The Essential Home Theatre Resource™
WIDESCREEN REVIEW® NEWSLETTER
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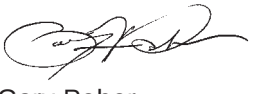
WELCOME!

It's hard to believe that half a year has passed since we first started sending out our free monthly Newsletter, but since this is the sixth one we have put together, it must be true. We have had a tremendous amount of interest and praise and plenty of positive feedback on the Newsletters, and for this we thank you all. This month's archived article is from Issue #3—"Aspect Ratios…Are You Confused? Part 1." And be sure and read the Studio Scoop for a chance to win not one, but six great prizes! Lastly, if anyone has a suggestion for something special that they would like to see in the Newsletter or possibly has something to contribute, please send an email to nate@widescreenreview.com.



Gary Reber
Editor-In-Chief, *Widescreen Review*

COMING SOON TO NEWSSTANDS

Here's a sneak peek into what's coming in Issue 115, December, 2006 of *Widescreen Review*:

- Greg Rogers reviews the Sony VPL-VW50 1080p SXRD™ front projector
- Danny Richelieu listens to the Earthquake Sound Tethys and Rhea loudspeakers
- Mike Marks looks at the Toshiba 62HM196 1080p DLP Television
- Gary Reber's take on Mackie® HR626 high-resolution studio monitors
- Bill Cruce watches the Sharp® AQUOS™ LC-37D9OU 1080p LCD HDTV
- Two Keys Unlock Digital Cinema By Gary Sasaki
- Over 50 Blu-ray Disc, HD DVD, and DVD picture and sound quality reviews
- And more...

ATTRACTIONS

NEWSLETTER EDITION

Coming Soon...
To A Retailer Near You

Tricia Spears

Nola Viper IA

The new **Nola Viper IA** loudspeaker uses a "trickle down" version of the mid-bass drivers used in their Grand Reference system. Upgraded crossover components offer improved performance, and the solid, high-gloss, black acrylic sub-baffle provides greater front baffle damping and lower coloration. The mid/high-frequency wiring harness is now hidden and runs inside the front baffle to provide significantly improved performance in addition to fit and finish. The 40-inch high, 10-inch wide, and 15-inch deep Viper IA weighs 70 pounds, is available in a cherry or light ash wood finish with black cloth, and retails for $4,000 a pair.

Accent Speaker Technology *631 738 2540* *www.nolaspeakers.com*

SpeakerCraft has announced their **AIM Cinema** in-wall loudspeakers with a unique new driver configuration. With a taller and thinner footprint than most standard in-wall loudspeakers, the units feature a D'Appolito array high-frequency section with two 5-1/2-inch drivers flanking a pivoting, one-inch dome tweeter. The entire high-frequency sub-baffle pivots ±15 degrees laterally, and directly below it are two six-inch woofers mounted on a separate, stationary low-frequency sub-baffle that significantly improves bass quality and quantity by reducing energy-absorbing baffle resonance. The AIM Cinema will be available in three models (AIM Cinema 1, 3, and 5) with the same driver configuration. The drivers themselves will vary from polypropylene to aluminum, and then to Kevlar® in the top-of-the-line version.

SpeakerCraft AIM Cinema 5

SpeakerCraft *800 448 0976* *www.speakercraft.com*

Pinnacle Speakers QP 5 IW

Now available from **Pinnacle® Speakers** are the **QP 3 IW** ($549 each) and **QP 5 IW** ($749 each) in-wall loudspeakers. Designed aesthetically and acoustically for flat panel televisions, the black or silver models can swivel 25 degrees left to right for optimum direct ability of sound. Featuring an ultra-low profile, minimal cutout, paintable grille and frame, and sleek overall design attributes, the QP 3 IW and QP 5 IW's extruded aluminum enclosures ensure consistent and predictable sonic performance from job to job. The QP 3 IW is best suited for 27-inch and larger televisions, while the QP 5 IW works best with 32-inch and larger televisions.

