The Arts

On the Screen

****: Excellent
***: Good
**: Average
*: Poor

1 Exit to Eden
Garry Marshall (Pretty Woman) directs this screen adaptation of Anne Rice's novel, which deals with a fantasy sex resort. The principal characters in the book are Dana Delany's dominatrix and Paul Mercario's citizen-slave, and their story describes the trust that can develop in a mistress-slave relationship. The film defies many of the novel's themes through two police officers (Rosie O'Donnell and Dan Aykroyd) who investigate the activities of diamond smugglers that have infiltrated the resort. This comic element provides some minor amusement, but it also confuses the main plot. This film is an interesting cultural study: Cute and friendly, it makes fun of social repressions while allowing the viewer to indulge in one or two of the ubiquitous sex acts. — Terence Emer. Loews Cheri.

**** Only You
This is an amusing, enjoyable film for people who haven't given up on old-fashioned romance. Exploiting only a romantic locus, this film recalls a film like Roman Holiday. Marisa Tomei is Faith, a quirky schoolteacher who hasn't given up on old-fashioned romantic love. Faith, a name she obtained from a Ouija board as a child. This far-fetched premise track down a soul mate named Damon who takes off to Italy with her best friend on October 28, 1994. Marisa Tomei is Faith, a quirky schoolteacher who has never lost the hope of being free, and this carries both Andy and Red through the tough times. This film transcends its short-story basis (originally written by Stephen King) with excellent performances and artful direction — it has "Oscar" written all over it. — John Jacobs. Loews Copley Place.

**** The Specialist
The latest film is a long line of testosterone-dominated action flicks has a lot more going for it than its plot. It's a movie of moments, whether the scenes marvel at the spectacle of normal action-movie exploits: violence and sex. You can love it, but you don't have to watch it. — TE. Loews Cheri.

**** Pulp Fiction
Winner of the Palm d'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival, this movie combines standard plots of hit men, junkies, and criminals, with an amazing facility with storytelling. The plot consists of three principle stories: First, the daily experiences of two hit men (John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson); second, Travolta's character involved with his gangster boss's wife ( Uma Thurman) as a resort; and third, the plans of a boxer, who has been paid off to take a dive in the ring, instead choosing to win the fight and take off with the money and his girlfriend. Although these film noir concepts may seem a bit cliched, writer-director Quentin Tarantino infuses his characters with crackling dialogue and a sense of purpose (i.e., Jackson's hit-man character quoting bible verses as a prelude to execution). Tarantino's career may still be young, beginning with the cult hit Reservoir Dogs (1992) and recently surfacing in his scripts for True Romance and Natural Born Killers, but his latest film confirms his mission to shake up the current course of cinema. — Rob Marcato. Loews Cheri.

**** Quiz Show
The quiz-show scandals of the 1950s forced America to probe the changing face of morality. Robert Redford directs this fresh look at television and honesty in an age of illusions and image-making. Excellent performances by Ralph Fiennes and John Turturro, as quiz-show contestants Charles Van Deren and Herbert Stempel, make this reality-based drama worth the contemplation and dissection of ethical issues amid the phoniness of television. — Craig K. Chang. Loews Copley Place.

**** The Shawshank Redemption
This extraordinary movie about hope, friendship, and renewal in the face of suffering in life is much more heartfelt than its title suggests. Tim Robbins embodies the classic protagonist in Andy Dufresne, a banker who is imprisoned for two murders he swears he did not commit, and he is forced to face the abrasive reality of prison life. He eventually comes out of his shell and cultivates a friendship with Red (Morgan Freeman), whose connections inside the prison provide a neat counterpart to Andy's own talents as a financial planner, which he eventually exploits to get on the good side of the prison guards. Through all of Andy's suffering in prison, he never loses the hope of being free, and this carries both Andy and Red through the tough times. This film transcends its short-story basis with excellent performances and artful direction — it has "Oscar" written all over it. — John Jacobs. Loews Copley Place.

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Samuel L. Jackson, John Travolta, and Harvey Keitel in Pulp Fiction.