

# Olympic Valor

**C**hariots of Fire arrives with cachet enow—the British entry at Cannes, it won raves and a best-supporting-actor award for Ian Holm. And it proves to be a stunning film, an inspiring story of aspiration and accomplishment, a fact-based thriller and a perceptive social statement. That its title is derived from William Blake but with no clarifying quotation or epigraph on screen is a lagniappe for the literate.

For moviegoers it offers the debuts of a highly talented director, Hugh Hudson, and two noteworthy stage actors, Ben Cross and Ian Charleson; a brilliantly detailed period recreation; and a finely crafted script. Above all, its story is both satisfying and stimulating. The producer, David Puttnam, whose relatively commercial filmography includes *The Duellists* and *Midnight Express*, was “looking for a film not unlike *A Man for All Seasons* in terms of its moral position and its possibilities as an allegory,” he recalls, when he came across a history of the Olympic games. He found his allegory in the story of two British runners in the 1924 Paris Olympics, who were initially rivals in the 100-meter competition.

The screenplay by Colin Welland (*Yanks* was his most recent script) explores the background of the two men—Harold Abrahams, “The Cream of Cambridge,” son of a wealthy Lithuanian Jew, dedicating himself to outrunning the WASP Establishment, and Eric Liddell, “The Flying Scot,” China-born son of a missionary, determined to “run in God’s name and let the world stand back in wonder.” In counterpoint, their careers are followed, one man possessed by a “pursuit of excellence” that would put a thumb in the eye of the bigots, the other in fulfilling God’s will. After Liddell refuses to run in the 100-meter race because the heats are held on a Sunday, Abrahams wins against four Americans. Liddell goes on to victory in the 400-meter.

Hudson, a veteran of television com-

mercials, brings to the large screen an eye attuned to the telling detail, to the minutiae of time and place and social setting. And he creates character studies of such overwhelming intensity that we are bound to the two leading competitors, caught up in their motivations and sharing their passions. Cross’s Abrahams is darkly brooding, a man close to obses-

classmate and a top hurdler, who resolves the crisis Liddell creates in refusing to break his Sabbath. He saves, with noblesse oblige at its best, both the pride of the British Olympic committee (replete with Prince of Wales), which is reluctant to lose face in front of “the Frogs,” and the ethic of Liddell, who does indeed put God before king and country.



Exhausted after winning a race, Eric Liddell (Ian Charleson) collapses in the arms of trainer Sam Mussabini (Ian Holm, right) and a bystander, in *Chariots of Fire*.

sion through humiliation, envying the “contentment” of the ruling class, unable to achieve his own. The realities of that class are provided in a number of vignettes, most memorably in teatime chats at Cambridge between the Provost of Trinity College and the Master of Caius (John Gielgud and Lindsay Anderson at their most poisonously urbane), as they remark on the progress of that pushy Jew—“academically sound, arrogant, defensive to the point of pugnacity, as they invariably are.”

But there is balance, for in the pinch it is a young peer of the realm, Abrahams’s

The running sequences are of breathtaking beauty, transported beyond sport to epitomize the lyric grace of physical endeavor and the wracking agony of competitive drive. Puttnam’s desire to show sport as “the meeting between idealism and expediency” is fulfilled. But while the races provide the moments of major impact, the human drama is dominant as Liddell and his family cope with the worldliness of sport, or as Abrahams’s obsession spills into his romance with an enchanting Savoyard. Most memorable is Abrahams’s involvement with a professional coach, Sam Mussa-

bini, another outsider in that age of gentleman-amateurs and a superb recreation by Ian Holm. It was not for king, country, or God that Abrahams triumphed, in his view: "You won for us," he assures his pupil. "Now go home and start some bloody living!" And home they went, Abrahams to live a full life as barrister, journalist, and sports figure until 1978, Liddell to die, as missionary to China, in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in 1945.

