

AVS THIS WEEK

by Michael Giltz



"E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial" Collector's Edition (\$29.98, Universal)

Like "The Wizard of Oz" and a handful of other classics, "E.T." seems like it wasn't made by Steven Spielberg — he just discovered it. Its appeal was so universal, no one minded seeing "E.T." crowned as the top-grossing movie of all time. (The same certainly can't be said for "Titanic," the movie that replaced it.) For this special edition, Spielberg has wisely included the original version, along with the revamped one with tweaks and additions that proved mostly unnecessary. Here's hoping his buddy George Lucas will have a similar respect for history when he finally puts out the first three "Star Wars" movies.

"Y Tu Mama Tambien" (\$26.98, MGM)

If Beavis and Butt-head had been from Mexico and good-looking and a lot more self-aware, they might have starred in "Y Tu Mama Tambien," a road movie that is clearly one of the sexiest, funniest and wisest movies of the year. At first viewing, this story of two teens who head for the beach with an older woman who's just left her husband is simple and appealing. But watch it again and you'll appreciate how cleverly director Alfonso Cuarón keeps a savvy eye on society and politics and economics. Of course, there's also that potential three-way lingering in the air. Superlative.

The James Bond Collection (\$124.96, MGM)

Another Bond flick soon hits the screens, so there's another excuse to delve into the ever-growing catalog of Bond films. Either you want to own "Goldfinger" (the best movie with the best Bond) or you want the whole lot. If that's the case, this grab bag is a good place to start. You get two Sean Connerys ("Goldfinger" and "Dr. No"), two Roger Moores ("The Man With the Golden Gun" and "The Spy Who Loved Me"), one with the underappreciated Timothy Dalton ("License to Kill") and two Pierce Brosnans ("Goldeneye" and his best "Tomorrow Never Dies").

"Gigantor" Episodes 1-26 (\$59.95, Rhino)

Rhino's name is an assurance of quality when it comes to CDs but not, so far, when it comes to DVDs. (Smaller companies can't always afford to do things the way they'd like.) But this nicely packaged boxed set of the first 26 episodes of "Gigantor" proves Rhino can set the standard in this format as well. Debuting in the mid-'60s, "Gigantor" was about a remote-controlled robot sent into battle by young Jimmy Sparks. The show contained bold visuals and, of course, the appeal of lots of smashing action. As the theme song said, "Gigantor" was bigger than big! Taller than tall! And in this case, bester than best!

"High Noon"/"Rio Grande"/"The Quiet Man" (\$19.98 each, Artisan)

"High Noon" is the tense showdown subtly inspired by the McCarthy hearings. Gary Cooper gets the job done, but with Grace Kelly urging me on, I would have left to be a Quaker at about 10 a.m. "Rio Grande" is John Wayne in the third and least of John Ford's Cavalry trilogy. (It's good, but where the heck are "Fort Apache" and "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon"?) Finally, "The Quiet Man" is one of the most gorgeous-looking movies in history, whether you're looking at the stunning Irish scenery or the stunning fiery redhead Maureen O'Hara. It's grand, and to heck with political correctness: I love the moment when an old woman tosses a branch toward John Wayne and says enthusiastically, "Here's a stick to beat the lovely lady with!"

"Star Trek III: The Search for Spock" (\$24.99, Paramount)

The best "Star Trek" film is "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan." What made it so superior was the boldness of killing off Spock. "Star Trek III" may be the second best film by default, but since it's based entirely on bringing Spock back to life, it always felt like a cheat to me. Still, Leonard Nimoy did right by the franchise in 1984 and I'd watch it any day over the jokiness of "Star Trek IV." Only three more years and Trekkies would get the best revival of all: "Star Trek: The Next Generation," a spin-off TV series that would ultimately supercede the original.