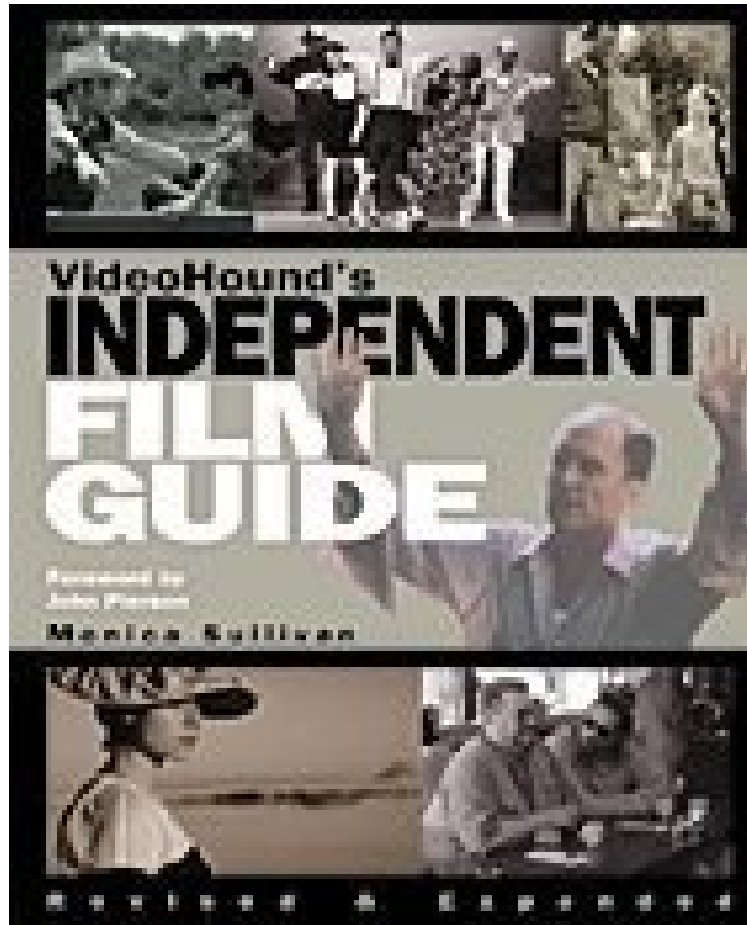


VideoHound's Independent Film Guide

Monica Sullivan

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Monica Sullivan : VideoHound's Independent Film Guide before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised VideoHound's Independent Film Guide:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Wish There Was an Another Guide to Independent Film By A Customer Read through some of the reviews in this book before you buy it!!! There are a number of things about this guide that are disappointing, so it's all the more pity that it seems to be the only published collection on independent films. (Let me preface my complaints by saying that, as with all film guides, the degree to which your taste lines up with the writer's makes a huge difference. Perhaps if I found this guide to be more consistent with my own taste, the other issues would not have bothered me so much.) Aside from the author's taste, here are some things about the guide that might bother you. First, although the guide uses a rating system (from 4 "bones" [good] to a "woof" [bad]); you might be surprised, however, at how often the author will devote half a page describing a "woof" of a movie, and a mere few sentences describing a "four bone" film. Second, although there are a number of useful appendices (films listed by director, cast member, category), there is no listing by rating; you'd think if they bother to rank films

