

This week's DVDs By MICHAEL GILTZ



The Sopranos: Fifth Season

★★★
HBO, \$99.98

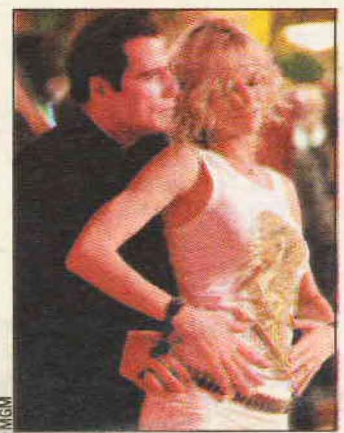
Let's admit it, this fine series peaked two years ago. And with a bear lumbering onto the Soprano compound at the start of this season, subtlety wasn't in the cards. Still, the stellar cast keeps it afloat. And thank God Drea de Matteo got her Emmy before being sentenced to "Joey." One great series, with its first season out on DVD, is Denis Leary's firefighter drama "Rescue Me" (Sony, \$49.95) — complex, bitter, and fascinating.

The Machinist/American Psycho: Collector's Edition

★★½ each
Paramount, \$29.99/Lions Gate, \$19.98

The June 15 debut of "Batman Begins" will hopefully send fans in search of the challenging, fascinating movies starring Christian Bale. Two of them prove what De Niro-like lengths he'll go for a part. "Machinist" is a Kafkaesque tale about a man literally wasting away — Bale is so emaciated it's painful to see. On the flip side, the uneven but fascinating "American Psycho," due June 21, shows Bale in stunningly handsome form with a toned, ripped body that would put most male models — heck, most Greek gods — to shame.

from "Desperate Housewives" withdrawal should jump at "Footballers Wives" (Capital, \$34.98), a British soap opera about the jaded wives of soccer superstars that makes "Desperate" seem positively tame in comparison.



Be Cool

★★½
MGM, \$27.98

If only Vince Vaughn had been working in the '40s. He'd have made a perfect character actor for Warner Bros. in its heyday — adding just the right spice to different films with his patented pseudo tough-guy weasel shtick. Vaughn's certainly one of the few reasons to check out this too little, too late sequel to "Get Shorty" that switches the action from movies to the music biz but leaves behind the wit and humor of the original.

Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman — First Season

★★★
Warner Bros., \$59.98

"Smallville" could learn a few lessons in lightening up from this delightful romantic comedy spin on the Man of Steel. Along with all 21 episodes we get a bonus "Smallville" episode and a new full-length documentary, featuring Dean Cain and Teri Hatcher. And anyone suffering