

Southern Comfort

Lone Star • Columbia/TriStar



Writer/director John Sayles blends a murder mystery with Greek tragedy, tosses in romance and social commentary, then sprinkles the entire enchilada with humor. The resulting complexity of this Oscar-nominated screenplay can't easily be shaken off. Past promises and long-buried secrets threaten to agitate a prickly tug-of-war between Anglo and Mexican cultures along the Texas border. Sam Deeds (Chris Cooper), digging into a long-dormant crime, discovers tarnished truths about both his town and his legendary father, played by then hot-shot-du-jour Matthew McConaughey. Kris Kristofferson also appears as the vicious sheriff. Bringing his craft to a new level, Sayles seduces us with detailed flashbacks that slide into the present as his camera caresses the intriguing faces of the cast. The intensity and pain of the film's startling resolution are so evenly balanced with honesty and compassion that you'll want to rewind and start all over again.

—Rochelle O'Gorman Flynn

Bringing his craft to a new level, Sayles seduces us with flashbacks.

No Cruise Control

Swingers •

Miramax • VHS & Laserdisc



You don't have to be single to get *Swingers*; you just have to have done the dating/mating dance at some point in life. In this road movie for the cocktail nation, boy (Mike) has already lost girl, his tragically hip friend (Vince) tries to help him forget girl, and the rest of the dudes-in-training juggle the desire to meet "beautiful babies" with the need to maintain their beloved "just one of the boys" status. *Swingers*—an homage to flirting and cruising—is hilariously self-deprecating while it cavorts around the swingingest digs of L.A.'s underappreciated nightlife. With all the nuances of a low-



budget film, including some crisp and gutsy dialogue, this effort revels in its own ridicule and exploits some of its own inspirations. From paying tribute to Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, to spending some time at L.A.'s illustrious lounge, the Dresden Room,

—Rebecca Kraus



Looking for Answers

Looking for Richard • 20th Century Fox



Shakespeare may well be regarded as one of the Western world's greatest cultural barometers. A society that embraces the bard and his works is somehow a society ennobled and saved. Conversely, ignorance of Shakespeare is tantamount to social decline. In *Looking for Richard*, Al Pacino is on a virtual crusade to encourage everyone to dip their cup into the great soul of Shakespeare and drink in his wisdom. He chooses as his vessel *Richard III*, a difficult, unwieldy, and bloody history that probably never made your high school's required reading list. Pacino's choice of the problematic play was deliberate. He seeks to uncover the very complexities of relationships, plots, and subplots in this unstructured documentary that challenges actors, scholars, and people walking the streets of New York City to probe such questions as: Why was Richard so embittered? Why did the Queen agree to marry Richard after he killed



"Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York"—what does it mean, anyway?

her husband, the King? How did Richard justify having the two young heirs murdered? And that elegant but mysterious opening line, Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York—what does it mean, anyway? Pacino is relentless, and occasionally overwrought, in his quest for these answers. But his histrionics are bolstered by the enthusiasm of the stage and screen actors who join his cause; Alec Baldwin, Winona Ryder, Kevin Spacey, Aidan Quinn, and Estelle Parsons all tackle parts of the play, while Shakespearean masters Kenneth Branagh, Sir Derek Jacobi, and Sir John Gielgud offer some commentary.

—Marianne Cotter