

## “SAVAGES CROSSING” (DVD Review)



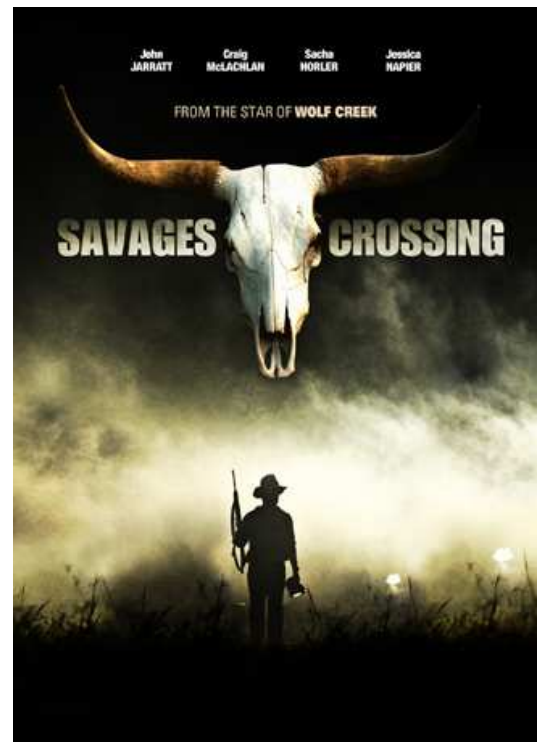
When *WOLF CREEK* came out back in 2005, it proved to be one of the most riveting and raw horror films in a long time. The main attraction that tied it all together was the central villainous performance by then-unknown actor John Jarratt. The promise of another horror film starring Jarratt, set in his native Australia, gave rise to great hopes and anticipation—which, unfortunately, are quickly shattered by *SAVAGES CROSSING*.

The film (recently released on U.S. DVD by Jinga Films/MVD) centers on eight people stranded at a rest stop in the middle of a severe rainstorm. They include Kate (Jessica Napier), who owns the joint and runs it with her cowboy partner Mory (Craig McLachlan), vacationing women Mickey (Rebecca Smart) and Shae (Sacha Horler) and mother and son Sue (Angela Punch McGregor) and Damien (Charlie Jarratt, John's son). The estranged and drunk father, Phil (John Jarratt), follows Sue to the rest stop, while being pursued himself by someone claiming he is a cop; Phil has escaped an attempt on his life, but his running to the rest stop puts all of them in great danger.

First off, there probably hasn't been a slower horror film in a long time. For a movie that runs a little shy of 90 minutes, it takes at least a third of that time for the plot to move forward, and under Kevin James Dobson's direction, it just drags on from there. The cast all seem to be acting as if they are slightly amazed they are part of such a ridiculous movie, and you never become too attached to any of these people due to a severe lack of character development. For example, the only noticeable trait given Phil is that he drinks...a lot. Scenes move from one to the other without proper segue, and don't get me started on the random musical choices; it plays like the producers found a soft-pop music station and chose the first few songs that came on to use on for the soundtrack.

*SAVAGES CROSSING* lacks the necessary tension and edge-of-your-seat moments to keep the viewer engaged, and while there are a number of attractive images sprinkled throughout the picture (a reverse shot through a storm cloud into the upper atmosphere is a nice touch), these little touches do not make a complete film. And it all builds to one of the most abrupt and tension-free endings in cinema history. A revelation that seems to shatter everyone's opinion of the whole incident was seemingly established beforehand to one of the parties involved, yet this same person acts shocked and appalled and walks off in slow motion—while this reviewer dropped my head into my hands in pure astonishment and embarrassment.

John Jarratt and his wife Cody themselves wrote the screenplay for *SAVAGES CROSSING*, and they should never be allowed to take on that part of the process again. The only person left unscathed here is director of photography Geoff Cox, who was able to contribute some clean and vivid shots. Maybe this team was excited to work with Jarratt, but all involved should be more careful about what they choose for future projects. As for Jarratt himself, I choose to remember him as good old killing machine Mick Taylor and



forget this DVD (which comes with no special features) crossed my path.

<http://www.fangoria.com/new/savages-crossing-dvd-review/>