

## Blu-Ray Review: 'The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor' an Awful Movie, Great Blu-Ray

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 15, 2008 - 10:56am

- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brendan Fraser](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [DVD & Blu-Ray Review](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Jet Li](#) [7]
- [John Hannah](#) [8]
- [Luke Ford](#) [9]
- [Maria Bello](#) [10]
- [Michelle Yeoh](#) [11]
- [Mummy 3](#) [12]
- [Rob Cohen](#) [13]
- [The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor](#) [14]
- [Universal Pictures](#) [15]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [16]

CHICAGO – The divide between the quality of a film itself and the Blu-Ray presentation it has been given has arguably never been wider than with Universal's "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor". The special features are as comprehensive as any released this over-crowded holiday season and the transfer is one of Universal's best of the year but the film itself is a complete disaster, one of the most excruciating theatrical releases of 2008.

It's impossible to recommend purchase, renting, or even thinking too hard about a movie as horrendously conceived and executed as "Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" but it's just as hard to claim that fans of the film or the franchise won't be completely satisfied with the quality of the package that Universal has put together.

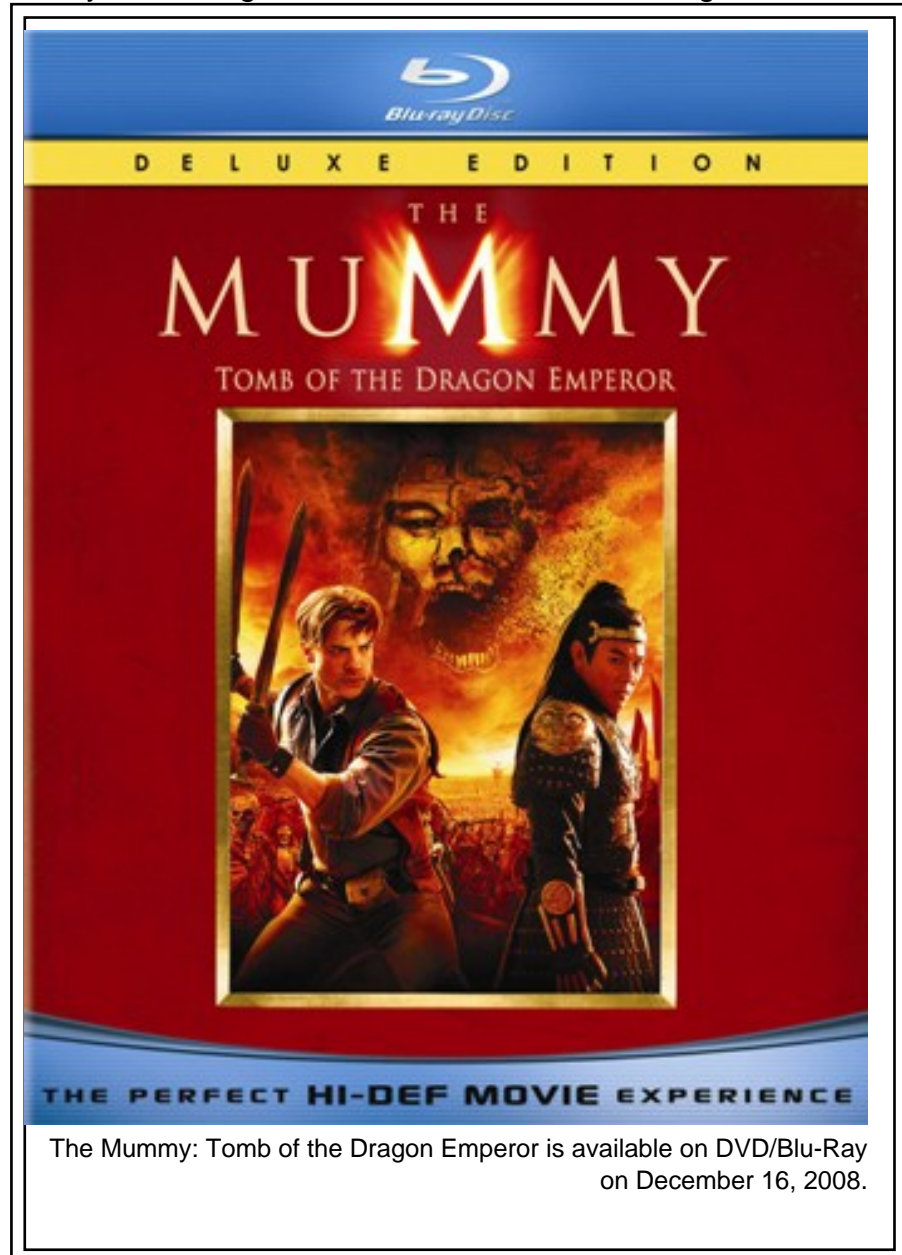
As for the movie itself, "Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" is insufferable, boring, and embarrassing to everyone involved (that's assuming that the man who directed "xXx", "Daylight", and "Stealth" can still feel embarrassment).



