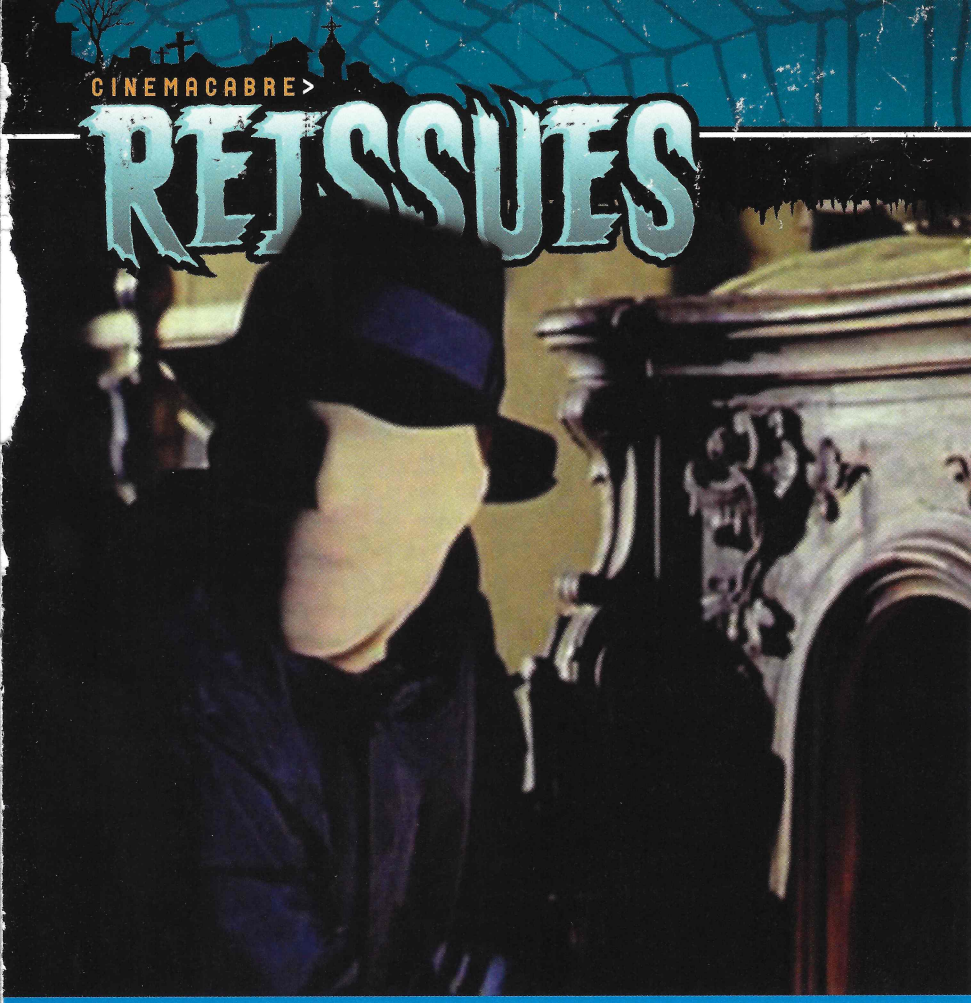


## REISSUES



## BRAVO ON THE BAVA

## BLOOD AND BLACK LACE (1964) Blu-ray/DVD

Starring Cameron Mitchell, Eva Bartok and Thomas Reiner  
 Directed by Mario Bava  
 Written by Marcello Fondato, Giuseppe Barilla and Mario Bava  
 Arrow

Not content with inventing opera, radio and the telephone, the Italians also formulated the irreducible template for the “body count” slasher film with Mario Bava’s *Blood and Black Lace*. Although it wasn’t the first giallo to be made, the subgenre’s cinematic currents can be traced to this cardinal source in which all of its hallmarks effectively coalesced.

This lurid milestone begins with the brutal murder of a model employed at a chic Haute Couture fashion house managed by the recently widowed Countessa Cristina Como (Eva Bartok) and her associate, Max Marian (Cameron Mitchell). The subsequent discovery of the victim’s diary, coupled with the arrival of the plodding Inspector Silvester (Thomas Reiner), spreads panic amongst the salon’s staff, which fears being



implicated in a sex and drugs scandal. One by one, a masked maniac stalks and kills all who come into possession of the incriminating journal, leaving a growing pile of exquisite corpses in his – or her – wake.

Oscillating between the sadistic and the sublime, elements of *Blood and Black Lace* may appear shrill and over-familiar – possibly inviting a cynical response from some modern viewers – but the unaffected genius and vivacity Bava exhibits from the gaudy title sequence onwards is undeniable. Other directors may have ploughed the same bloody furrows in ensuing decades, but few have matched the fluid dance of light and shadow, colour and camera movement on display here. In his tinkering with the entrenched mechanics of the whodunit, Bava succeeded in creating a new language for the horror film – one whose decorative gestures, modes and motifs would adorn the genre for the next 50 years.

Aside from delivering a gorgeously restored print, Arrow’s new Blu-ray yields an unstinting cornucopia of extras, crowned by the feature-length documentary *Psycho-Analysis*, which examines *Blood and Black Lace* and the origins of giallo, and boasts contributions from Dario Argento and Lamberto Bava. Add to this an edifying commentary by

Video *Watchdog* editor Tim Lucas, a ten-minute appreciation by *Amer* directors Hélène Cattet and Bruno Forzani, a panel discussion on Bava recorded at last year’s Courmayeur Noir Film Festival (again featuring Argento), plus some additional baubles – including Ryan Haysom’s stylish neo-giallo short *Yellow* – and you have the finest home video release of 2015 thus far.

MICHAEL DOYLE

## “I’LL DRIVE-A DA TANKER”

## EXTERMINATORS OF THE YEAR 3000 (1983)

Starring Robert Iannucci, Alicia Moro and Luca Venentini  
 Directed by Giuliano Carnimeo  
 Written by Elisa Briganti, Dardano Sacchetti and José Truchado  
 Shout! Factory

“Meet the new breed of Road Warriors” – if you actually name-check the movie you’re ripping off in your own tagline, you’ve elevated shameless to an art form, and that’s what the Italian film industry has long excelled at. So let’s review *Road Warrior* rip-off *Exterminators of the Year 3000* on those terms.

Also released as *Death Warriors*, the 1983 film takes place in a post-apocalyptic wasteland where both water and fuel are in short supply. It’s a place where roving gangs of thugs – who look like they didn’t make the cut for the Village People because of too much sports equipment – rip around in modified, weaponized vehicles, stopping mostly to rape, kill and steal. Enter a benevolent community that needs a hero as bad as it needs H<sub>2</sub>O, and a capable loner with his own weaponized car who reluctantly agrees to shepherd their tanker to an oasis. With the help of a tough kid and a feisty babe, our leather-clad ass-kicker fights his way down Hell’s dusty highway.

That plot is – wow – embarrassingly familiar, but since you can’t give a screenwriting credit to a Xerox machine, and director Giuliano Carnimeo (working here as “Jules Harrison”) didn’t have the resources to make something as accomplished as *The Road Warrior*, the filmmakers added extra garnish to this saucy impastor. *Exterminators of the Year 3000* boasts disfigured toxic mutants, a robotic arm capable of throwing a rock right into someone’s skull, random haunted house skeletons, a steady regimen of huge explosions, headbands and some extra gore. Not a bad trade-off for Mel Gibson.

And yes, there’s more production value in the trailer for the upcoming *Mad Max* reboot than in all of this film, but it does have its cheesy, wonky charms (did I mention the skeletons?). To help enshrine it for future generations, Shout! Factory

