

## Blu-Ray Review: 'The Bridge on the River Kwai: Collector's Edition'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 9, 2010 - 5:40pm

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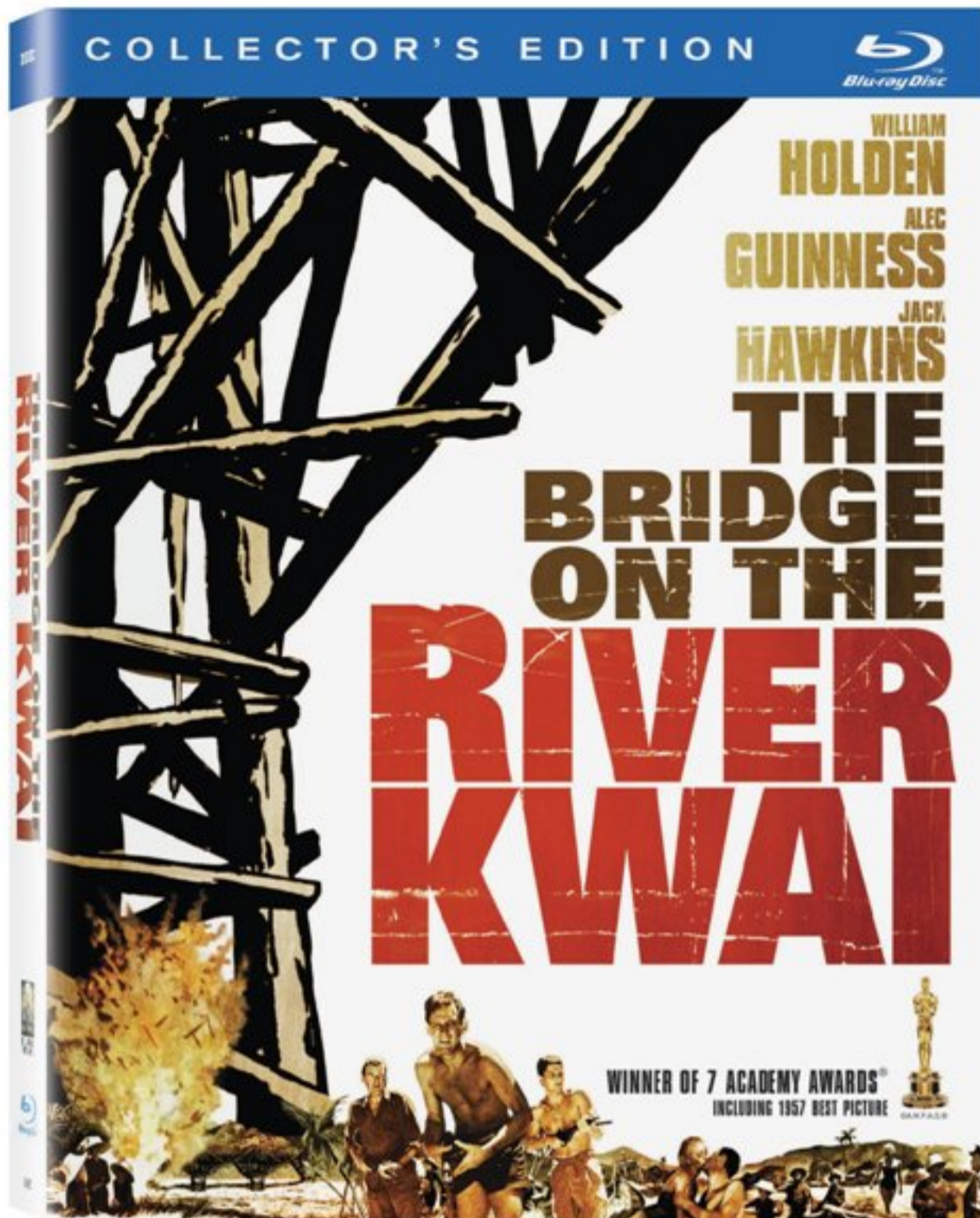
CHICAGO – David Lean's "The Bridge on the River Kwai" is one of the most beloved epics of all time and not only has the film been restored for a massive Blu-ray Collector's Edition release but a new print will roll at the Music Box Theatre in Chicago starting Friday, November 12th, 2010. If you've never seen the 1957 Best Picture winner, there's never been a better time.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.5/5.0**

"The Bridge on the River Kwai" was a massive hit when it was released in 1957, winning seven Oscars, including Director (David Lean), Actor (Alec Guinness), Adapted Screenplay, Editing, Score, Cinematography, and Picture. It beat "12 Angry Men" and "Witness For the Prosecution" for the big prize and has made multiple lists of the best films of all time. When the American Film Institute did their first list of the best 100 films ever made in 1998, "The Bridge on the River Kwai" was #13 (it fell to #36 in the tenth anniversary update). Finally, it's not just the Academy and critics — IMDB users have placed the film at #76 all time between "Raging Bull" and "Singin' in the Rain." Clearly, this is one of the most widely-admired films of all time.

And that makes it a perfect fit for a Sony Collector's Edition timed for holiday shopping season. The film has undergone a 4K digital restoration from the digital negative and there are times when it looks absolutely stunning. Most notably, the night scenes, which often looked murky and dull in previous releases, have been meticulously refined. The grain level seems a bit off in some of the daytime scenes, especially when compared to some other studio's recent restorations of film's from the same era, but, overall, the HD picture is stunning. Even more impressive is the newly re-mastered 5.1 audio track. David Lean's epics were meant to be experienced loud and now you can finally hear "River Kwai" in the booming (pun only slightly intended) manner in which it was meant to be heard.



Alien Anthology was released on Blu-ray on October 26th, 2010  
Photo credit: Fox

In case you're completely unfamiliar, "The Bridge on the River Kwai" tells a mostly-fictional story based on a French book about the building of the Burma Railway during World War II. Alec Guinness, James Donald, and William Holden play prisoners of war in western Thailand forced to build a bridge over the River Kwai. The film was just the beginning for the master of the epic, David Lean, who would follow this work with "Lawrence of Arabia" and "Doctor Zhivago." It's a classic.

Not only has the film been restored but it's been included in a large collector's edition set with a 32-page book featuring on-set and behind-the-scenes photos and content from the original 1957 souvenir book and 12 replicas of the original lobby cards. While you're watching the actual film, you can follow along with a Picture-in-Graphics track that provides behind-the-scenes details called "Crossing the Bridge." It's a great feature that takes advantage of BD functionality. The release also includes "William Holden and Alec Guinness on The Steve Allen Show" and newly discovered archival audio of William Holden narrating "The Bridge on the River Kwai" premiere.

This has been the best season ever for fans of classic movies with Blu-ray players. From "Alien Anthology" to "Maltese Falcon" & "Treasure of the Sierra Madre" to Criterion releases of "Seven Samurai" and "Paths of Glory," it's arguably never been a better time to be a fan of classic movies. Just add "The Bridge on the River Kwai" to your wish list.

*'The Bridge on the River Kwai: Collector's Edition' stars William Holden, Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins, Sessue Hayakawa, James Donald, Ann Sears, and Geoffrey Horne. It was written by Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson and directed by David Lean. It was released on Blu-ray on November 2nd, 2010. It is rated PG and runs 162 minutes.*

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