

# Reviews *from TipSheet*

## ROMANTIC COMEDY

### Unhitched

Color, NR (mature themes, language, sexual situations), 95 min., DVD \$26.98  
DVD: no extras  
Street: Jan. 30, Prebook: Jan. 3  
First Run: ABC Family Channel, July 2006  
Director: Stefan Schwartz  
LIONSGATE

**Story Line:** Olly (Stuart Townsend) instantly falls in love with Sarah (Amy Smart) without realizing she's engaged to one of his college friends—for whom Olly is the best man. Fortunately for Olly, his roommate and best friend Murray (Seth Green) is determined to help him win the girl of his dreams.

**Bottom Line:** The charming talents of Irish actor Townsend and some of his co-stars—including Kate Ashfield and Steve John Shepherd in supporting roles—almost make up for this



Unhitched

awkward romantic comedy, which was originally titled *Best Man, Worst Friend*. Townsend is adorable as the leading man, a klutzy writer suffering from a severe case of writer's block, but co-stars Smart and Green (assuming a bizarre English accent) are terribly miscast. Nothing anyone does never makes any sense—we're never given an explanation for Murray's mistrust of Sarah's fiancé or why

Olly even falls for Sarah in the first place. A bunch of useless shenanigans (some funny, some just plain mean) ensue to ultimately bring on a squishy happy ending. Strangely, what might have been suitable for an adolescent audience is marred by several references to hard-core porn, making the movie's premiere on the ABC Family Channel earlier this year hard to comprehend.

—Mayna Bergmann

## DRAMA

### The Motel

Color, NR (mature themes, language), widescreen, 76 min., DVD \$24.99, English and Cantonese with English subtitles  
DVD: director's commentary, deleted scenes, featurette, cast audition tapes  
Street: Jan. 30, Prebook: Jan. 2  
First Run: L, June 2006, <\$1 mil.  
Director: Michael Kang  
PALM/VIVENDI

**Story Line:** Chinese-American adolescent Ernest (Jeffrey Chyau) works after school cleaning rooms at the dingy hotel owned by his bossy mother (Jade Wu). A Korean-American playboy drifter (Sung Kang) helps Ernest come out of his shell, encouraging him to pursue an older girl (Samantha Futerman) he has a crush on.

**Bottom Line:** *The Motel* avoids all the clichés in coming-of-age dramas by craft-

ing three-dimensional characters and a very unsentimental depiction of puberty. The Korean mentor is the closest the film comes to a stock character and even he has his downside. First-time director Kang transforms the motel into a memorably dingy arena in which Ernest absorbs life lessons about girls, bullies, baseball and success. The result is so genuine that viewers of the film will no doubt shift uncomfortably in their seat. —Ed Grant



The Motel

## Coming soon

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the lives of those around

her; a woman must confront her terror alone in *Anna's Eve*. Street Feb. 20, prebook Jan. 26; DVD \$16.98

### MICRO-CINEMA

*Investigation of a Flame* tells how on May 17, 1968, three priests, a nurse, an artist and four others walked into a Catonsville, Md., draft board office, grabbed thousands of service records and burned them with

napalm in a poetic act of civil disobedience. Street Jan. 30, prebook Dec. 31; DVD \$24.98

### MONARCH

A group of vicious bank robbers find themselves on the run in the Arizona mountains, where they become prey in *Sasquatch Mountain*. Street Jan. 23, prebook Jan. 2; DVD \$26.95

### MVD

*Cracker & Camper Van Beethoven: First Annual Camp-Out Live* features the bands' original members, who

hosted a camp-out in Pioneertown, Calif. Street Jan. 30, prebook Dec. 26; DVD \$19.95

### PICTURE THIS

A 15-year-old boy's life changes forever when a young man he recruits as a boxer in an illegal fight club dies in the ring in *The Recruiter*. Street Feb. 27, prebook Jan. 16; DVD \$19.95

### POP CINEMA/ FIRST LOOK

Long after the sun sets, the night is shattered by blasts of a chainsaw and screams of flesh-

ripping punishment in *Chainsaw Sally*, featuring horror legends Gunnar Hansen and Herschell Gordon Lewis. Street Feb. 27, prebook Jan. 30; DVD \$19.98

### SONY

*Viva Pedro: The Pedro Almodovar Collection* has eight of Almodovar's films, including *All About My Mother*, *Talk to Her*, *Bad Education*, *The Matador*, *Law of Desire* and more. Street Jan. 30, prebook Dec. 28; nine-disc set \$117.95

### TARTAN/GENIUS

A crystal meth dealer and a renegade cop take down a powerful crime lord in *The Ties That Bind*. Street

Feb. 20, prebook Jan. 9; DVD \$22.98

### THINKFILM/ LIONSGATE

Director Terry Gilliam's *Tideland* is a tale of a young girl caught in a terrifying world where only her dolls' heads keep her company. Street Feb. 27, prebook Feb. 1; DVD \$27.98

### UNION STATION/ ANCHOR BAY

Colin Firth and Hart Bochner star in this suspenseful tale of madness and murder set in the lush backdrop of Buenos Aires in *Apartment Zero*. Street Feb. 20, prebook Jan. 10; DVD \$19.98

—Compiled by Cheryl Biggs

