

Suggested retail price: \$19.98; Blu-ray \$24.98

"PORTLANDIA: SEASON TWO," starring Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein. Daffy yet pointed, ruthless but somehow never mean, this sketch show from IFC keeps getting better and better, as unlikely but perfect duo Armisen ("Saturday Night Live") and Sleater-Kinney leader Brownstein continue to lovingly lampoon the ultra-liberal, unfailingly politically correct city they know so well (that other Portland). While Oregonians and people who came of age in the '90s are most likely to catch all the references and quirks, "Portlandia" keeps things broad enough for viewers of most any stripe to thoroughly enjoy. Not rated; contains language and crude humor. Running time: 3:40

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NEW TO BLU-RAY

"EATING RAOUL," starring Paul Bartel and Mary Woronov. Beloved cult classic from 1982 gets the deluxe Criterion treatment, and the Blands (as unforgettably portrayed by inspired team Bartel and Woronov) have never looked better, at least visually. Morally, they've still got some explaining to do, given that their primary source of funding for their restaurant stems from luring would-be swingers to their apartment, then killing them and taking their wallets. A stinging yuppie send-up and a pitch-black comedy that still holds up, this remastered re-release is a great gift for fans of offbeat cinema and an ideal introduction to the undervalued comic talents of its two talented leads. Special features include a gag reel, a making-of documentary and archival interviews with Bartel and Woronov. Rated R. Running time: 1:30

Suggested retail price: \$39.95

VIDEOPORT PICKS

"DAMSELS IN DISTRESS," starring Greta Gerwig and Adam Brody. When it comes to quirky yet thoughtful comedy-dramas about the affluent and disaffected, filmmakers such as Wes Anderson and Noah Baumbach immediately come to mind these days, but they hardly paved the way. Writer-director Whit Stillman, who brings us "Damsels in Distress" after a conspicuous 14-year absence, was an early and somewhat overlooked spark for this particular sub-genre, and 1990's "Metropolitan" and 1994's "Barcelona" are both classics of the form.

Playing it a bit broader than previously with "Damsels," Stillman's return to form is nonetheless a throughout ingratiating and enjoyable highbrow comedy. Although star Gerwig is still more of a critical darling than the household name she will no doubt one day become, it's not for lack of trying in this film, as she dominates all scenes with her portrayal of Violet, a self-styled student at the fictional Seven Oaks College who runs the student suicide prevention center with her girlfriends. Rated PG-13. Running time: 1:39

Suggested retail price: \$30.99; Blu-ray \$35.99

"THE SAMARITAN," starring Samuel L. Jackson and Ruth Negga. Film noir is a tricky genre to pull off, and even trickier to convince a wider audience to take a chance on. With "The Samaritan," writer-director David Weaver and star/co-producer Jackson certainly succeeded in the former, creating a plum role for Jackson as Foley, the ever-present ex-con looking to go straight and taking an innocuous-seeming job on a construction crew upon his release from a lengthy jail stint. It isn't long before he's approached by the equally ever-present shady types, who have mysterious reasons for needing Foley to return to his former life of crime. In the meantime, Foley becomes friends with Iris (Negga), the prerequisite damsel in distress, and before long, the double dealings and unpleasant situations are piling up as expected. Rated R for strong violence, language, some sexuality and drug use. Running time: 1:30.


Suggested retail price: \$24.98; Blu-ray \$29.98


- *Courtesy of Videoport*


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