

REVIEW

Mad Max: Fury Road 3D Blu-ray Review

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 04, 2015 BY KEN_MCALINDEN

+ Highly Recommended ★★★★★

George Miller's post-apocalyptic franchise roaring vigorously back to life

In *Mad Max: Fury Road*, George Miller returns to his most famous franchise and character for the first time in 30 years and for the first time without Mel Gibson in the title role of post-apocalyptic "road warrior" Max Rockatansky. Stories of Miller's efforts to get this film off the ground over a decade and a half seemed to be raising "troubled production" red flags, but the finished product wowed audiences with its intricate post-apocalyptic aesthetic and its seemingly non-stop chase and action sequences in service of rather than in lieu of story, theme, and character.

Title Information:		
Studio: Warner Brothers	Distributed By: N/A	Video Resolution: 1080P/MVC
Aspect Ratio: 2.40:1	Audio: English Dolby Atmos, Spanish 5.1 DD, French 5.1 DD, Other	
Subtitles: English SDH, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Other		Rating: R
Run Time: 2 Hr. 0 Min.	Package Includes: Blu-ray, 3D Blu-ray, DVD, UltraViolet	

Case Type: Standard sized Blu-ray case with hinged tray allowing for three non-overlapping discs. Case is in a lenticular 3D enhanced slipcover

Disc Type: BD50 (dual layer), DVD-9 (dual layer)	Region: A
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Release Date: 09/01/2015	MSRP: \$44.95
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The Production Rating: 4/5

Mad Max: Fury Road

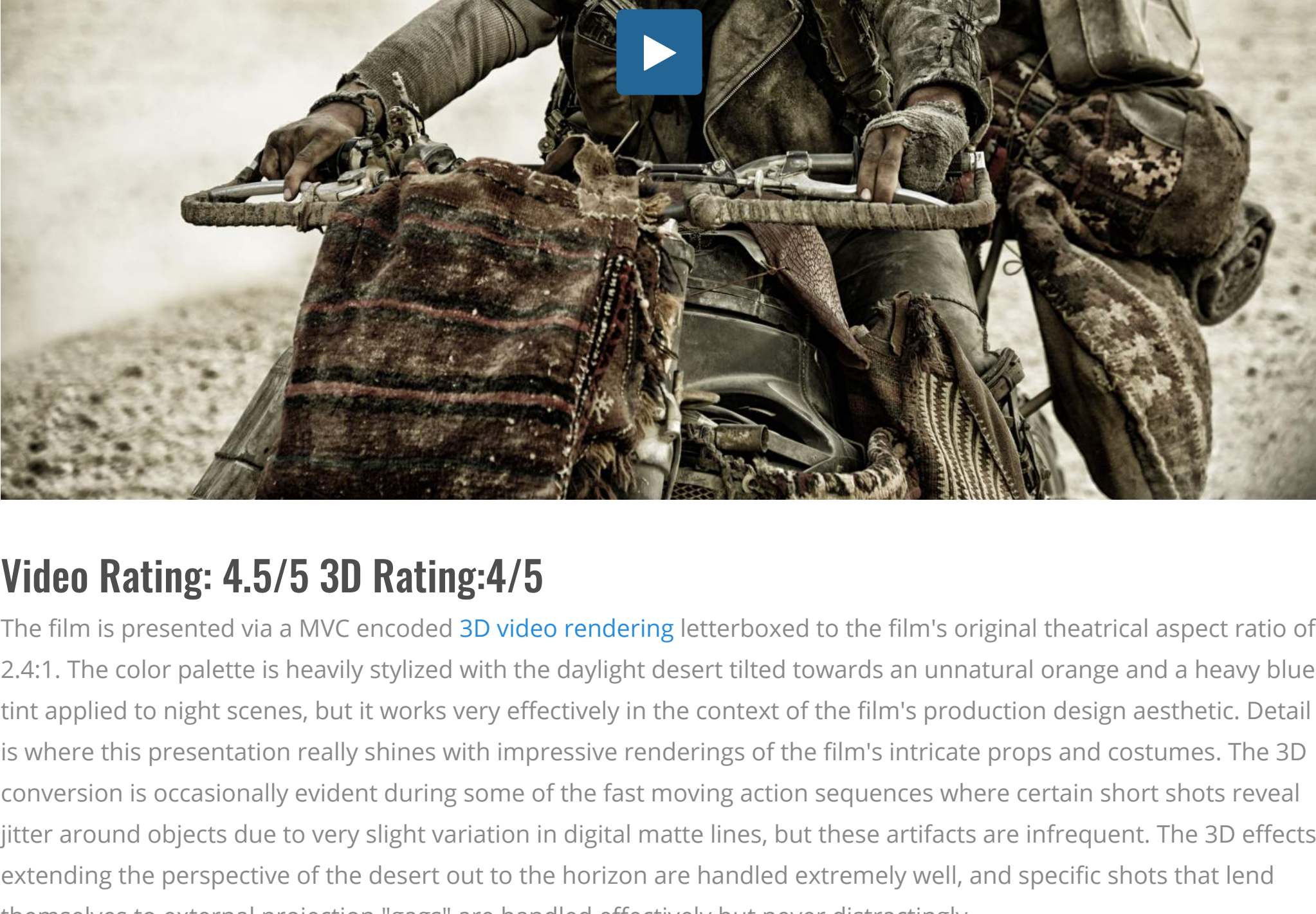
Directed by: George Miller
Starring: Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult, Hugh Keays-Byrne, Josh Helman, Nathan Jones, Zoë Kravitz, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Riley Keough, Abbey Lee, Courtney Eaton

