

Two of France's most popular actors, Alain Delon and Jean-Paul Belmondo, united for director Jacques Deray's 1970 period-piece gangster film **BORSALINO** (Arrow Video), which was a huge success on its home turf but most ignored in the US. Only loosely based on real-life organized crime figures Paul Carnoe and François Spirito, this is less of a hard-edged drama than a colorful, breezy romp with both leads sticking close to their established screen personas — Delon is suave and dapper, Belmondo is a street-wise bruiser — as their characters rise to power within the city's underworld... In 1930 Marseilles, Roch Siffredi (Delon) is released from prison and searches for old flame Lola (Catherine Rouvel), only to find her hanging out with François Capella (Belmondo).



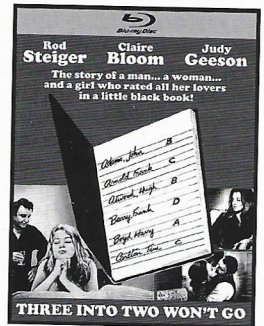
Though completely different in personality and style, these two macho crooks strike up a friendship (after comically beating the crap out of each other, of course), become partners and initially work with unscrupulous lawyer Rinaldi (Michel Bouquet). Following a few

small-time schemes (fixed boxing matches and horse races; helping a local seafood distributor destroy the competition with rotten fish), Capella becomes attracted to pretty Ginette (Nicole Calfan, **THE BURGLARS**), the girlfriend of jealous mobster Poli, who controls the meat market. The film's second half becomes progressively less glib and more brutal, with deadly consequences

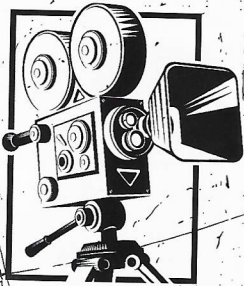
along the way... **BORSALINO** works as amusing fluff, but it's also mildly disappointing that everyone involved seems to be coasting. The script lacks emotional depth or any surprises, and though director Deray delivers a couple decent set pieces (such as a fiery warehouse siege), it's too little too late. Often overwhelmed by its sumptuous production values, none of this feels remotely authentic, but instead like big stars playing an expensive game of dress-up. The wardrobe does much of the work in establishing these characters — Alain wears a Borsalino fedora, Jean-Paul sports a working-class flat cap — with any excuse to have its stars parading about in period attire (e.g., Belmondo in a vintage swimsuit, or lounging about in a silk bathrobe while getting a manicure). Claude Bolling's repetitive, rinky-tink score is also incredibly grating. Blu-ray extras include a commentary by film scholar Josh Nelson and featurettes focusing on the film's costumes, soundtrack and Belmondo's career.

Though primarily known for his theatre work as Artistic Director for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre, Peter Hall also directed a handful of offbeat British features, such as **PERFECT FRIDAY**, **WORK IS A FOUR LETTER WORD**, and 1969's **THREE INTO TWO WON'T GO** (Kino Lorber Studio Classics), in which a married man faces the consequences of his philandering. While driving along a stretch of country road during a business-related trip, middle-aged assistant sales director Steve Howard (Rod Steiger) offers a lift to pretty, blonde Ella (19-year-old Judy Geeson). Hoping for a no-strings dalliance with this teenage free-spirit, Steve gets the two of them a hotel room and soon feels like he's hit the jackpot, since uninhibited Ella has a casual attitude about screwing random older men. When Steve returns to his new

Middlesex home and wife Frances (played by Steiger's off-screen wife, Claire Bloom), tensions between the unhappy couple continue to grow — that is, until Ella shows up at the Howard's door and befriends Frances, concealing the fact that she just fucked her husband. Soon Frances invites her to crash overnight in their spare bedroom, Ella cons her way into a lengthy stay with a sob-story about being knocked-up, as Steve gets increasingly nervous about Ella being under his roof. Adapted from a novel by Andrea Newman, this situation is ripe with sensationalistic possibilities but Hall keeps it all cool and non-exploitative. Steiger typically overplays this drunk, pathetic, self-absorbed idiot, and it's post-TO SIR, WITH LOVE Geeson who gives the film its only real energy and unpredictability (not to mention, bare flesh) as the manipulative troublemaker. In supporting roles, RSC alumnus Peggy Ashcroft plays Steve's dodderly mother-in-law and Paul Rogers (star of Hall's future film adaptation of Pinter's **THE HOMECOMING**) is a hotel owner. The Blu-ray includes a commentary by Troy Howarth and Nathaniel Thompson, plus a bizarre US commercial-TV version of the film — which replaced all of the original sex and nudity with mismatched new scenes filmed in Hollywood, involving inane new subplots and characters (such as a social worker looking for runaway Ella). This bastardized cut is spectacularly ill-conceived.



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