

CineVegas shines spotlight on the silver screen

Anyone familiar with Spinal Tap can attest to the value of turning things up to 11. It's, as Christopher Guest's character so eloquently puts it, "one louder." Where regular amps (or in this case, film festivals) only go to 10, this one goes to 11. And it's that extra notch, the ability to go beyond a regular dial, that's driving this year's CineVegas film festival.

Not coincidentally, this is CineVegas' 11th year and with 10 years of world premieres, crazy parties and more than a few events that only a film festival in Las Vegas could offer already behind them, the creative forces over at CineVegas have pulled out all the stops to make sure this year's festivities bring it to a whole new level.

We've broken down the things that set this year's CineVegas (June 10 - 15, 2009) apart, but let us just say, before we go any further - it's pretty much everything.

The films

This year CineVegas' film lineup is the most ambitious yet - with nine world premieres (affectionately known as the festival's "Jackpot Premieres")



CineVegas' opening night film is *Saint John of Las Vegas*, directed by Hue Rhodes, and featuring Steve Buscemi and Sarah Silverman.

and a slew of other offerings like documentaries and advance screenings of highly anticipated indie flicks.

"This year's CineVegas will rock anyone looking for exhilarating new films from uninhibited and adventurous filmmakers," Trevor Groth, CineVegas' artistic director, said.

Opening the festival this year is the world premiere of "Saint John of Las Vegas," which will screen at Planet Hollywood on Wednesday, June 10. Directed by Hue Rhodes and starring

Steve Buscemi, the film centers around Buscemi's character, an ex-gambler, who returns to Las Vegas as part of his job as a fraud investigator.

Other high-profile screenings include the "Sure Bets" series, which are early screenings of much-buzzed about independent studio films. Included in this run are "500 Days of Summer," starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Zoëy Deschanel and "Moon," starring Sam Rockwell and Kevin Spacey.

The festival will close with Bobcat Goldthwait's "World's

Greatest Dad," a dark comedy starring Robin Williams as a father and high school teacher trying to connect with his teenage son and get the girl (in this case, an art teacher) in the face of tragedy.

For more on the films, check out the listings below.

The parties

Part of the fun of having a film festival in Las Vegas is that, well, it's Las Vegas. Movie stars and movie watchers alike flock to Vegas on normal weekends, partying their hearts out in nightclubs, in hotel rooms, even poolside.

But with CineVegas, the parties are just a little wilder, just a little bit more off the wall than a normal weekend and, because everybody is celebrating movies, you might just find yourself dancing near someone you watched on screen a few hours before.

While laying out the details of every CineVegas soiree would take too long, here's the rundown on the big ones:

June 10, 2009 - The opening night party will be held at Privé in Planet Hollywood. Sure, it's

a Wednesday night, but it's also one of the biggest parties of the whole festival.

June 11, 2009 - The Jackpot Premieres party will be held at Lavo in the Palazzo. There will also be a party at Sapphire Gentleman's Club that night. So you've got celebs, nightclubs, strip clubs - that sounds like a formula for success.

June 12, 2009 - Official CineVegas party at Rain in the Palms. Just a short walk from CineVegas headquarters and some of the screenings, there's no excuse for missing this one.

June 13, 2009 - Official CineVegas party at Moorea Beach Club at Mandalay Bay. Here's where holding a festival in Vegas gets great - partying poolside.

June 14, 2009 - The closing night party will be at the Playboy Club in the Palms. We shouldn't have to explain why that one is worth going to.

In addition to parties, CineVegas throws some events that feel like parties.

On Saturday night, the festival is holding a screening of "Yellow Submarine" at Mandalay Beach at Mandalay

Bay Hotel and Casino.

This is a "dive-in" movie, meaning you can watch from the cool comfort of the pool.

And on Monday, there will be a screening of "Attack of the 50 Foot Woman" at a drive-in the festival's organizers are building (temporarily) on Fremont Street in downtown Las Vegas.

Groth sums all this excitement up, "[The films and parties] combine to make up six days and nights in Vegas that you won't want to miss a second of. Good thing they pump oxygen into the casinos."

