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Napoleon Dynamite (DVD) Review

By Britt Gillette

One of the more absurd movies of the decade, Napoleon Dynamite nonetheless manages to be a

hilarious comedy in its own right. Featuring a unique brand of alienated-teenage humor, the film relies more on its well-timed pauses and character body language than on zinging one-liners. If you enjoy its subtle humor, then Napoleon Dynamite is a film you'll find utterly hilarious. Otherwise, it might cause boredom or outright confusion. The film has a near non-existent storyline, but what it lacks in plot, it makes up for with its witty and hilarious comedy sequences...

Jon Heder plays the title role of Napoleon Dynamite, an estranged and nerdy high school youth living with his grandmother and older brother, Kip (Aaron Ruell), in Preston, Idaho. Sporting a clueless, unchanging facial expression throughout the movie, Napoleon simply glides through life, getting kicked around, pushed into lockers, and watching life pass by. When a Spanish student named Pedro (Efen Ramirez) moves into town, Napoleon befriends the social outcast. The two drone on and on about myriad subjects, such as who to take to the upcoming dance. Fellow socially-challenged student Deb (Tina Majorino) becomes the object of their affections.

Meanwhile, Kip trolls the Internet chat rooms in search of women, and Napoleon's Uncle Rico (Jon Gries) moves in with the boys while their grandmother is away. Uncle Rico's own exploits add to the hilarity of a film with little in the way of substance, at least until Pedro decides to run for class president against the school's most popular girl, Summer (Haylie Duff). Now, Napoleon and Pedro must work against all odds to win the school election...

The true strength of Napoleon Dynamite is its clan of outrageous characters, characters that are so outrageously ridiculous that every viewer can point out the mirror image of that character from his own high school yearbook or current life experience. The arrested social development of Napoleon and his friends are amplified for effect within the film's context, drawing the viewer into a Lord of the Flies world of Darwinian adolescence. The humor is sometimes subtle, and Napoleon Dynamite is not to be confused with an Academy Award winning drama. But if you like stupid movies such Dumb And Dumber, then this is the film for you.

Napoleon Dynamite (DVD) Review

Napoleon Dynamite is a unique comedy which pushes the boundaries of plot-challenged, immature filmmaking. In short, you'll love it. Most of the characters are so pathetic, you'll find yourself laughing at them simply because they exist. One of the biggest surprises of 2004, Napoleon Dynamite is an oddball comedy that definitely ranks as a must-see movie...

Britt Gillette is author of The DVD Report (

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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.

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.

Kenny Hemphill is the editor and publisher of

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