

## Blu-Ray Review: 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince' Looks Amazing in HD

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 17, 2009 - 4:04pm

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CHICAGO – “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” is one of the most visually striking films of a year filled with achievements in great cinematography. I love Deakins’ work on “A Serious Man,” Richardson’s on “Inglourious Basterds,” and Christian Berger’s on “The White Ribbon,” but Bruno Delbonnel (who also lensed “Amelie”) has helped produce one of the most aesthetically remarkable films of the year, easily the most interesting interplay of shadow and light yet seen in a “Potter” film. Naturally, it makes for a great fit with the 1080p of Blu-Ray.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

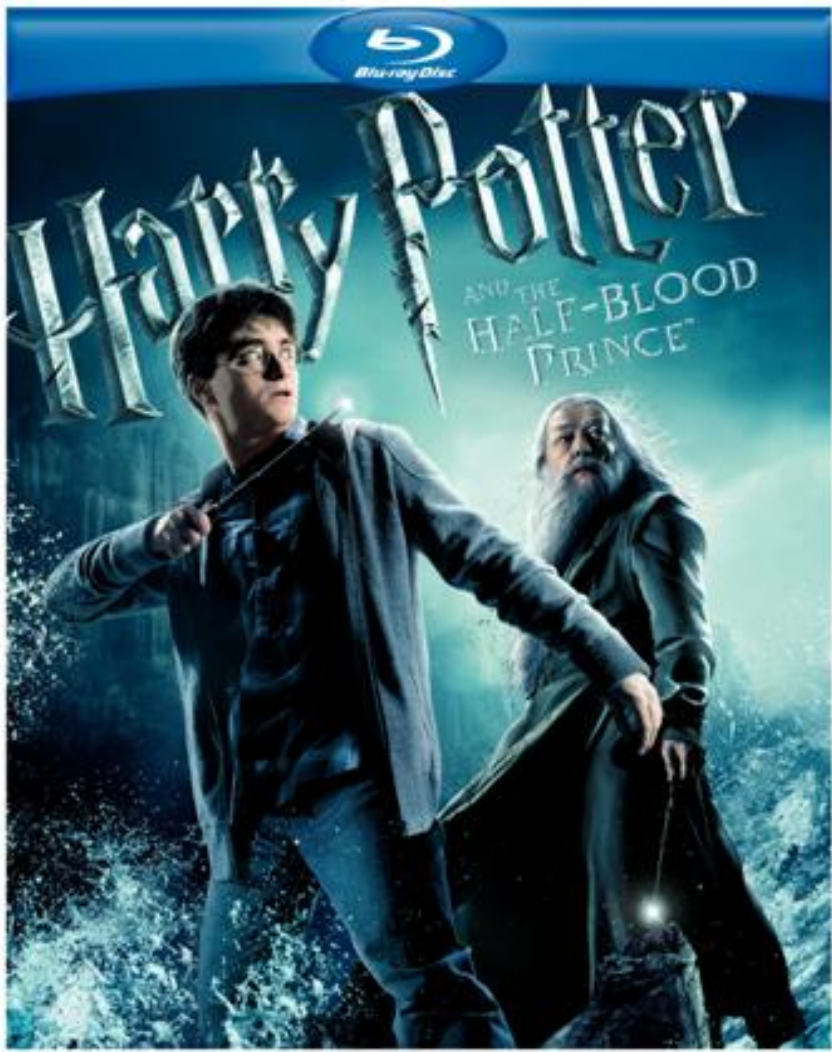
After shuffling directors for four installments in a row from Chris Columbus to Alfonso Cuarón to Mike Newell, the “Harry Potter” series settled on the relatively unknown David Yates for the final four films (“The Order of the Phoenix,” “The Half-Blood Prince,” and the two-part “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows”).



Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on December 8th, 2009.

*Photo credit: Warner Bros. Home Video*

It's interesting that Yates will lay claim to half the franchise as I feel that he hasn't put much of a directorial stamp on his films and, consequently, they come off a little dryer than they should. There are large passages of “Half-Blood Prince” that are quite simply dull. Like “Order of the Phoenix,” it sometimes feels like we're treading water until we get to the final films and there's too much focus on the romantic entanglements of Harry, Ron, and Hermione for my taste. And the final climactic bits, especially one with Dumbledore, don't have the dramatic urgency that they should or would have with another director.



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*Photo credit: Warner Bros. Home Video*

Even with a bit of missing narrative drive, "Half-Blood Prince" works better than the last film simply due to the power of its imagery. This is a strikingly gorgeous film, featuring not just the best cinematography of the series but better than most films released this year. Delbonnel's use of color and shadow in telling what is, once again, a rather dark story is flawless and whoever thought the man who worked so well in the fantasy worlds of Jean-Pierre Jeunet would be a good fit for Harry Potter deserves a raise.

It doesn't hurt the visual appeal of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" to come from the company still setting the bar for HD video quality, Warner Brothers. The video transfer of the worldwide hit is simply flawless with just the right line detail and nearly three-dimensional pop. The audio mix is similarly remarkable.

As for special features, one has to wonder what's been held back for the inevitable "Ultimate Edition" of the film that will one day tie in with the recent gigantic box set releases of the first two films but what is provided is extensive and notable. Fans will likely be drawn to the deleted scenes first, but they were all correctly cut from a film that still runs long. Most interesting is a featurette on J.K. Rowling's writing process and how she closed the door on the series with the final book. Several behind-the-scenes documentaries round out a typically complete package for a franchise that has been delivering them for years.

I hope Yates finds a little more passion in his production of the final two films (if you're curious, after the focus on the look of "Half-Blood Prince" in this review, they're being shot by the very talented Eduardo Serra, Oscar nominee for "Girl With a Pearl Earring" and "Wings of the Dove") but he has delivered a reasonably entertaining film that makes for a remarkably good Blu-Ray release.

*'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince' is released by Warner Brothers Home Video and stars Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, Jim Broadbent, Robbie Coltrane, Maggie Smith, and Jim Broadbent. It was written by Steve Kloves from the book by J.K. Rowling and directed by David Yates. It was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on December 8th, 2009.*



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