

10 of my top movies picks for 2008

1. **Rain of the Children** – emotionally draining, brilliant film from Vincent Ward
2. **The Counterfeiters** – The Oscar winner capturing the other side of the Nazi death camps stories, survival at all costs.
3. **WALL-E** – certainly not for children, brilliant story telling. A classic tale of now and the future ... beware.
4. **No Country for Old Men** – The Coen Brothers come back - with a chilling, riveting tale. Never lose the toss of a coin
5. **Man on Wire** – Documentary from James Marsh back for general release in 2009. An amazing, heart stopping memorial to the Twin Towers.
6. **In Bruges** – Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson and Ralph Fiennes are brilliant with a script to match. Not for those with a weak stomach !
7. **Waltz with Bashir** – Ari Folman has a masterpiece of memory loss and recall. Animated from life action, a must.
8. **Mongol** – The rise and rise of Genghis Khan, awesome epic the first of three. A massive sprawling tale for general release in 2009.
9. **Sweeney Todd** – Johnny Depp redeems himself from the awful pirate crap in this dream role, lots of blood and music – superb.
10. **Rubbings from a Live Man** - Documentary of Piha boy grown up to shock, amaze and compel. Warwick Broadhead is genius, unflinching and honest.

Three stinkers to run from even on DVD:

1. **There will be Blood** – just over hyped endless and pointless.
2. **The Bands Visit** – hang Peter Calder now, unbearable.
3. **Silent Light** – Tedious festival snorer, hide if it comes near in 2009.

Best Restaurants in the West:

1. **Bunga Raya – 3062 Great North Road.** Just up Memorial Drive, wondrous. Number one for 2008, Malaysian gem, fabulous food and service.
2. **Moto – 3/42 Paramount Drive, Lincoln North.** Japanese at its best, wonderful and welcoming staff and food.
3. **Toby's – Titirangi.** An old favourite for locals. Good bar and dining setting, fire in winter, away from traffic. A lot to enjoy and great food.

4. **The Falls – corner of Alderman Drive and Edmonton Road.** It's the Grand old Dame of Henderson. Great service and venue. Fine kitchen, consistent and always good.
5. **Curry Leaf -24 Hutchinson Ave.** Another New Lynn hide away and a real gem. Tucked away its worth looking for, Indian Magic.

Bonus award for style – The Hardware Café - Titirangi always good day and night.

My 10 Great reads for 2008

1. **Breath – Tim Winton (Hamish Hamilton) \$50**
The Best of the year, a tale of youth, foolishness, love and rejection – yes perfection
2. **Native Wit – (Hamish Keith) Random House** - Witty self fladulation. Fun and jammed full of racy tales of love and mistakes along the way.
3. **Pakeha and the Treaty – (Patrick Snedden)**The book of the lectures and more, meaningful, highly insightful work of wisdom.
4. **Caesar, Life of a colossue (Adrian Goldsworthy) Phoenix books** - To understand politics you shouldn't miss this masterpiece. The definitive biography, broad and brilliant.
5. **At the end of Darwin Road – (Fiona Kidman) A Vintage book.** A writers life continues, Kidman understands its ups and downs. A powerful memoir of struggle and substance, loved it.
6. **Remember Me – (Derek Hansen) Harper Collins** A Newton Gully boy like me, the author of "Lunch with Mussolini" Hansen revisits 1950's Ponsonby and Newton. A war time secret and its aftermath, gripping and poignant.
7. **I celebrate myself: The somewhat Private Life of Allen Ginsberg.(Bill Morgan) Viking Book U.S.A** 50 years after "Howl" the 20th centurys great poet revealed. Irreverent and dysfunctional. A timely tribute to a great poet of our time.
8. **Living with Natives: New Zealanders talk about their loves of Native Plants (Edited by Ian Spellerberg and Michelle Frey.** A long list of New Zealanders wax lyrical about themselves and trees. They do a stirring job too. 44 Narratives of a passion, could have had more care with the photos, still a fine effort.
9. **Rita Angus: An Artists Life (Jill Trevelyan) Te Papa Press** The matching companion to the magnificent exhibition touring New Zealand. A brilliant and beautiful book Angus is hard to like but her art isn't. Stunning in its narrative and flow, an intellectual roller coaster of a book, just excellent.
10. **The Buried book: The Loss and Recovery of the Great Epic Gilgamesh (David Damrosch) Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. New York** - The finding of the tablets buried since 612BC telling of the great flood. Unbelievable yet true. Thrilling link with the ancient world. Fascinating sleuthing, it's got to be in my hit list of all time.

Bonus award for 2008 – Road Less Travelled (Kennedy Warne) Penguin Book. A journey through 20 years of New Zealand geographic magazine. Beautiful photographs and rich text from this fine publication, a journey worth taking.