Pinnacle Speakers *800 346 2863* *www.pinnaclespeakers.com*

Final Sound 300i

Final Sound has added the **300i** 48-inch panel to their Inverter™ electrostatic loudspeaker line. Mounted on either a standard floor stand or an optional wall mount, the 300i is eight-inches wide and only one inch in depth. Capable of creating frequency responses of 95 Hz up to 22 kHz (±3 dB), the exclusive technology allows loudspeakers to be driven with an amplifier with as little as 40 watts per channel. The 300i will be available in the fourth quarter 2006, can be specially painted to match the décor of any room, and is available in several different pedestal overlays in a variety of materials. Final Sound has also introduced two new specially designed subwoofers, the **S110** and the **S220**. The S110 is an eight-inch long throw, 100-watt RMS down-firing and bass-reflex subwoofer with a frequency range of 25 Hz to 220 Hz, ±3 dB. The S220 is a 12-inch long throw, 220-watt RMS, front-firing sealed-box subwoofer with a frequency range of 20 Hz to 200 Hz, ±3 dB.

Final Sound *781 938 6416* *www.finalsound.com*

Key Digital HDMI 4x1

The **Flash Max Series HDMI 4x1™** from **Key Digital®** is a new digital video/audio switcher and video processor that switches any of four video inputs of HDMI to one output, while also switching multiple audio formats. Capable of scaling, deinterlacing, and switching up to four HDMI/HDCP/DVID sources and inputs to its one HDMI/HDCP/DVID output with a resolution up to 1080p, it allows you to customize each input to its best video setting and memorize each setting for that input. Providing a one-cable solution to the display, the HDMI 4x1 maximizes picture quality and supports third-party control systems via RS232 and IR. The HDMI 4x1 is available now for $1,000.

Key Digital *914 667 9700* *www.keydigital.com*

HANNspree Xv Series (42-inch)

HANNspree California, Inc. has introduced their first three high-performance, high-value widescreen LCD HDTVs in the new Xv Series. The 32-inch ($1,200), 37-inch ($1,500), and 42-inch ($1,900) televisions feature a rich glossy black and grey cosmetic and a classic grey table stand. Like all HANNspree Xv Series TVs, they feature a full complement of audio and video connectivity options, including HDMI with HDCP input, PC input, composite video in, S-video in, HD component in, and RF in. All feature built-in stereo loudspeakers and Smooth Motion Technology.

HANNspree California, Inc. *510 360 3000* *www.hannspree-usa.com*

Aspect Ratios...Are You Confused?

Part One

This article is Part One of a two-part overview of widescreen aspect ratios beginning with the silent film era. Various film formats are presented such as Cinerama®, Widescreen 3-D, CinemaScope® and VistaVision®. Part Two explores the various widescreen 70mm formats. This is a complex subject with seemingly as many variations in application both in terms of principal photography and projection as there are numerous film formats. As a magazine, our task here is to provide our readers with a sense of the complexity without necessarily exploring each and every variation or specific application. Such depth would require a book on each of the formats.

Projection Orders

WIDESCREEN: Recommended Aspect Ratio 1.85:1. This film is not to be projected wider than 2.0:1 or less than 1.50:1! (notice on leaders of numerous MCA/Universal releases)...**The Aspect Ratio is 2.0:1.** (Todd-AO Instruction Manual)...**The Aspect Ratio is 2.35:1.** (TAP notice to projectionists)...**The Aspect Ratio is 2.40:1.** (Lucasfilm TAP notice to projectionists)...**The Aspect Ratio is 1.66:1.** (TAP notice to projectionists)...**The Aspect Ratio is 1.85:1.** (TAP notice to projectionists)...**WideVision is 1.85:1.** (Twentieth Century Fox pressbook notice) ...**The Aspect Ratio is 1.75:1.** (notice in dozens of Disney pressbooks)...**Paramount Pictures announces all films will be framed for 2 to 1.** (article in *Variety*) ...**Columbia Pictures adopts 1.85:1 Aspect Ratio.** (*Variety* article)...And on it went and so it still goes.

