

## Blu-Ray Review: Sapphire Series Release of 'Saving Private Ryan'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 10, 2010 - 9:55pm

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CHICAGO – One of the reasons that Blu-ray hasn't taken over like so many of the technology's early adopters hoped that it would is that a lot of the films that drove the success of standard DVD weren't available on the format. It has taken time for early DVD hits like "The Matrix" and even "The Lord of the Rings" to come out in HD. When people buy a Blu-ray machine, they want to be able to get their favorite films right away. Now they can add another long-wanted option to the first-day-purchase list with "Saving Private Ryan".



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Paramount has been somewhat quietly releasing their most acclaimed films of the last twenty years in a mini-collection called the Sapphire Series, releasing "Gladiator," "Braveheart," and "Forrest Gump" in the second half of 2009 and adding "Saving Private Ryan" to the set just in time for Father's Day. The film has held up as well as any from the late '90s, looks remarkable in HD, comes with an even more notable audio track, and has a vast collection of special features. As it should be for such a beloved film, it's a fantastic Blu-ray release with only a few notable oversights.

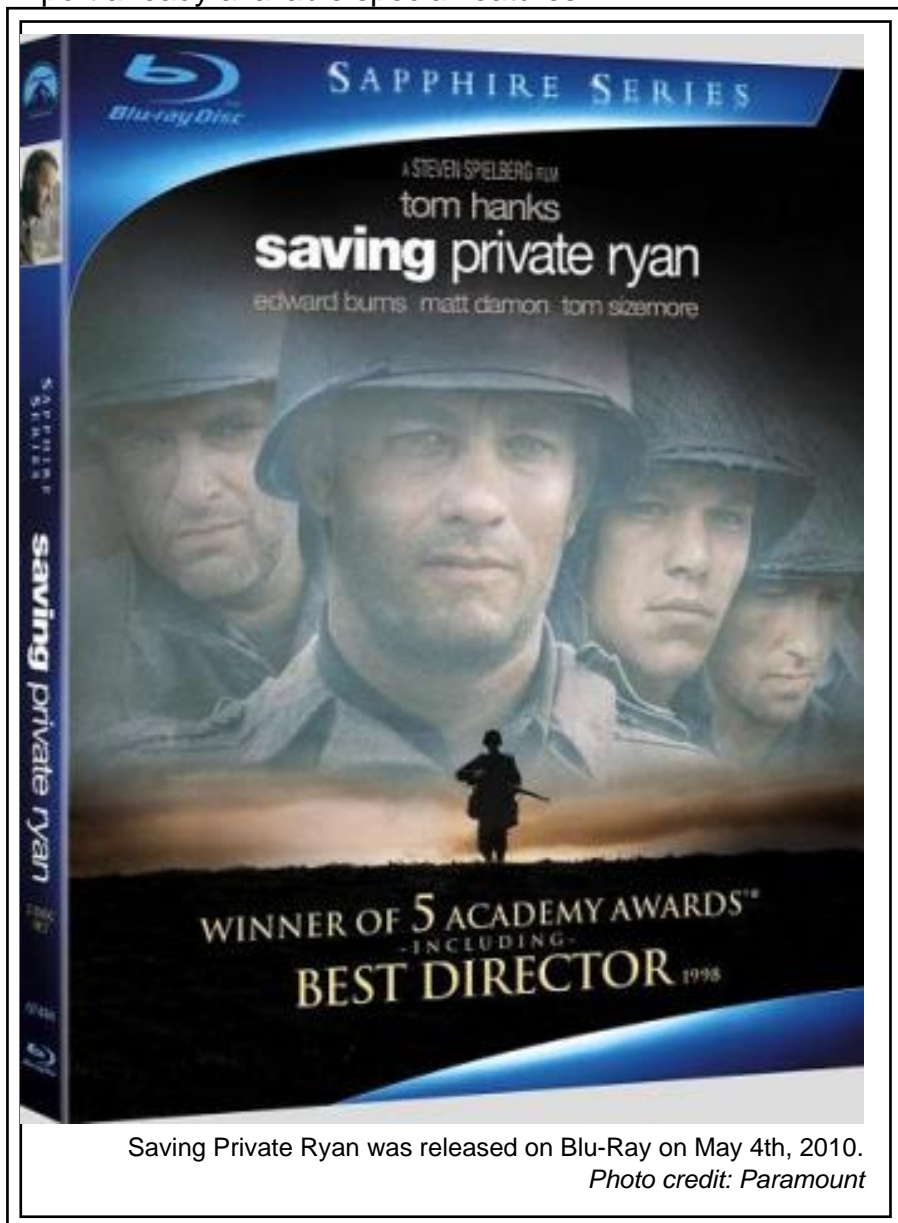


Saving Private Ryan was released on Blu-Ray on May 4th, 2010.

