

Loren to downshift her glamour. Loren also sits for a 15-minute interview, talking about how she became involved with the film, and about working with Scola and Mastroianni, and there are two episodes from the half-hour *Dick Cavett Show* on PBS from 1977, with Loren and Mastroianni. The first was actually the first episode in Cavett's gig, having moved over from commercial TV, and he is so frustrated to discover he has run out of time that he immediately turned around and had them sit again with him for another episode. It is in that second episode that Mastroianni, whose knowledge of English has its limitations, famously dropped the f-bomb, which passed through on the broadcast without a bleep, this being public TV and all. The two were promoting **Special Day**, but the conversation also ranges from the nature of their fame to other aspects of their careers, to their relationship with each other, and to life in general. Cavett also asks Mastroianni what it was like working with Fellini, and Loren, what it was like working with Chaplin.

Finally, Loren's son, Edoardo Ponti, directed her in a 25-minute short in 2014, *Human Voice*, which has been included in the special features. Presented in letterboxed format with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and in Italian with English subtitles, the film is lovely to look at, but the drama is not all that convincing. An adaptation of the famous one-person play by Jean Cocteau about a woman talking on the telephone, you never really get the feeling that there is someone on the other end of the line as she has a meltdown when she realizes her lover has called it quits. It is great to see her being so full of vitality and pathos at 80, but the script abridges the material a little, and doesn't do her justice.

Stuffed

Four buddies, whose first names are the same as the names of the actors playing them, gather for an extended getaway of eating and whoring in the 1973 Marco Ferreri French language feature, **La Grande Bouffe**, an Arrow Video Blu-ray release (UPC#760137764397, \$40). The film begins plausibly, but becomes more and more absurd as it advances, to the point where, and it is not spoiling things to reveal this, all four collectively die from their indulgence. Running 129 minutes, the viewer is pulled in by the general revelry at first, becoming a kind of silent guest at the party, just enjoying the personalities of the others. The four have ensconced themselves in a three-story house on a large piece of property that is sort of hidden in the center of a block. Except for the food deliveries, the visiting prostitutes, and a schoolteacher from next door, the world has pretty much forgotten that the place exists. The food is so vividly depicted that you almost share that as well, as the characters stuff themselves, and while the semi-graphic sex may seem somewhat standard now, in 1973 it was considered highly risqué. Beyond the general consumption, the narrative is limited to the development of each character, played by Philippe Noiret, Ugo Tognazzi, Marcello Mastroianni, and Michel Piccoli, and each one's relationship with the teacher. Sadly, at some point—it will probably be different for every viewer, but for most it will definitely occur—the movie stops being fun and begins to feel more like a grind. The more satirical it becomes, the more alienating, or uninteresting, it becomes. Even the food stops looking so good. While that is probably the intention—the film was made in the days when assaulting values and sensibilities was all the rage—the film begins with such a great promise of talent and such an engaging setting that it essentially ends up assaulting itself, instead.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. The image is a little soft, with a mild grain in the background, but otherwise the picture is in very good condition, with fresh colors and accurate fleshtones. The monophonic sound is in good shape, and the film features an appealing musical score by Philippe Sarde. There are optional English subtitles; a 27-minute interview with Ferreri from 1975, in which he talks about his films and also about the movies that have influenced him; a promotional piece from 1973 that runs 11 minutes and includes interviews with several of the cast members; a cute 4-minute interview with the stars responding to the negative reaction the film received at Cannes; a contentious 2-minute press conference held about a month after Cannes, in which Ferreri really lets the reporters have it, Italian hand gestures and all; and a 27-minute overview of the film, Ferreri and the cast. A DVD platter is also included in the set, with the same special features. Because of the film's age and the fine but limited nature of the transfer, there is not a significant difference between the BD presentation and the DVD presentation.

Financial intrigue

Based upon true events, most of André Téchiné's 2014 **In the Name of My Daughter**, a Cohen Media Group eOne Entertainment release (UPC#741952796794, \$35), is set in the mid-Seventies, on the Riviera, and is about a corporate fight over control of a casino property. Catherine Deneuve plays the widow who has nominal control of the company, and Guillaume Canet plays her lawyer. The lawyer eventually has an affair with the widow's daughter. The daughter is frustrated that Deneuve's character is too financially desperate to release any of her inheritance, and so the lawyer and the daughter scheme to wrest control of the company away from her. As the lawyer's romantic interests move on, however, the daughter becomes more and more obsessed with sustaining her relationship with him. Running 116 minutes, the film is exquisitely paced for narrative entertainment, conveying the glamour and intrigue of high finance, and then gradually incorporating the erotically charged romance. At first the daughter seems like a very cool

