

## DVD Review: 'The September Issue' is Jam-Packed With Fashionable Footage

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on March 1, 2010 - 5:05pm

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CHICAGO – Though “The Devil Wears Prada” ultimately had a sobering message about resisting the vapid world of fashion, fans of the picture couldn’t care less. Who wouldn’t want to be Miranda Priestly, an editor-in-chief whose fashion taste influences the world? She spends all day getting what she wants, and can chill blood with the mere tensing of a facial muscle.

Meryl Streep made the role great fun, but her memorable performance left viewers wondering about the real-life woman Priestly was meant represent, Vogue editor Anna Wintour. R.J. Cutler’s breezily entertaining documentary, “The September Issue,” observes the formidable woman in her natural habitat, though the film could hardly be referred to as “The Wintour of Our Discontent.”



DVD Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The inherent challenge facing the filmmakers is the basic fact that their image-conscious subjects are all too aware of the camera. Wintour, baring a striking resemblance to Frances Fisher, is clearly restraining herself during her interviews, and remains a polished enigma throughout. Yet once she enters her “fashion maven” zone, hurtling tirelessly through meetings, photo shoots and fashion shows, the filmmakers do manage to capture candid clips of the journalistic diva in her element. The film takes place during the months leading up to the publication of Vogue’s much-hyped September 2007 issue, which aims to be the biggest and most extravagant one yet.



Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour is featured in R.J. Cutler's documentary The September Issue.

*Photo credit: Lionsgate Home Entertainment*

Though Wintour easily lives up to her icy reputation, she does allow glimmers of her humanity to come through when she briefly speaks about her family. Her father was editor of the Evening Standard, and retired after he got “too angry” (Wintour insists that she tries to keep her cool). She takes a long pause before admitting that her siblings (who are involved in various humanitarian work) “are amused by what I do.” Even

Wintour's own daughter has trouble taking the fashion world seriously. The most grounded person in the film is Vogue's longtime creative director Grace Coddington, who is the Stanley Tucci to Wintour's Streep. She prefers movement and earthiness over pin-sharp perfection, and doesn't share Wintour's interest in celebrity culture. When they butt heads, the film is at its most fascinating, though their awareness of the camera is never in doubt. After Coddington argues with Wintour about her budget, she turns to cinematographer Bob Richman and laughs, "I love talking to Anna about money in front of you guys."



The September Issue was released on DVD on February 23rd, 2010.

Photo credit: Lionsgate Home Entertainment

"The September Issue" is presented in its 1.78:1 aspect ratio, and the two-disc set includes over ninety minutes of additional footage, as well as thorough audio commentary from director Cutler. He reveals that it was Wintour's idea to have the film focus on the publication of a particular issue. She granted Cutler seven months of access, and allowed him to have final cut. Another challenge the filmmakers faced was the inability of their subjects to wear microphones, out of fear that they would rip their clothing (all of the sound ended up having to be recorded with a boom mic).

Though Cutler says that it was his intention to use Vogue's editor-at-large, André Leon Talley, as a sort of Shakespearean comic relief and Greek chorus at the end of each act, the deleted scenes prove that the film would have benefitted from more of Talley's flamboyantly zesty personality. It's equally pleasurable to spend more time with Coddington, as she discusses the photographers who inspired her by capturing images that were all a little bit imperfect (thus making them more real). There's also a priceless moment on the first disc, set at a Vogue CFDA fundraiser, where Wintour is by turns maternal ("These designers are like my children!") and bitchy ("Why do we have ice in horrible white plastic buckets?"). Photography buffs will appreciate Richman's gallery of behind-the-scenes stills shot in classy black and white.

The second disc consists entirely of new footage, the majority of which is devoted to Wintour alone. Though there's a disappointing lack of additional interviews, the deleted scenes offer a more in-depth glimpse of Wintour at work, dissecting eye-popping fashions while meeting with famous designers like Karl Lagerfeld, John Galliano and Vera Wang. Highlights include extended footage of Coddington's Couture shoot, Talley's commencement speech at NYC's High School of Fashion Industries, Sienna Miller's cover shoot, and Wintour's discussions about everything from cover lines to Michelle Obama. The most memorable footage is that of an uncommonly heartfelt Wintour speaking at the memorial service of her former assistant, Isabella Blow, who took her own life in May '07.

*'The September Issue' is released by Lionsgate Home Entertainment and features Anna Wintour, Grace Coddington, André Leon Talley, Thakoon Panichgul and Sienna Miller. It was directed by R.J Cutler. It was released on February 23rd, 2010. It is rated PG-13.*



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By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]

Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

[matt@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:matt@hollywoodchicago.com) [13]

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