Photo credit: Paramount

The winner of five Academy Awards (and the one that should have won Best Picture over "Shakespeare in Love," a good film but one that history hasn't been nearly as kind to as Steven Spielberg's), "Saving Private Ryan" has lost none of its dramatic power in the twelve years since its release. Yes, Spielberg's film is a shameless heartstring-puller, but the man is a master of this kind of material and his ode to "The Greatest Generation" is one of the most beloved World War II films ever made for a reason.

Given the overwhelming adoration for a film that's a regular purchase every Father's Day, Christmas, and the birthdays in between, it's surprising that no one has scraped together any new material for this high profile release. This is one of the most acclaimed films of the last twenty years, a five-time Oscar winner, and a movie that someone is probably watching somewhere every minute of every day and its first release on Blu-ray doesn't include a single new special feature (outside of the trailers now being in HD, which totally doesn't count)? Where's the commentary track? The retrospective featurette with the incredible cast of young stars talking about what the film did to their career and their memories of making it? The doc about the influence and love people still have for "Ryan"? It seems like a wasted opportunity to merely import already available special features.



And yet that's exactly what has happened. So all of you who love "Saving Private Ryan" should be warned that this is a technical upgrade only. Luckily, it's a hell of an upgrade. The 1080p HD picture is stunning enough but it's the DTS-HD Master Audio track that's the mind-blower. Turn up the scenes of intense combat and try to relax. When I saw "Saving Private Ryan" in theaters, my friend next to me literally rocked back and forth during the final battles of the film. She was that on edge by the power of the action on the screen. The sound mix for the film has finally been perfected to recreate that immersive experience that can rattle the nerves like it did for her in theaters.

I've often written that with the capability of most quality Blu-ray players to upconvert standard DVDs that if a catalog Blu-ray doesn't come with anything new except for the transfer that the update isn't worth the expense. I would make an exception for "Saving Private Ryan". This is a film that only works if you give yourself over to the intensity of the experience and there's no better way to do that than with Blu-ray's HD picture and sound.

#### Special Features:

- o Introduction by Director Steven Spielberg
- o Looking Into the Past
- o Miller and his Platoon
- o Boot Camp
- o Making Saving Private Ryan
- o Re-Creating Omaha Beach
- o Music and Sound
- o Parting Thoughts
- o Into the Breach: Saving Private Ryan
- o Theatrical Trailer
- o Re-Release Trailer
- o Shooting War - WWII Combat Photographer - Hosted by Tom Hanks

**(Update: May 12th, 2010:** It turns out that numerous copies of "Saving Private Ryan" have had an audio sync issue after Chapter 15. Paramount released the following today:

"Paramount Home Entertainment today announced that it is recalling the Sapphire Series Blu-ray edition of Saving Private Ryan recently released in North America, the United Kingdom and the Benelux countries due to an audio synch error that occurred during Technicolor's authoring process. Although Technicolor employs comprehensive quality control measures, in this instance the issue was not detected prior to replication.



"Technicolor has been a valuable partner to Paramount Home Entertainment, and both Paramount and Technicolor are committed to providing the highest quality product to consumers," said Dennis Maguire, President, Paramount Pictures Home Entertainment Worldwide. "Our Sapphire Series was created to present our greatest films with the finest picture and sound quality available. Saving Private Ryan is a five time Academy Award® winning film including Best Director from one of America's most acclaimed filmmakers so we are recalling this edition to ensure that every Blu-ray disc honors Steven Spielberg's vision."

Technicolor has set up the following toll-free numbers for consumers who have already purchased the Saving Private Ryan Sapphire Series Blu-ray, which provides details on how they can receive a replacement copy—US and Canada: 888-370-8621, UK: 08000-852-613. Consumers can also return the Blu-ray to the stores where they purchased the product to receive a replacement. Technicolor expects to have replacement discs available at retail no later than Tuesday, May 18."

*'Saving Private Ryan' is released by Paramount Home Video and stars Tom Hanks, Edward Burns, Matt Damon, Tom Sizemore, Vin Diesel, Jeremy Davies, and Barry Pepper. It was written by Robert Rodat and directed by Steven Spielberg. The Blu-Ray was released on May 4th, 2010. It is rated R.*



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