character. She is athletic, and rich and independently minded, but gradually you realize that something is not right, that she is not completely satisfied with her self-image, and that she lacks the sort of social life one associates with the rest of her family's lifestyle. The film takes some interesting turns at the end, again based upon genuine headlines, and other filmmakers might have chosen to make an entire movie out of the film's last 5 minutes, but what completely blew us away was the cast listing in the credit scroll at the film's conclusion. All of the performances are outstanding—Deneuve's character goes through a 30-year transition, and she nails it perfectly. And so the actress playing the daughter, whose performance is superb, must have been cast because of her talent, yet her name is just too much of a coincidence not to believe that Téchiné was compelled to hire her because of it—Adèle Haenel, i.e., Adèle H.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is slick and colors are crisp. The DTS sound is outstanding. There is not much of a rear channel presence, but the left-right separations are distinctive, for both the sound effects and the orchestration of Benjamin Biolay's musical score. The film is in French with optional English subtitles and comes with a trailer, along with an extensive 53-minute interview with Canet, in English, in front of a live audience, who talks about both **In the Name of My Daughter** and the similar *Next Time I'll Aim for the Heart*, as well as his philosophies about acting and directing. He has some very interesting stories about meeting the man that his character is based upon.

Finally, if you are trying to quit smoking, you should probably pass the movie by. Since it is set in the Seventies, the characters always have cigarettes in their hands, and the combination of that and the sex was so subliminally persuasive that even though we have never smoked in our life, by the end we were dying to go out and get a cigarette.

Cowboy in a castle

We reviewed the three Spaghetti Westerns starring Anthony Dawson, **The Stranger Collection**, in Jun 15. All three had been distributed by MGM in America, hence facilitating their bundling by the Warner *Archive Collection*. The first two were fairly standard westerns, but the third, *The Silent Stranger*, was an inspired cross-pollination in which the hero journeyed to Japan and essentially brought his Spaghetti Western mojo smack dab into the middle of a samurai movie. Well, Dawson made one more 'Stranger' film in 1975, entitled **Get Mean**, which essentially took the next step beyond cross-pollination and was so ridiculous, MGM took a pass, as did everyone else (the film had a premier, but never got a distributor). On the other hand, this is the kind of movie that Blue Underground enthusiastically releases on Blu-ray, and in this case they have gone so far as to put out a *2-Disc Limited Edition* (UPC#827058800594, \$40), overflowing with special features.

Directed by Ferdinando Baldi, Dawson's character travels from the West to Spain (cute, right?) because a princess has offered him a bounty to protect her from 'Barbarians,' yes, guys in helmets with horns, like Elmer Fudd in *What's Opera, Doc?*. They have spears and swords. He's got his six shooters and his fancy multiple-barreled shotgun. And they're running around Spanish castles, chasing after 'treasure.' The film is clearly a satirical send up of the whole Spaghetti Western genre, and the filmmakers were probably cracking up after every scene, but there is no logic to any of it, from the anachronisms to the geography to the motivations of the characters. Running 90 minutes, the film will please fanatics like us who are always open to new and different things, but casual viewers will have no patience for it.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The film's colors are adequately preserved, with accurate fleshtones, and the image is reasonably sharp, but contrasts are a little weak at times. The monophonic sound is adequate. The film is in English, with optional English, French and Spanish subtitles. There are also four radio commercials, two trailers, a collection of stills, posters and sketches for proposed posters, 9 minutes of interesting deleted scenes including a very violent sequence, and 58 minutes of terrific retrospective interviews with Anthony, co-star Lloyd Batista, producer Ronald Schneider and a lovely little piece with the late Baldi, who says creating movies is like magic. There are home movies from the set, recollections about all four 'Stranger' films, and other great clips and photos mixed in with the talks.

The other three also collaborate on a commentary track, reminiscing more specifically about the wild troubles they had shooting (in order to get Baldi, they had to start making the film before all of the money was lined up, and at one point they ran out of funds to pay for water for the extras while working in the desert—"Eventually somebody would come running to the set with a suitcase of money, and then you could continue."); the tricks they would use to save money (all three are American, but they would always pull in a European 'front man' as a producer so the locals wouldn't charge outrageous prices for rentals and such); whose idea was what in the story; and, desperately, they try to justify the film's premise. As Anthony explains, "Making the film, we thought we had something special, because we kept passing our capabilities financially, and we just kept at it. I thought it was working."

A DVD platter is included in the set with the same special features. While the transfer is admirable, because of the film's age and budget history, there is not much of a difference between the presentation on the BD and the DVD.