

Blu-Ray Review: Spectacular Release For Superior Version of ‘The Wolfman’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 6, 2010 - 8:34pm

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CHICAGO – A great Blu-ray can come from the most unexpected places. Who would have guessed that the relatively disappointing “The Wolfman” with Benicio Del Toro, Emily Blunt, and Anthony Hopkins would result in one of the best Blu-ray releases of the year to date? With a superior version of the film, perfect HD, and amazing special features, this is a spectacular release.



“The Wolfman” had elements that worked but was also clearly the product of a laborious, delayed editing process that left it about as slashed as a victim of its title. While the design of the film was truly admirable and the cast more than up to the challenge, “The Wolfman” missed by just a hair by never being quite as compelling or entertaining as it could or should have been.

As I wrote in my [theatrical review](#) [13], “*Del Toro doesn’t help. Perhaps there’s a longer, director’s cut version of “The Wolfman” in which his character is more fully fleshed-out but it’s almost as if the actor decided that his natural wolf-like presence needed to be toned down and he consequently comes off a little dull.*”



The Wolfman was released on Blu-ray and DVD on June 1st, 2010
Photo credit: Universal

I don’t usually get a chance to say this, but I was absolutely right. Now on Blu-ray is an unrated version of “The Wolfman” that runs 16 minutes longer and is undeniably a better version of Joe Johnston’s creature feature remake. Most of the non-theatrical material comes in the first act and fleshes out the backgrounds of all the characters, complete with a fantastic cameo from the great Max von Sydow that I simply can’t believe was cut. Clearly, the producers wanted to get to the “action” of the piece, but they drained it of some of its meaning by cutting some of this excellent first act material.





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Photo credit: Universal

The third act is still the problem as the piece doesn't have the dramatic weight it needs to but now that the set-up has been improved, the weaknesses of the follow-through aren't as noticeable. And it certainly helps that the film looks absolutely amazing in HD. Something about this modern take on a horror classic plays better at home, especially with such a great Blu-ray.

As for the plot, "The Wolfman" tells the saga of the Talbot family, opening with the grisly murder of Ben Talbot by the full moonlight. Long-lost brother Lawrence (Benicio Del Toro) returns from the States and into the twisted world of his father John (Anthony Hopkins) and the loving gaze of Ben's beautiful fiancée Gwen (Emily Blunt).

After the murder, the townspeople are looking for answers and Officer Abberline (Hugo Weaving) is trying to track down the murderer or creature responsible. We also learn that Lawrence has his own dark side (having spent some time in an asylum) but his issues get much worse after he's attacked by a beast and starts sprouting hair in all the wrong places.

The performances in "The Wolfman" are reasonably strong, but it's a visual piece that's no stronger than during a great transformation sequence in front of a panel that believes Lawrence's problems are all in his head. The scene is so masterfully done that it almost makes "The Wolfman" worth a rental on its own. And there's an alternate ending (two, actually, but one is stronger than the other) that helps the closing act as well. Watch the unrated version and alternate ending #1 and "The Wolfman" actually goes from a film that just barely doesn't work to one that just barely does.

The Blu-ray for "The Wolfman" is so complete that it includes a BD-Live functionality that allows the viewer to watch the original 1941 film via disc, on your computer, or even on your phone. Other special features include "U-Control" picture-in-picture, behind-the-scenes features "Take Control" and "Legacy, Legend and Lore," a few featurettes, and deleted and extended scenes. The release loses a few points for not having a commentary track or some information on why there are two versions that are so drastically different, but not many.

With amazing picture and sound and a superior version of the film, "The Wolfman" is one of the most notable Blu-ray releases of the season.

'The Wolfman' is released by Universal and stars Benicio Del Toro, Anthony Hopkins, Emily Blunt, and Hugo Weaving. It was written by Andrew Kevin Walker and David Self and directed by Joe Johnston. It was released on June 1st, 2010 and is not rated or rated R.



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