

dvd



## Marie Antoinette

USA/Japan/France (2006) 129 mins  
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Sofia Coppola  
STARRING Kirsten Dunst & Jason Schwartzman RELEASED Feb 13

A film about a French queen with Marianne Faithfull in the cast (as Marie Antoinette's mother, Marie Tereza)? That should be a hint about this wildly imaginative take on Marie's life, a cake-strewn, bouffant-haired quasi-biopic where reality is never having to say you're sorry and wealthy ladies of the court accessorize by carrying around diminutive dogs (some things never change).

An exuberant and eminently seductive jewel of a film whose allure and intelligence shouldn't be underestimated, it reveals all the excesses of 1788 as heard through the ears of the 1980s New Romantic music genre, which accounts for most of the soundtrack. It's the world seen through the eyes of an impressionable, sheltered adolescent, Marie (Kirsten Dunst), it has to be remembered, was only 15 when she was abruptly yanked from her Viennese home and taken to France to become the wife of the 16-year-old Dauphin (played by a badly miscast Schwartzman, the only sour note in an otherwise well-cast film). Marie did in fact marry, thanks to a hoversal husband, a marriage consummated for seven years, constant court intrigues and the birth of four children.

Underlying the flippancy is something much darker, like some pretty gone Hollywood-wrong, *Dancer* is simply splendid and director/screenwriter Coppola deserves full credit (along with Antonia Fraser, who wrote the biography on which Coppola's film is based) for taking an iconic life and transforming it into something intimate and personal. It's history with a fair and heart. Among the 40-odd minutes of DVD extras, most are relatively anemic. Schwartzman's MTV-style tour of Versailles is incoherent. Two extremely brief deleted scenes are included. Best is the 24-minute "making of" sequence, which includes Coppola and a variety of cast members commenting on their roles. - WD



**The Prestige**  
UK/USA (2006) 129 mins  
DIRECTED BY Christopher Nolan  
STARRING Hugh Jackman, Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Scarlett Johansson & David Bowie  
RELEASED Feb 20

Set in Victorian London, two rival magicians (Hugh Jackman, Christian Bale) entice up a friendship that goes horribly awry as the two engage in an escalating vendetta of deadly tricks. It's a complex and ingenious film using the multiple Genies that director Christopher Nolan utilized to such great effect in his landmark thriller *Memento*.

The film takes place almost entirely at night, the cobblestones of London bathed in the eerie glow of torches and gas lamps, capturing an era of transformation where "the world is on the brink of new and terrifying possibilities." Respectably, there are very few bonus features. A thought-provoking "Director's Notebook" conjures up cast interviews. - WD

