

## Blu-Ray Review: High Definition Makes ‘The Rock Collection’ More Appealing

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 9, 2009 - 12:55pm

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CHICAGO – [Dwayne Johnson](#) [7], the artist formerly known as ‘[The Rock](#) [14],’ has a new movie hitting theaters next month, “[Race to Witch Mountain](#) [11],” so the time seems right to revisit the action extravaganzas that almost made this former wrestler a massive star with the release of three of his early films on Blu-Ray in “[The Rock Collection](#) [15]”.

A spin-off of “[The Mummy](#) [18],” “The Scorpion King” was the film that started it all for The Rock back in April of 2002. Directed by Chuck Russell, “The Scorpion King” is a loud, nonsensical action movie that co-stars [Kelly Hu](#) [10] and [Michael Clarke Duncan](#) [19].



Set 5,000 years ago in Gomorrah, The Rock plays Matthayus, the most fearsome warrior of the ancient world, a leader hired to kill the beautiful sorceress (Kelly Hu) who has helped the evil warlord Memmon (Steven Brand) rule with an iron fist. Matthayus kidnaps the sorceress to lure Memmon into a trap and, with the help of Balthazar (Michael Clarke Duncan), the stage is set for the ultimate showdown.

“The Scorpion King” is a mess, leadenly directed by the man who made “Eraser,” “Bless the Child,” and “A Nightmare on Elm Street 3,” but it’s the perfect film for Blu-Ray. The Rock was a bigger than life star from the very beginning and the HD format fits him perfectly. He’s too over-the-top for standard definition.

“The Scorpion King is presented in 1080P High-Definition Widescreen with a 2.35:1 aspect ratio and an English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 track (with Spanish and French DTS Surround 5.1 tracks). Universal has given the film the U-Control treatment, meaning behind-the-scenes featurettes can be accessed picture-in-picture while the film plays. Viewers can also access more content through BD-Live and pick their favorite scenes with the “My Scenes” feature. The film also includes a commentary by Chuck Russell.

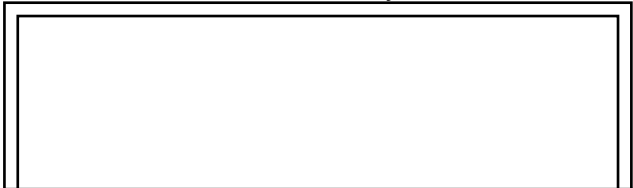




Photo credit: Universal

Still my favorite Rock film, [Peter Berg](#) [20]'s "The Rundown" should have been a bigger hit and really felt like it was going to turn this charismatic action hero into a star. Still the most critically acclaimed film in The Rock's career, "The Rundown" co-stars [Seann William Scott](#) [13], [Christopher Walken](#) [21], and [Rosario Dawson](#) [12] in an old-fashioned, fun-as-hell action adventure. He's moved on to family movies like "The Gameplan," "Get Smart," and "Witch Mountain," but I hold out hope that he has another fun action movie like "The Rundown" yet to produce.

In "The Rundown," The Rock stars as a bounty hunter named Beck sent into the treacherous jungles of the Amazon to bring the rebellious Travis (Scott) back to the States. When Beck and Travis reluctantly join forces to hunt down a priceless treasure, this unlikely team embarks on a pulse-pounding, non-stop thrill ride.

The Blu-Ray presentation for "The Rundown" is in 1080P with a 2.35:1 aspect ratio and an English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 track (with Spanish and French DTS 5.1 track). Special features include BD-Live functionality, My Scenes, deleted scenes, "Rumble in the Jungle," "The Amazon, Hawaii Style," "Appetite For Destruction," "The Rundown Uncensored," "Running Down the Town," "Walken's World," a commentary by The Rock and Peter Berg, and a commentary by producers Kevin Misher and Marc Abraham.

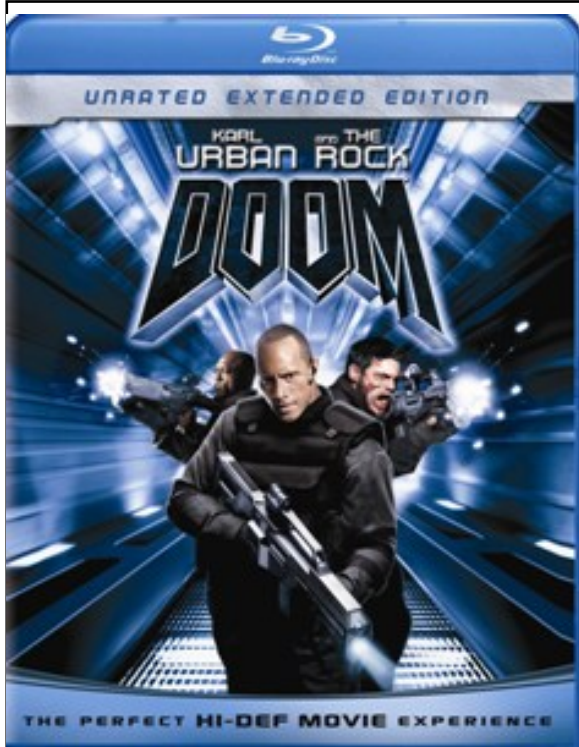


Photo credit: Universal

The final film in "The Rock Collection" is his least successful, the disastrous "Doom," a film that looks better when played on Blu-Ray, but if you're watching it on your PS3, you'll want to pick up a controller and join in. "Doom" looks good in HD but the script is a total disaster and it's not even paced well. But the film will clearly have fans happy to get it on Blu-Ray.

The Rock and [Karl Urban](#) [9] head a team assigned to respond to a distress call at a remote research station on Mars. They descend into the Olduvai Research Station, where they find a legion of nightmarish creatures, lurking in the darkness, killing at will. Once there, the Marines must use an arsenal of firepower to carry out their mission; nothing gets out alive.

"Doom" is presented in 1080P with a 2.35:1 aspect ration and an English DTS-HD Master Audio track (with Spanish and French DTS 5.1 tracks). Special features include BD-Live, My Scenes functionality, "Basic Training," "Rock Formation," "Master Monster Makers," "First-Person Shooter Sequence," "Doom Nation", and "Game On!"

It's impossible to heartily recommend a three-pack with only one good movie in it and "The Scorpion King" and "Doom" are definite misfires. Having said that, as bad as these movies are, they were *made* for Blu-Ray, enhanced by the world of high-definition more than your average drama and accompanied by Universal's excellent understanding of how next-gen special features should be presented. If you're primary

reason to buy a Blu-Ray title is the movie itself, just pick up “The Rundown,” but if you’re drawn in by all the bells and whistles, “The Rock Collection” is likely to satisfy.

*‘The Rock Collection’ is released by Universal Home Video and stars Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson, Kelly Hu, Michael Clarke Duncan, Seann William Scott, Christopher Walken, Rosario Dawson, and Karl Urban. ‘Doom’ is unrated and ‘The Scorpion King’ and ‘The Rundown’ are PG-13. It was released on February 10th, 2009.*



[22]

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