

On Screen

Kasha Van Sant and Cat Hughes preview the latest releases

GRAN TORINO

Clint Eastwood hasn't been in the directorial saddle since Oscar[®]-winning *Million Dollar Baby*. So all eyes (including mine) were peeled to see what he would bring to the table with his latest offering, *Gran Torino*. Eastwood portrays recent widower, Walt Kowalski - a gnarled and inflexible Korean War veteran living in a changing world, where his principles and prejudices are threatened by his immigrant neighbours.

A retired car worker, his only pride and joy is the Gran Torino which evokes the envy of his neighbours, including that of the young hoods next door. Events take an unprecedented turn after Kowalski takes matters into his own hands, with disastrous gun-toting consequences.

Kowalski's political incorrectness is possibly a barometer of the age, but does little aside from invoking the odd gasp and snigger in the auditorium. Sadly, *Gran Torino* holds no surprises and could very easily be a paler shade of *Unforgiven* with its undertones of hero worship and correction of lawless behaviour. Close your eyes and Walt Kowalski transposes quite easily onto *Pale Rider's* Preacher or *Dirty Harry's* Inspector Callaghan.

But before the die-hards spit out their tobacco in fury, stop and ponder awhile - despite his age, Eastwood, ever the formulaic rule breaker, can still hold the attention, unlike his supporting cast.



3/5

DIRECTOR: CLINT EASTWOOD

RUNNING TIME: 117 MINUTES

Also on this month

The popular Shopaholic novels have been given the Hollywood treatment, *Confessions of a Shopaholic* sees Isla Fisher play Rebecca Bloomwood - a NYC girl who likes shopping a little too much - snag a job working for a financial magazine. But her finances take a turn for the worse and she tries ever more hilarious ways to get out of her predicament. (February 20). The world of banking is in the dock again in

The International. Starring Clive Owen and Naomi Watts, this thriller sees an Interpol agent spearhead an investigation into one of the world's most high-profile banking institutions - in an attempt to expose them for arms broking, corruption and murder. (February 27). Starring Emily Blunt and Paul Bettany, *The Young Victoria* will focus on the first turbulent years of Queen Victoria's rule and her legendary romance

and marriage to Prince Albert. (March 6). *Marley and Me*, starring Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston, is the story of a family who knew nothing of the good things in life until they meet a neurotic dog. (March 13). *The Boat That Rocked* charts the story of a pirate radio station broadcasting rock and roll in 1966. This ensemble comedy focuses on the music, the people who are spinning it and a romance on the ship. (April 1).

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