



## THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DIGITAL BITS BITSY AWARDS

### TOP 10 DVDS OF 2004

#### BILL'S PICKS

- 1) THX 1138: G.L. Director's Cut - SE
- 2) Dawn of the Dead: Ultimate Edition
- 3) Rules of the Game (Criterion)
- 4) The Ultimate Matrix Collection
- 5) LOTR: Return of the King - Extended
- 6) Spider-Man 2: Special Edition
- 7) American Splendor
- 8) The Battle of Algiers (Criterion)
- 9) The Star Wars Trilogy
- 10) Master and Commander: CE

#### TODD'S PICKS

- 1) Clerks X: 10th Anniversary Edition
- 2) Dawn of the Dead: Ultimate Edition
- 3) John Cassavetes: Five Films (Criterion)
- 4) Lady Snowblood
- 5) Panic Room: Special Edition
- 6) Shawshank Redemption: LTD SE
- 7) Thriller: A Cruel Picture
- 8) THX 1138: G.L. Director's Cut - SE
- 9) Videodrome (Criterion)
- 10) Wild at Heart: Special Edition

#### ADAM'S PICKS

- 1) Videodrome (Criterion)
- 2) Dawn of the Dead: Ultimate Edition
- 3) Ed Wood: Special Edition
- 4) One from the Heart
- 5) Rules of the Game (Criterion)
- 6) Bill Hicks Live
- 7) American Splendor
- 8) WDT: On the Front Lines
- 9) LOTR: Return of the King - Extended
- 10) Looney Tunes Golden Collection, Vol. 2

### BEST DVD – OVERALL

#### The Ultimate Matrix Collection

(Warner Bros.)

In a year when repackaged, cash-in "ultimate" editions of previously released movies became the norm rather than the exception, Warner's 10-disc **Ultimate Matrix Collection** showed us all the right way to upgrade. First, the films look and sound better than ever, particularly the original **Matrix**. Each film gets its own **Revisited** bonus disc to explore all the "how'd-they-do-that" stuff, plus Disc Nine (**The Burly Man Chronicles**) provides enough behind-the-scenes info to satisfy tech-heads everywhere. Best of all, **The Ultimate Matrix Collection** explores the ideas behind the ideas, with insightful commentaries and the set's terrific Disc Eight (**The Roots of the Matrix**). **The Ultimate Matrix Collection** isn't the be-all and end-all of special edition DVDs, but it's an ideal example of an upgraded package that doesn't rip off the consumer. Perhaps its single greatest achievement: With a collection this good, you're even willing to give **Reloaded** and **Revolutions** another shot. A nifty trick indeed.

#### THE RUNNERS-UP

We'd be highly remiss if we didn't acknowledge **The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King - Special Extended DVD Edition**, the capper to what is arguably the most satisfying series of DVDs the format has yet produced. And while we here at **The Bits** are basically over the whole "extended director's cut" trip, Guillermo Del Toro's **Hellboy: Director's Cut** made a swell movie and a good DVD even better. Released early in 2004, and kind of overlooked by the end of the year, the 3-disc **Panic Room: Special Edition** is just about as good as a special edition can get. We were also duly impressed by Fox's 2-disc **Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World - Collector's Edition**, another often overlooked, early 2004 release. About the only other DVD this year to deserve to use the word "ultimate" was Anchor Bay's zombieriffic **Dawn of the Dead: Ultimate Edition**.

Criterion continues to impress us each month as well and, for our money, their best release of 2004 was Jean Renoir's **Rules of the Game**. And, oh yeah... apparently the **Star Wars Trilogy** was released this year. Those are all good and well worth your time.

## BEST DVD - PSYCHOTRONIC

### **George A. Romero's Dawn of the Dead: Ultimate Edition** (Anchor Bay)



Here's an **Ultimate Edition** you can feel confident isn't going to be replaced by a **Super-Ultimate Edition** down the road. You want zombies? Anchor Bay's got 'em right here in a beautiful treatment of George Romero's original 1978 masterpiece. You get not one, not two, but three versions of the film itself, each with audio commentaries by the likes of Romero and Tom Savini. A brand-new documentary on the making of the film is included, along with Roy Frumkes' original documentary **Document of the Dead**. You get home movies, commercials, trailers, poster art, and more image galleries than you can shake a machete at. This is one seriously comprehensive package. If you ever feel the need to buy another version of **Dawn of the Dead** after this one, your family might want to consider staging an intervention.

<http://www.thedigitalbits.com/articles/bitsy/6th/page0.html>