The casting and performances are impeccable, as are the production values, transporting us to a time of relative innocence, of songfests and local games, of Olympics that involved individuals rather than politicized nationals, and of men dedicated—dare we cynics note?—to a pursuit of personal excellence in the deepest sense, "with hope in their hearts and wings on their heels."

Another tyro makes a noteworthy directorial debut with **Body Heat**, as slick and moody a thriller as ever came from an obvious devotee of the Chandler-Cain school of tough cinema. Lawrence Kasdan, a writer whose credits include co-authorship of *The Empire Strikes Back* and the screenplay of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, has directed his own screenplay and come up with a melodrama soaked in atmosphere, rich in character and taut with tension.

As *Raiders* indicated, Kasdan breathes film of the Thirties and Forties. His torrid tale of sexual obsession and crime of passion starts out with Chandleresque dialogue and shades of *Double Indemnity* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice* as a nice mediocre lawyer in a small Florida city becomes involved with a rich man's neglected wife. There's a heat wave on, when, as a local detective gratuitously notes, ordinary standards go by the board; before long the enthralled lovers are planning how to get rid of the husband and get hold of his money. It sounds familiar enough, but by the time the complex plotting begins Kasdan has the viewer equally enthralled not only by vibrant performances by William Hurt and Kathleen Turner as the good man and wicked woman but also by his on-the-move camera eye, which owes no allegiance to theatrical or literary roots. Kasdan offers pure cinema in terse, refined dialogue that develops a pungency of its own, and in his understated and deeply effective visual narrative. His plotting is fascinatingly complex and the

suspense quotient commendably high. And beyond the principals, he has drawn fine character bits from Ted Danson, as a district-attorney friend of the lawyer and a Fred Astaire manqué; Oscar Grace as the detective "whose whole life is based on doing the right thing"; and Richard Crenna as the cuckolded husband who points to the importance of doing one's homework. That's what Kasdan's tale is about—with a little side story about greed.

Glenn Jordan, an acclaimed theater and television director, takes his cinematic bow with Neil Simon's **Only When I Laugh**, the playwright's screen adaptation of his 1970 play, *The Gingerbread Lady*. But just as the stage version belonged to Maureen Stapleton, so this film belongs to Marsha Mason as the alcoholic, fresh from a "cure," trying to cope with a resumption of her acting career, the lover who left her, and above all the teen-aged daughter determined to live with her.

Simon has opened out his story and Jordan gives it a New York look and

A veteran director, the masterful John Schlesinger, has taken a new screenwriter in hand and come up with an offbeat and insidiously appealing comedy in **Honky Tonk Freeway**. Edward Clinton, a 31-year-old playwright, has fashioned one of those *Grand Hotel* structures, much in the *Citizen's Band* (a.k.a. *Handle With Care*), and *Airport-Airplane* manner, and he has packed it full of oddball, ultra-Amurrican types. The whole is brought to satiric flower by Schlesinger, who sees our country more than plain, as *Midnight Cowboy* and *Day of the Locust* indicated.

The focal point is the tiny Florida town of Tlclaw that, despite a bit of bribery, has been by-passed by the Freeway, with the nearest exit 37 miles away. Its mayor, William Devane, and citizens are determined to develop a tourist resort by fair means or foul, and the latter provides the denouement. Punctuated by the plotting of the Tlclawians, the film concentrates on the variety of folk who will wind up there, among them Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy as an irascible adman and his alcoholic wife bound for Florida



Marsha Mason (left) triumphs as a 38-year-old ex-alcoholic trying to cope with life and a teenaged daughter (Kristie McNichol, right) in Neil Simon's *Only When I Laugh*.

texture. James Coco and Joan Hackett, as the lady's intimates—a homosexual frustrated actor and an aging beauty queen—and Kristy McNichol, as the vulnerable child, are very good indeed. But the triumph is Mason's, as the "38-year-old ex-wino" who has yet to look beyond herself. The film provides no answers or deep analysis (nor did the play), but the one-liners glitter as always. And Mason once again provides us with a shattering portrait of human striving—if not for perfection at least for survival.

