

## Blu-ray Review: Howlingly Funny ‘Best in Show’ is a Comic Masterpiece

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on March 8, 2013 - 5:49pm

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CHICAGO – The more one is familiar with the art of improv, the more one is bound to fall head over heels in love with the mockumentaries of Christopher Guest. Working from a mere scene outline, Guest and his ensemble of top-drawer comedians bring a colorful assortment of richly eccentric oddballs to life. Their ad-libbed dialogue is infinitely funnier than scripted punchlines since it emerges organically from their character’s own warped worldview.

2000’s “Best in Show” is Guest’s most merciless satire and also his funniest. It ranks right alongside “Bringing Up Baby,” “Young Frankenstein” and “Airplane!” as one of the greatest comedies ever made. It has stood the test of time, proving to be funnier with each subsequent viewing, while providing viewers with countless quotable lines and a wealth of side-splitting sequences. Few comedies in the last decade have delivered as many genuine laughs.



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

Of course, a dog show is an ideal target for satire, considering that its canine contestants are less interested in medals than they are about the location of the nearest fire hydrant. The show is really all about the ego of the dog owners and the hoops they force their pets to jump through (“Little Miss Sunshine” skewered beauty pageants with equally scathing mirth). It’s especially fun to observe how a dog ends up becoming a reflection of its master’s own peculiar neurosis. Consider the defensive, volatile Weimaraner owned by Meg and Hamilton Swan (Parker Posey and Michael Hitchcock), a miserably unhappy couple united by their shared love of brand names (“We’re so lucky to have been raised amongst catalogues!”). Or the bloodhound owned by Harlan Pepper (Guest), a contented bachelor whose southern drawl is perhaps intelligible only to his beloved pooch.

Jennifer Coolidge earns some of the biggest laughs as buxom blonde Sherri Ann Cabot, a gold-digger who appears to be built entirely of collagen, and insists that she shares a great deal in common with her geriatric husband, Leslie (Patrick Cranshaw). “We both love soup, the outdoors, snow peas, talking and not talking...” replies Sherri. “We could not talk or talk forever and still find things to not talk about.” Clearly Coolidge has more chemistry with Christy Cummings (Jane Lynch), her formidable poodle trainer. Shih Tzu owners Scott (John Michael Higgins) and Stefan (Michael McKean) are easily the most functional couple of the group, especially when contrasted with terrier lovers Gerry and Cookie Fleck (Eugene Levy and Catherine O’Hara). Cookie can’t walk five steps without bumping into one of her old flames, leading to a marvelously awkward dinner where Gerry finally explodes in the most unexpected possible way.



Best in Show was released on Blu-ray on February 19th, 2013.

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Home Entertainment

Just when it seems that the film couldn't possibly get any funnier, in enters Fred Willard as the hopelessly inept yet cheerfully exuberant color commentator Buck Laughlin, a comic character for the ages. His observations during the dog show are not only hilariously nonsensical, they illuminate precisely how silly the entire concept of a dog show truly is. Yet even at its most biting, Guest's comedy is never mean-spirited. He has a genuine affection for his characters that has remained consistent throughout all of his directorial work, from the local theatre director in "Waiting for Guffman" to the Botox-injected Oscar hopeful in "For Your Consideration." His characters may always fail in their misguided attempts at achieving success, but they aren't losers. They are exaggerated reflections of our most embarrassing selves, and we can't help but love them dearly.

"Best in Show" is presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 1.85:1 aspect ratio), accompanied by English and Spanish audio tracks and includes a typically droll audio commentary track with Guest and Levy recycled from the film's original DVD release. None of the other extras are new either, but why fix something that ain't broke? The half-hour array of deleted scenes is as every bit as hysterical as anything in the final cut, offering several more sublime (and occasionally surreal) sketches. My personal favorites include Harlan's inexplicable collection of beach balls, Gerry's badly edited promo for the Fleck Super Fliers, Buck's abysmal attempt at interviewing Leslie ("Is there a switch that turns him on?") and this golden line from Cookie: "What did I do to deserve you Gerry? You're a good man. Cause I know a LOT of men who—dress cooler, talk faster, have more money, tell stories that...end..."

*'Best in Show' is released by Warner Bros. Home Entertainment and stars Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Christopher Guest, Parker Posey, Michael Hitchcock, Jennifer Coolidge, Jane Lynch, Michael McKean, John Michael Higgins and Fred Willard. It was written by Christopher Guest and Eugene Levy and directed by Christopher Guest. It was released on February 19th, 2013. It is rated PG-13.*

By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]

Staff Writer

[HollywoodChicago.com](http://HollywoodChicago.com)



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

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