

Blu-ray Review: 'Game of Thrones: The Complete First Season' is One of Best TV-HD Releases to Date

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 13, 2012 - 4:14pm

- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Game of Thrones](#) [4]
- [HBO](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Isaac Hempstead-Wright](#) [7]
- [Lena Headey](#) [8]
- [Maisie Williams](#) [9]
- [Mark Addy](#) [10]
- [Michelle Fairley](#) [11]
- [Nikolaj Coster-Waldau](#) [12]
- [Peter Dinklage](#) [13]
- [Sean Bean](#) [14]
- [Sophie Turner](#) [15]
- [Television](#) [16]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [17]

CHICAGO – Being an entertainment critic calls for top ten lists in December of every year but I've always been someone who believes that these things are not written in stone. I don't think there's a single top ten for film or television that is the same today as on the day I wrote it. Oh, they're close, but the fact is that not only do some things age better than others but sometimes it takes time to fully appreciate something or to realize one was incorrect the first time around. Not three months after I wrote my [Top Ten TV of 2011](#) [18] piece and I can tell you this — The first season of "Game of Thrones," recently released on Blu-ray and DVD, wasn't high enough. It's only March and I think it should have been #3. Maybe if I watch again, I'll move it up to #1.



Blu-ray Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Like the best HBO programming — "The Wire," "The Sopranos," "Deadwood" — "Game of Thrones" truly is a program that I know I'll someday watch again. In fact, I can't wait for this stellar program to complete its entire run so I can experience it from first episode to last. And my true hope is that they not only match the quality of the first season but find ways to top it.

As for what works about "Game of Thrones," it's more a question of what doesn't. Peter Dinklage has been given the highest pedestal in terms of acting accolades but he's far from alone on this series as there's not a single performance that feels false. The strength of the ensemble is amplified due to possibly the best writing on TV right now. What first seems dense and unclear becomes more powerful with each passing episode. I had difficulty following "Game of Thrones" at the beginning but when it clicks for you it becomes more and more addictive. Not since "The Wire" has there been a show in which long scenes of dialogue, often political in nature, were more captivating. I could listen to these characters speak for a full hour and I love the pacing of this daring program that has moments of extreme violence but is essentially a show driven by dialogue. Some of the most well-written, engaging, fascinating dialogue in the history of television.



Game of Thrones
Photo credit: HBO

And then there are the production values, a level of design accomplishment that is similarly unmatched on current television. Particularly in HD, "Game of Thrones" looks and sounds AMAZING. Just hearing the score (one of my all-time favorites) booming in HD audio sound is something all fans of this show should do.



Game of Thrones
Photo credit: HBO

One of the best shows on TV, amazing HD video and audio — that would be enough to recommend this set. However, it goes beyond recommendation to must-own status when one considers the bonus material. Where do we start? Each episode features an interactive guide that is constantly being updated to make sure you know how the characters relate and even where they are physically in the world of Westeros. There are clan and character histories, not just plot recaps, and it's all presented in an incredibly user-friendly manner. If someone is understandably apprehensive about getting into a show with as many speaking roles as "Game of Thrones," HBO has done everything they

can to allay their fears, including not just the on-screen guide but a pamphlet that includes a map and a family tree.

And that's just the beginning. There's an in-episode behind-the-scenes examination of 1.6, "A Golden Crown," an interactive compendium of the houses, featurettes, SEVEN commentaries (out of only ten episodes), easter eggs, and a lot more. It is a collection of bonus material that wonderfully enhances the viewer experience instead of just cluttering it and deserves recognition next to "24," "Lost," and "The Simpsons" in the pantheon of the best TV on DVD/BD releases ever. It's the best Blu-ray release of any kind so far in 2012. Buy it.

Special Features:

- o Blu-ray Complete Guide to Westeros
- o Anatomy Of An Episode
- o In-Episode Guide
- o Hidden Dragon Eggs
- o Making Game Of Thrones
- o From The Book To The Screen
- o The Night's Watch
- o Creating The Show Open
- o Audio Commentaries - Seven Audio Commentaries With Cast and Crew
- o Creating The Dothraki Language
- o Character Profiles

"Game of Thrones: The Complete First Season" stars Sean Bean, Mark Addy, Michelle Fairley, Lena Headey, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Peter Dinklage, Sophie Turner, Maisie Williams, Isaac Hempstead-Wright, Jack Gleeson, Aimee Richardson, Emilia Clarke, and Harry Lloyd. It was adapted by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss from the book by George R.R. Martin and the premiere was directed by Tim Van Patten. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD by HBO on March 6th, 2012.



[19]

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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/game-of-thrones>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hbo>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
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- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/nikolaj-coster-waldau>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/peter-dinklage>
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