

Blu-Ray Review: ‘Marley & Me’ Effective Crowd Pleaser, Great Blu-Ray

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 7, 2009 - 1:29pm

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CHICAGO – “[Marley & Me](#) [12]” is that rare, old-fashioned crowd pleaser that honestly pleases. The movie just works. Yes, it’s sentimental, melodramatic, and a bit long, but it’s completely effective and was underrated in theaters. This is going to be a movie that fans love for years to come and Fox has given their family-friendly hit a gorgeous three-disc Blu-Ray treatment.

“Marley & Me” opened with the highest Christmas day gross of all time and stayed at number one into 2009. It’s very easy to see why. This underrated dramedy directed by [David Frankel](#) [13] (“The Devil Wears Prada”) and written by the excellent [Scott Frank](#) [14] (“The Lookout”) and [Don Roos](#) [15] (“The Opposite of Sex”) is moving without being manipulative and the kind of heartwarming story of average people that you don’t see that often in the era of sequels and superheroes.



Marley and Me was released on Blu-Ray on March 31st, 2009.

Photo credit: Fox

Jenny ([Jennifer Aniston](#) [7]) and John Grogan ([Owen Wilson](#) [10]) have an average life in “Marley & Me” with all of the ups and downs framed in the context of their gorgeous-yet-problematic yellow Labrador Retriever that they name Marley. They move from Michigan to Florida after John gets a job at the *Palm Beach Post* with his friend Sebastian (Eric Dane). John’s buddy gets the more dangerous, sexy, high-profile assignments while John ends up writing a column about his dog.





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Photo credit: Fox

Marley is more than a handful. At first, they try to have him sleep in the garage but this hundred-pounds-of-canine needs constant companionship. And he destroys nearly everything he comes in contact with.

Once John realizes that he can use his column to write about his adventures with Marley, the film becomes basically just a series of highlights from the life of a young couple through their thirties. They experience tragic loss and incredible triumph, have a few kids, fight, make up, and Marley is always there in the family picture. The screenplay by Roos & Frank does an amazing job of making Marley a believable part of the life of the Grogans instead of putting all the focus on him.

The script is what truly sets "Marley & Me" apart from similar family fare but it certainly helps to have Wilson's most affable and believable performance in years. He downplays the shtick of movies like "You, Me, & Dupree" and "Drillbit Taylor" and makes John a likable, fully-realized character. Even Aniston, who surprisingly takes a back seat to Wilson, is more believable than in a lot of her recent work. Frankel deserves credit for making John, Jenny, and Marley feel real instead of just melodramatic devices.

This movie canine isn't perfect. At nearly two-hours, "Marley & Me" overstays its welcome a bit. There are a few too many "Marley, no!" scenes and Dane is ineffective as John's buddy. Wilson sells John's concerns about not realizing his dreams of tough journalism without the superfluous supporting character.



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Photo credit: Fox

But these are minor complaints for what is essentially a charming movie with charismatic leads of the two and four-legged variety.

Fox knows "Marley & Me" is not only a hit but a film that families will watch for years, so they employed the Disney model in their Blu-Ray

release, giving buyers a BD, DVD, and digital copy of the film in one beautiful package. I love this release pattern because it recognizes that modern families watch movies in more than the family room and allows them one purchase to watch "Marley & Me" wherever they want to see it.

The BD version is presented in 1080p with a 2.35:1 aspect ratio and a great English DTS HD 5.1 Master Lossless Audio track. Spanish, French, and Portuguese 5.1 tracks are also included.

The extensive special features include an amazing 19 deleted scenes with optional director's commentary, "Finding Marley," "Breaking the Golden Rule," "On Set with Marley: Dog of All Trades," "Animal Adoption," "When Not to Pee," a gag reel, and a dog training trivia track. The featurettes are a little scattered and repetitive and it would have been nice to hear a commentary track, but it's about as solid a collection of extras as fans could expect. 19 deleted scenes! Was there a 3-hour version of "Marley & Me" at one point? That's a lot of dog.

If you avoided "Marley & Me" because you think it's too cheesy or old-fashioned, give it a shot. You may be surprised by this lovable pooch.

'Marley & Me' is released by Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment and stars Owen Wilson, Jennifer Aniston, Eric Dane, and Alan Arkin. It was released on March 31st, 2009. It is rated PG.



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