The tickets

If all this sounds like a good way to spend a few days, you'll be pleased to know that it's not just celebrities and the ultra-rich that can afford CineVegas.

There are four ticket package options, starting at \$500 and winding down to just \$100 that pair everything together - admission to films, parties and events.

Plus, individual tickets to films can be purchased for \$10. To purchase tickets or for more information on packages, visit cinevegas.com.

CineVegas highlights

Wednesday, June 10

Saint John of Las Vegas (Comedy/Drama)
Directed by Hue Rhodes, featuring Steve Buscemi and Sarah Silverman.

Thursday, June 11

All In: The Poker Movie (Documentary)
Directed by Douglas Tirola, featuring Matt Damon, Phil Hellmuth, Jennifer Tilly and Annie Duke. Also screening on Friday.

Daylight (Drama/Thriller)
Directed by David Barker, featuring Alexandra Meierhans and Michael Godere. Also screening on Friday.

Redland (Drama)
Directed by Asiel Norton, featuring Lucy Adden, Mark Aaron and Sean Thomas. Also screening on Friday.

Moon (Sci-fi/Thriller)
Directed by Duncan Jones, featuring Sam Rockwell and Kevin Spacey.

In the Loop (Comedy)
Directed by Armando Iannucci, featuring Peter Capaldi and James Gandolfini.

Friday, June 12

Easier with Practice (Drama)
Directed by Kyle Patrick Alvarez, featuring Brian Geraghty and Marguerite Moreau. Also screening on Saturday.

Etienne! (Comedy)
Directed by Jeff Mizushima, featuring Richard Vallejos and Megan Harvey. Also screening on Saturday.



Photo courtesy CineVegas
The comedy *World's Greatest Dad*, directed by Bobcat Goldthwait, will be screened on June 14. The film features Robin Williams (above), Daryl Sabara and Alexie Gilmore.

Patriotville (Comedy)
Directed by Talmage Cooley, featuring Justin Long, Emmanuelle Chriqui and Rob Corddry. Also screening on Saturday.

500 Days of Summer (Comedy)
Directed by Marc Webb, featuring Zoëy Deschanel and Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

Harmony and Me (Comedy)
Directed by Robert Byington, featuring Kristen Tucker, Justin Rice and Alex Karpovsky. Also screening on Sunday.

Saturday, June 13

Asylum Seekers (Comedy)
Directed by Rania Ajami, featuring Pepper Binkley, Bill Dawes and Judith Hawking. Also screening on Sunday.

Godspeed (Drama/Thriller)
Directed by Robert Saitzyk, featuring Joseph McElheer, Cory Knauf and Courtney Halverson. Also screening on Sunday.

Mercy (Drama/Romance)
Directed by Patrick Hoelck, featuring Scott Caan, Wendy Glenn, Troy Garity and Erika Christensen. Also screening on Sunday.

Humpday (Comedy)
Directed by Lynn Shelton, featuring Mark Duplass, Josh Leonard and Alycia Delmore.

Yellow Submarine (Animated)
Directed by George Dunning, featuring The Beatles. This iconic movie will be screened at the Mandalay Beach area (the pool at Mandalay Bay) as a "dive-in" movie.

Sunday, June 14

World's Greatest Dad (Comedy)
Directed by Bobcat Goldthwait, featuring Robin Williams, Daryl Sabara and Alexie Gilmore. Closing night film.

Bronson (Action/Drama)
Directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, featuring Tom Hardy, Matt King and James Lance.

Monday, June 15

Adam (Romance/Comedy)
Directed by Max Mayer, featuring Hugh Dancy, Rose Byrne and Pete Gallagher.

The Headless Woman (Drama)
Directed by Lucrecia Martel, featuring Mara Onetto and Claudia Cantero.

Attack of the 50 Foot Woman (Sci-Fi)
Directed by Nathan Juran, featuring Allison Hayes and William Hudson. See this classic cult movie at a temporarily-erected drive-in in downtown Las Vegas.

— Written by Jamie Helmick

