

POP CULTURE

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MOVIES FOR GROWN-UPS

BID GOOD RIDDANCE TO LIGHTWEIGHT SUMMER FARE AND BRACE FOR A FALL FILM SLATE TO MAKE ADULTS SIT UP AND MAYBE EVEN APPLAUD

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID FITZPATRICK THE GAZETTE

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Is everyone gone now? Have the super-heroes departed, and the intergalactic creatures, and the left-over bits and pieces of the Star Wars cast? Are the guns all put away? Have the car chases ended? Is Rob Schneider safely back in wherever it is he spends his time between Deuce Bigalow sequels?

Is it safe for the adults to come back to the movie theatre?

Well, yes and no. After a summer of lost chances and comic-book excesses, the fall film season is the palate-cleanser between, say, *The Devil's Rejects* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which is part of an even more promising Christmas season. Fall is time to see the early Oscar contenders and the prestige movies: new versions of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* and *Oliver Twist*, this one directed by Roman Polanski; the movies they made from the Broadway musical *Rent* and the London play *Proof*, the latter of which pairs Gwyneth Paltrow with Anthony Hopkins;

biographies of Johnny Cash and of Truman Capote during his *In Cold Blood* years.

For the children — the thinking children — there is the feature-film debut of the incomparable Wallace & Gromit, a Tim Burton adventure, and the fourth Harry Potter film. For the reading public, there are movies of best-sellers like *An Unfinished Life*, *Everything Is Illuminated*, *Jarhead*, and *Bee Season*. There's a new Terrence Malick film, always an event for film buffs, and a David Cronenberg work that just might be the movie of the year.

On the other hand, there is also the usual

cast of silly comedies and naughty teen romps, a couple of horror movies, and — in a category all its own — the return of Tom Green. And we can't swear that one or two extraterrestrials might not still be lurking about somewhere.

For the most part, though, things look promising this autumn. Here are film opening dates to watch for, starting with the 10 best bets for the best time of the year.

MORE MOVIES INSIDE, D3

TOP 10 PICKS



CORPSE BRIDE: In Tim Burton's stop-action animation, Johnny Depp is whisked to the underworld to marry Helena Bonham-Carter — who is not only dead and buried but has a maggot living inside her head — while his true love waits behind on Earth. It's *The Nightmare Before Thanksgiving*. *Sept. 23*



A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: David Cronenberg's drama stars Viggo Mortensen as a small-town restaurateur whose life is turned upside down when he has to defend himself against two violent criminals who try to rob him. A hit at Cannes, it's like Cronenberg's version of an old Western, and in its combination of character study, controlled violence and plot twists, it is both smart and hugely entertaining. *Sept. 23*



CAPOTE: Philip Seymour Hoffman seems ideally cast as the late author and celebrity hanger-on Truman Capote in this story of how the writer developed a close relationship with Perry Smith, one of the killers of a Kansas family whom Capote wrote about in his "non-fiction novel" *In Cold Blood*. *Sept. 30*



WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT: In their first full-length movie, the clay-animated cheese-lover and his faithful dog — familiar from such award-winning shorts as *Creature Comforts* and *A Grand Day Out* — must find the creature that is eating everyone's vegetable gardens. It comes from Aardman Animation, the people behind the masterful 2000 comedy *Chicken Run*. *Oct. 7*



JARHEAD: Anthony Swofford's memoir about his experience as a marine sniper in the first Gulf War comes to the screen with Jake Gyllenhaal, Jamie Foxx and Peter Sarsgaard going from boot camp to the desert. Sam (American Beauty) Mendes directs. *Nov. 4*



WATER: Deepa Mehta's film — which premiered Thursday night in the prestigious opening-night slot at the Toronto International Film Festival — looks at the plight of widows forced into poverty at a temple in Varanasi in the 1930s. The film was shot in Sri Lanka after Hindu fundamentalists shut down the production in India. *Nov. 4*



THE NEW WORLD: Terrence Malick's new movie, set in 17th-century America, is based on the legend of English explorer John Smith (Colin Ferrell) and Indian maiden Pocahontas (15-year-old newcomer Q'orianka Kilcher, discovered after a world-wide talent hunt). *Nov. 9*



HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE: No. 4 in the film series finds Harry (still Daniel Radcliffe) being chosen for the Quidditch team even as Voldemort's dark forces are gaining strength. Can Harry vanquish evil and ride a broom at the same time? *Nov. 18*



WALK THE LINE: In this biopic of Johnny Cash, Joaquin Phoenix plays the troubled country singer who always wore black, and Reese Witherspoon co-stars as June Carter. Before his death, Cash approved the casting of Phoenix. *Nov. 18*



RENT: The revolutionary rock opera about East Village bohemians dealing with the AIDS epidemic — a tale based on Puccini's *La Bohème* — moves from Broadway to the screen, with Rosario Dawson and Taye Diggs. *Nov. 23*

Opening dates subject to last-minute change.