
BEACH RATS


BIRTH
OF THE
DRAGON


GOOD TIME

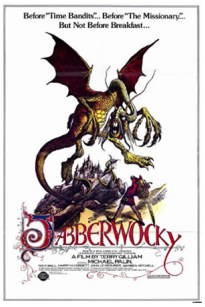

HITMAN'S
BODYGUARD
RYAN
REYNOLDS
SAMUEL L.
JACKSON


FROM THE DIRECTOR OF
WOLF CREEK
DANIEL
RADCLIFFE
JUNGLE


Life's greatest adventures
begin with a single...
Leap!
COMING SOON


Lemon


AN ENDLESS VENGEANCE BEGINS
THE VILLAINESS





It’s time once again to take a look at new arrivals on Blu-ray and DVD. As always, there is a lot to look at in a wide variety of genres. So if you can’t make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

Beach Rats - A scruffy Brooklyn teenager comes of age in this drama, experimenting with drugs and his own sexuality while palling around with local delinquents. Reviewers were generally positive about this independent effort. There were a few who thought that the character study was too surface level and didn’t delve deeply enough. However, the majority stated that the work was gritty and compelling, and felt that the energy level on display made up for any missteps. It features Harris Dickinson, Madeline Weinstein and Kate Hodge.

Birth of the Dragon - This biopic is set in San Francisco during the 1960s and chronicles a legendary fight between two kung-fu experts... legendary master Wong Jack Man and

up-and-comer Bruce Lee. The film didn't end up being screened for critics and the ones who did see it panned it. There was a comment or two stating that it was a passable B-movie. Still, most critiqued the picture for being surprisingly dull and dramatically flat, stating that fans of Lee would be best served by avoiding it and re-watching one of the stars classics instead. The cast includes Yu Xia, Philip Ng, Billy Magnussen and Terry Chen.

Good Time - When a heist goes completely wrong, one of the two brothers involved in the job is caught. Feeling guilty that his mentally ill sibling is about to be prosecuted, the other spends a night trying to help his sibling by raising cash for bail and eventually breaking him out. Reaction to this indie thriller was very strong. While there were a few who couldn't get on its wavelength, the consensus was that this was a kinetic and punchy effort that featured an excellent performance from the panicked lead. It stars Robert Pattinson, Benny Safdie, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Barkhad Abdi and Taliah Webster.

The Hitman's Bodyguard - A protection agent in a personal and professional rut is given a bizarre assignment when he's asked to guard and assist a hitman in testifying against an Eastern European dictator. Of course, the sinister leader sends his own men to ensure that the pair don't survive long enough to testify. This action/comedy was a hit at the box office but garnered mixed reviews from the press, with a few more pans than recommendations. Some thought that the charisma between the two actors earned it a pass, but several complained that it didn't present enough laughs or thrills to feel like anything more than a low-rent buddy picture. It features Samuel L. Jackson, Ryan Reynolds, Gary Oldman and Salma Hayek.

Jungle - Based on a true story, this drama follows a group of adventurers who decide to trek into the Amazon rain forest. After a horrific accident, one man finds himself lost and on his own. The film captures his struggles to survive the elements and make his way out over the following weeks. Critics were split down the middle about the feature. All were impressed with the lead performance. Half didn't think the script was interesting enough and found it sluggish, while the other half were impressed with the man vs. nature struggle. It stars Daniel Radcliffe, Thomas Kretschmann, Alex Russell and Lily Sullivan.

Leap! - Titled *Ballerina* in the rest of the world, this multi-national animated effort follows a young orphan in the French countryside who dreams of going to a world-famous dancing school in Paris. She runs away with a friend who aspires to be an inventor and tries to get herself enrolled in the program. Reaction to the picture in this part of the world was muted. Some thought that it was formulaic but fun for the youngsters, but more complained that didn't compare with other features like and found story and technical elements anachronistic. The voice cast for this release includes Elle Fanning, Nat Wolff, Maddie Ziegler, Mel Brooks, Carly

Rae Jepsen and Kate McKinnon.

