

DVDs this week



Some Like It Hot (MGM; \$24.98)

Almost everyone considers this Billy Wilder comedy about two men (Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon) posing as women to be one of the great comedies of all time. We actually prefer *Tootsie* (out next week), but we're pretty alone in thinking this one isn't the ultimate. Certainly Monroe is delectable, Lemmon is hilarious, Curtis does a great Cary Grant imitation and the kicker at the end is one of the great closing lines in movie history. MGM does right by this crown (or is that "clown?") jewel by including some nice extras, including a Leonard Maltin-hosted documentary.



Sarah Jessica Parker

Sex and the City: The Complete Second Season (HBO; \$49.98)

An immediate hit about four gals on the make, *Sex and the City* actually got better in its second season. Led by Sarah Jessica Parker, it got naughtier, sexier and funnier. Highlights include the continued presence of Mr. Big (Chris Noth) and storylines involving over- and under-endowed dates. Their secret weapon? Cynthia Nixon, as far as we're concerned, though everyone has their favorite. Admirably, HBO has packed all 18 episodes onto three discs at a very reasonable price.

Before Night Falls (New Line; \$24.98)

This frequently hypnotic film tackles the life of gay Cuban poet Reinaldo Arenas both before and after Castro's takeover. He never has it that easy, though the revolution itself is a time when rules are broken in his favor. Director Julian Schnabel is on a roll for the first two thirds, making the most of striking visuals, a terrific score that uses popular songs and the tremendous performance of Javier Bardem. (He wuz robbed at the Oscars!) But as soon as Arenas escapes to America, the movie hits a wall: it doesn't find a compelling way to tell the old story of someone dying. Maybe Schnabel needs the outrageousness of the new to keep his (and our) interest.

Stargate: SG1 Season One (MGM; \$89.96)

This spin-off from the outlandish movie starred Richard Dean Anderson (*MacGyver* himself) as the leader of a team exploring the universe through the Stargates. Each week they landed on different planets, battling or befriending aliens everywhere they went. Originally, it aired on Showtime, part of that channel's bid to make a name for itself by reaching the sci-fi audience. They were successful, but since the show was sold so quickly into syndication, Showtime never capitalized on that success by signing up more subscribers. It's no *Star Trek*, but you do get 21 episodes for \$90; 20 episodes of *Shatner and Nimoy*, on the other hand, cost about \$200. Hopefully, others will realize that there are so many episodes of a successful series that it pays to make them available cheaply.

Vertical Limit (Columbia TriStar; \$27.96)

This mountain climbing adventure tale starring Chris O'Donnell proved yet again that a visually striking action movie with forgettable dialogue can score around the world at the box office. On the audio commentary, director Martin Campbell offers stories about the travails of filming (perhaps only making a movie on the water is more fraught with difficulties). Other goodies include brief documentaries from HBO and National Geographic. Still, it's a let down after Campbell delivered with popcorn fare like *The Mask of Zorro* and the James Bond flick *Goldeneye*.

QB VII (Columbia TriStar; \$29.95)

Here are three more TV shows available on DVD - all packaged smartly and economically. *QB VII* won the Best Miniseries Emmy and scored an early triumph for Anthony Hopkins as a British doctor accused of war crimes during WWII. The top-notch cast also includes John Gielgud, Ben Gazzara, Lee Remick, Leslie Caron and Juliet Mills. **The Three Stooges** (Columbia TriStar; \$24.95) squeezes in six examples of "nyuck! nyuck!" **Hullabaloo** (MPI; \$24.98) really piles it on with four hours of highlights from the rock 'n' roll variety show, featuring performances from the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, Petula Clark, Frankie Avalon, the Animals and many others. — Michael Giltz