There are more myths from Hollywood—or more accurately the motion picture industry—than from the entire Mediterranean region of the world. The most outrageous is that directors have total control of their films which is a subject for another article. The second most often touted fantasy is that there are two 35mm aspect ratios[1]: 1:85:1 for spherical flat (cropped) widescreen and 2.35:1 for anamorphic widescreen in the United States and 1.66:1 and 1.75:1 spherical ratios outside America. If it were only so simple! Well, it isn't, it never has been and with the coming of 1.78:1 widescreen television it isn't going to be standard anytime in many of our lifetimes. So here are the facts, and it may be shocking, stunning or even disgusting to read the following. One thing is certain: **It is confusing!**

Early Widescreen

We all know the original spherical ratio was 1.33:1, right? Well, wrong! In fact cropping films up to 2.10:1 had become so common by 1930 that cinematographer Gilbert Warrenton wrote an article for *American Cinematographer* suggesting all studios adopt a policy of framing their films with a 2.0:1 safe crop area for those cinemas which had installed wide screens and were using Magnascope® lenses and other enlarging film devices to fill these wide screens which were first introduced in 1925.[2]

The idea of cropping was introduced by Paramount Pictures, initially for use on a few silent film features which had large scale action climaxes (*The Thundering* Herd, *Old Ironsides*, etc.) and it caught on in many cinemas, not just in large cities and on large screens but even in rural villages on modest size screens. It was in fact extremely common. So common Mr. Warrenton felt it was time the industry as a whole recognized the fact and made the proper production adjustments for such. Foolishly the Hollywood powers ignored him, even when various motion picture guilds came forward in support of the idea.

Rather amazingly it was 1930, that the cropped ratio of 1.85:1 was suggested. (And it had nothing to do with the myth that the majority of classical paintings were in the 1.85:1 shape.) In reality it was because of the location of the film's sprocket perforations (perfs): if one framed the image across the bottom of the top perf and across the top of the bottom perf the resulting projected picture just happened to be 1.85:1, fractionally more or less. Framing for 2.0:1 removed exactly one-sixth from the top and one-sixth from the bottom of the frame. The 2.0:1 crop would just about fill the Grandeur and Realife 70mm screens introduced by Fox and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer which a few theatres had been equipped for.

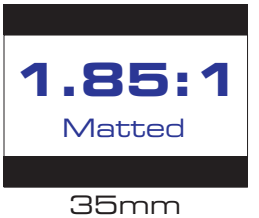
Aspect Ratios

NTSC Television
Academy Aperture

Anamorphic Scope
Panavision®
CinemaScope®

70mm

Academy Standard



35mm
Academy Aperture
Matted To 1.85:1
Flat Spherical Panavision®

1 The term "aspect ratio" means the shape, width-to-height, of the image as seen by the audience and may not be the same as the frame ratio which is the actual picture image on the film. In fact, projector aperture plates, which are small removable metal plates which determine the actual projected picture shape, even if providing the correct, recommended screen image are fractionally smaller than the actual film image. This prevents such things as fractional soundtrack displacement, variation in framelines and other "garbage" as it is called from becoming visible during projection. Thus a film printed in an exact 1.85:1 aspect ratio may be projected in that very same ratio but will not actually be, on a microscopic level, the very same 1.85:1 composed photography. Since the magnification of image is many thousands of times, this fractional difference is not determinable by the audience.

2 Many theatres used these large image lenses selectively, for example only on big action movies or for westerns and outdoor adventure yarns while others employed them for the entire feature presentation, regardless of subject.

Aspect Ratios...Are You Confused?

So cropping emerged, rather widely in 1925 and by the introduction of sound in 1927 it was common. By 1929 with the brief introduction of 70mm it was nothing new at all and an accepted situation in every major city and many small towns. Of course it was not in every theatre and it was not officially sanctioned by Hollywood. Films certainly were not being framed during photography for it excepting a few items from Paramount, MGM and possibly others.[3]

Cinerama®

Along came the 1950s. Television was sapping Hollywood. Cinemas were closing, filmmakers and actors, and some minor production companies were deserting theatrical film for the tiny tube. Hollywood needed a gimmick and fast.

