

Film Editor's Summer Classic Movie Tips

by Jeff Lundenberger



CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD

We all hope for a summer full of bright, sunny weekends but, let's face it, it's practically inevitable that there will be at least one lousy weekend weather day over the next few months. So, you're at home, it's raining, and you've binge-watched all your favorite TV shows. What to do? Might I suggest a classic movie? There are many options for watching movies for free or for just a few dollars: TCM, streaming services, and Youtube are just a few. And classic doesn't necessarily mean staid or out-of-date. Here is a short list of "vintage" movies that pack a little summer heat.

Some Like it Hot (1959)

This film is number one on the American Film Institute's list of 100 Funniest American Comedies of All Time. The first sight of Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis walking in high heels cracks me up every time I watch it. It also features a breathtaking Marilyn Monroe in several skin-tight dresses that conceal very little of her voluptuous body. What's not to like?

In the Good Old Summertime (1949)

If you've seen "You've Got Mail" you've seen an updated version of this story. Judy Garland and Van Johnson play a pair of music store workers in turn of the century Chicago who seem to love tormenting each other, and we can all guess how that will turn out. It's as prim and proper as any 1949 Hollywood movie, but the final scene is intimate and carries a lot of heat. Garland is, as always, difficult not to watch.

Summertime (1955)

Katharine Hepburn was nominated for an Academy Award for her performance as an Ohio school teacher on her dream trip to Venice in this charming romance. Hepburn's characters are often self-assured and prickly, but here those qualities are tempered with vulnerability and loneliness. She meets and falls in love with a married antique dealer played by Italian actor Rossana Brazzi. Will she stay or will she go?

White Heat (1949)

There are a lot of great movie psycho/killers: Anthony Hopkins as Hannibal Lecter, Robert DeNiro as Travis Bickle, but one of the best is James Cagney as Cody Jarrett in "White Heat." He's ruthless, with a loose, urgent trigger finger and a habit of treating his women none to well - except for his beloved mother, who is possibly more evil than he is.

Suddenly, Last Summer (1959)

Elizabeth Taylor was one of Hollywood's great beauties and one of it's last classic film stars. There's an iconic image of her from this film, on the beach in a white bathing suit, serving as bait for the Spanish boys her cousin Sebastian Venable is hoping to seduce. Katharine Hepburn is back, at her flinty best, trying to convince doctor Montgomery Clift to perform a lobotomy on the poor girl.

In the Heat of the Night (1967)

Sidney Poitier is Philadelphia police detective Virgil Tibbs, stranded in Sparta, Mississippi, in this Best Picture Oscar-winner. Rod Steiger also won an Oscar for his role as bigoted police chief Bill Gillespie, who persuades Tibbs to help him solve a murder case, against the suspicious wishes of most of the locals. It's a sharp, insightful look at the workings of 1960's southern racism. They call him MR. Tibbs.