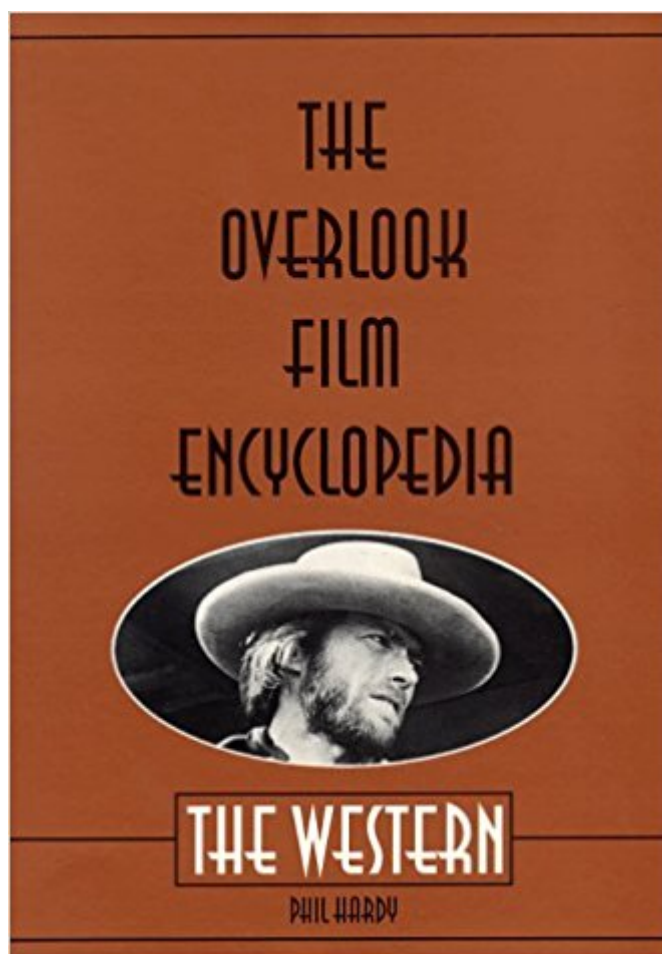


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The Overlook Film Encyclopedia: The Western



Synopsis

In *The Western*, editor Phil Hardy provides commentary on every Western you've ever heard of--and hundreds that you haven't--from the commencement of the sound period until 1990. Eschewing the conventional star ratings for each film, Hardy instead opts for generous, detailed commentary. The films are listed chronologically, and each decade is preceded by instructive essays that detail the period's trends. Appendices include critics' lists of the best Westerns ever made, all-time Western rental champs, a list of important Westerns that were inspired by novels, and an appendix of Western films that Hardy was unable to cover in detail.

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Customer Reviews

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While not the be all and end all listing of westerns its still a valuable reference tool as are every other book in the Overlook series

These Hardy servay books are great. You can pick them up real reasonably except the horror one which seem to be a collector's item now.

The Orverlook series is the go-to reference for each genre it covers. If you're exploring a new genre, this is where to go to get the best direction.

I have just ordered this book. I had not done so previously because I have the first edition of this book written under a different title in about 1983. That is a wonderful book for the western fan and is a "must-own" in my opinion. However, one VERY SIGNIFICANT FAULT in that book is the fact that the author included an extremely high number of spoilers in the synopsis of most of the films. Why he would do that I cannot understand. But, be aware, if you do not want to read spoilers than do not read the thumbnail sketch of each film's plot before you view the film or you may be disappointed. I am hoping that the author did not repeat this stupid mistake in this new edition of the book. Otherwise I cannot say enough good things about the earlier edition.

I have had this excellent book for some time and refer to it everytime I watch a Western Movie. It is a huge book, 9 1/4" X 12" X 1 1/2", with 416 pages, with a Hard Cocver and excellent paper, and profusely illustrated about 1000 B & W and 16 full pages of excellent color photographs. There is a preface to both the First and Second Editions. Also there is a very informative Perspective on the Western Movies. The movies are covered chronologically by the decades, starting in 1929, all the way through to 1990. There are also 6 Appendices: All-Time Western Rental Champs Most Successful Westerns: Inflation Adjusted Biggest Money-Making Western | stars Critic's Top Tens Western Oscars Selected Sound Westerns and Their Novel Sources Select Bibliography All Other Sound Westerns And An Excellent Detailed Index The information varies on each Movie, but generally it includes the Studio, Color or B&W, length in minutes, the Director, the Producer, the Screenwriter, the Cinematographer, Leading Players, a brief description of the story of the movie, interesting information about the making of the movie and actors involved, and in many cases a photograph. I also have another excellent reference fior Western Movies that makes a great companion to this Encylopedia. It is "A Pictorial History of Westerns" by Michael Parkinson & Clyde Jeavons ;see my Review dated October 3, 2011.

This entertaining coffee-table format encyclopedia of Western films covers the years 1929 to 1990. There were numerous silent westerns, but most have not survived and so can't be reviewed. As you

thumb through the 1930s, you notice right away how the vast majority were low-budget films aimed at kids. Only in the 1940s did the genre begin to take itself seriously and produce more adult-oriented stories. There are only a relatively small number of Spaghetti/Euro westerns included. As with the other Overlook encyclopedias, there are plenty of photographs.

If, like me, you love Westerns and have cable, this is a book you need to own. Its detailed synopses and reviews have helped me over and over again in deciding what previously-unknown movie to set the timer for. Each capsule-essay includes year of release, run time, director, major stars, and some information about the story, with brief critical remarks. The many bw photographs, though rather small, are just so much gravy. You can also just sit down with it and start going through the listings so you can compose a Wish List! With this book and Fenin & Everson's "The Western," you have a good basic foundation in Western-film criticism and history.

More than a dry listing of what westerns came out in what year, The Overlook Encyclopedia is actually fun to read. The book begins in the 1930s (so no silent Westerns) and lists the Westerns that came out each year, giving a brief plot synopsis and then an evaluation. The value of the book is that it shows the reader how many Westerns Hollywood made and when production rose and fell off. Also, the comments on the individual films are interesting and can point the reader in the direction of some films he might not otherwise have heard of. The book concludes with several "ten best Western" lists from different film critics. Overall, a useful book for anyone interested in this genre.

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