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The Notebook (DVD) Review

By Britt Gillette

Adapted to screen from the Nicholas Sparks novel of the same name, The Notebook is one of the best romantic dramas to hit the big screen in decades. Garnering high marks from a wide-range of critics, The Notebook is a funny and emotional film which deals with love, relationships, and the risks people take. James Garner turns in a notable performance as the elder man, Duke, who reads the pages of his notebook to dying nursing home resident Allie (Gena Rowlands). Overall, this is a classic "chick flick" with a dramatic twist. Set in the World War II era, The Notebook is a great film...

Duke (James Garner) regularly reads from the pages of a notebook to an older woman in a nursing home. Suffering from Alzheimer's disease, her memories of the parts which he's read in the past appears and disappears without order, but Duke continues to read to her because of their deep and enduring friendship.

The notebook's story centers around the lives of a teenage boy and girl who meet at a carnival in the late-1930s. At first, Allie Hamilton doesn't know what to think of Noah Calhoun, but she soon gives into his insistence that they go out on a date. When Noah and Allie fall deeply in love, Allie's parents try to break up the couple. The Hamiltons are rich, and Noah and his father are from the poor side of town. Nevertheless, Allie and Noah are determined to be together.

When World War II breaks out, Noah is sent into conflict. He writes numerous letters to his love, but they go unanswered because Allie's parents are hiding the letters as well as her replies to Noah. After several years apart, Allie becomes engaged to successful businessman. But after reading a newspaper article concerning Noah's restoration of a historic home he once promised her, she decides to go visit him.

Allie's visit with Noah turns both their worlds upside down when they learn the truth about the letters. Now, Allie must choose between the fiancée she truly loves and the man who is her real true love...

Actor Ryan Gosling is entertaining and likeable in his portrayal of the young and energetic Noah Calhoun. The Notebook as a film is better served by featuring his superb talents. Likewise, up-and-coming actress Rachel McAdams is brilliant in her role as Allie. The emotions of her young

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romance are clearly conveyed by a natural and instinctive penchant for delivering her lines in just the right way. Call it onscreen charisma or whatever, but McAdams is one to look out for in the future.

In short, The Notebook is as good a film as it is as a book. Few books translate onto the big screen as well as they read in print, so The Notebook is to be heralded for its ability to do so. Charming and easy to like, the film glorifies the romance of a young couple who find true love – a love that lasts forever. Well-produced and featuring some amazing shots of natural locations, The Notebook ranks as a definite must-see film. Do yourself a favor and go see it today...

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.

There are DVD video recorders which use the DVD-RAM format. This enables them to pull off clever

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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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