

Bond at it's best in Skyfall

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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What makes the latest Bond really great is that it is not the traditional Bond. Yes, there's the daredevil and heart-pounding action sequences, magnificent cars, gorgeous girls and tiny gadgets, but Skyfall is ultimately a stirring and emotionally evocative human drama unlike any other; with Bond and M pitted against an unscrupulous villain with a personal agenda and unyielding vendetta. Moving global warfare of epic proportions into the background, Skyfall zones in on an intimate and emotional war zone that strikes all the right chords.

There are three main reasons to see Skyfall: Firstly, the chemistry between Bond and M and first-rate performances by Daniel Craig and Dame Judi Dench; secondly, Javier Bardem's incarnation of a charming villain from hell whose humanity is only equalled by his wit; and, thirdly, there's director Sam Mendes, whose fusion of grand and spectacular action with heartfelt and intimate human drama offers a visceral experience that is both rewarding and meaningful. We crawl under the skin of the characters and into their unique mindscapes, allowing us to bond with what's happening and who it's happening to.





A powerful portrait of humans struggling with their flawed humanity

The visual splendour of Mendes' vision paints a powerful portrait of humans struggling with their flawed humanity; it has immense depth and is amplified by consummate implementation that showcases the art and craft of filmmaking and the compelling impact of a well-scripted screenplay that was co-written by Neal Purvis and Robert Wade (who also wrote the James Bond films *The World Is Not Enough*, *Die Another Day*, *Casino Royale* and *Quantum Of Solace*) and John Logan (who wrote the screenplays for *Gladiator*, *The Aviator*, and *Hugo*).

The end result is a meticulously plotted story with characters who bleed; the humanity of the characters is wrapped in a spectacular visual and visceral realm created by Steve Begg (visual effects and miniature supervisor), Chris Corbould (special effects supervisor and miniature effects supervisor), and cinematographer Roger Deakins.

The onslaught of the effects is amplified by editor Stuart Baird and poignantly underscored by composer Thomas Newman.

Then there's the awesome title sequence that was designed by Daniel Kleinman, and produced by Paul Epworth, who co-wrote the song with 24-year-old vocalist Adele, currently the world's best-selling recording artist.

Skyfall is not only Bond at its best, but a film that anyone can enjoy (the USD600 million box office figure serves as testament to its universal appeal).

Its overwhelming success and powerful impact are definitely due to the fact that Skyfall never tries to imitate its predecessors, but delivers a film with artistic and intelligent intensity that is unequalled, offering out-of-this-world entertainment that serves as a shining example of what cinematic escapism is all about and why we go to the movies.

Behind the scenes

Skyfall marks the first film for 10-time Oscar-nominated cinematographer Roger Deakins to shoot on a digital camera. Deakins described the Arri Alexa: "This camera has brought us to a point where digital is simply better."

This is the sixth Bond film that the Aston Martin DB5 has been featured in. It first appeared in Goldfinger way back in 1964 and subsequently appeared in Thunderball, GoldenEye, Tomorrow Never Dies, and Casino Royale. Undergoing weapons training, the cast went through 200 000 rounds of ammunition. Coca-Cola was sprayed on the tarmac of the streets in Istanbul to keep the bikes from sliding. In order to film the chase in Istanbul, the production team had to remove the existing tiles from the bazaar and replace them with rubber tiles, just in case the stunt didn't go as planned. Once the filming was finished the original tiles were then put back in place.

In the exterior Whitehall shots, halfway through the chase between Bond and Silva, we had 750 extras, 100 background vehicles, 300 film crew and multiple agency co-operation: Westminster City Council/TFL/TFL Buses/Met Police/CHX Police/London Underground/Herts Traffic Management/MOD/Royal Parks/ Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Network Rail.

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Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za
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