



Blu-ray Disc News

News and Views from the Blu-ray Disc Association

08 June 2007

Contents in this issue

- Pirates top the HD charts
- Sony ships new popularly priced BD player
- Panasonic expands Hollywood Blu-ray Disc R&D facility
- Paramount brings Blades of Glory to Blu-ray Disc

Pirates top the HD charts

"We are thrilled by the critical and industry response to Pirates on Blu-ray Disc. But more importantly, the consumer has spoken loud and clear. This is only the beginning, but it was certainly a significant and explosive indicator of things to come."

*Bob Chapek
Worldwide President
Buena Vista Home
Entertainment*

Last week saw the Blu-ray Disc release of the first two *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies from Buena Vista Home Entertainment, representing some of the most anticipated titles on the Blu-ray Disc format. Immediately, the two movies moved into a leading position within the sales charts, confounding predictions that much vaunted HD DVD releases would rule the roost in the US market.

Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl and *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* took the top two spots on the High Definition DVD sales charts and combined sold more than three times the highest HD DVD release last week.

Disney has no plans to bring any of the *Pirates* movies to HD DVD, due to a strong commitment to the Blu-ray Disc format. Bob Chapek, Worldwide President of Buena Vista Home Entertainment, calls the *Pirates* sales tally a "strong and significant trend toward consumer preference for the Blu-ray Disc format."

"We are thrilled by the critical and industry response to *Pirates* on Blu-ray Disc," he said. "But more importantly, the consumer has spoken loud and clear. This is only the beginning, but it was certainly a significant and explosive indicator of things to come."



Sony ships new popularly priced BD player

“The BD format gained great momentum in the past several months, and we’re going to capitalize on that with the new model. The player gives a broader consumer segment the opportunity to experience the exceptional quality of Blu-ray Disc format at a competitive price.”

*Chris Fawcett
Vice president of marketing
Sony Electronics’ Home
Product Division*

In the US, Sony has started shipping its new Blu-ray Disc player to major consumer electronics retailers and specialty dealers nationwide for a list price of \$499. The BDP-S300 is expected to broaden the High Definition disc player market while delivering new features including the advanced Dolby Digital Plus audio codec as well as BRAVIA Theatre Sync and CD playback.

“The BD format gained great momentum in the past several months, and we’re going to capitalize on that with the new model,” said Chris Fawcett, vice president of marketing for Sony Electronics’ Home Product Division. “The player gives a broader consumer segment the opportunity to experience the exceptional quality of Blu-ray Disc format at a competitive price.”

The new model can output 1920 x 1080/24p High Definition video, currently the highest resolution High Definition signal available through an HDMI connection. The player supports various video formats, including MPEG2, MPEG4-AVC and VC1. For those who own an HDTV set without HDMI, an analog component output for 1080i (interlaced) is available as well.

The new BD player is compatible with most standard DVDs and has the added feature of 1080p upscaling through HDMI to 1080p capable HDTVs, improving the picture performance of existing DVD libraries.



BDP-S300 - highest quality at a popular price

The model also supports AVC-HD discs encoded with x.v.Color (xvYCC) technology, a new international standard for wide color space. The standard expands the current data range of video approximately 1.8 times allowing the player to output more natural and vivid colors similar to what the human eye can actually see.

The new BD unit incorporates BRAVIA Theatre Sync utilizing HDMI connectivity, which integrates the operation of the player with a compatible BRAVIA flat-panel LCD television or audio/video receiver. With the touch of a button, you can automatically turn on and switch inputs to match connected devices.

Additionally, the player offers multi-channel linear PCM digital audio output via HDMI, and can decode Dolby Digital Plus, providing optimum surround sound to an appropriately equipped receiver. The unit has optical and coaxial digital audio out, along with 5.1 channel decoding capability for backward compatibility with existing receivers.

The BDP-S300 joins Sony’s family of full HD 1080 line of products, spanning from its original BDP-S1 BD player, now with a list price of \$799, to BRAVIA flat-panel

LCD, and 3LCD and SXRD rear-projection television line, as well as the PLAYSTATION 3 games console, PC drives and recordable BD media.

Panasonic expands Hollywood Blu-ray Disc R&D facility

"We are opening our doors to directors, producers, the big household names, through our relations with the studios—they want to learn about Blu-ray."

*Eisuke Tsuyuzaki
VP of corporate development and general manager, Blu-ray Group Panasonic R&D Company of America.*

Panasonic's Hollywood Laboratory (PHL) is expanding its California-based research and development facility and its staff to grow with the Blu-ray Disc format.

