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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Newsflash! Studios Release Oscar Hopefuls In Fall

In a stunningly unoriginal piece, [the LA Times asks us why it is so many adult, thoughtful films appear at the same time in the fall](#); then they give us the not-so startling answer that it's because movies hope to piggyback on the Oscars. They link it to the Weinsteins but in fact releasing serious movies towards the end of the year with summer fare being typically lighter has been a trend for the past 30 years, at least.

But is it true that serious movies only come out in the fall? The real trend in the last ten years has been a major increase in year-round programming, with some studios putting out major films like "Saving Private Ryan" in the summer as counter-programming to fluff.

Let's look at this year. Now, there's a difference between Oscar HOPEFULS and Oscar nominees. But what "serious" movies were released this year? In March, they released Johnny Depp's *The Libertine*, Sam Shepard's *Don't Come Knocking*, Robert Towne's *Ask The Dust*, Aaron Eckhart's *Thank You For Smoking* (which could still get attention come awards time), Spike Lee's *Inside Man* (a popcorn movie, but still adult), and the terrific noir movie *Brick*. Now I'm including some indie films but ignoring most foreign films (like *Joyeux Noel* which also came out in March). I'm just saying, here are some serious films that came out. In April, they released *Friends With Money*, *The Notorious Bettie Page*, *Akeelah and the Bee* and *United 93*. In May, they released *Art School Confidential*, Ed Norton's *Down In The Valley*, and *An Inconvenient Truth*. In June, they released *A Prairie Home Companion*, *Wordplay*, *Who Killed The Electric Car* and *The Devil Wears Prada*. In July, the heart of summer, they released Woody Allen's *Scoop*, Richard Linklater's *A Scanner Darkly* and *Little Miss Sunshine*. In August, they released *World Trade Center*, Robin Williams' *The Night Listener*, Ryan Gosling (who is brilliant) in *Half Nelson*, and *The Illusionist*. In September, they released *Hollywoodland*, *Sherrybaby*, *The Black Dahlia*, *The Last Kiss*, *All The*

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