

'Speed Racer' Condemns Franchise Dignity, Delivers Sensorial Explosion

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CHICAGO – While Hollywood slapped “PG” on the hotly anticipated “Speed Racer” to line its pocketbooks with the widest hodgepodge of people (ahem: kids) everywhere, those same kids will leave the theater with that lollipop nearly sucked to the stick but then yanked away with confusion.

Rather than the “go!” marketing hype, this is a stop-and-go proposition. Chicago brothers Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski are ultimately wrangling with a clear identity crisis of who this film is meant for.



Is it the 1967 crowd who adored the American anime version following the Japanese manga creation? Is it for today's children who didn't grow up with the franchise but will magically identify with it from scratch because it's on the big screen? Perhaps it's for “The Matrix” crowd who slobber over the Wachowski's sensory orgy?

 [Read Adam Fendelman's full review of “Speed Racer” in our reviews section.](#) [18]

 [View our full, high-resolution “Speed Racer” image gallery.](#) [19]

A slathering of all of the above will be influenced by the omnipresent advertising and power of the Wachowski name, which has been catapulted to stardom with the trail-blazing triumph of “The Matrix” films.

But with summer blockbuster season in full effect for 2008, moviegoers won't spend in droves the way they recently did with “Iron Man,” which is so far the [best-reviewed film of the year](#) [20].

With a production budget of \$140 million, “Iron Man” has already earned [\\$220 million](#) [21] in worldwide box-office receipts in its first six days of release, according to Box Office Mojo. With a production budget of \$100 million, “Speed Racer” won't compare.

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Despite its bevy of blemishes, you can't deny its color. There's an intense vibrancy to the environment that – while unrealistic in the real world – is beautifully charming in Hollywood's CGIville.

Knowing they had to hop beyond another planet in the solar system following 2003's "The Matrix Revolutions," the Wachowskis don't disappoint in the "Speed Racer" special effects department.

The brothers continue to break new ground, and in doing so, they play an important role in inspiring other visionaries to forge new lines of thinking.

Just as "The Matrix" in 1999 had sequences that have been among the most emulated in Hollywood today over the past decade, the Wachowskis continue to up their own bar.



Emile Hirsch in "Speed Racer".
Photo credit: Warner Bros.



Matthew Fox (middle) in "Speed Racer".
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

★ [Read Adam Fendelman's full "Speed Racer" review...](#) [18]

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