Since its inception in 2001, PHL has grown to four times its original building area size and two years ago moved into a larger space. Now residing near NBC Universal (which ironically happens to exclusively support Blu-ray rival HD DVD), PHL is expected to beef up its staff by over 50% between now and the end of year.

To date, PHL has authored and developed about 12 titles featuring BD-Java, the format's interactive technology, for 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment and Buena Vista Home Entertainment. Fox's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and Buena Vista's first two *Pirates of the Caribbean* films—all representing some of BD's most progressive efforts—are among Panasonic's credits.

The lab is now asking studios and filmmakers for help infusing titles with picture-in-picture and Web-enabled BD Live features. "We are opening our doors to directors, producers, the big household names, through our relations with the studios—they want to learn about Blu-ray," said Eisuke Tsuyuzaki, VP of corporate development and general manager, Blu-ray Group for Panasonic R&D Company of America. "Getting the endorsement and backing of the creative community is paramount."

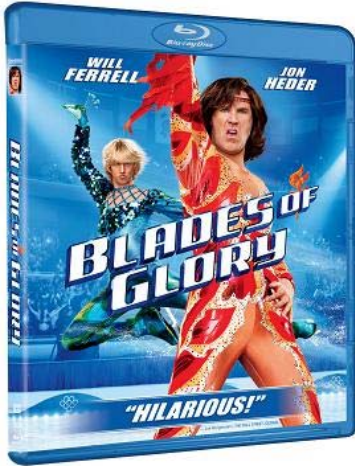


Panasonic brings BD know-how to Hollywood's creative community

Picture-in-picture, where a separate video stream plays on top of the running feature film, will debut on a BD title this year, says Tsuyuzaki. This coincides with the BD Group's Oct. 31 deadline mandating that all new hardware models launching after this date must handle picture-in-picture playback.

PHL also is testing a BD Live prototype title, which will likely street by early 2008. In addition to BD Java and BD Live, PHL also has been involved in research and development of the format's advanced codec MPEG 4 (also known as AVC) and copy-protection technologies AACS and BD+.

Paramount brings Blades of Glory to Blu-ray Disc



As the adage says, content is king, so news that Paramount Home Entertainment is extending its Blu-ray Disc line-up is yet more power to the format's elbow. Paramount Home Entertainment will support the home video debut of *Blades of Glory* with a multi-million dollar marketing campaign including television, radio and online advertising and a comprehensive national publicity campaign.

Will Ferrell (*Talladega Nights*) and Jon Heder (*Napoleon Dynamite*) are at their comedic best in the "hysterical parody" (Los Angeles Times) *Blades Of Glory* skating onto DVD and Blu-ray Disc on August 28, 2007.

"Full of laughs both subtle and ridiculous" (Chicago Tribune) the send-up of the world of professional figure skating garnered more than \$100 million at the U.S. box office with its laugh-out-loud story of rival skaters forced to compete together as a pairs team in order to return to the ice.

The film also stars Will Arnett (*Arrested Development*), Amy Poehler (*Shrek The Third*), Jenna Fischer (*The Office*) and Craig T. Nelson (*The Family Stone*) and features appearances by real-life skating stars Scott Hamilton, Nancy Kerrigan, Dorothy Hamill, Brian Boitano and Peggy Fleming.

The *Blades of Glory* DVD and Blu-ray Disc presentations feature an avalanche of bonus material including "Return to Glory: The Making of *Blades*", "Celebrities on Thin Ice", "Cooler Than Ice: The Super-Sexy Costumes of Skating", "Arnett & Poehler: A Family Affair", "20 Questions with Scott Hamilton", "Hector: Portrait of a Psychofan", deleted scenes, a gag reel, alternate takes, a music video and more.

The *Blades of Glory* Blu-ray Disc presentation will be 1080p High Definition with English, French and Spanish 5.1 Dolby Digital and English, English SDH+, French, Spanish and Portuguese subtitles.

We are here
to help

The Blu-ray Disc Association supports the production of this electronic newsletter. For more information on the association visit the website – www.blu-raydisc.com
To find out more about any of the topics reported here please email info@blu-ray-news.net

Images included within this newsletter have been minimised for ease of emailing. If you require hi-res versions for reproduction within magazines please contact info@blu-ray-news.net

To receive copies of Blu-ray Disc News free of charge, please email info@blu-ray-news.net stating your wish to subscribe. Likewise, if your colleagues want to receive the newsletter all we need is their email address.
