It's Friday night, and time to check out the latest happenings in the World of Movies with Mitch and the Crystal Ball. This week, Mitch previews "The Brave One", "Mr. Woodcock", and "Dragon Wars", tells us about new films with Pitt & Norton together again, Al Pacino as Salvador Dali, and Matt Damon & Sean Penn together. Plus, he has a link to the first "Ironman" trailer.

It's almost time for the new TV season to begin!

Try to suppress your yawns.

In any case, next week I will be doing a brief segment about the new season as I see it, in place of my "News and Rumors" segment.

There are a lot of interesting looking new series coming out...but I said that last year about such stinkers as "Smith" and "The Nine".

***News & Rumors**:*

~ The first teaser trailer for next year's "Ironman" is out...and damn, if it isn't great. Check it out here.

~ We have a "Fight Club" re-union coming up. Brad Pitt and Edward Norton will team up again in "State of Play", with Norton playing a U.S. Congressman facing an investigation of the death of his mistress.

Pitt will portray the journalist that is following the case.

~ For those of us that were big fans of the HBO series "Rome", there will be something worth seeing in late 2008 or 2009. Roman Polanski is filming "Pompeii", a big budget epic about the 79 A.D. destruction of the Italian city following the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Orlando Bloom and Scarlett Johansson are being sought after by Polanski to take leading roles in the film.

Just as long as he doesn't make it into an Italian "Titanic" with too sappy of a love story going on in between disaster shots.

~ The "winner" of the "what the hell is Lucas and Spielberg going to call the next Indiana Jones film" award has been announced. "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull".

As long as those skulls don't have chilled monkey brains in them, I'll be OK.

~ I believe that in a "Crystal Ball" from early this year, I made mention that Al Pacino was in line to star as artist Salvador Dali. The film is definitely a "Go", with Cillian Murphy (Scarecrow in "Batman Begins") starring along side the legendary Pacino in "Dali & I: The Surreal Story".

~ Gus Van Sant ("Good Will Hunting") will direct Sean Penn and Matt Damon in a movie depicting the life (and death) of Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay politician in 1970s as a San Francisco city supervisor. Penn will portray Milk, with Damon playing the assassin Dan White, who also killed mayor George Moscone...and then received a seven year prison sentence.

~ A sequel to "Tron" is actually being developed. Yick.

This week's new releases:

The Brave One

Starring: Jodie Foster and Terrance Howard

Plot: A woman turns all Charles Bronson-ish and goes about offing scum buckets after her Arab husband is murdered by thugs.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Just in case you didn't get enough vengeance killings from Kevin Bacon in "Death Sentence". This one is supposed to be a lot better, based mostly on the acting of Foster and Howard. I found the one scene in the trailer where she's putting the gun to the face of dirtbag saying "I've come to get my dog" cool enough to convince me to give it a whirl.

I'll let you know next week.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Mr. Woodcock

Starring: Billy Bob Thornton, Seann William Scott, Susan Sarandon

Plot: A successful motivational author returns to his hometown to find that his mother is engaged to the sadistic gym teacher who tormented him as a child.

View Trailer
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

The BeerBuzz: Why is this film being released now during a very slow time for comedies...especially when they completed shooting two and a half YEARS ago?

Probably has something to do with the fact that Billy Bob Thornton has starred in nothing but turkeys since "Bad Santa".

This one will not help his track record.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Dragon Wars

Starring: Jason Behr, Amanda Brooks, Robert Forster

Plot: Two dragon-led armies bring their war to Los Angeles.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: A South Korean import, this has been a huge hit in Asia...but it looks to be just another stupid rip off of &quot;Godzilla&quot;. The addition of some American actors to subplots interspersed to the original CGI is also a lame rip off of the Japanese splicing Raymond Burr into the aforementioned &quot;Godzilla&quot; for its American release, just to appeal to our demographics. &quot;Eregon&quot; meets &quot;Transformers&quot; meets &quot;Dumb and Dumber&quot;.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, September 11th

Much better lineup than we saw last week.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Then again, that's like saying the Browns' offensive line is much better than we saw in 1999. Not a tough standard to beat.

Death Proof - For the DVD, they have split the two films that made up "Grindhouse", with Quentin Tarantino's wild tale with Kurt Russell and a killer car.

This goes to the top of my Netflix Queue.

We Are Marshall **-** I guess it's a good marketing ploy to finally put this film to DVD during football season, as it was released to theaters last December. Tastefully done homage to the spirit it took to rebuild the Marshall football team after the tragic accident in November, 1970 that killed 75 players, coaches, staff members, and boosters.

Keep the tissues handy, but it's well worth the rent.

Gracie - Elizabeth Shue's quasi autobiographical story of a young girl in the 1970s who feels to blame for the death of her brother, so she tries out for the guys soccer team to take his place.