Three things emerged all successfully. Soon a fourth joined the group of new film presentation formats. The first official offering was Cinerama in September 1952. This was a trifilm, deeply curved screen system which premiered with a documentary appropriately entitled, *This Is Cinerama*. Cinerama employed three 35mm films running six perfs—instead of four perfs per frame as on standard film formats—with the image occupying the entire frame area. A magnetic coated film was run in sync and carried seven tracks; six had audio, the seventh controlled the shifting of the sixth track into surround loudspeakers on the right, left and rear walls of the theatre. The ratio of Cinerama as well as the photographic and projection specifics changed several times and ranged from 2.59:1 to 2.77:1.

Widescreen 3-D

Next came 3-D in November 1952, using various camera rigs, and with a simplified interlock stereophonic sound system using four tracks.[4] In early 1953 cropped widescreen was officially introduced to the world with this process.

The widescreen movement started in a most modest and inconsistent way; there was no attempt at maintaining a standard crop from even the same studio. Warners used 1.50:1 for *House Of Wax* in 3-D, but 1.66:1 for spherical flat engagements of the film (due to the wider ratio destroying some of the stereoscopic effects). Paramount offered *The War Of The Worlds* in 1.47:1 and *Shane* in 1.66:1. Universal chose 1.85:1 for *It Came From Outer Space*. Columbia Pictures suggested 1.85 for *The 5,000 Fingers Of Dr. T*, and so on. Interestingly none of these films had been shot for cropping and the ratios selected were based on what the film could visually stand (though in fact several lost part of their opening credits). They were advertised with such tags as WideVision, Widescreen, Giant WideView Screen, Panoramic Screen, etc.

CinemaScope®

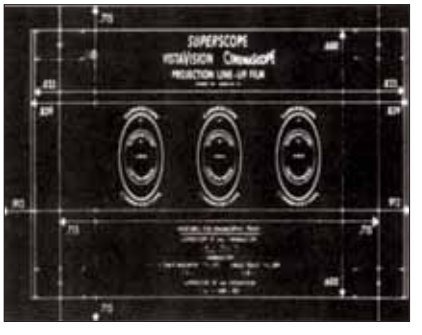
The war against TV was in full swing, but there was such confusion at this point most cinemas didn't bother cropping spherical flat films. (3-D films, which died out in 1954 were usually shot for Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences ratio presentation but many were also shot for cropping.) In September 1953 Twentieth Century Fox premiered CinemaScope with *The Robe*.[5]

The push was on to use anamorphic lenses, which optically compressed the image times-two on the frame during photography and rendered a variety of ratios: 2.66:1 (using optical sound and Academy camera and projection plates) and 2.55:1 or 2.35:1 (depending on the type of soundtrack: magnetic or optical) when projected through the special deanamorphosising projection lenses. Very quickly, a 2.35:1 ratio was standardized on all CinemaScope pictures by reducing the size of the perfs on magnetic prints and using standard perfs on optically tracked prints. A 1.17:1 camera and projector aperture was utilized because of the compressed picture image of the film.

There was one major visual problem with the 2.35:1 image: flashes at each splice in the negative. In the early 1970s Panavision Inc. and the SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) suggested the use of a 2.40:1 projector aperture plate which crops this flash from the bottom of the frame. The common terminology, however, remains 2.35:1.

This flash was caused by the fact that CinemaScope images literally have no dividing frameline but splicers cut an area slightly less than the height of the Academy Aperture 1.33:1 frameline. As this area was exposed in anamorphic projection it showed as clear space on the film and appeared as a 1/24th flash on screen.[6]

Many manufacturers produced anamorphic devices of various types and under different trademarks: Vistarama®, Warner SuperScope® (later just called WarnerScope), Dyaliscope®, Franscope® —nearly two hundred different tags over the years. But they all were the same as CinemaScope once the 2.35:1 ratio was standardized.



