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Goodfellas (DVD) Review

By Britt Gillette

Joe Pesci won an Oscar for Best Actor in a Supporting Role for his part in GoodFellas, a film

nominated for six Academy Awards overall including Best Picture. And every accolade attributed to this film is well deserved. With an all-star cast of performers, GoodFellas is one of director Martin Scorsese's greatest productions. Based on the true story of former mobster Henry Hill, GoodFellas begins with his famous quote, "As far back as I can remember, I've always wanted to be a gangster..."

GoodFellas follows the life of Henry Hill (Ray Liotta), an Irish-Italian American who becomes involved in organized crime at a young age. Quickly rising in stature as a small time gangster, Henry wins the heart of a local Jewish girl, Karen (Lorraine Bracco), despite her parents' objections. Karen, though frightened, is fascinated by Henry's life of crime. He has many friends – rich friends, powerful friends. And nobody messes with him. When they get married, Karen is forced to adjust to the life of a typical mobster's wife...

Meanwhile, Henry's best friends (he and Karen only associate with those connected to the mob) in crime are Jimmy Conway (Robert De Niro) and Tommy DeVito (Joe Pesci) – two fellow wiseguys with their sights set on bigger and better jobs. When Henry, Jimmy, and Tommy pull together a team that executes the biggest heist in years, their reputations rise fast within the mob hierarchy. But things begin to fall apart when the incompetent and undisciplined men with whom they worked start flaunting cash from the robbery. The three friends are forced to kill off several members of the team in order to avoid raising the suspicions of the police.

But eventually, Henry becomes arrogant and reckless, landing himself in jail. When he gets out, he's careful in his business dealings due to the fact that local mob boss Paulie Cicero (Paul Sorvino) has his eye on him. Paulie doesn't want Henry to do anything stupid and land himself in jail again. But in the end, Henry, Jimmy, and Tommy get more than they bargained for when Tommy kills an annoying barfly – unaware that the man he killed was a "made man". Now, each man must figure out for himself which direction his life will take...

Raw and blunt in its pronouncements, GoodFellas easily holds its own with some of the greatest films of all time. Like any good story, it brings the audience into an unknown world of mystery and seduction.

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The audience begins to feel the tension along with the characters in the film. That's the mark of a great movie...

Liotta, Pesci, and De Niro all stand out in this epic drama about one man's life as a professional criminal. Through each man, the audience views the perks and the pitfalls of life in the mob as well as the perpetual feeling that one is always looking over his shoulder. GoodFellas doesn't glamorize life in the mob by any means, and those who enjoyed The Godfather will appreciate its contemporary slant on the drug trade to which Don Corleone so vigorously objected. When taking an objective view, GoodFellas stacks up as one of the 100 greatest movies of all time, and it certainly merits the designation of must-see film...

Britt Gillette is author of The DVD Report (

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), a blog where you can find

more reviews like this one.

Recordable DVD formats explained

By Kenny Hemphill

Recordable DVD formats explained by Kenny Hemphill

Picking your way through the ton of information available on recordable DVD formats can be a nightmare. To help you out, we've done our best to distill it into this summary.

There are five recordable versions of DVD; DVD-R for General, DVD-R for Authoring, DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, and DVD+RW. None of the formats is fully compatible with the other although there are drives which will read, and in some cases write to more than one format.

DVD-R for General and DVD-R for Authoring are essentially DVD versions of CD-R. And DVD-RW is a DVD version of CD-RW. All three formats can be read in standard DVD-ROM drives and in most DVD video players. The difference between DVD-R for General and DVD-R for Authoring is that DVD-R for General is a format intended for widespread consumer use and doesn't support 'professional' features such as piracy protection or duplication in mass duplicators. The Pioneer DVD-RW drive which is the most popular PC device for writing to DVD uses the DVD for General format. And as the case with CD, DVD-RW is essentially the same as DVD-R except that it can be erased and written to again and again.

DVD-RAM is slightly different as it is a sector based disc which mounts on the desktop of a PC when inserted into a drive. Files can then be copied to it in the same way as any other mounted media. Some single-sided DVD-RAM discs can be removed from their caddy and inserted in a DVD-ROM drive which will then be able to read the content of the disc.

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There are DVD video recorders which use the DVD-RAM format. This enables them to pull off clever tricks like timeshifting - where you can watch the beginning of a programme you have recorded while you are still recording the end on the same disc.

DVD+RW is the newest format and not supported by the DVD Forum, the body which sets the standards for DVD. However, it is supported by some of the biggest electronics and computer manufacturers, and is therefore likely to stick around.

It is also the format used by Philips in its DVD video recorders. Despite not being authorised by the DVD Forum, DVD+RW is claimed by its supporters to be compatible with more DVD video players than DVD-R and DVD+RW writers are found in PCs from quite a few manufacturers.

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The HDTV Tuner



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