retirement; Beverly D'Angelo, a waitress heading for vacation with her mother's ashes and the conviction that the International House of Pancakes is one of the world's few constants; Geraldine Page as a proper nun; Deborah Rush as an improper novice; and a rhinoceros. What Schlesinger has composed is a comic ode to the American highway culture, a laughing exploration of the social structures that are created for and exist because of our life on wheels. It's perceptive, diverting, and pleasantly cynical. ■

# TOOLS FOR LIVING™

*Tools For Living* cuts through the proliferation of products to bring you unusually worthy items that often will simplify, but always will make day-to-day routine tasks more fun. All of these new, innovative or time-honored products are honestly useful and do what they say they will do. They've been evaluated by members of the TFL staff before being presented to you here, and are fully guaranteed. Our offerings run the gamut from products that will help you conserve water and energy, or prepare a gourmet meal for friends to those that will make what little leisure time you have thoroughly enjoyable.

## GIVING DUST THE BRUSH

Saving energy means paying attention to the small things around the house—like the refrigerator coils. Once these coils become coated with dust, the efficiency of your refrigerator drops dramatically. Simply cleaning the coils—and keeping them clean—can reduce your refrigerator's electric consumption as much as 10%. This brush, angled and with tapered bristles, is designed to clean deep in the coils where vacuum cleaners and dust cloths won't reach. It also keeps dust off baseboard heaters and radiators. It costs only **\$8.00** (\$1.95) #SRA261.



## CARRY-IT-ALL



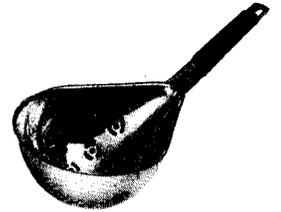
The problem with lugging firewood is that you can never quite get the weight distributed evenly. So you either carry a seemingly endless number of small loads or stagger along uncomfortably risking strain under the weight of a few Herculean loads. Two new creations—the log apron and the log carrier—provide the best way we have found (short of owning a pet donkey) to get your wood in without feeling overburdened. The cleverly designed carrying harness or apron distributes the weight of the load over your back and shoulders, where you are strongest, so you carry more but struggle with it less. The front handle requires little holding strength—it is there more to stabilize the load than to lift it—so you have one hand

free to open and close doors and to unload. The log apron is made of a strong nylon/polyester duck material and the straps are made of seat-belt webbing. It will last for years and prove handy for all kinds of bulky hard-to-handle loads besides firewood. It costs **\$14.00** (\$2.95) #SRA347.

The log carrier—more an all-purpose tote bag—is sturdy enough to haul load upon load of heavy logs for years. (And unlike sling carriers, it won't leave a trail of bark and wood chips either.) But that is only the beginning of the story for this well-made, good-looking bag. Its 23" x 12" x 12" dimensions are capacious enough for big loads, yet manageable enough for convenient carrying. Use the carry-all for shopping, laundry, trips to the beach, yard clean-up, gardening, or to pack a picnic lunch for a pair of hungry softball teams. (We have friends who use theirs as a portable crib for their new baby.) It is hard to imagine you won't find almost daily uses for this remarkable bag—whether or not you burn firewood. The all-purpose tote bag is made of 22-oz. duck, the material often used for making conveyor belts, and it sells for **\$16.00** (\$2.95) #SRA348. Both the log apron and the log tote are available for **\$28.00** (\$2.95) #SRA369.

## SCOOP COLANDER

A breathless moment occurs in any kitchen when it is time to transport a heavy pot of pasta and boiling water from stove to sink, where the colander waits. But why not take the colander to the pot instead? This handy scoop-colander saves you risk and effort. A simple dip-and-drain replaces the old lug-and-pour. This utensil is also perfect for separating solid foods from broth when you are making soups, stews or sauces. The scoop-colander is made in Italy of stainless steel and black plastic. The bowl is 8½" x 6½" x 3" deep and the scoop is 17" long overall. This tool is exceptionally sturdy and well-made, handsome to display, and a true convenience at **\$21.00** (\$2.95) #SRA362.