### NEW RELEASES

**FLAGE OF OUR FATHERS** Feb 13  
Franz Philipp & Adam Beach

**A SUNDAY IN KISALU** Feb 13  
Directed by Robert Faivreau

**INFAMOUS** Feb 13  
Ziwe Zizwe as Truman Capote

**SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS** Feb 13  
Stacy Allen as Truman Capote

**THE US VS JOHN LENNON** Feb 13  
Directed by David Lead

**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION** Feb 20  
Directed by Christopher Guest

**SHOOTING DOGS** Feb 20  
John Hurt & Hugh Dancy

**KEEPING MUM** Feb 20  
Rowen Atkinson & Maggie Smith

**MAN OF THE YEAR** Feb 20  
Robin Williams & Christopher Walken

**SANTO OF 8-11** Feb 20  
Narrated by Sir Ian McKellen

**SHOT UP 9 SING** Feb 20  
The Dixie Chicks

**AMERICAN HARDWARE** Feb 20  
The rise and fall of '80s punk rock

**SO GOES THE NATION** Feb 20  
George Bush & John Kerry

**FLUSHED AWAY** Feb 20  
Hugh Jackson & Kate Winslet

**FACTOTUM** Feb 27  
Matt Dillon & Eli Taylor

**TENACIOUS D: THE PICK OF DESTINY** Feb 27  
Jack Black & Kyle Gass

**THE GATHERING** Feb 27  
Christina Ricci & Sean Grady

**MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES** March 6  
Sundance Grand Jury Prize nominee

**SONG FOR A RAGGY BOY** March 6  
Aidan Quinn

**SHORTBUS** March 13  
Spike Jonze

**CASINO ROYALE** March 13  
Daniel Craig & Christie Tuckey

**THE HOLIDAY** March 13  
Kate Winslet & Cameron Diaz

**THE MAN WHO SUED GOD** March 13  
Billy Connolly & Judy Davis

**KARSH TIMES** March 20  
Christian Bale

**THE NATIVITY STORY** March 20  
Keisha Castle-Brigham

**NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM** March 20  
Ben Stiller & Ricky Gervais

**ROCKY BALBOA** March 20  
Sylvester Stallone



**A Good Year**  
USA (2006) 118 mins  
DIRECTED BY Ridley Scott  
STARRING Piersice Crowe, Albert Finney & Marion Cotillard RELEASED Feb 27

This is a travelogue with pretensions. It's all here: the bucolic vineyard in the south of France, the earthy local villagers, the interminable sunset. When London bond trader Max Skinner (Piersice Crowe) inherits his Uncle Henry's (Albert Finney) property, he sets off with the intent of selling it as rapidly as possible. He's soon seduced by the myriad temptations of pastoral bliss, including a lovely, haughty French cafe owner. The sudden appearance of a young Californian claiming to be Uncle Henry's illegitimate daughter temporarily complicates matters. But it's all contrived and predictable, a series of episodic events strung together largely to take advantage of the scenery. Crowe is genial but ill at ease and Ridley Scott's leisurely directorial approach doesn't make for a very good voyage. Leave this one in the cellar. The "exciting bonus features" (a la the press release) only turn out to be a director's commentary and a "making of" doc. - WD

FastForward

## HIGH-DEFINITION DVD

Deciding between Blu-ray and HD-DVD is so 2006. In 2007 it's all about choosing both... for better and worse.

The high-definition DVD war just got a little more complicated. After watching competing next-gen DVD technologies Blu-ray and HD-DVD butt heads for the better part of 2006, Korean consumer electronics giant LG tried to bring the two camps a little closer together by announcing that the world's first dual-format Blu-ray/HD-DVD player would be available by the end of Feb. (for \$1,500 in Canada).

Is this a real solution? While a combo-player is a good idea in theory, it presents several problems in the real world. For starters, it encourages us to buy movies in both formats, which is fine and dandy - until one format eventually kills off the other, at which point all of the discs we've collected in the dead format become about as worthless as Betamax tapes. And in the unlikely event that both formats end up coexisting for the long haul, industry analysts have speculated that the manufacturing costs and royalties

involved in the production of dual-format players will keep the technology from dropping into the mainstream for some time.

Confusing matters even further, Time-Warner recently announced that in mid-2007 it would begin releasing films on a dual-format disc called Total HD, with HD-DVD content on one side and Blu-ray on the other.

But again, the cost of manufacturing these discs will be enormous compared to producing a standard HD-DVD or Blu-ray disc, and consumers would likely end up footing the bill. Add to that the unlikelihood of movie studios entrenched on one side of the format war swiftly adopting Total HD and it doesn't look like we're going to see a real resolution to the ongoing dilemma any time soon. For the time being it seems the best option for early adopters is to wager on one technology and try to weather out the war. - CHAD SARGENT

### HD-DVD

**WALL-E** Feb 6  
**Police To Catch** Feb 6  
**The Departed** Feb 13  
**Star Trek** Feb 20  
**Wishy Wash** March 27

### BLU-RAY

**Return to Lancelot** Feb 6  
**Racing with the Monks** Feb 6  
**The Departed** Feb 13  
**The Marine** Feb 13  
**The Sentinel** Feb 20  
**Star Trek** Feb 20  
**The Prestige** Feb 20  
**Stronger Than Krypton** Feb 27  
**Game of Thrones** March 20  
**Heavy Metal** March 27

There's a reason nobody asks for margarine on their popcorn.

BUTTER THAT SPREADS.

