

A spoiler-free review of CASINO ROYALE (2006). Published November 6, 2006.

Review by Anders Frejdh, Founder & Editor of From Sweden with Love

“A DIFFERENT BOND TO ENJOY”

It was a privilege to be present during the preview press screening for the world's press of the 21st official James Bond film CASINO ROYALE. Based on the first 007 novel by **Ian Fleming**, published in 1953, one hoped the film would be good. Having seen it, one is filled with admiration and respect for the film makers and the new James Bond, **Daniel Craig**.

Craig is a terrific choice to play Bond and his incredible talent as an actor gives the performance an added dimension. Those so-called fans who believed the producers had selected the wrong successor to **Pierce Brosnan** have been proved wrong. Craig is tough and vulnerable and yet unstoppable. Craig is wonderful in the role – in only minutes you realise that this is a guy who has taken 007 close to his heart.

The film succeeds in taking a novel written 53 years ago and updating it very well for the 21st epic in the 21st century. It is this talent that has made the Bond series the longest running and most successful film franchise ever. This must have been a difficult process. I am already looking forward to the next film.

The villain, 'Le Chiffre' is cleverly played by Dane, **Mads Mikkelsen**, making Bond's enemy an evil, cold, mathematical genius. Mad is very effective in the painful torture sequence, where the chemistry between Bond and Le Chiffre is chilling. Our own Swedish (and French) Bond girl, **Eva Green**, makes 'Vesper Lynd' mysterious and exciting. It was pleasure just to sit back, enjoy her and watch Bond fall in love. This makes Bond more emotionally committed than ever before which should appeal to the large female audience waiting to see Daniel in action.

The pre-title scene is entirely in black and white but is nicely followed by a cartoon-ish title sequence from **Daniel Kleinman**. The music score from **David Arnold** fits the film well and creates the right mood and so does the title song from **Chris Cornell** titled 'You Know My Name'.

Of course, a certain longing for characters such as 'Q' and 'Miss Money Penny' will appear. Most of the gadgets are also gone. However, the many new ingredients and aspects never seen before in a Bond film more than make up for their absence. The fight sequences are brutal and blood is now suddenly not unusual in a Bond film. Bond has to rely on his fists and personal strength and has a helluva ride in an Aston Martin DBS. Compared to previous films, this film feels much tougher and rawer.

It is difficult to imagine **Roger Moore** in a similar interpretation. A similarity with **Sean Connery** and **Timothy Dalton** is there but Craig succeeds well in setting his own touch on the role from a perspective never examined before. It is

the longest running Bond film (144 minutes) but did not feel long as the film is so well paced.

The film script is well-written and powerful taking Bond in a new, courageous direction. Future films from EON Productions with **Barbara Broccoli** and **Michael G. Wilson** (the late **Albert R. Broccoli's** daughter and stepson respectively) in the driver's seat are eagerly anticipated. They have made an intelligent and strategic choice here. One can only hope the result is positive also for the cinema owners. We will look forward to Craig's return as 007 in the next successful Bond film.

The film has its worldwide premiere on November 17 and Swedish premiere on November 24 2006.

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