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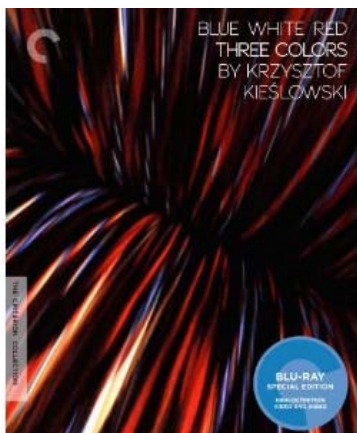
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Maybe you need to grab a last-minute gift at the mall. Maybe you're going to ship a gift and send a link on Christmas morning to the DVD you purchased for them. (Hey, nobody's perfect.) Maybe you're going to get a gift certificate and want some ideas of what to buy. Whatever the case, here are some of the best DVDs of the year mixed in with some great gift ideas. Now get shopping! In no particular order:



THREE COLORS: BLUE, WHITE, RED (\$79.95 BluRay; Criterion) -- If your giftee is a serious movie fan, virtually anything from Criterion will be welcome. This trilogy from the late, great Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski is a landmark work of cinema and these BluRays look stunning. Actually, the original releases on DVD looked very good and had lots of solid extras. But as a statement of its importance, this boxed set is essential. This work needs to be collected and presented with care and

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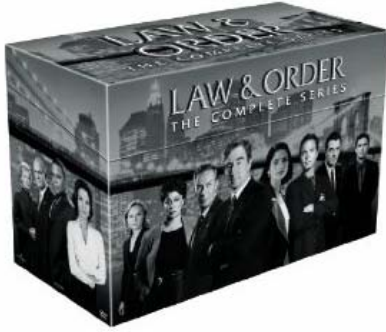
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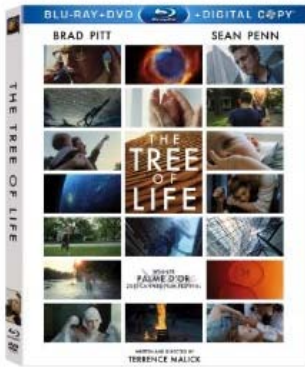
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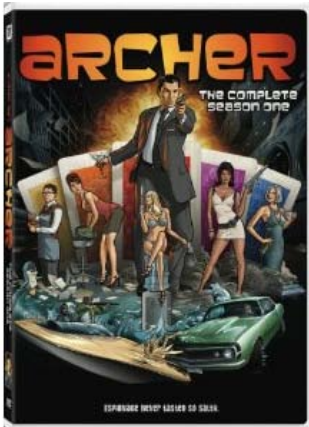
attention. Getting onto Criterion feels like getting into the Movie Hall of Fame. Red itself is one of the greatest films of all time and this collection has pride of place on my shelf.



LAW & ORDER: THE COMPLETE SERIES (\$699.99; Universal) -- Let's face it, if you know someone who loves Law & Order, they don't need this set. The reruns are in constant rotation on cable (at one point, there was even talk of a channel devoted to the franchise). Plus, as a programmer (as opposed to a serial drama like The Wire), you don't need to watch the episodes in order to enjoy them. Far from it. You can follow episode seven from season two with episode 12 of season 14 and the pleasure is the same. That's exactly what makes this massive set (the biggest devoted to a single series, I believe) such a terrific present. It's pure indulgence. They'll say "oh you shouldn't have!" while greedily clutching it to their bosom.



THE TREE OF LIFE (\$34.99; FOX) -- The best film of the year is also a demo disc perfect for showing off your home entertainment system. Whether it's the kids running through the backyards of their neighborhoods or the gorgeous shots of nature, director Terence Malick's film is as eye-popping as any nature documentary and far more moving.



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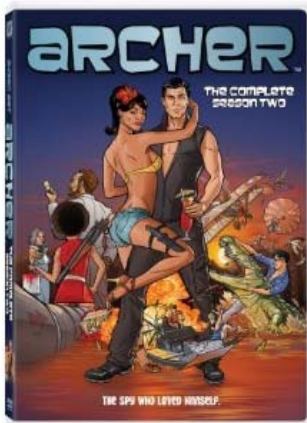
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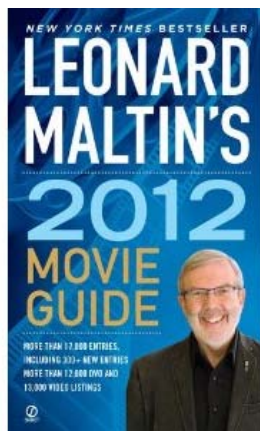
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ARCHER SEASON ONE AND TWO (\$29.98 each; FOX) The funniest sitcom on TV is also one of the raunchiest, so this is not for the kiddies. It's a spy show crossed with a workplace comedy. Imagine if James Bond was a bit of a doofus and his mother was his boss. Toss in petty coworkers, international conspiracies, loads of sex and drugs and you've got an inkling of the fun in store. It's Matt Helm if you got to see what Matt Helm really did. It's funny, weird, has a great voice cast and the sexiest animated characters ever. Season Two comes out December 27, so you can have it arrive right on time and not look like your present was late. (Hey, it didn't come OUT till that day!)



CITIZEN KANE 70TH ANNIVERSARY ULTIMATE EDITION (\$79.89; Warner Bros.) -- Obviously it's one of the most important films of all time. If you love movies, you probably (or should) own a copy already. Plus, I HATE exclusives, where bonus stuff is only available if you go to this store or shop at this site. But this one is a doozy and a real treat for movie lovers. Even if your giftee owns *Kane*, they certainly don't own a DVD of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. It's never been out before and is only available via Amazon if you buy this lavish new set. But what a bonus disc! *Ambersons* is a champ as well and deserves its own lavish set. Perhaps they're waiting until they can find the missing reel with all the footage cut out! Till then, no better treat can be had than to finally own *Ambersons*. I just saw it at [Film Forum](#) and boy is it a tremendous movie. Its reputation would be even higher if it wasn't seen so rarely. And hey, a [Film Forum membership](#) is a great gift for any friend who lives in NYC!



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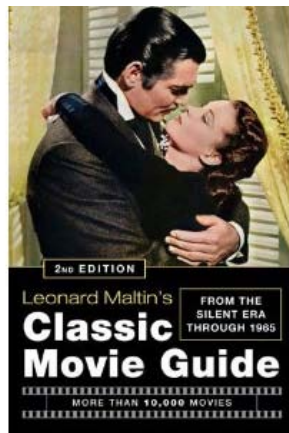


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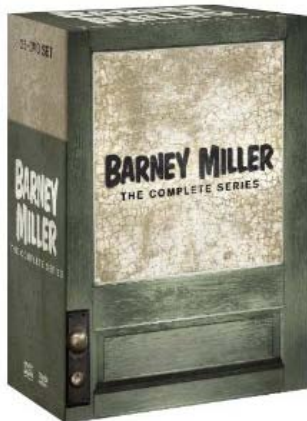
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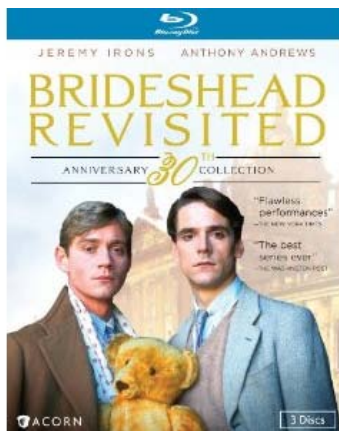


LEONARD MALTIN'S 2012 MOVIE GUIDE (\$20; Plume)

LEONARD MALTIN'S CLASSIC MOVIE GUIDE (\$25; Plume) -- I'm not so smart. (What? You already knew that?) I keep these handy movie guides right by my tv and consult them all the time when working on my columns. Maltin is rock solid on the spellings of titles, actors, credits and the like and his team of reviewers can be counted on for judicious, mainstream opinions. (They're not quirky, so you know if they give a movie a solid rating that most others would too and it's worth DVRing and so on.) The Classic Movie Guide is great for those like me who are hardcore about our TCM watching or just want something we can trust for a second opinion. Don't leave home without it was the Amex slogan. I don't go to the movies without these and barely a day goes by when I don't open them up.



BARNEY MILLER: THE COMPLETE SERIES (\$159.99; Shout) -- Shout is another label you can put your trust in: if they've put out a DVD set, chances are it will be of the best possible quality and with all the extras you want. I had fond memories of Barney Miller but wasn't sure where it belongs in the pantheon. It has a tremendous cast of course and cops always named it the most realistic of police shows. (Really. Higher than Hill Street Blues, NYPD Blue and you name it.) I've just started season four and while Abe Vigoda, Linda Lavin and Gregory Sierra are sorely, sorely missed at this point, it's still a great ensemble. The extras are solid, the packaging compact and nice and the set as a whole impressive. A fitting tribute to one of TV's finest.



BRIDESHEAD REVISITED 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (\$69.99 BluRay; Acorn) -- One of TV's greatest miniseries is finally given proper treatment and a new remastering so you can enjoy it on

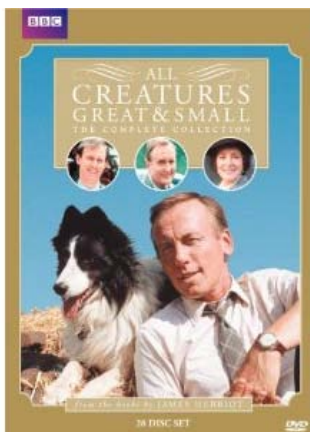
BluRay or DVD in all its glory. Jeremy Irons made a tremendous splash with this look at a passing age. After the third episode, the entire series is just loss, loss, loss right down to the bitter finale. You may not mourn the vanished world of the aristocracy (especially if you're not blue-blooded) but this work can surely make you feel like you should, if only for a while.



LAUREL & HARDY: THE ESSENTIAL COLLECTION (\$99.98; RHI) -- One of the greatest comedy teams of all time...wait, my friend Damien is now pointing a gun at my head. Let me rephrase that. The GREATEST comedy team of all time, Laurel & Hardy have been almost invisible for decades now, with their best work -- their shorts -- unavailable on DVD and rarely seen in any context. That has changed with this long-overdue boxed set which is bursting with content that will keep you absorbed for weeks to come, especially if you're tempted to watch some again and again, as you will. Now where is the boxed set with their silent shorts?



TRACY & HEPBURN: THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION (\$59.98; Warner Bros.) -- Speaking of great duos, Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn - two of the best movie actors of all time -- were just as famed for their discrete offscreen love as for their onscreen pairings. Actually, I have to admit that for a team that only made 9 films, four of them are suspect (with *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner* rescued only by the poignance of Spence's final speech.) But five out of nine would be a good batting average and those five are terrific fun: *Woman Of The Year*, *Desk Set*, *Pat & Mike*, *State Of The Union* and above all *Adam's Rib*. My idea of the perfect marriage is still something like their marvelous bickering.



ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION (\$349.98; BBC) -- Classic

TV makes a great gift because it's timeless. That's my excuse for including this 2010 release which completely slipped by me when it came out in May a year and a half ago. I don't know how. It's a charming show about the life of a vet in rural England before and during WWII. I read the books as a kid, watched the show then and trust me, I am not an animal person in the least. It's delightful and holds up very well. This complete set contains all seven seasons plus the two Christmas specials. Any fan of British TV or James Herriot will appreciate getting this at any time of the year.

MOST TITLES LISTED HERE WILL BE AVAILABLE IN MULTIPLE FORMATS AND IN MULTIPLE COMBINATIONS, INCLUDING DVD, BLURAY, DIGITAL DOWNLOAD, VOD, STREAMING AND THE LIKE. THE FORMAT LISTED IS THE FORMAT PROVIDED FOR REVIEW, NOT ALL THE FORMATS AVAILABLE. IT IS OFTEN THE MOST EXPENSIVE VERSION WITH THE MOST EXTRAS. DO CHECK INDIVIDUAL TITLES FOR AVAILABILITY IN ALL THEIR VARIOUS GUISES.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on [Netflix](#) and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Note: Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of DVDs and BluRays with the understanding that he would be considering them for review. Generally, he does not guarantee to review and he receives far more titles than he can cover.

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