

Jocks in nighttown

Two snotty jocks grab a rich nerd who has a car and drive into the city to hire a stripper for a fraternity, but end up in a den of vampires in the 1986 New World and Warner Bros. horror comedy, **Vamp**, which has been resurrected on Blu-ray by Arrow Video (UPC#760137948186, \$30). Even before they leave for town, however, it is clear that the film has something going for it. Although the heroes, played by Robert Russler and Chris Makepeace, are jerks, they are surprisingly sympathetic, and so whether or not you like them, you are still game to stay in their company for a while. And that impulse is rewarded, because the first time they bump into some real thugs downtown, they surprise everyone by confidently gaining the upper hand. Running 94 minutes, the film is witty, sexy, exciting, and even charming—Dedee Pfeiffer plays a stripper who recognizes Makepeace’s character, even though he can’t quite place her and is unsure, up to the last shot, if she is legit or just more clever than the other vampires. Gedde Watanabe co-stars as the nerd, Billy Drago is memorable as one of the thugs, Sandy Baron is one of the barkeepers, and Grace Jones sizzles in a masterful turn as a seductive vampire stripper. Richard Wenk directed the engaging feature, constantly poking around the familiar traps of popular genre clichés, but wittily springing each one without stepping in it. The dialog is often very amusing, there is plenty of action and gore, and the characters are developed with genuine care, so that viewers remain engaged not so much because of the wild things that go on, but because the growth and appeal of the heroes remains compelling throughout.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Evocatively colored and lit, the transfer is fresh and crisp, so the film often looks quite classy and much slicker than its budget ought to have allowed. With his mind on the bottom line, it is clear that Wenk took his time to stage the most important sequences, such as Jones’ mouthwatering striptease, and made up for it by being less picky about the transitional sequences, although with the basic green/red lighting scheme (inspired by **After Hours**, according to the supplement), even those passages are aesthetically stimulating. The presentation has a strong monophonic track, although we would have welcomed a stereo remix to free it up some. There are optional English subtitles; two trailers; seven terrific TV commercials; a nice collection of production photos in still frame; a 6-minute bloopster reel that includes stunts and nudity that didn’t make it into the film, as well as some specific amusements; a fascinating 7-minute clip of a rehearsal with Jones (and Wenk performing stand-in duties), intended to determine the best camera angles for a vampire biting sequence, which is as erotic as anything in the film and makes you wish you could make movies; an absolutely wonderful 44-minute retrospective documentary, catching up with all of the aged actors (except Jones, although the stories about her are the best of all; each performer has delightful memories, such as what happened when Drago went into a 7-11 after work but still in costume) while providing a comprehensive and informative overview of how the film was conceived and executed, and the esprit de corps they developed collaborating on it (Wenk: “The gift was that there are good people in this business, and that if you look hard enough, you’ll find them, and those are the ones you want to work with.”); and an inspired 22-minute post-graduate comedy short that Wenk made in 1979, **Dracula Bites the Big Apple**, which is partly a musical (and full of great song gags), as a young Dracula leaves Transylvania, journeys to Seventies Manhattan, and must endure the indignities of urban life (in the funniest moment, he attacks a young woman as she enters her dark apartment, only to be startled when her friends turn on the lights with a surprise party for her).

DVD News

BREATHE AND TALK: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment’s **Don’t Breathe** will have a commentary, deleted scenes and several featurettes. **Sausage Party** will have featurettes and an alternate ending. **The Hollars** will have a Margo Martindale commentary, a Q&A, and featurettes.

CRITERION CORNER: The Criterion Collection’s release of Jack Garfein’s **Something Wild** will include a conversation between Garfein and critic Kim Morgan; an interview with actor Carroll Baker; an interview with scholar Foster Hirsch on the Actors Studio’s cinematic legacy; and **Master Class with Jack Garfein**, a 2015 recording of one of the director’s lectures on acting technique. Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s **Fox and His Friends** will feature an interview with actor Harry Baer; an interview with filmmaker Ira Sachs; excerpts from a 1981 interview with composer Peer Raben; and an excerpt from a 1975 interview with Fassbinder. Howard Hawks’ **His Girl Friday** will be paired with Lewis Milestone’s **The Front Page** (1931), made from a recently discovered print of the director’s preferred version. Also included is an interview with film scholar David Bordwell about **His Girl Friday**; archival interviews with Hawks; featurettes from 1999 about Hawks, actor Rosalind Russell, and the making of **His Girl Friday**; a piece about the restoration of **The Front Page**; a piece about playwright and screenwriter Ben Hecht; a radio adaptation of **His Girl Friday** from 1940; and radio adaptations of the play **The Front Page** from 1937 and 1946. Ousmane Sembène’s **Black Girl** will come with the short film **Borom sarret**, Sembène’s acclaimed 1963 debut; interviews with scholars Manthia Diawara and Samba Gadjigo; an excerpt from a 1966 broadcast of **JT 20h**, featuring Sembène accepting the Prix Jean Vigo for **Black Girl**; and an interview with actor M’Bissine Thérèse Diop.

