

DVDs this week



Horatio Hornblower: The Adventure Continues (A & E; \$39.95)

The first run of *Horatio Hornblower* was a surprise winner of the Best Miniseries Emmy. This next installment, a two-part adventure, is even better. Here, the dashing young Hornblower (played winningly by the impossibly handsome but difficult to pronounce actor Ioan Gruffudd) must deal with a slightly mad captain while capturing an enemy fort. Scrapes aplenty, but young Hornblower is quick on his feet and quite clever. Very well cast, it's faithful in spirit to the books by C. S. Forester, which are rousing fun and very popular in the UK. Surprisingly, and unlike other iconic British characters (Holmes, et al), Hornblower had never been successfully portrayed in the movies or on television before now. But once again, A & E has excellent programming and squeezes out every last dime: this 200 minute program could easily have fitted onto one disc



Horatio Hornblower



Christopher Guest

Best in Show (Warner Bros.; \$24.98)

To us, Christopher Guest went to the well of improv comedy documentaries (pioneered by *Spinal Tap*) one too many times with this skewed take on dog show contestants. But the movie ran and ran in theaters, indicating word of mouth on this was excellent. Certainly there are stand-out moments from Parker Posey and Fred Willard. But we still much prefer *Waiting for Guffman*, even though it tackles the equally obvious target of community theater.

Father Ted (BBC Video; \$29.98)

This genial Britcom is about three Irish priests serving the community of the windswept and barren Craggy Island. There's the drunken Father Jack, who barely has a line of dialogue but chases after women and bottles of beer. There's the boyish, winning Father Dougal, who isn't quite sure he believes in God and of course Father Ted, who suffers silently but indulges in occasional Walter Mitty-like escapes. In one typical episode, they try and condemn a movie being shown at a local cinema, only to turn it into the biggest hit in Craggy Island history. All six episodes from the first season are here and like many low-key British series, it improves immensely on repeated viewings. A real charmer.

Tora! Tora! Tora! (Fox; \$24.98)

Just in time for Pearl Harbor comes this 1970 multinational coproduction that lumbers through the buildup to the infamous (or famous, if you were on the other side) attack. Like most such movies, it takes its stodgy time to get going, but the battle scenes are impressively mounted and quite gripping. As a side note, it inspired one of the great headlines of all time: a story about Aaron Spelling's daughter and her role in a TV movie was tagged "Torii! Torii! Torii!"

Also out:

Antitrust (MGM; \$24.98) about computer software boy wonder Ryan Phillippe, with Tim Robbins slumming as a Bill Gates-type; **Pay It Forward (Warner Bros.; \$24.98)**, a movie that called for gentle acts of kindness but got none from critics; **Von Ryan's Express (Fox; \$24.98)**, one of Frank Sinatra's best and what an ending!

— Michael Giltz Frank Sinatra

