



BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

What a shame Queen Latifah follows her Oscar-nominated turn in *Chicago* by portraying a convict who loosens up a white lawyer (Steve Martin) while he tries to clear her record. Meanwhile, she has to deal with his filthy colleague (Eugene Levy), racist neighbor (Betty White) and conservative client (Joan Plowright, who gets stoned in one of the film's few amusing moments).

—Jim Radosta

THE HUNTED

This solid actioner from suspense master William Friedkin (*The French Connection*) features an unhinged supersoldier (Benicio Del Toro) on a killing spree, pursued by his aging ex-mentor (Tommy Lee Jones). Known as the movie that broke Benicio's wrist—no word on whether it became permanently limp as a result—*The Hunted*'s best performance is by Portland, which provides gorgeous backdrops from Mount Hood to various other hoods to downtown for a dynamite chase sequence. Can a city win an Oscar?

—Gary Morris

RUSSIAN ARK

Director Alexander Sokurov takes us on a dreamy journey through Russian history, art and the spirit of a long-buried empire's tragic, resilient people. Moving fluidly through time and space to an elegiac con-

clusion, *Russian Ark* was, with its huge cast and constantly mobile camera, shot in one single, amazing 90-minute take.

—Christopher McQuain

SPIRITED AWAY

This instant classic and Academy Award winner for Best Animated Feature by visionary director Hayao Miyazaki (*Princess Mononoke*) follows a young girl who stumbles upon a portal that pulls her into a fantasy world filled with spirits, ghosts and other indescribable creatures. Because the audience experiences this strange land through her innocent eyes, the journey becomes all the more fascinating and unsettling.

—JR

TALK TO HER

Two men (a nurse and a journalist) bond while waiting for two women (a dancer and a matador) to come out of their comas in Pedro Almodóvar's latest quirky soap opera. The gay writer/director explores the striking contrasts between the couples but ventures into creepy territory when the nurse, whose sexuality is questionable, lets his obsession with the dancer go too far.

—JR

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Gwyneth Paltrow slums it in this appallingly unfunny, unromantic, uninspiring tale of upwardly mobile stewardesses with hearts of gold and brains of lead. (If 9/11 hadn't done the trick, you'll never want to fly again.) Mike Myers falls

flat as a cross-eyed instructor with a big chip on his shoulder. (I often found myself praying for relief from his comic relief.)

Candice Bergen follows up her embarrassing turn as a ball-busting mayor in *Sweet Home Alabama* with a ridiculous portrayal of the world's most famous flight attendant-turned-motivational speaker. (No joke—literally.) And Joshua Malina (*Will Bailey on The West Wing*) hits every wrong note as a nelly queen who makes predictably "snappy" comebacks about warm nuts and circumcised Europeans. (And you thought *Boat Trip* was offensive!)

—JR

What's Poppin'?

What's popped and what's flopped, in a theater near you.



☹️ dud, bottom of the bag

☹️☹️ only if you're really hungry

☹️☹️☹️ good effort, pass the salt

☹️☹️☹️☹️ mmmm, tasty!

☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️ get the big tub o' corn



Good actors go slumming in *View from the Top*



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