More Format Confusion

Studios eventually settled down to their own selected trade names and ratios for cropping: MGM's Variscope (1.75:1) and Metroscope (1.66:1 or 1.75:1 printed with a hard matte), Columbia's Vistascope (1.85:1), Universal's WideVision (2.0:1 safe area allowed, 1.85:1 recommended), Disney's hard matte at 1.75:1, Allied Artists' 1.85:1, etc. The WideVision tag also was used by Fox, Alperson, American International Pictures and others. As can clearly be determined there was never an accepted industry standard use of 1.85:1 cropping. However the SMPTE did recommend a standardization to 1.85:1. It never happened and it still has not occurred. As an example, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial,*

3 Reference to widescreen projection can be seen in several reviews from this period and well into the 1930's in *Variety* and elsewhere.

4 Until CinemaScope, all magnetic stereophonic soundtracks in the U.S. were on a separate 35mm striped film which was run in sync on an interlocked audio reproducer. With CinemaScope, and usually thereafter on flat films as well, the magnetic soundtracks were placed on the picture film.

5 First called Hypergonar and later Anamorphosa, the CinemaScope technology had been used as early as 1927 for *Pour construire un feu* which was unshown in the U.S. In 1929 *La merveilleuse vie de Jeanne d'Arc* used the process for selected scenes only. In the middle 1930s attempts to reintroduce the system by its French backers failed. Fox purchased exclusive rights from Professor Henri Chretien in 1952 after Paramount passed on it. Unfortunately for the studio it turned out the technology was not patentable nor protectable and their dreams of controlling its use were not realized. Fox did, however, license the use of the name CinemaScope to other studios.

6 These flashes do not show on widescreen laserdiscs as the image, regardless of width presented, is always matted somewhat, and occasionally substantially, on top and bottom. *Alien*, for example, is horribly cropped on top and bottom.

Aspect Ratios...Are You Confused?

Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves, etc. in recent years have been framed for 1.66:1. John Sayles always shoots for 1.66:1. William Wyler always framed his films for 2.0:1 cropping. Etc. etc. etc....I warned you, this aspect ratio business was going to be confusing.

VistaVision®

Paramount, perhaps more than any studio, really tried to please everyone with VistaVision. Four different print formats were offered with this process. First there was the actual photography over two 35mm frames shot horizontally (with the film running sideways instead of vertically in the camera). When exhibited in double frame projection—the ads noted "Presented Through VistaVision Motion Picture High Fidelity"—the 1.50:1 frame image was to be cropped at 1.85:1 but could be shown in any ratio between 1.50:1 and 2.0:1. An anamorphic print was produced using a 1.56:1 compression and required variable compression anamorphic lenses for projection from SuperScope, Panatar, Delrama, Hi-Lux, etc., and a projected ratio of 2.0:1. These VistaVision scope prints were not compatible with CinemaScope. A standard 35mm reduction print also was available with a 1.50:1 frameline for cropping up to 2.0:1, and a special 1.33:1 print, principally for overseas and 16mm reduction, could be produced by extracting the Academy image from within the 1.50:1 negative. (This print was not produced by simply cropping the sides; indeed the sides and top were cropped so the heads would appear the same height as on a 1.66:1 cropped standard 35mm VistaVision print but the foot area dropped all the way to the bottom of the frame. When racked (pulled) out of frame on a projector, you can actually see the tops of the perfs from the horizontal negative. This explains why VistaVision films seen on TV often have main titles off center and higher in the frame than normal.)

Theatre Projection

Now if this isn't bothersome enough consider the realities of cinema presentation; there was no more standardization in the field than on the shooting stage! Most theatres did not own a whole set of lenses and projector plates, so regardless of what the recommended crop was, it really meant nothing. Each theatre—with a few exceptions where money was spent in an effort to present each film as it was intended—simply showed flat films in whatever cropped ratio they ended up selecting for themselves. Despite claims otherwise this usually was between 1.65:1 and 2.0:1, and not simply 1.85:1 across the board.

