Out of Bounds

SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

kung-fu fighting

Maybe you've been there: early 20s, post-college and for some reason, you find yourself living at your Grandma's house in your hometown while you wait tables, save money and try to figure out what to do with your life. Luckily, your best friend still lives in the same town, and his wife works the graveyard shift. Add frothy cold drinks, an endless supply of old karate films, and you have a recipe for good times and better kicks.

Nothing beats watching the cat-like reflexes of experts in kung-fu, taekwondo, Shaolin, or any other of the magical, mystical martial arts. So let the pretentious folks wax rhapsodic about the latest "important" Oscar-nominated films, for these movies can simply kick those movies' butts.

10. "China O'Brien" — While none of Cynthia Rothrock's movies have gripping stories, they do feature this five-time karate world champion showing us that kung-fu isn't just a man's game.

9. "Ghost Dog" — While not as much action as many on this list, this story of a modern-day hitman who lives by the code of a samurai (Forest Whitaker) is absorbing and features a phenomenal soundtrack.

8. "Seven Samurai" — Legendary director Akira Kurosawa's epic about vagabond swordsmen hired to protect a town. A wonderful final battle.

7. "Return of the Dragon" — Bruce Lee helps save a friend's restaurant from the clutches of local heavies. The crime boss doesn't take "no" for an answer and sends Chuck Norris to take on Bruce.

6. "The Legend of Drunken Master" — Jackie Chan is consistently one of the most entertaining martial artists, and he does his own stunts. The finale here is something to behold: fighting a bevy of badguys while ducking carts full of hot coals.

5. "Kill Bill Vol. I" — Though genre purists will say it's not really a martial arts movie, this over-the-top, blood-soaked Quentin Tarantino revenge story features some wicked fighting in kitchens and the infamous House of Blue Leaves.

4. "Ong-Bak: Thai Warrior" — I have a dear friend who has a Ph.D. in English and without question is the smartest person I have ever met. This is his favorite movie. A whirlwind of Tony Jaa doing things that gravity shouldn't allow. Don't pay attention to the story, just try to follow Jaa's fists.

3. "Fist of Legend" — While you may know Jet Li from "Hero" or "Kiss of the Dragon," this remake of Bruce Lee's "Fist of Fury" ranks as one of the best martial arts movies ever. Li is blinding fast and wicked smooth.

2. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" — Unbelievably beautiful film where the fights feel more like ballet. Unlike many martial arts films, this one actually has a good plot.

1. "Fists of Fury" — Bruce Lee stars in the film that changed the landscape of martial arts films, and you will see no wires or camera tricks. It's merely Bruce being Bruce, and bad dudes get spilled all over the place. Happy roundhouse kicks.

Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, where he can barely beat eggs. He can be reached at msluce@sbcglobal.net.

GOLFDOM (ISSN 1526-4270) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group, Inc., 306 W Michigan Street, Suite 200, Duluth, MN 55802. Corporate office: 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. Accounting, Advertising, Production and Circulation offices: 306 W. Michigan St., Suite 200 Duluth, MN 55802-1810. Subscription rates: One year $39 (U.S. and possessions), $59 (Canada and Mexico) and $89 (all other countries). Air expedition offices: 306 W. Michigan St., Suite 200 Duluth, MN 55802-1610. Subscription rates: One year $39 (U.S. and possessions), $59 (Canada and Mexico) and $89 (all other countries); add $10 (U.S. and possessions), $14 (Canada and Mexico) and $16 (all other countries); add $8.50 per order shipping and handling for both current and back issue purchases.

Movies that might compel you to break out your BD staff and overdub your home movies

BY MARK LUCE

1. "Fists of Fury" — Bruce Lee stars in the film that changed the landscape of martial arts films, and you will see no wires or camera tricks. It's merely Bruce being Bruce, and bad dudes get spilled all over the place. Happy roundhouse kicks.

2. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" — Unbelievably beautiful film where the fights feel more like ballet. Unlike many martial arts films, this one actually has a good plot.

3. "Fist of Legend" — While you may know Jet Li from "Hero" or "Kiss of the Dragon," this remake of Bruce Lee's "Fist of Fury" ranks as one of the best martial arts movies ever. Li is blinding fast and wicked smooth.

4. "Ong-Bak: Thai Warrior" — I have a dear friend who has a Ph.D. in English and without question is the smartest person I have ever met. This is his favorite movie. A whirlwind of Tony Jaa doing things that gravity shouldn't allow. Don't pay attention to the story, just try to follow Jaa's fists.

5. "Kill Bill Vol. I" — Though genre purists will say it's not really a martial arts movie, this over-the-top, blood-soaked Quentin Tarantino revenge story features some wicked fighting in kitchens and the infamous House of Blue Leaves.

6. "The Legend of Drunken Master" — Jackie Chan is consistently one of the most entertaining martial artists, and he does his own stunts. The finale here is something to behold: fighting a bevy of badguys while ducking carts full of hot coals.

7. "Return of the Dragon" — Bruce Lee helps save a friend's restaurant from the clutches of local heavies. The crime boss doesn't take "no" for an answer and sends Chuck Norris to take on Bruce.

8. "Seven Samurai" — Legendary director Akira Kurosawa's epic about vagabond swordsmen hired to protect a town. A wonderful final battle.

9. "Ghost Dog" — While not as much action as many on this list, this story of a modern-day hitman who lives by the code of a samurai (Forest Whitaker) is absorbing and features a phenomenal soundtrack.