## A HOT TEA POT

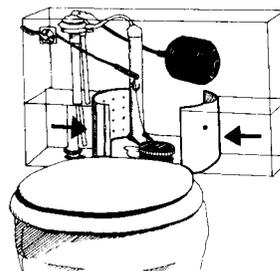


A teapot may look like a simple instrument, but don't be fooled. Extraordinary subtleties of design are required to make an ideal teapot. For example, the shape needs to be rounded with just the right degree of squatness, so that the tea swirls gently after the water is poured in, assuring a perfectly balanced infusion. Then you need those important little touches such as a built-in strainer at the spout to hold back the swollen leaves when the tea is poured, and a careful lip at the end of the spout to eliminate drips. But the critical choice is material: what do you use to make the teapot? You use a special red clay that is available only in one small district in England. This clay is legendary for its abilities to hold the heat in the teapot and to cuddle the brew—attributes that make a truly classic teapot. All these qualities and more can be found in the Brown Betty redware teapot, imported from England where it has been recognized as the premier "branded" teapot for over 100 years. No pot brews better tea. The Brown Betty straight from England and manufactured from that special red clay holds 40 oz. (that's 6-8 standard tea cups!) and costs **\$14.00** (\$2.95) #SRA178.

## TOILET SANITY

A government study shows that 45% of the water used by the average American family gets flushed down the toilet. That is 90 gal. per day for the family of four. Such extravagance is unconscionable. The conventional flush toilet uses 5 to 8 gal. of clean fresh water each flush, when 2.5 to 3 gal. is sufficient. What can we do about this insanity? Use toilet

dams. Putting a dam in the tank saves 1/3 to 1/2 the flush without reducing the toilet's effectiveness (it doesn't reduce the pressure of the flush, just the amount of water used). Putting dams in all your toilets could cut your overall water use (and bill) up to 20%—a vital savings in the parts of the country now affected by drought and a sensible step for everyone to take. For **\$11.00** (\$1.95) #SRA259, we can supply first-quality toilet dam units made of stainless steel and thermoplastic rubber. It comes with a 10-year manufacturer's guarantee. It requires no tools (or special effort) to install and will pay for itself in a matter of months. If you need a good example, we understand the White House toilets have recently been dammed.



## GRIND THEM YOURSELF

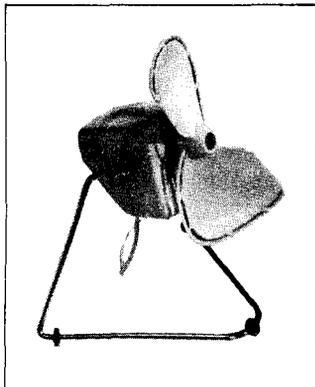
quantity but in terms of quality. The processing—plus the wait on supermarket shelves—allows the essential oils to evaporate, weakening the flavor. Worse yet, some seasonings have unnecessary additives mixed in—like salt and sugar. So we were delighted to discover this line of grind-them-yourself herbs and spices, 100% natural and full of fresh flavor. These spices are packaged in their whole state (or as near to it as practical). You fresh-grind just what you need each time you use them. You'll be surprised by the superior flavor these freshly ground spices produce in all your homemade soups, stews, roasts and casseroles. We can supply any of the herbs and spices listed below for only \$14.00 (\$2.95) per set. Choose from spices of France:



Our quarrel with most packaged herbs and spices is that they don't give you enough of a good thing. Not in terms of quantity but in terms of quality. The processing—plus the wait on supermarket shelves—allows the essential oils to evaporate, weakening the flavor. Worse yet, some seasonings have unnecessary additives mixed in—like salt and sugar. So we were delighted to discover this line of grind-them-yourself herbs and spices, 100% natural and full of fresh flavor. These spices are packaged in their whole state (or as near to it as practical). You fresh-grind just what you need each time you use them. You'll be surprised by the superior flavor these freshly ground spices produce in all your homemade soups, stews, roasts and casseroles. We can supply any of the herbs and spices listed below for only \$14.00 (\$2.95) per set. Choose from spices of France: marjoram, yellow mustard, rosemary, white pepper, tarragon, parsley (#SRA325); Italy: oregano, basil, celery, garlic, marjoram, fennel (#SRA326); China: cloves, nutmeg, ginger, Chinese mustard, celery, Chinese star anise (#SRA327); Mexico: red chili pepper, allspice, sea salt coriander, garlic, cumin (#SRA328).

