

Erstwhile critic says top-grossers are gross

By Michael Giltz

Reviewing movies in any city other than New York or Los Angeles is a frustrating, vexing affair. The clever little art film that sends the national critics into a frenzy of admiration usually takes months to reach Gainesville — or Miami or Atlanta, for that matter — and by then the public's blood pressure has returned to normal and interest has waned.

Also, studios often release their hot Oscar prospects in a few, select cities to qualify for the awards and then take their sweet little time showing them to the rest of the world. This puts the Top 10 lists of most film reviewers in a perpetual state of disarray.

Visiting South Florida solves some of these problems (three of the movies on my list have yet to appear in Gainesville), but among the many titles yet to screen within a five-hour's drive of here include *Mississippi Burning*, Woody Allen's *Another Woman*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Wings of Desire* and *Talk Radio*.

So here are the best movies of the year. If you fail to recognize some of the names, don't be put off: The

best movies are invariably the most entertaining as well.

1. *Au Revoir Les Enfants* — A film for which the word "perfect" is not praise enough. Director Louis Malle penned this somber, beautiful story of the friendship between two boys attending a private school in occupied France. Fragile and moving, it is one of the quietest and most powerful movies I have ever seen. In fact, it's so good that I'm ashamed to say I did my earnest best to avoid reviewing it. No words can do it justice.

2. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* — Director Philip Kaufman followed *The Right Stuff* with this equally bold and ambitious adaptation of the acclaimed novel by Milan Kundera. Its unqualified success places him in the front rank of artists. Frankly sexual, it makes the steaminess of *No Way Out* and *The Big Easy* seem like Spin The Bottle.

3. *Things Change* — Playwright David Mamet's second film is an extremely witty tale about a shoe-shine man (Don Ameche) recruited by the Mafia to spend time in prison for a look-alike member of "the family." Sharp and funny.

4. *A Fish Called Wanda* | *Women*



Roger Rabbit sequel in the works

On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown — *Wanda* is a farcical delight from former Python John Cleese, and *Breakdown* is its equally funny flipside, a more sophisticated screwball comedy from Spanish director Pedro Almodovar that is the hot prospect for the Oscar.

5. *Bagdad Cafe* — A whimsical little bonbon about a very large German woman stranded in an out-of-the-way motel. Its strong suit is idiosyncratic charm, but the haunting theme song ("Calling You" by Jevetta Steele) lends the whole affair a wistful, melancholic

air.

6. *The Thin Blue Line* — A powerful documentary about a man imprisoned for a murder he claims he didn't commit. Director Errol Morris virtually vindicates the man through some astonishing revelations and the result is a movie that is as engrossing and exciting as anything you're likely to see.

7. *The Accidental Tourist* — William Hurt and Geena Davis shine in this restrained, intelligent examination of some very individual people and their tangled relation-

1988's top-grossing movies

1. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*
2. *Coming to America*
3. *Big*
4. *Crocodile Dundee II*
5. *Die Hard*
6. *Cocktail*
7. *Bettelejuice*
8. *A Fish called Wanda*
9. *Willow*
10. *Rambo III*

ship.

8. *Biloxi Blues* — One of the best adaptations of a Neil Simon play, this comedy about soldiers in boot camp during World War II is filled with funny lines and an excellent cast. A durable, appealing film that will only improve with age.

9. *Rain Man* — Tom Cruise is beginning to hold his own against the heavyweights he is acting with, but it is no surprise that Dustin Hoffman's brilliant turn as an autistic savant dominates the

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proceedings.

10. *Bull Durham* — Director Ron Shelton's screenplay contained some of the best dialogue of the year, and it is delivered with zest by Susan Sarandon and especially Kevin Costner, who simply inhabits the screen as an over-the-hill baseball player called in to mentor a young hotshot on his way to the majors.



Wanda popular with public, Giltz