Lemon - A middle-aged man's life literally begins to disintegrate in this release. The lead's career is bottoming out, his girlfriend decides to leave him and his family announces that he is a complete disappointment to them. Things get even worse in this independent black comedy as more attempts to right his course fall apart. According to those who have seen it, this is a polarizing feature. It seems that a good portion of viewers didn't like the protagonist and found the events painful to watch. Yet more complimented the weirdness and originality, saying they couldn't look away as terrible events unfolded. It features Brett Gelman, Judy Greer, Michael Cera, Nia Long, Fred Melamed, Shiri Appleby, Gillian Jacobs, David Paymer and Martin Starr.

Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets - This expensive French science-fiction flick is based on a popular comic book and involves a duo of special operatives sent to a floating planet city called Alpha that houses almost every kind of life in the known universe. Once there, they uncover a plot that could threaten the universe. This was another movie that garnered a wide variety of responses. About half disliked the film, calling it nonsensical and bizarre. The rest admired the incredible vision on display and the willingness to do anything to entertain. It stars Dane DeHaan, Cara Delevingne, Clive Owen, Rihanna and Ethan Hawke.

The Villainess - Note: This flick was supposed to be released last week, but was delayed. In this South Korean effort, a young girl is trained to be an unstoppable assassin and is eventually recruited by the government as a special agent. After fulfilling her duties and retiring, she sets out to start a new life. However, strange characters from her past begin to appear and make threats. The lead doesn't take kindly to their threats. The press was generally positive about this foreign-language action flick. They claimed that while the story and characters weren't new, the fight sequences were stunningly staged and sure to give viewers a visceral kick. Kim Ok-bin is tasked with beating down the bad guys.

Blasts from the Past!

Some great older titles are also arriving on Blu-ray this week. Criterion is delivering the comedy *Jabberwocky*
(1977), the first film from director Terry Gilliam (
Brazil
,
The Fisher King

,
12 Monkeys
,
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
). Set in the Middle Ages, it follows a village doofus played by Michael Palin who is tasked with becoming a knight and slaying a dragon. This release features a high quality 4K transfer of the film, a 2001 commentary from the star and filmmaker, a new documentary on the production, an interview with the woman who designed the title creatures, an audio interview with Gilliam and publicity materials. Sounds like a great release for any Monty Python enthusiasts out there.

Kino has a large slate as well, including the box set, *Fritz Lang: The Silent Films*. It's a twelve-disc set that includes 11 silent features from the director, dating between 1919 and 1929. Besides the upgraded image quality, many come with film historian commentaries and other extras.

The distributor also has plenty of features in the form of the war film, *Cease Fire!* (1953) and the drama *Driftwood* (1947), about a collie who survives a plane crash. In addition, you can pick up the film-noir *Hangover Square* (1945), the Ginger Rogers romance pic, *I'll Be Seeing You* (1944) and the war/drama, *Since You Went Away* (1944).

Finally, MVD Entertainment Group has a Special Edition of *The Man from Earth* (2007), an independent science-fiction title that marks the last work by the late screenwriter Jerome Bixby (*It! The Terror from Beyond Space*
,
Fantastic Voyage
).

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some new additions that may appeal to kids.

Bob the Builder: Mega Machines: The Movie

Thomas & Friends: Thomas' Christmas Holiday Collection

On the Tube!

And here are the week's TV-themed titles.

CSI: Crime Scene Investigators: The Complete Series

The Fall: Series 3

High School Lover (Lifetime TV-movie)

The Incredible Hulk: The Complete Series

The Librarians: Season 3

Mystery Science Theater 3000: Vol. XXXIX (*Girls Town*, *The Amazing Transparent Man*, *Diabolik*, *Satellite Dishes*)

Red Dwarf VII

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun