

Entertainment

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Favorite flicks

Some suit television, others belong on big screen

Once in a while someone asks me to name my favorite films.

That's not too difficult, assuming the someone doesn't want the list etched in stone.

"The Searchers," "Lawrence of Arabia," "Manhattan," "Patton" and (surprise) "Rumble Fish" come to mind. Yes, "Rumble Fish," the little-seen Francis Ford Coppola film from a year or two ago.

Now that list is likely to change. By tomorrow "Rumble Fish" could be replaced by "My Fair Lady." Already I'm thinking "8 1/2" ought to be in the top five.

Film favorites — yours and mine — depend upon our moods. One day John Wayne hits the spot, the next day only Matt Dillon will do.



second runs

Tom Panzenhagen

Your list will differ, and certainly we can agree to disagree on this matter over many rounds of your favorite beverage — or mine.

THE QUESTION I'm never asked, though, is what are my favorite films on TV. That's an interesting question, because none of the films listed above would make the list.

As much as I adore them all, I don't want to see big, beautifully photographed films like "The Searchers" or "Lawrence of Arabia" on the small, home screen.

"Manhattan" is a "little" film to begin with, but I wouldn't want to witness its wonderful pace and continuity interrupted by TV commercials. "My Fair Lady" demands a better sound system than televisions offer. "Rumble Fish" would be cut for TV, and "8 1/2" simply is never shown.

Where's that leave us? With old movies that aren't cut for TV and that can withstand commercial interruptions; old movies that were filmed in studios and have almost a made-for-TV look about them.

ERROL FLYNN made dozens of such films. "The Green Light," "Footloose in the Dark" and "Edge of Darkness" are my favorites.

These pictures are formulaic, to be sure, but they're well done formula. They can be cut for TV or interrupted by commercials because you know where they're going. You've seen them before — or films just like them — so it's not essential to see every foot of them again.

Comedies are good on TV, and some actually benefit by being cut for the home screen.

Mel Brooks is a very funny man, but he has a penchant for bathroom humor. His "Blazing Saddles," for instance, is one of my favorites and a much better film on TV with its vulgarities excised.

The Marx Brothers translate well to television. Their movies are hilarious, but they're also riddled with obligatory plot and character development, and



Patrolling their territory after school are Nicholas Cage as Smokey (left), Vincent Spano as Steve, Matt Dillon as Rusty-James and Christopher Penn as B.J. In Francis Ford Coppola's "Rumble

Fish." This outstanding, but lengthy, movie probably would be cut for television to allow time for commercial breaks. It's a better choice for the movie house.

At home, you can edit out the banalities by scanning a newspaper or looking out the window. "At the Circus" — one of their films that's a bit out of the mainstream — is my favorite.

WESTERNS are good on TV. They rarely contain any objectionable material that would have to be cut for the home screen, and most of them run between 90 and 100 minutes, which means they fit quite snugly into a two-hour TV time slot.

That's not to say I'm a big fan of

westerns in general, because rarely would I venture to a movie theater to see one on the big screen. At home, however, where our entertainment expectations are lower, westerns play just fine.

Many westerns of the '50s were made on a grand scale, with majestic scenery filmed in wondrous color. My favorites on TV are those filmed on a

smaller scale in black and white, such as "The Westerner" with Gary Cooper and Walter Brennan and "Yellow Sky" with Gregory Peck.

Certainly there are dozens of other sorts of pictures I like on TV, from very bad horror films to outstanding war epics. After all, movies deserve to be seen on the big screen, but precious few of them are too good for TV.

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