## A FAN FOR ALL SEASONS

The important qualities of a household fan are safety, quietness, portability and force enough to get the air circulating. We've found a little powerhouse of a fan that meets all these criteria admirably.



The fan blade is made of pliable plastic. If you stick your finger in, the blade stops turning. So far as we can tell the possibility of injury, even for small children, is virtually nil. The fan has two speeds and although it is small (only about 8" high) it moves a surprising volume of air. The operation is ultra-quiet, so your soothing breeze comes with no distracting mechanical rattles. Summer or winter, this is the best way we've seen to put air where you want it. The fans are \$24.00 (\$3.95) #SRA 406.

## DUST MAGNET

If we ever compile a book on *The Old Ways That Were Better Ways*, we will certainly include a chapter on the lambswool duster. This remarkable implemented, the best we can tell, in 19th-century England where it quickly put the feather-duster to shame. It evokes memories of all those movie scenes of starched maids humming happily to themselves as they dust endless feet of library shelves. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. Its magnetic qualities also are perfect for gathering cobwebs from the tops of windows or from ceiling corners. When the duster is soiled, just wash it in warm soapy water. Let it dry, fluff it out and store it, hanging from a conveniently located hole at the end of its handle. We are happy to offer a 20" authentic lambswool duster imported from England for only \$9.00 (\$1.95) #SRA163.



## SAVINGS IN THE SHOWER

We're all being urged to do our part to protect and preserve our precious water and energy resources. *Tools For Living* has discovered a finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver that can help you do your part. This shower head, manufactured by Con-Serv, cuts the use of water—hot water—in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. And using less hot water also means saving the cost of heating more water. Remember, heating water throughout the year is second only to the cost of heating the house. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gals. of water—most of it heated—every day. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water or, realizes a savings of up to \$350 a year for electrically heated water or \$195 for gas-heated water.



The prototype of the Deluxe Fuel Saver was originally developed for use in the U.S. nuclear submarine program. It also is currently being used by over 400 universities and hundreds of military bases. Con-Serv designed the new Deluxe Fuel Saver expressly for the consumer, without compromising comfort or high quality. It gives a great shower! Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated—utilizing the Venturi principle—for an invigorating shower. It delivers a comfortable yet forceful spray—forceful enough to quickly rinse shampoo suds out of a long, thick mane of hair. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is guaranteed for one full year. It installs easily over the standard 1/2" shower head arm with pliers or a wrench—no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for \$16.00 (\$2.95) #SRA351.

**ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUARANTEE:** We ship via United Parcel Service wherever possible to insure prompt delivery. The cost of each item is shown followed by its shipping and handling charges in ( ). Be sure to add the cost plus shipping and handling charges for each item ordered to arrive at the **total price** of each item. If you are not satisfied for any reason, return the article to us within 30 days, and we'll exchange it or refund the cost, per your instructions.



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SR091

Stephen Wadsworth

## A Guide for the Smart Buyer

**T**he *Schwann Record & Tape Guide*, a monthly catalogue distributed through record dealers, lists recordings that are “generally available through retail record stores in the United States.” But *Schwann*’s listings are arbitrary and incomplete. What good reason can there be to omit such important and widely available labels as Supraphon and Hungaroton (the state-run labels of Czechoslovakia and Hungary), English EMI, and German Harmonia Mundi, to name only a few? *Schwann* has served the business well and still has its uses—it is, after all, our *only* catalogue—but there is a need for a guide that serves both market and public realistically. There are works and performances available on record that you and your dealer should know about—perhaps half again as many as *Schwann* lists.