LATEST SILENT RELEASES: The first silent film Blu-ray release from Grapevine Video has been announced, **The Phantom Honeymoon**, with Margaret Marsh. The film is also available on DVD, along with **The Mystery of the Eiffel Tower** and **Last Warning**. Sound releases include **Phantom Empire**, **Undersea Empire**, **Black Raven/Dead Men Walk**, and **Daughter of Horror/Screaming Skull**.

LATEST TWILIGHT: The latest Blu-ray releases announced by Twilight Time include **Comes a Horseman**, **Interiors**, **Two for the Road**, **Stanley and Iris**, **The Mad Magician** (3D), **Pardon My Backfire** (3D), **Spooks** (3D), **Chilly Scenes of Winter**, **Kiss of Death**, and **Edge of Eternity**.

ARCHIVES UPDATE: **Grinder Season 1** has been released as part of the 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment *Cinema Archives Collection*.

ARCHIVE UPDATE: The following titles have been released as part of the Warner Home Video *Archive Collection*—**Body Snatchers** (Blu-ray), **Constantine Complete Series** (Blu-ray), **The Kwicky Koala Show**, **On Dangerous Ground** (Blu-ray), **One Day Since Yesterday**, and **Wheeler & Woolsey The RKO Comedy Classics Collection V.2** (*The Cuckoos*, *Dixiana*, *Too Many Crooks*, *Everything’s Rosie*, *Cockeyed Cavaliers*, *Silly Billies*).

NEW IN BLU: The following titles have recently been released on Blu-ray—Murdoch Mysteries A Merry Murdoch Christmas (Acorn); The Infiltrator (Broad Green); Alice through the Looking Glass (Buena Vista); Doctor Butcher MD/Zombie Holocaust, Masks (CAV); Carrie, Fender Bender, Howard Lovecraft and the Frozen Kingdom, The Laughing Policeman, Nighthawks, Sharknado 4 The 4th Awakens, What We Become, WWE Brock Lesnar Eat Conquer Repeat, WWE Summerslam 2016 (Cinedigm); BoyHood, The Executioner, Short Cuts, Trilogia de Guillermo del Toro (Criterion); Diary of a Chambermaid, Les Cowboys, Two Films by Douglas Sirk (eOne); Tales of Halloween (Epic); Suddenly (Film Detective); Kamikaze 69, The Mirror (Film Movement); Attack on Titan V.1, Blood-c: The Last Dark, Blood-c Complete Series, Epsilon: The Movie, Jinsei - Life Consulting Complete Series, Lupin III: The Woman Named Fujiko Mine Complete Series, Strike Witches The Movie, The Vision Of Epsilon V.1, The Vision Of Epsilon V.2 (Goldhil); Banshee Season 4 (HBO); Monday At 11:01 A.M. (K Street); Astro Zombies, Boy on a Dolphin, Chosen Survivors, Daughter of Dracula, The Earth Dies Screaming, Fuzz, The Pit, The Rift, Troubleman, Wolf Lake (Kino); Blood Father, Cafe Society, Dr. Strange, Feed the Beast Season 1, Glengarry Glen Ross Director’s Cut, Hillary’s America: The Secret History Of The Democratic Party, Into the Forest, Joshy, Nerve, Our Kind of Traitor, Skiptrace, Swiss Army Man, Waxwork/Waxwork II (Lionsgate); The Last King, Satanic (Magnolia); Dinosauria Complete Series, Knight Rider Complete Series, Miami Vice Complete Series (Mill Creek); Bride of Re-Animator, Francesca, The Hills Have Eyes (MVD); Demolisher (MPI); The Innocents (Music Box); The Captive, Commando Cody Sky Marshal of the Universe, The Fake, Gas-S-S-S, Hannie Caulder, The Horrible Dr. Hitchcock, Jekyll and Hyde Together Again, The King of Pigs, Little Fauss and Big Halsey, The Return of Dracula, Strategic Air Command, Villa Rides (Olive); Penny Dreadful Final Season (Paramount); Gundam Build Fighters Try, Mobile Suit Gundam F91 (Right Stuff); Amerigeddon, Ghostbusters, Kingsglaive: Final Fantasy XV, Minds Eye, Preacher Season 1 (Sony); American Horror Story Hotel, Ice Age Collision Course, Independence Day Resurgence, Vikings Season 4 V.1, X-Men Apocalypse (Fox); Barbie & Her Sisters In A Puppy Case, Bates Motel Season 4, Captain Fantastic, Laid in America (Universal); Hunter x Hunter V.1 (Viz); The Hunt, The Legend of Tarzan, Lights Out, The Musketeers Season 3, Prince Movie Collection (Purple Rain, Graffiti Bridge, Under the Cherry Moon), The Venture Bros. Season 6 (Warner); The Wailing (Well Go)

NEW IN 3D: The following titles are being issued in 3D format—Adventure Time Season 6, Ice Age Collision Course, Independence Day Resurgence, X-Men Apocalypse (Fox), The Legend of Tarzan (Warner)

NEW IN 4K: The following titles are being issued in 4K format—Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, Ghostbusters, Resident Evil Afterlife, Sausage Party, Underworld (Sony), The Great Gatsby, Ice Age Collision Course, Independence Day Resurgence, Jupiter Ascending, X-Men Apocalypse, X-Men First Class (Fox), Argo, Goodfellas, I Am Legend, The Legend of Tarzan, Pacific Rim, The Town (Warner)

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