The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor is available on DVD/Blu-Ray on December 16, 2008.

The title may sound random and unimaginative but it actually refers to an ancient ruler named Emperor Han (Jet Li), a dictator who sought immortality but found himself and his army forever cast in stone after a witch named Zi Yuan (Michelle Yeoh) but an end to his quest for undying power.

Flash forward to 1946 England, where the heroes of the first two films, adventurers Rick and Evelyn O'Connell (Brendan Fraser and Maria Bello, replacing Rachel Weisz) are struggling with the tedium of domesticity. The retired heroes are approached for one last mission - taking the Eye of Shangri-La to its new home in a Shanghai museum.

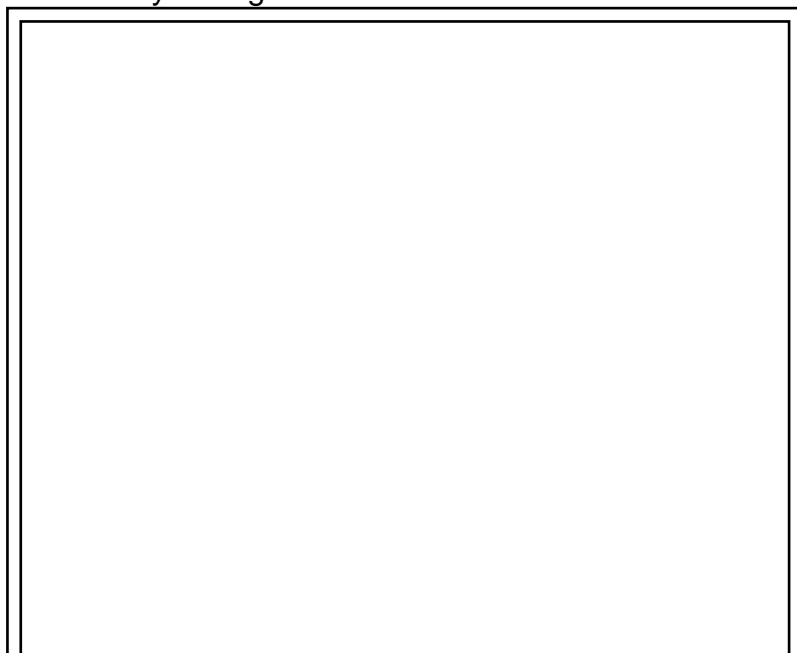


Meanwhile, their young son Alex (Luke Ford) happens to have found the tomb of the aforementioned Dragon Emperor in China and Evelyn's brother Jonathan (John Hannah) finds his way into the action for a little comic relief. Han comes back to life, as does his army, and the entire O'Connell clan works together to defeat the latest undead incarnation.