Girl Power rules!

Lucky You - Eric Bana and Drew Barrymore seemed like a dream matchup for this romantic comedy/drama about a gambler dealing with personal issues with Daddy (Robert Duvall), while getting ready for the World Series of Poker. Unlucky for them (and us), the movie stunk.

The Condemned - Another idiotic movie from WWE jerk Vince McMahon about a man awaiting the death penalty who is purchased by a TV producer and taken to an island so they can have televised fights to the death. Sounds like something McMahon would love to find a way to do in real life, when he's not pumping up all the morons working for him with steroids.

Calendar Watch

Next week:, *Eastern Promises* , *Good Luck Chuck, Resident Evil: Extinction, Sydney White.*

Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

The Kingdom - September 28th - Jamie Foxx, Chris Cooper, and Jennifer Garner in a story about an American team sent into the Middle East to investigate a terrorist attack on Americans in Riyadh.

Michael Clayton - October 12th - George Clooney as a top law firm's "fixer" (the type of person played by Jodie Foster in "Inside Man"...IOW, a shady power broker/dirty tricks expert).

The Golden Age - October 12th - Cate Blanchett and Clive Owen in a follow up of the award winning "Elizabeth"...this one looks to be better than the first, with much more action as it focuses on England's defeat of the Spanish Armada, and Elizabeth's flirtation with Sir Walter Raleigh, played by Owen.

We Own the Night - October 12th - Joaquin Phoenix, Mark Wahlberg, and Eva Mendes in a story of a nightclub owner (Phoenix), his police officer brother (Wahlberg), and the conflict with the mobsters who run Phoenix's nightclub.

Rendition - October 19th - Reese Witherspoon, Jake Gyllenhaal, Meryl Streep and Alan Arkin in a political thriller with Gyllenhaal as a CIA agent troubled by witnessing questionable interrogations.

American Gangster - November 2nd - Denzel Washington as a heroin kingpin from the Vietnam War era (he smuggled it back in the body bags of dead soldiers) and Russell Crowe as the investigator on his trail.

Bee Movie - November 2nd - Animated flick with Jerry Seinfeld as a bee who files a lawsuit

against mankind for eating honey.

Lions for Lambs - November 9th - Robert Redford directs himself, Tom Cruise (yeck) and Meryl Streep in this political thriller.

Fred Claus - November 9th - Vince Vaughn as Santa's embittered little brother. With Paul Giamatti. Another slightly naughty Christmas fairy tale that will make a bundle of cash.

Beowulf - November 16th - Robert Zemeckis gets all medieval on us with a motion capture (like "Polar Express") adaptation of the epic poem. Crispen Glover as the monster Grendel and Angelina Jolie as Grendel's mother?

I'm there.

Hitman - November 21st - Deadwood's Timothy Oliphant follows up his portrayal as the chief villain in "Live Free or Die Hard" in this action/adventure film where he play...what else...a hitman. Look for it to be in the same vein as "The Transporter", and a hit (heh...I kill me).

The Golden Compass - December 7th - Major, major push from the studios for this big budget fantasy...designed to be the first of a franchise. Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig star (their second collaboration this year, let's hope it's better than "The Invasion"), along with Sam Elliot and Eva Green.

Leatherheads - December 7th - George Clooney in an old fashioned screwball comedy set in 1925. George is an aging football legend who now owns a pro team, and is competing for the affections of Renee Zellweger with his star player.

I Am Legend - December 14th - Will Smith in what is basically a remake of the Chuck Heston apocalyptic film "The Omega Man".

National Treasure: Book of Secrets - December 21st - Follow-up to the hugely popular guilty pleasure "National Treasure" with Nick Cage back at his wacky best.

P.S., I Love You - December 21st - Hillary Swank, Gerard Butler, and Harry Connick Jr. in an award contender about a widow who discovers love letters written by her recently deceased husband (Butler) that are meant to help her begin the next chapter of her life.

The Other Boleyn Girl - December 21st - Natalie Portman as Anne Boleyn, Scarlett Johansson as her sister Mary, and Eric Bana as King Henry VIII. I expect this to blow the tepid Showtime series "The Tudors" out of the English Channel.

Charlie Wilson's War - December 25th - Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Philip Seymour Hoffman in an Oscar contender about the charismatic and eccentric Texas Congressman who orchestrated the funding of the Afghans against the Soviet Union in the early 80s.

Sweeny Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street - Limited release in December - Tim Burton's adaptation of the macabre Steven Sondheim musical about a deranged barber bent on revenge (Johnny Depp) and the meat pie baker that assists him (Helena Bonham Carter), who uses the bodies to make delicious snacks.

Untitled J.J. Abrams Project - January 18th - You've seen the buzz generating hand held camera trailer during "Transformers", and wondered what it's all about.

We don't know yet, but we're thinking it should be fun.