

## Blu-Ray Review: Pixar's Beloved 'Up' Continues HD Dominance

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 18, 2009 - 12:21am

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CHICAGO – One of the most beloved films of the year and a likely contender for the Oscar for Best Picture now that the category has expanded to ten nominees, Pixar's "Up" was recently released on Blu-Ray in yet another lovingly produced set from a company that has been a pioneer in the next-gen format. "Up" doesn't exceed expectations but also doesn't falter from the critically-acclaimed pattern.



Blu-Ray Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Pixar has built a reputation by taking unexpected character models and turning them into movie magic. Whether it be toys that come to life, a refined rat, a family of superheroes, or a lovable robot, one never can judge a Pixar character by its cover. Such is the case with Carl Fredericksen (Ed Asner), the delightful hero of "Up" who just happens to be a crotchety old man.



Up was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on November 10th, 2009.

*Photo credit: Walt Disney Home Video*

It's hard to truly capture the magic of "Up" in a plot description, which is why the advertising has focused so heavily on the colorful balloons. There's a lot more to Pete Docter's film than a house that flies.





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*Photo credit: Walt Disney Home Video*

The film opens with a young Carl fawning over the exploits of adventurer Charles Muntz. The silent-but-wide-eyed Carl finds himself entangled with another young dreamer named Ellie and the two form a bond that will last nearly a century. A spectacular, heart-breaking montage details the life of Carl and Ellie, ending with her passing, which leaves our hero grumpy, creaky, and alone. When the nursing home comes to take him away, he follows through on a promise he made to a young Ellie and uses helium balloons to fly away from this cruel world and find happiness somewhere else. Along for the ride are a junior explorer (Jordan Nagai), a talking dog, and a colorful bird.

There's a lot to love about "Up" but an element that has been missed in much of the copious praise is that Docter's film is simply hilarious. "WALL-E" was a sci-fi adventure, "The Incredibles" was an action movie, and "Ratatouille" was a film about culinary passion, but "Up" is primarily a comedy. There are dramatic themes but fans will revisit this movie and laugh out loud as they fall in love with the importance of never letting life get in the way of your spirit of adventure.

The first two acts of "Up" are as perfect as anything released this year but the film somewhat falters in the final one. Action has never been a strength of Pixar and the film gets a bit too goofy for its own good in the final act as dozens of talking dogs, a blimp, and the balloon-buoyed house are forced into a somewhat awkwardly-conceived action sequence. The ending also lacks a bit of the emotional undercurrent of not just the best of Pixar but the rest of the film.



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*Photo credit: Walt Disney Home Video*

I may be harder on "Up" than I would be if it were a Sony or Fox film and there's MORE than enough here to warrant a recommendation. The fact that "Up" is "merely" one of the most entertaining films of the year is only a viable criticism when one considers the bar set by what Pixar had produced before. ("WALL-E" was my number one film of 2008 and both "Toy Story"s, "Finding Nemo," "Ratatouille," and "The Incredibles" are among my favorite films of the last twenty years.)

Ultimately, what has allowed Pixar to shine is the fact that they recognize that animation is a medium, not a genre. You can make action films, dramas, sci-fi adventures, or whatever your imagination can dream up within that medium. With "Up," Pixar produced a beautiful, heartwarming, comedy adventure that shouldn't be missed.

Technically, the Blu-Ray release for "Up" is a beauty. Disney and Pixar films always look amazing in HD and this one's perfect, as is the audio



mix.

Special features for "Up" include a commentary by Docter and co-director Bob Peterson, the mildly-amusing "Dug's Special Mission" short film, the great "Partly Cloudy" short film that played in theaters, "The Many Endings of Muntz" (which proves that perhaps there were a few problems with the development of the final act of the film), "Adventure is Out There," the "Cine-Explore" feature, "Geriatric Hero," "Canine Companions," "Russell: Wilderness Explorer," "Our Giant Flightless Friend, Kevin," "Homemakers of Pixar," "Balloons and Flight," "Composing for Characters," "Married Life," and "The Global Guardian Badge Game".

The combo pack release for "Up" also includes a DVD and digital copy of the film, continuing Pixar/Disney's fantastic trend of providing their films in every format, recognizing that families need options when it comes to entertainment. Don't miss the option to add "Up" to your collection.

*'Up' is released by Walt Disney Home Video and stars the voice work of Ed Asner, Christopher Plummer, Jordan Nagai, Bob Peterson, and Delroy Lindo. It was written by Bob Peterson and directed by Pete Docter. It was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on November 10th, 2009.*



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