In a late 1960s survey, the average cropped image turned out to be, most interestingly considering widescreen NTSC TV, 1.78:1! This survey was conducted by an associate who used the results supplied by equipment manufacturers, screen suppliers, and theatre chains for some 2,000 cinemas.

In recent years the variation in spherical flat ratios has been even more confused. Today one no longer necessarily purchases manufactured precut projector aperture plates in a specific ratio but instead a plate with a small hole in the center which must be filed to fit the appropriate screen ratio. Cinemaccania of Italy supply their projectors with a single sliding aperture plate which has four precut ratios: 1.66:1, 1.75:1, 1.85:1 and 2.35:1. Other projector aperture plates are available from various manufacturers in the above precut ratios that are undersized (smaller) which represents yet another compromise to the correct projected image (the ratio is correct, but the aspect image as seen is not correct). So where is the standard 1.85:1 ratio seen? Well, here and there I suppose, but it most definitely is not a standard, either photographically or in projection.

What about anamorphic CinemaScope pictures? The facts are just as varied. Indeed two major surveys were conducted in the early 1950s, one by Irving and Joseph S. Tushinsky of SuperScope Inc. for RKO, and one by MGM. Both reached the same conclusion, though their percent of theatres doing/not doing proper projection of anamorphic films was slightly off from each other. These covered between 1,500 and 2,000 CinemaScope equipped houses. The SuperScope results noted about 92 percent of theatres were projecting in a ratio substantially less than the correct shape; the MGM results determined that not even 5 percent of the theatres were actually projecting CinemaScope in the ratio for which it was designed. Shocked? The survey in 1968 showed the average scope screen was between 2.0:1 and 2.10:1 and all screen manufacturers were then producing, as standard, screens in a 2.0:1 ratio. This has not changed. Any theatre wishing to order a screen in a ratio wider than 2.0:1 must do so as a special order.

The results of the SuperScope and MGM surveys lead to the development in 1954 of the SuperScope photographic process—in which the film was shot flat, cropped in the lab and optically squeezed for CinemaScope compatible projection—in a 2.0:1 aspect ratio. As the Tushinsky's advised Howard Hughes, it made no sense to produce a wider image on the frame as few cinemas had screens projecting much, if any, wider ratio and those which did usually were lowering top masking and showing a wide but smaller image. Furthermore the Tushinsky's declared, since SuperScope could use the old prime lenses with their variable attachment, their process allowed cinemas to fill—as a general rule—their widescreen and still retain the height of their flat pictures. While a 2.35:1 version was eventually introduced, called, SuperScope® 235, it was employed on few films until recent years where it has reemerged under such trade names as Super Techniscope®, System 35, etc. However it makes no more sense today to use the wider 2.35:1 image than it did in 1954. Indeed it is even less sensible today as sadly, fewer and fewer cinemas are installing screens wider than 2.0:1. Certainly less than 5 percent and more likely only 3 percent of today's cinemas have screens in excess of 2.0:1. Thus an image wider than 2.0:1 is only of value in at best 5 cinemas out of every 100.

So out of all of this it becomes sadly pointless to argue over widescreen laserdisc aspect ratios from scope films which are not transferred at 2.35:1. The chance you saw it in a cinema wider than what most laserdiscs are presented in is most unlikely indeed. The widescreen laserdisc, however, does offer the medium for compositionally correct aspect ratio transfers.

In Part Two, the emergence of 70mm and other widescreen systems will be explored. ■

Authored by Dr. R. Michael Hayes, *Widescreen Review's* Motion Picture Technical Consultant. Dr. Hayes has written a number of books documenting film history. He is the co-author of *Wide Screen Movies: A History and Filmography of Wide Gauge Filmmaking*. Dr. Hayes has worked as a film editor with credits on more than thirty films and is developer of the ColorTone™ process for converting black-and-white to color and the 70mm Perspecta® Realife™ 4-D System. He is Technical Director of Perspecta® Systems Ltd. and a member of the International Society of Cinematographic Technologists, the International Cinerama Society, and the International 70mm Association.