In a post apocalyptic future, damaged and dangerous loner Max Rockatansky (Hardy) is captured by a band of "War Boys" in the roving army of war lord Immortan Joe (Keays-Byrne). When one of Joe's "Imperators" named Furiosa (Theron), goes rogue and steals away Joe's five wives (Kravitz, Huntington-Whiteley, Keough, Lee, & Eaton) in a "War Wagon", Max is taken out on the road strapped to the front of War Boy Nuk's (Hoult) vehicle so that he can be used as a "blood bag" providing a real time transfusion to the ailing Nuk while he joins in the pursuit. Much chasing and racing ensues as Max contends with his confinement and haunting past and Furiosa's motives become clear.

Reportedly fifteen years in the making, Director George Miller and his collaborators appear to have spent their extended time in development hell refining their storyboards and production design. The film's narrative includes a few stops for exposition and character development, but the majority of the storytelling occurs via action and editing with minimal and functional dialog. The first two-thirds of the film consists primarily of an extended vehicular chase through a post-apocalyptic wasteland, with the last half hour consisting primarily of a race through that same wasteland. That it all works seamlessly and brilliantly is a testament to Miller's talents as a visual filmmaker. This is not a film that could coexist with a "second screen experience" since distracting one's eyes from the screen for even seconds can result in missing key plot and character details.

The production design is every bit as striking as the composition and editing, extending the visual aesthetic established in *The Road Warrior* and *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* to an extreme but logical limit. While there is stylistic continuity with prior films in the series, Miller does not attempt to fit the film into strict continuity with its predecessors. For example, Tom Hardy's take on Max is similar to Gibson's marriage between a Clint Eastwood-style "man with no name" drifter and a psychologically damaged film-noir protagonist, but the family he mourns and is haunted by includes a daughter not present in the earlier films.

This retconning of Max's back story underlines a surprising but deftly handled feminist theme that drive's the film's plot. George Miller cleverly finds a way to express the basic thematic elements of many a feminist dystopian novel (e.g. *The Handmaid's Tale*), in a slam bang wall to wall action thriller that's faster and more furious than just about any tentpole spectacle film released this summer. The themes are expressed through character choices and action and never belabored, making for an inventive crowd-pleaser that works on whatever level an audience member wants it to play.



Video Rating: 4.5/5 3D Rating:4/5

The film is presented via a MVC encoded 3D video rendering letterboxed to the film's original theatrical aspect ratio of 2.4:1. The color palette is heavily stylized with the daylight desert tilted towards an unnatural orange and a heavy blue tint applied to night scenes, but it works very effectively in the context of the film's production design aesthetic. Detail is where this presentation really shines with impressive renderings of the film's intricate props and costumes. The 3D conversion is occasionally evident during some of the fast moving action sequences where certain short shots reveal jitter around objects due to very slight variation in digital matte lines, but these artifacts are infrequent. The 3D effects extending the perspective of the desert out to the horizon are handled extremely well, and specific shots that lend themselves to external projection "gags" are handled effectively but never distractingly.

The AVC encoded 2D presentation on the included 2D Blu-ray renders the fine detail even better than its 3D counterpart, and is also worth a separate viewing of the film.

Audio Rating: 4/5

Not being Dolby Atmos equipped, I was still impressed by the directionality of the 5.1 downmix of the lossless Dolby TrueHD track. The soundtrack was loud and a bit more dynamically compressed then the best reference quality surround encodings, but a somewhat dynamically compressed soundtrack is not an aesthetic liability considering the pedal to the metal approach to every other aspect of the film. The 2D Blu-ray includes additional Dolby Digital 5.1 tracks in English DVS, French, Spanish (Latin), and Portuguese. The 3D Blu-ray includes all of these plus an additional Dolby Digital 5.1 Thai track.

