

Blu-Ray Review: Cult of 'Serenity' Will Grow With Great Release

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 30, 2008 - 10:10am

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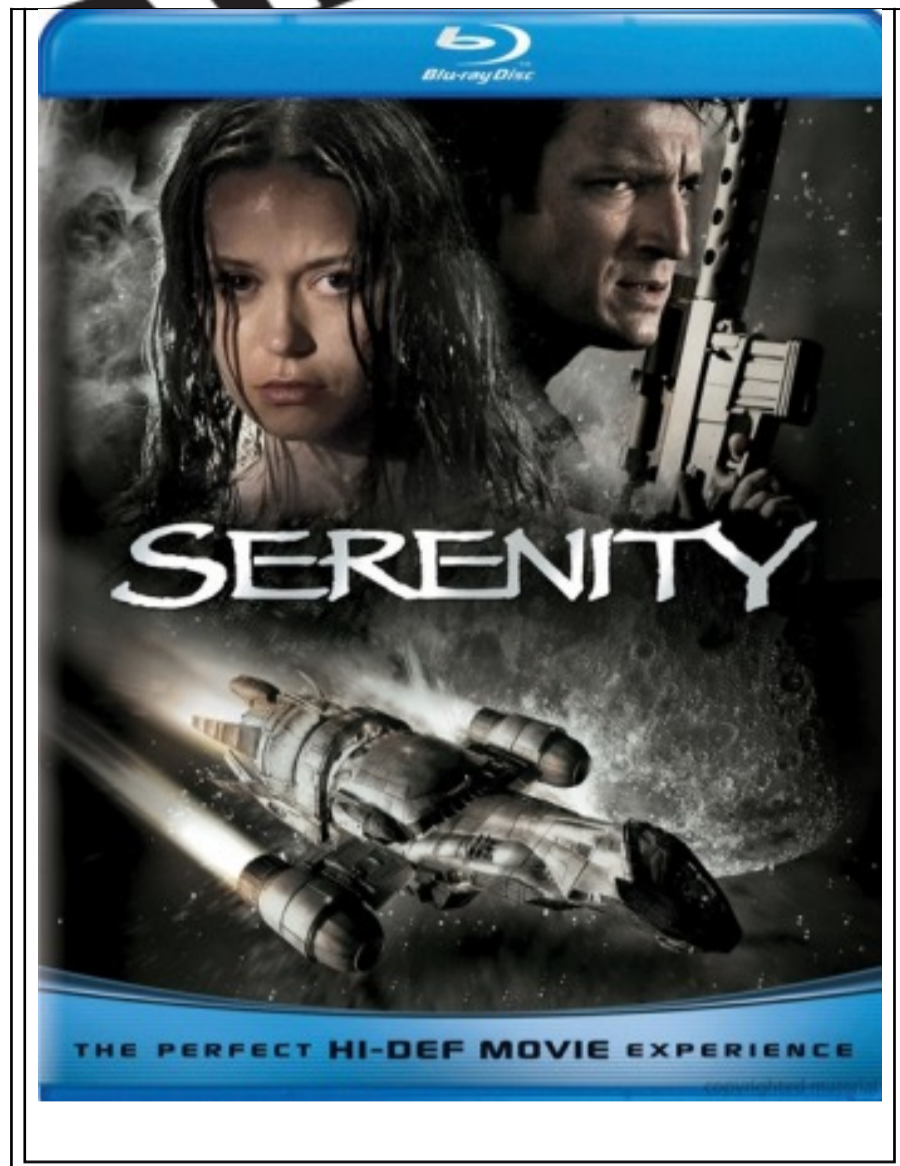
CHICAGO – The regular flow of imports from standard DVD and HD-DVD to the champion of the format war, Blu-Ray, continues with this week's release of an HD-DVD hit, Joss Whedon's excellent "Serenity".

The movie based on one of the best science fiction programs in the history of television, the short-lived "Firefly," suffered a similar fate as its source material - not being appreciated during its initial release. When "Serenity" hit theaters, it certainly earned critical acclaim and adoration of fans of the show, but most audiences ignored it. Like the show, the film earned a cult following after fans caught up with it at the video store and is regularly voted one of the best sci-fi films ever made.



With "Serenity," Joss Whedon and his multi-talented cast, including great work from Nathan Fillion, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Adam Baldwin, Alan Tudyk, and Summer Glau, didn't just take the opportunity to tie up loose ends from the show. Anyone could have made a series finale blown up to movie screen size, but Whedon isn't just anybody and he made a great movie that works just as well for people completely unfamiliar with the show.





"Serenity" is a perfect fit for HD and the video and audio on the Universal Blu-Ray release stand up to nearly any title released recently by the company. The 1080P widescreen presentation is a beauty but the English DTS-HD Master Audio in 5.1 channels is even more remarkable. I've seen "Serenity" a few times and never appreciated the sound design nor David Newman's score quite as much as I did with this release.

What's most outstanding about the release of "Serenity" on Blu-Ray is the unbelievable wealth of special features. You'll spend days with this title. Universal's U-Control still grabs most of the attention with optional, picture-in-picture, scene-specific features like a "Visual Commentary," which allows the viewer to watch the director and cast as they give their commentary. If watching people talk while they watch a movie doesn't do it for you, the picture-in-picture featurettes that include rehearsals, behind-the-scenes footage, and interviews as the movie plays should be more interesting.

Through U-Control, viewers can also access a "Digital Tour of Serenity," which allows access to the ship schematics during all scenes that take place on it, and "Mr. Universe's Compendium," a detailed trip into the "Serenity" universe with data on organizations, weaponry, and personnel, gathered from decrypted files and intercepted transmissions.

The U-Control features and access to the increasingly-interesting BD-Live combined with HD video and audio would be enough for most "Serenity" fans but all of the other excellent features from previous editions of the cult hit have been imported. That includes deleted scenes with commentary, outtakes, "Future History - The Story of Earth That Was," "What's in a Firefly," "Re-Lighting the Firefly," an introduction by Joss Whedon, extended scenes, "Take a Walk on Serenity," "A Filmmaker's Journey," "The Green Clan," and "Session 416". It's an overwhelming and detailed look at every aspect of "Serenity," exactly what fans of the movie should expect and deserve. Now if they would only get back together and make a sequel. A browncoat can dream.

'Serenity' is released by Universal Home Video and stars Nathan Fillion, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Adam Baldwin, Alan Tudyk, and Summer Glau, and was written and directed by Joss Whedon. It was released on December 30th, 2008.



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