I Want To Know

The Studio Scoop

Rumors, Reports & Ramblings

Jack Kelley

"Giveaway! Giveaway! Giveaway!" Well, actually two, so just "Giveaway! Giveaway!" If you're a fan of the television series *Bones*, brought to you by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, please read Fox's blurb to discover how you can win an autographed t-shirt. And for the other giveaway, Genius Products, LLC, has generously provided us with five copies of *Cinema Paradiso*, Limited Collector's Edition, so read about it under Independents.

Buena Vista

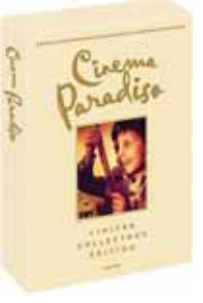
Feel like seeing a Christmas-type movie this month, to sort of get in the mood, but not sure what to see? Well, don't ask Kyle Smith of the *New York Post* if *The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause* is worth the $10 plus admission price. He thinks Santa "is so dumb he should be demoted to cleaning up after Geoffrey the Giraffe at Toys 'R' Us." Ouch. That's gotta stink...erm...I mean sting.

DreamWorks

Well, I did receive a copy of *Over The Hedge* on October 17, 2006...its street date. And by that time, our slate of DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, and HD DVDs to be reviewed was full, so this little animated feature was shelved. Now, being as customer service oriented as we are here at *WSR,* if I receive ten emails (jack@widescreenreview.com) requesting that this title be reviewed, I will make sure Danny Richelieu gets it done and posted on our Web site as a Webzine exclusive. (Danny Richelieu writes: Oh you will, will you?)

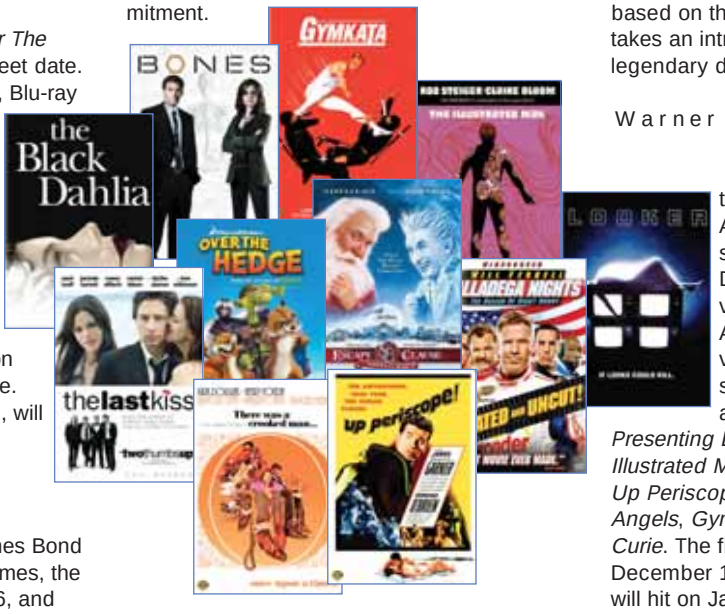
MGM

As I reported last month, the James Bond catalog will be released in four volumes, the first two streeting November 7, 2006, and the second two streeting on December 12, 2006. What I didn't report is that all 20 of the films were remastered over a period of two-and-a-half years. Just to give you an idea how much these titles were polished, it is reported that 37 million pieces of dirt and 9,000 feet of scratches were removed from the films' masters. Now, how would you have liked to be the guy responsible for counting pieces of dirt? Not me. Look for a review of one of the volumes in Issue 116 (January 2007).



Paramount

Pucker up. *The Last Kiss*, which grossed a mere $11.6 million at the domestic box office, closes out the year for Paramount on December 26, 2006. Based on Gabriele Muccino's film *One Last Kiss*, and starring Zach Braff and featuring Blythe Danner (Gwyneth's mom), *The Last Kiss* is a look at every single guy's favorite subject—commitment.