The 2D Blu-ray includes optional subtitles in English SDH, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. The 3D Blu-ray includes these plus additional Chinese, Korean, and Thai subtitle streams.

Special Features: 4/5

The 3D Blu-ray is dedicated entirely to the film and includes no promos or special features

When the 2D Blu-ray disc is first played, the viewer is greeted with the following skippable promos:

- Black Mass Theatrical Trailer
- Warner Digital Movies Promo

Proper extras accessible from the 2D Blu-ray's "Special Features" menu include a collection of better than average featurettes on most aspects of the production that fans would want to know about as well as a brief collection of deleted scenes:

Maximum Fury: Filming Fury Road (28:37) is the most comprehensive overview of the film on the disc. Topics covered include the conception of the film primarily via storyboards, the Namibia locations, challenges of the constantly moving story and production, the insistence on real stunts, the innovative use of the "edge arm", key stunts, the physical approach of Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy to their roles, the rock rider jump motorcycle stunts, the pole cats, the people eater **fuel truck** explosion, and the climactic war rig roll. On camera comments come from Production Designer Colin Gibson, Writer/Producer/Director George Miller, Principal Vehicle Designer/Storyboard Artist Peter Pound, Co-Writer/Concept Designs Brendan McCarthy, Tom Hardy ("Max Rockatansky"), Producer Doug Mitchell, Executive Producer Iain Smith, Co-special Effects Supervisor Andy Williams, Charlize Theron ("Imperator Furiosa"), Co-special effects Supervisor Dan Oliver, Stunt Coordinator Keir Beck, Josh Helman ("Sliit"), Second Unity Director/Supervising Stunt Coordinator Guy Norris, Visual Effects Supervisor Andrew Jackson, Angus Sampson ("The Organic Mechanic"), Technical Continuity Georgina Selby, Producer/First Assistant Director PJ Voeten, Fight Coordinator Richard Norton, Nicholas Hoult ("Nux"), Principle War Rig Driver, and Lee Adamson.

Mad Max: Fury on Four Wheels (22:37) is a featurette covering the various vehicles created for the film. Details of the conception and design of many of they key vehicles in the film are covered. On-screen comments are provided by Colin Gibson, Miller, Pound, Principal Storyboard Artist Mark Sexton, Norris, Helman, Sampson, Hugh Keays-Byrne ("Immortan Joe"), Nathan Jones ("Rictus Erectus"), Hoult, and Rose Huntington-Whiteley ("The Splendid Angharad")

The Road Warriors: Max and Furiosa (11:18) highlights the film's two main protagonists and the actors who play them. Along with director Miller and producer Mitchell, they discuss their thoughts on the characters and each other. They also discuss the effect that the unusual environment in which they shot had on them.

The Tools of the Wasteland (14:26) Focuses on the aesthetic principles behind the film's industrialized post apocalyptic production design. Individual segments focus on key props and costumes. On-camera comments come from Hoult, Miller, Colin Gibson, Salvage Artist Matt Boug, Property Master Andrew Orlando, Mitchell, Helman, Costume Designer Jenny Beavan, Key Armourer Lance Peters, Theron, iOTA ("The Doof Warrior"), Keays-Byrne, and Jones.

The Five Wives: So Shiny, So Chrome (11:11) discusses the five characters who represent the "MacGuffin" driving much of the film's plot. Topics covered include rehearsals, performance, costumes, relationships on set, and conditions on location. On camera comments are provided by Miller, Whiteley, Anney Lee ("The Dag"), Zoë Kravitz ("Toast the Knowing"), Riley Keough ("Capable"), Courtney Eaton ("Cheedo the Fragile"), and Theron

Fury Road: Crash and Smash (4:02) is an amazing compilation reel of pre-production vehicle stunt test shots completely free of CGI. This may be my favorite extra on the set.

Deleted Scenes is a collection of three scenes cut from the film. None of them are essential, and two of them are preludes to action in a film that has very little use for preludes to action.

