

FOR PETE'S SAKE...

Kong things from the DVD: some good, some ZZZZZZ...

The jokey *Mummy*-style 1996 script that never got made (you can download it off the DVD along with the new version) had Jack Driscoll as a WWI fighter pilot, practicing baseball with his buddy up in the air.



Serkis was adamant Kong should not be a carnivore (gorillas are herbivores); hence the scene where he's munching on a bamboo stalk. Jackson originally wanted him to be chewing on a dinosaur carcass.

There's a raft of concept sketches from the aborted 1996 version, including several dinosaurs with "comical" names: the plodysorryassaurus, the rather embarrassing mooseasaurus and the "fishy-walky thingy".

There's an entire featurette shamelessly plugging Weta-produced *Kong* collectibles. "When I was a kid I would have given anything to have one of these things sitting in my bedroom," Jackson gushes, with a straight face.

Jackson explains his take on the film's great mystery – namely, how did they get Kong into the *Venture*'s hold? "The bigger question," he says, "is how did they get him into that theatre without anybody seeing?"



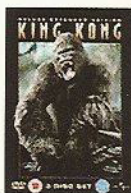
Beast In Show

One helluva package thwacks its chest onto DVD...

KING KONG
DELUXE EXTENDED EDITION 12

2005 Out now (£24.99)

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★



Those of you who splashed out for the *King Kong* Special Edition release might feel a tad aggrieved to see this extras-stuffed, three-disc Director's Cut whisked out little more than six months later – hardly long enough for the first one to expire in DVD bargain bins. True, this Deluxe Extended Edition *only* contains the Director's Cut, with its 13 extra (mostly action) minutes siphoned back into *King Kong*'s already chunky running time, and they've packed on more than six hours of extras... including the long-promised Peter Jackson commentary (alongside one of *Kong*'s co-screenwriters, Philippa Boyens, but not the other, Fran Walsh). Still, the words "rub", "your" and "noses in it" spring to mind.

Once you start dipping into this package, however, any resentment should swiftly go the way of the *Venture*'s sacrificial sailors, given the plentiful, superb, rewatchable nourishment here. The big problem *Kong* marketers have, of course, is that the film's big-screen journey was covered so exhaustively in the online production diaries, it might feel like there's nothing left to say or see (especially if you *also* forked out last year to get them on disc). Jackson attempts to lay those fears to rest in his introduction, claiming, "This is all the juicy stuff we've saved up 'til now."

And for the most part he's right. The astonishingly comprehensive Making Of, *Recreating The Eighth Wonder*,

is riveting stuff. There are clips from the Super-8 WWII movies Jackson shot as a lil' Kiwi; a pre-production trip Jackson and Watts made to the top of the Empire State Building and loads of on-set footage featuring Andy Serkis "being" Kong, including the first day he showed up ready to rumble in his padded monkey suit and fake fangs. "I feel a little bit silly," quoth the actor, looking a mite sheepish.

Jackson's commentary with Boyens is a chummy, explanatory affair. There are some decent revelations but it's mainly a chance for Jackson, who does most of the talking, to reflect on remaking his favourite movie after a lifetime of dreaming about it. On a lighter note, check out *The Eighth Blunder Of The World* gag and blooper reel, which includes Black fighting Skull Island's insects with a double-sided lightsaber, 40 minutes of deleted scenes – original or extended – with Jackson explaining why each one didn't make the cuts and a short video romp the cast made about giving PJ his birthday present. For geeks, there's a "pre-viz" animatic section detailing the film's key set-pieces, hundreds of conceptual designs, and an anal rundown of all the nods to the original film in the new version. Phew!

As for the film? Well, as *Lounge* said when the Special Edition came out, *Kong* doesn't lose too much in its transfer to the small screen. Everything that didn't work in cinemas is still a bit rubbish (like the silly stampede), while everything that thrilled still does – namely Weta's breathtaking effects work, including the stunning V-Rex smackdown and Kong, a supreme creation brought to living, breathing, snorting life by Weta and Serkis. It's testament to the power of Jackson's remake that you can sit there watching the rough, "pre-viz" version of Kong's final moments and still manage to shed a tear.

Matt Mueller