The problem with "Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" is simple - there's literally nothing to care about. The story seems to have been slapped together like a MadLibs entry and the cast, even the usually lovely Maria Bello, is shockingly grating. Newcomer Ford is particularly abrasive and even the typically game Fraser seems bored by the third time around. For more on the movie itself, check out HollywoodChicago.com publisher Adam Fendelman's [2-star review](#) [17].

You would never know that anything is wrong with "Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" by watching the extensive special features on Universal's Blu-Ray release. It's unreasonable to expect an honest assessment of the film in the behind-the-scenes featurette, but the love-fest for "Dragon Emperor" feels even more hyperbolic than usual. In just a few short minutes of "The Making of The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor", Rob Cohen compares Bello to Katherine Hepburn, talks about how shooting in China gives the film "authority", compares the scope to a giant archaeological dig, and even claims that the movie Gods have blessed them with magic as evidenced by the good weather during the shoot.

Ignoring Cohen's lack of perspective, there is a shocking amount of detail and interesting behind-the-scenes information in the special features that accompany "Dragon Emperor". Nearly every aspect of the process was documented from pre-production effects preparation to actually lighting Jet Li's hands on fire. And it can all be viewed using Universal's excellent U-Control, a studio-exclusive feature that allows interactivity during the film itself.







The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor is available on DVD /Blu-Ray on December 16, 2008.

"Dragon Emperor" includes the most extensive and detailed U-Control yet produced by the studio. While the movie plays, viewers have the option of watching Rob Cohen's commentary picture-in-picture (it can also just be listened to as an audio track), playing an interactive in-movie trivia game called "The Dragon Emperor's Challenge", exploring the connection between the three "Mummy" movies through film clips and photos in "Know Your Mummy", examining the action from up to four different angles in "Scene Explorer", or watching picture-in-picture behind-the-scenes featurettes related to the on-screen action at the time.

There are other special features including "From City to Desert", "Legacy of Terra Cotta", deleted and extended scenes, "Preparing for Battle with Brendan Fraser and Jet Li", "Jet Li: Crafting the Emperor Mummy", and "Creating New and Supernatural Worlds" that are impressive but it's the way information and trivia about the film is incorporated in U-Control that makes the release so remarkable. With Blu-Ray, audiences no longer have to bounce back and forth between menu screens and the movie, allowing special features to truly enhance a film instead of just adding to it.

Interactivity is also a key to Universal's approach to Blu-Ray and "Dragon Emperor" includes both BD-Live capabilities and "My Scenes", which allows viewers the chance to clip, save, and share their favorite moments from the movie.

Not only are the special features as inclusive and well-designed as anything we've seen recently, but the video transfer for "Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" is a beauty. Universal has mastered the film in 1080P HD with a 2.40:1 widescreen ratio and the vivid mix of color perfectly suits the film. The DTS-HD Master Audio track in 5.1 matches the video in quality.

"Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" looks and sounds perfect on Blu-Ray and includes a series of special features that are as comprehensive and well-organized as anything we've seen this year. It's yet another example of a horrible movie with a nearly flawless Blu-Ray treatment.

*'The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor' is released by Universal Home Video on DVD/Blu-Ray and stars Brendan Fraser, Maria Bello, Jet Li, Michelle Yeoh, Luke Ford, and John Hannah. It was written by Alfred Gough & Miles Millar and directed by Rob Cohen. It will be released on December 16th, 2008.*



[18]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [18]

**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 2:21am):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/6052/blu-ray-review-dragon-emperor-awful-movie-great-blu-ray>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantr>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>

- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brendan-fraser>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-blu-ray-review>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jet-li>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/john-hannah>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/luke-ford>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/maria-bello>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/michelle-yeoh>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mummy-3>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/rob-cohen>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-mummy-tomb-of-the-dragon-emperor>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/universal-pictures>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [17] <http://hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/3280/despite-jet-lis-would-be-resurrection-the-mummy-tomb-of-the-dragon-emperor-still-flops>
- [18] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>