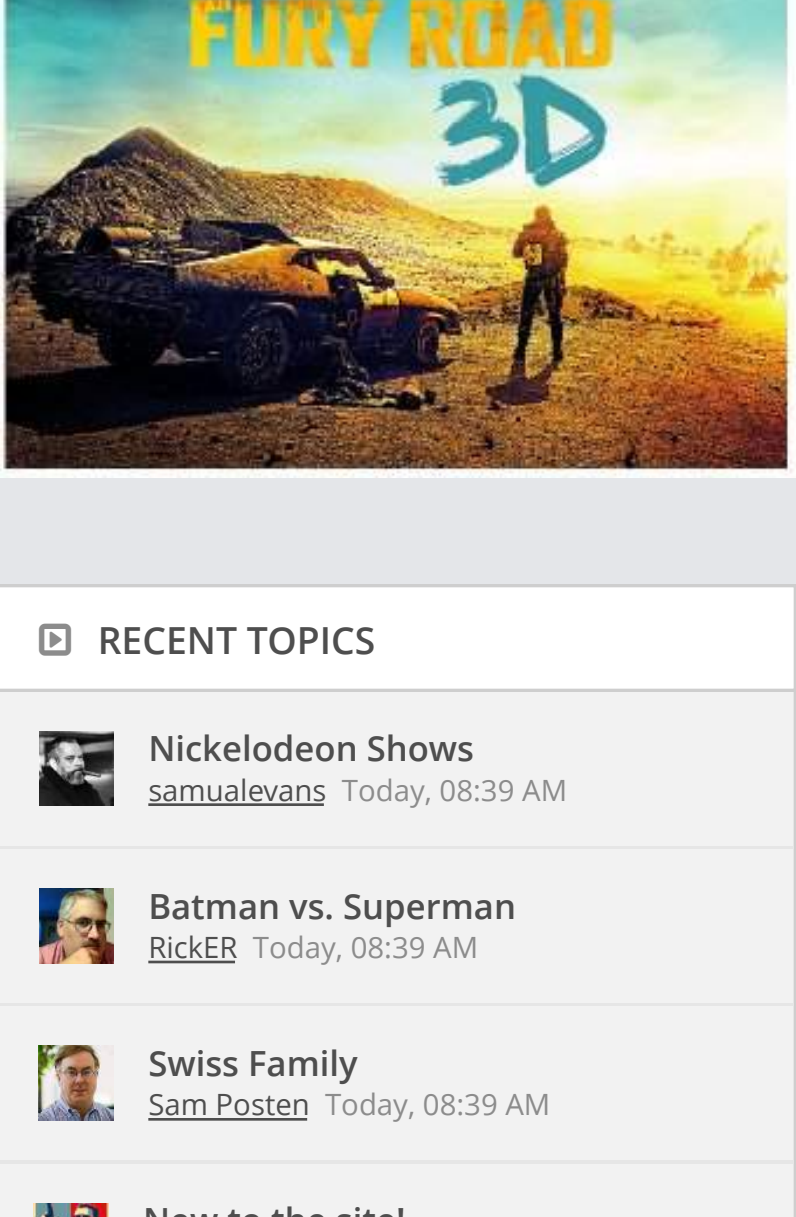
- I Am a Milker (:31) a woman offers her male baby to the Immortan and after he is rejected for being weak, she offers herself as a "milker"
- Turn Every Grain of Sand (1:49) Some preliminaries before Immortan Joe commands his War Boys to pursue Furiosa including the final fate of a minor character.
- Let's Do It (:59) Max surveys the landscape before setting out with Furiosa on their climatic quest.

SD DVD - In addition to the 3D and 2D Blu-ray versions of the film and an HD Ultraviolet Digital Copy, this "Combo Pack" also includes a standard definition DVD version of the film. It presents the film in 16:9 enhanced standard definition video with Dolby Digital 5.1 tracks in English, English DVS, French, and Spanish. Subtitle options include English SDH, French, and Spanish. There are no proper special features accessible from the SD DVD's menu, but when the disc is first played, the viewer is greeted with the following set of skippable promos:

- Batman Vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice Theatrical Trailer
- Black Mass Theatrical Trailer
- San Andreas Home Video Trailer
- Entourage Home Video Trailer
- In the Heart of the Sea Theatrical Trailer
- Warner Digital Movies Promo

Overall Rating: 4/5

Mad Max: Fury Road reboots George Miller's signature post-apocalyptic franchise in high style with plot, theme, and character driven as much or more by a series of relentless expertly-executed action sequences as by dialog. The design aesthetic builds appealingly on Miller's previous Mad Max Films and both Tom Hardy and Charlize Theron are effective in their physically demanding roles as the films tacturn but ready for action protagonists. The film is presented with an above average 3D rendering and an impressively detailed 2D rendering of the film's intricate production design and highly stylized cinematography. The extras are highlighted by a series of featurettes that shed light on the most interesting aspects of the film's production including the vehicles, stunts, and overall production design.



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