Like the book business, the record market in America has a bit of a blockbuster complex. Record outlets don’t want to keep a lot of merchandise around; many offer only what’s on *Billboard* magazine’s Top-Ten lists, which means a never-ending rhapsody of Luciano Pavarotti and multiple versions of the Pachelbel canon. Most aren’t likely even to order, much less to stock, non-*Schwann* records, and some feel that special-ordering anything at all is a waste of man-hours. Shopping for records in Smalltown, U.S.A., can be extremely frustrating. There will always be lovingly tended specialty shops, but if you can’t find one, consider a superbly stocked mail-order outlet (André Perrault, Ltd., Old Stone House, 73 East Allen Street, Winooski, Vermont 05404; catalogues, \$5.70); or a leading distributor of non-*Schwann* imported recordings (German News Co., 220 East 86 Street, New York, NY 10028; catalogues \$2.50); or both.

Do not fear imports. They constitute a world of artists, performances, and pressings that in many instances outclass *Schwann* offerings. Qualiton

Imports (39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, New York 11101; catalogues free) has recently released, on Supraphon and Hungaroton respectively, fine recordings of Bohuslav Martinu’s six symphonies and Karl Goodmark’s opera, *The Queen of Sheba*; there is only one Martinu symphony in *Schwann*, and no Goldmark opera. Qualiton has also made available, on the Swedish label Bis, a 14-disc series of Grieg’s complete piano music; here Bis offers about eight hours of music not listed in *Schwann*, and the performances and pressings rival any record of Grieg piano music *Schwann*

**“Schwann” is arbitrary and incomplete. Buying by mail can bring you superior value.**

does list. German News carries, on German RCA, German EMI Electrola, and English EMI, superior pressings of many performances available on the unreliable surfaces of American RCA and Angel.

And imports, while their technical quality is invariably higher and their packaging more attractive, are not necessarily more expensive than records listed in *Schwann*. Wilhelm Furtwängler’s historic *Tristan und Isolde* with Kirsten Flagstad, a five-disc investment, costs \$49.98 (suggested list) on Angel’s frequently defective surfaces—and only \$39.90 on EMI Electrola’s immaculate virgin vinyl. (One drawback: the import *Tristan* has no English libretto. About 25 percent of the imports I’ve heard this year have no English liner notes.) Sometimes, of course, imports *are* more expensive, but you can always hear why. Two

recent mid-priced domestic labels, Quintessence and Pro Arte, feature many performances that are available for less than half the list price of German Harmonia Mundi and Supraphon, but the budget pressings are less than half as good. The tapes jam, and the records snap, crackle, and pop. Is this a bargain?

If you want top value for your money, be very wary of Angel Records, whose poor pressings—so often full of hiss and other insidious manifestations of low-fi—can spoil marvelous performances. Angel’s digital recordings don’t measure up either. American RCA, which for some time produced virtually unplayable records, has a promising new imported-pressings line and some good-quality digital releases, but much of their line sounds mediocre, and, again, some of the performances are available—sometimes cheaper and almost always higher-fi—from German News or through the Perrault catalogue.

So what’s good in *Schwann*? In the last year or so CBS has made technical strides, better to serve their artists and their public, as has Nonesuch, technically the most advanced and, thanks to an enterprising catalogue, by far the most interesting of the so-called budget labels. The most reliable “generally available” labels are Telarc, the technically pristine digital pioneer, and the divisions of Polygram Classics—Deutsche Grammophon, Archiv, London, Telefunken, L’Oiseau Lyre, Argo, and Philips. They are all pressed and produced in Europe with great care and consistently rank with the best records made. The Polygram labels maintain the best balance of great performance and great sound.

The moral of the story: Use *Schwann*, but be aware of its inadequacies. For a marginally greater expenditure of time (and sometimes money) you can treat yourself to the best the market offers. ■