

## Box Office Power Rankings: When 10th Place Is Pretty Darn Good

Written by Jeff Ignatius

Wednesday, 20 August 2008 02:47

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It's not a surprise that *Tropic Thunder* unseated *The Dark Knight* last weekend after four-week reigns atop the box-office charts and the

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. Good reviews, some protests, Ben Stiller, and a white-hot Robert Downey Jr. will do that, although its \$40-million six-day take has to be considered something of a disappointment in light of its \$92-million production budget.

What isn't a disappointment is Woody Allen, who sneaked into the box-off top 10 and landed in third place in our rankings. With *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* showing in just 692 locations — earning the second-best per-theater average of the weekend — Woody rode good reviews to a great showing. A weekend gross of \$3.8 million isn't much, but that's the beauty of the Box Office Power Rankings: Three out of four ain't bad at all.

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Just ask George Lucas and Keifer Sutherland, whose new movies scored within three points of each other (and *low*) on both critical measures and were less than 50 bucks apart on per-theater average. *The Clone Wars*' higher theater count gave it the overall-box-office edge on *Mirrors*, but neither will be bragging: They finished fifth and sixth in the rankings.

### About Box Office Power Rankings

Box Office Power Rankings balance box office and critical reception to create a better measure of a movie's overall performance against its peers than gross receipts alone.

The weekly rankings cover the 10 top-grossing movies in the United States for the previous weekend. We assign equal weight to box office and critical opinion, with each having two components. The measures are: box-office gross, per-theater average, [Rotten Tomatoes](#) score, and [Metacritic](#) score.

Why those four? Box-office gross basically measures the number of people who saw a movie in a given weekend. Per-theater average corrects for blockbuster-wannabes that flood the market with prints, and gives limited-release movies a fighting chance. Rotten Tomatoes measures critical opinion in a binary way. And Metacritic gives a better sense of critics' enthusiasm (or bile) for a movie.

For each of the four measures, the movies are ranked and assigned points (10 for the best performer, one for the worst). Finally, those points are added up, with a maximum score of 40 and a minimum score of four.

For more Box Office Power Rankings, visit ( <http://www.culturesnob.com/bopr> ). [Culture Snob](#) is the Web site of *Reader* Managing Editor Jeff Ignatius.

**Box Office Power Rankings: August 15-17**

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**Box Office Ranks**

**Critics' Ranks**

**Rank**

**Movie**

[Last Week](#)

**Gross**

**Per T**

[Rotten Tomatoes](#)

[Metacritic](#)

1

*Tropic Thunder*

-

10 (\$25.8M)

2

*The Dark Knight*

1

9 (\$16.4M)

3

*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*

-

1 (\$3.8M)

4

*Pineapple Express*

2

6 (\$9.8M)

5

*Star Wars: The Clone Wars*

-

8 (\$14.6M)

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6	<i>Mirrors</i>	-	7 (\$11.2M)
7	<i>The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2</i>		3 (\$5.8M)
7	<i>Mamma Mia!</i>	5	4 (\$6.1)
9	<i>The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor</i>		5 (\$8.2M)
9	<i>Step Brothers</i>	5	2 (\$4.8)