


# Italian Cinema: Arthouse to Exploitation

## Barry Forshaw

**new title**

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- **The first comprehensive guide to every aspect of Italian Cinema, from art films to the immensely popular exploitation genres: Horror, Sword and Sandal epics, Spaghetti Westerns**
- **A complete list of every Italian film of note: the perfect film lover's shopping list**
- **The importance of the erotic in Italian cinema examined, and taboo-busting films celebrated.**
- **Every major director examined in penetrating essays, with their major films lovingly analysed**

From the unbridled sensuality of the orgy scenes in silent Italian cinema, through a topless Sophia Loren in a 1950s historical epic and the image of Silvana Mangano, her skirt provocatively tucked into her underwear, in the neo-realist classic *Bitter Rice*, to the erotic obsessions of Fellini and the more cerebral but still passion-centred movies of Antonioni, eroticism is ever-present in Italian cinema. And then there are the popular movies: the acres of tanned flesh (both male and female) on offer in the many sword and sandal epics of the peplum era through to the inextricable mix of sexuality and violence in the *gialli* of such directors as Mario Bava and Dario Argento, in which death and sex meet in a blood-drenched, orgasmic coda.

Of course, there's far more to Italian cinema: it is one of the most glorious and energetic celebrations of the medium that any nation has ever offered. For many years, this astonishing legacy was largely unseen, but the DVD revolution is making virtually everything available, from Steve Reeves' muscle epics to long-unseen Italian art house movies.

The one characteristic that most of the great (and not so great) Italian movies have in common is the sheer individualism of the directors. And this applies to the populist moviemakers as much as to the giants of serious cinema. While Fellini, Visconti and Antonioni have rightly assumed their places in the pantheon, so have such talented popular *auteurs* as Sergio Leone, who was doing something with the Western that no American director would dare do, so radical was the rethink.

All the glory of Italian cinema is celebrated here in comprehensive essays, along with every key film in an easy-to-use reference format.

**Barry Forshaw** edits the magazine *Crime Time*, and writes for *The Independent*, *The Express* and *Publishing News*. As well as his specialist area of crime fiction, he writes on film for a variety of magazines. He has worked as an illustrator, and has written a comprehensive guide to crime fiction worldwide.

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