according to their bones system, at least they'd give us the chance to flip to the back and see a listing of what the author considers the best independent films. Third, the author certainly knows film history, but it's annoying to have her rambling non-sequiters take the place of description or evaluation of a film (example: the entire "review" of "La Femme Nikita" is devoted to a tirade about how the American version of the film is a rip-off -- and how the tv series continues this corruption. Even if you agree with her, as I do, you may wish she at least described the original movie for those who have never seen it -- and gave some sense of what is interesting about it.) Fourth, the physical format of the book is annoying; it is larger and "floppier" than other guides (such as the Time Out guide) and quite unwieldy (you won't find it is easy to sit and read, let alone carry into your video store). Fifth, since Video Hound also publishes a companion guide to World Cinema, and since it's not clear what criteria are being used to include "foreign" (ie, non-English language) films in the current guide (the fact they are foreign? or famous? or the reviewer has seen them?), it's somewhat frustrating that there are a number of foreign films listed in this Independent Film Guide -- rather than more unknown or little-known indies.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Rich and wonderful
By A Customer
I enjoy reading books by movie buffs and I think that this book reveals the spirit of a reviewer who sees a lot of films and is not afraid to like or dislike what she sees. She puts it out boldly in her review on 'Valentino'. That is a film most people clearly disliked-- but she loved it. It is clear that Sullivan has seen everything she reviewed and for that reason it makes the book very special. Even if she dislikes a film, it's worth it to me to have this reference when I see it. I certainly agreed with what she wrote about 'A Boy and a Dog' (and I would say BARF, not just WOOF). After all, Don Johnson begs for ridicule, and it's funny to hear that the press attach begged her to go back in! And that's an example of a film that people seemed to like. The same went for 'Cold Feet' when the press kit included instructions on what to laugh at or not. I enjoy these insides to a reviewer's life, just as all aspects of the movie business. I particularly loved Sullivan's review of 'Jackie Brown'! That was what I was thinking exactly. Pam Grier rocked in 'Coffie' but in Tarantino's film, she remains only an icon. I was also disappointed with the film 'Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!' by Almodovar after his brilliant 'Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown', and the insights of the review point to some reasons why it didn't work. Check out the review on 'Good Will Hunting' and you can imagine the effects of media bombardment that tells the public to like something, through sheer advertising. How about 'The Player', which Sullivan cryptically warns us is a case book study: 'Heaven help Hollywood in the 21st Century'. (And we 'were' warned! I am not looking forward to the Oscars 2002!). And I want to see Altman's 'The Delinquents' now, which she suggests. Sullivan demythologizes film demagogues even in the Indie scene for us. I can understand that this is controversial but I love it!. With so much information (and since this is second reprint) I'm sure that any small discrepancies can be patched in for a third book, and I'm waiting. 1000 films are reviewed, and the special inserts are colorful and interesting for example on Lawrence Tierney, Ida Lupino and Sandra Goldbacher, to name only a few. Sullivan reveals so many aspects of independent film history which are valuable such as production code indies. ('Who Killed Teddy Bear') and Mary Pickford's work ('The Sparrow'). How about an overrated enigma indie like 'Spanking the Monkey', my sentiments exactly. And plots are revealed. 'Take Clay Pigeons' and 'The Journals of Jean Seberg' for example I have to say this is an excellent and personal review book. Critics have to dare to speak their truth, and I can't imagine their lives are always fun when their work is questioned. As Monica says "under threat of social torture, I will confess to being a movie reviewer". Further, she says 'I don't want a film to reinforce an opinion I already have. I want to see and hear the world from a perspective other than my own. I love it when a filmmaker shares a world that is wildly different from the one I've experienced up till now. Indies fill that need'. Monica's website 'Movie Magazine International' lives on in between reprints where I can keep up on independent film. I enjoy being a Monica Sullivan fan, she deserves her own cult and I sign up!

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.
Worthwhile - but here are some flaws...
By A Customer
As the previous reviews note, this volume has a lot going for it - decent scope and background info on many movies - but it has several flaws which prevent it from being as useful as it could have been: 1) The informal tone of the writing occasionally leads to overly juvenile and not overly illuminating rah-rah or boo-hiss opinionating on the film/director/whatever being discussed, 2) Too often background info on the movie is about the only thing discussed in the review, and little things like, well, what the movie is actually *about* get ignored (see, for ex., the "Gaslight" 'review'). Whether this is oversight or intellectual arrogance - "hey doesn't everybody know about this movie already?" - is hard to tell, and 3) the author's flaky politics occasionally intrude - for ex., her PC 'women are so oppressed yet smarter than men' views taint some reviews (see "Bad Lieutenant", for one ex.), and some films, such as "And the Band Played On", are included/praised more for their Grand Political Importance than anything worthy about the film in itself. Nevertheless, if you've an interest in the indie-film scene this is a worthwhile buy, but just in case its style doesn't agree with you, be sure to either read through it first or buy it on sale!

Devoted exclusively to reviews of independent films, VideoHound's guide offers 1,000 video reviews arranged in an A to Z format plus insight into some of the people in the industry. 125 photos 60 sidebars.

.com VideoHound's Independent Film Guide is exclusively for lovers of independent cinema, movies made outside the

Hollywood mainstream. If you're a fan of epics such as *Burnt by the Sun* and *The English Patient*, obscure black-and-white classics such as *Dead of Night* and *He Ran All the Way*, foreign oddities such as *Matador* and *The Lair of the White Worm*, or contemporary cult favorites such as *Crash* and *Fargo*, you'll find much to treasure here and some good tips on what to see next. Most movie guides are group efforts, but this book was composed by a single author. Monica Sullivan's prose is as free spirited and idiosyncratic as the films she reviews. In reading the volume you'll become well enough acquainted with the author's enthusiasm for the cinema and her personal likes and dislikes to measure your own tastes by them. Digressive, idiosyncratic, but nevertheless rewarding, VideoHound's *Independent Film Guide* is as much a movie reference as it is an autobiography, the chronicle of one reviewer's personal engagement with some of the most extraordinary films ever made. The guide opens with an introduction by indie actress Mare Winningham and concludes with indices of actors, directors, and alternate titles for the films reviewed as well as a list of indie film Web sites, a guide to movie distributors, and the specialty of the VideoHound house: a quirky category index that classifies the films in the book under traditional headings such as "Action Adventure," "Comedy," and "Foreign," and also under a variety of atypical headings, including "Showbiz Dramas," "Female Bonding," and "Religion"--even "Killer Bugs"!