

# REVIEWS THIS WEEK

By Michael Giltz



Johnny Depp (left), with co-star Orlando Bloom, swashbuckles with the best of them in Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean."

## "PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL"

Turning a theme park ride into a movie is a dreadful idea, even if they did get lucky with this happy lark of a pirate movie (\$29.99, Disney). **Keira Knightley** proved "Bend It Like Beckham" wasn't a fluke, **Orlando Bloom** was perhaps a bit anonymous (sorry, Legolas) as Will Turner, and **Geoffrey Rush** hammed it up nicely as a cursed bad guy. But the show belongs to **Johnny Depp**, who should get an Oscar nomination for Best Actor for his foppish, hilarious turn as Captain Jack Sparrow. Still, Depp is one step away from the self-pleasing bizarreness of late-period **Marlon Brando**.

## "ALIEN QUADRILOGY"

What a perverse change of events. DVD special editions used to be the refuge of directors stymied from getting their original vision seen on screen. But DVDs proved so popular (especially when they contained new footage) that "Alien Quadrilogy" (\$99.98, Fox) contains new versions of "Alien 3" and "Alien: Resurrection" overseen not by the director or the star or the producer, but by the home video division of a studio, which basically threw in every scrap they could find to create the longest, most "complete" version possible.

This would be truly dreadful except for the fact that this bargain of a boxed set (which includes nine discs and over 45 hours of previously unseen material) contains not just those bizarre editions — as well as director-approved special editions of "Alien" and "Aliens" — but also the original theatrical versions, not to mention enough elaborate extras and making-ofs to keep any fan busy for weeks.

## "TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.": SPECIAL EDITION

Anyone surprised by **William Petersen's** compelling anchoring of "CSI" hasn't been paying attention. He proved he was a star with "Manhunter" and 1985's "To Live and Die in L.A." (\$19.98, MGM), an uneven but clever thriller that boasts a how-to on counterfeiting and a bang-up car chase. The pompous director **William Friedkin** gives a commentary track.

## "ALIAS": THE COMPLETE SECOND SEASON

OK, so you're afraid to commit to a new TV series. (That has to be the only reason you're not already watching "24," "American Dreams" and "Gilmore Girls.") But this is a new day, where TV shows are at your beck and call, even if you don't have TiVo. Here's the deliriously goofy and fun second season of "Alias" (\$69.99, Touchstone), complete with **Jennifer Garner** in more sexy disguises and more mind-bending plot twists than you can shake a stick at. No more excuses.

### Also out:

Only the British would make a kind, thoughtful miniseries like "Cambridge Spies" (\$34.98, BBC America), which is as nice as possible to the upper-crust toffs who betrayed their country; cult favorite "The Ben Stiller Show" (\$26.98, Warner Bros.) gets its due; "The Great Longneck Migration" (\$24.98, Universal) is the 10th installment in the animated dinosaur series "The Land Before Time"; and novelist **Larry McMurtry** is one of the luckiest fellows when it comes to Hollywood adaptations, as proven by his early success with 1963's "Hud" (\$19.99, Paramount), starring **Paul Newman**.

### Out next week:

"Horatio Hornblower: The New Adventures," perfect for those who enjoyed "Master and Commander" and want more; the last truly great season of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"; and — you know you want to see it — "Gigli."