

Romance in the Air Chicago offers 'sweet spots' for Valentine's Day

Five years ago on Valentine's Day, husband and wife Richard Miller and Jan Lisa Huttner launched a Web site to help busy couples avoid lousy movies. In the process, "Jan and I have learned that men and women really do see things differently," Miller said.

"Even when we're in basic agreement, I typically value genre conventions, production values, and special effects, whereas Jan almost always focuses first on character development and relationships," he added.

For their Web site, "Films for Two: the Online Guide for Busy Couples," the duo watches about 300 movies every year (in theaters, or on DVD or cable television). They give 50-word mini-reviews only to movies they rate at least three points on a five-point scale.

If you want to see one of this year's Oscar nominated films on Valentine's Day, you'll have a hard time finding one with chemistry, they said.

"With our soldiers dying in Iraq and continued fear of worldwide terrorism, this wasn't a very good year for romance," Huttner said. "The desire Jake Gyllenhaal feels for Keith Ledger in *Brokeback Mountain* goes mostly unrequited, and Ralph Fiennes' passion for Rachel Weisz in *The Constant Gardener* is thwarted when she's murdered. So this might be the year to light some candles in dark corners and watch a DVD at home."

If you want to laugh, watch Amy Irving & Antonio Fagundes in *Bossa Nova*, Drew Barrymore & Adam Sandler in *Fifty First Dates*, Andie McDowell & Bill Murray in *Groundhog Day*, or Kevin Kline & Tom Selleck in *In & Out*.

If you'd rather cry your eyes out, find *Boys Don't Cry* with Chloe Sevigny & Hilary Swank, *Earth* with Nandita Das & Rahul Khanna, *Swept from the Sea* with Rachel Weisz & Vincent Perez, or *Witness* with Kelly McGillis & Harrison Ford

Couple picks Films for 2



For a bittersweet mix, try Susan Sarandon & Kevin Costner in *Bull Durham*, Anjelica Huston & Alfred Molina in *The Perez Family*, Lynn Chen & Michelle Krusiec in *Saving Face*, or Audrey Hepburn & Albert Finney in *Two for the Road*.

If you just want to watch two people connect despite all the odds against them, look for Elizabeth Pena & Chris Cooper in *Lone Star*, Sarita Choudhury & Denzel Washington in *Mississippi Masala*, or Maggie Gyllenhaal & James Spader in *Secretary*.

Huttner is the film critic for "Chicago Woman" and "Tampa Bay Woman" and she recently created the "Second City Tzivi" column for Chicago's Jewish community monthly, the JUF News. A former health care computer consultant, she was admitted into the Chicago Film Critics Association last year. She also founded a virtual organization "WITASWAN" (Women in the Audience Supporting Women Artists Now) of women who have pledged to watch one film per month either penned and/or helmed by women. Meanwhile Miller, who serves as controller for one of Chicago's largest academic medical centers, sees lots of movies and keeps the money flowing both at home and at work.