Sony Pictures

Okay, I realize that information about Sony's long-awaited Blu-ray Disc player doesn't really belong in The Studio Scoop, but I am not much of a rule-follower. Anyhow, it's been delayed again to on or about December 4, 2006, according to our contacts at Sony. And this is near-perfect timing with Sony Pictures' December 12, 2006 street date for *Talladega Night: The Ballad Of Ricky Bobby*. See how I just naturally worked this into a true Studio Scoop announcement? Genius, I tell you.

20th Century Fox

Well, for all you *Bones* fans out there, I have a gift for you. A one-in-a-million gift, that is. In my possession, I have an autographed *Bones* T-shirt. Now, wait, I'm getting there. It is signed by the two "stars" of the show—Emily Deschanel, who plays Dr. Temperance "Bones" Brennan, and David Noreanaz, aka Special Agent Seeley Booth. But true fans of the series already knew that. Now, for the giveaway—send me an email (jack@widescreenreview.com) with "Bones Giveaway" on the subject line and your contact information within, before November 30, 2006. I will then print said emails and have Editor-In-Chief Gary Reber (yep, being the editor does have its perks) draw the winning name.

Universal Studios

Also on December 26, 2006, *The Black Dahlia,* starring Josh Hartnett, Aaron Eckhart, Scarlett Johansson, and Hilary Swank, finds its way to store shelves...just in time to help you spend your after-Christmas loot. Told in a *film noir* style and based on the novel by James Ellroy, *Dahlia* takes an intricate and detailed look into the legendary death of Elizabeth Short.

Warner Home Video

So, Warner, along with the good people at Amazon.com, got together and selected 30 never-before-on-DVD films from Warner Bros.' vast library, posted the titles on Amazon, and allowed visitors to vote on which ones they'd like to see on DVD. And the winners are: *Operation Crossbow*, *Presenting Lily Mars* (1.33:1), *The Illustrated Man*, *There Was A Crooked Man*, *Up Periscope*, *The Arrangement*, *Band Of Angels*, *Gymkata*, *Looker*, and *Madame Curie*. The first five titles will be released on December 19, 2006, and the second wave will hit on January 30, 2007. Now, with titles like these, one is only left to wonder...what were the 20 losing titles?

The good...and generous...people at Genius Products, LLC, are offering five limited collector's editions of *Cinema Paradiso* to our online readers. As you may know, *Cinema Paradiso* is the winner of the 1990 Academy Award® and the Golden Globe® for Best Foreign Language Film, and *WSR* staffer, Tricia Spears, says it is a must-see. So, send me an email (jack@widescreenreview.com), with "Cinema Paradiso Giveaway" on the subject line and include your contact information, no later than November 30, 2006. Again, emails will be printed, and Tricia Spears will draw the winning names. Just don't tell Gary.

If you have kids or grandkids, this may interest you. Genius Products has teamed up with Discovery Kids to distribute a minimum of 16 family DVDs a year. This is the first time that Discovery Kids' content will be available in the DVD format. Look for programs such as *Kenny The Shark* and *Paz* to take a bow sometime in early 2007.

File this under the "what the f**k were they thinking?" category. ThinkFilm is facing a challenge...or a marketing dilemma, shall we say. It seems it's not as easy to promote a movie titled *F**k* as one, say, titled *The Princess Bride*. It appears newspapers have rules about printing such a word, and that movie theatres are unable to display it on their marquees. Hmmm. And then the MPAA is required to give it an NC-17 rating based on the title alone...not even looking at the content. So, ThinkFilm, exercising marketing prowess, has decided to have the movie released unrated. You know we'll be getting our dirty little hands on this title. ■

Contrary to popular opinion, Research/Production Editor Jack Kelley is not responsible for any release date changes, price changes, or any other perceived errors contained within. He can be reached at jack@widescreenreview.com.