

'SPIDER WOMAN' GETS  
DISC AND VOD DEBUT

By Stephanie Prange

**PRODUCT** The 1985 Oscar-lauded *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, from City Lights Home Entertainment, is available now for the first time since its theatrical release as a download exclusively on Amazon.com's Unbox. Digital consumers can rent the film for \$2.99 for 30 days or buy it outright for \$9.99.

The film also will be available for the first time on standard DVD (\$25.99) and Blu-ray Disc (\$27.95), again exclusively on Amazon.com, beginning July 22.

The documentary, *Tangled Web: Making Kiss of the Spider Woman* also is available

through disc-on-demand or Unbox.

*Kiss of the Spider Woman* is one of the top three films for which customers have requested release info, said Peter Farici, VP of movies and music at Amazon.

*Kiss of the Spider Woman* "symbolizes the pure spirit of independent filmmaking," said Sal Scamardo, president of City Lights Home Entertainment. "As an emerging major independent . . . , we're excited to preserve and promote that spirit."

Producer David Weisman said Blu-ray's format victory factored into his decision that it was the right time to release the film.



## City Lights Turns Up the Title Wattage

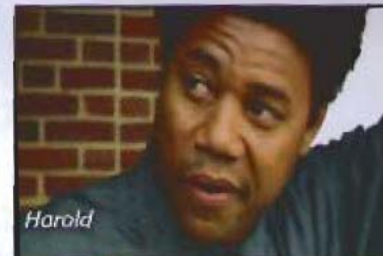
By Thomas K. Arnold

**SUPPLIER** Sal Scamardo used to be the king of sports videos. While at PolyGram Video and then USA Films, he crafted marketing campaigns for annual Super Bowl and World Series videos and other sports products.

But for the past 18 months, he's switched gears and has been quietly building up his own DVD distribution company, City Lights Home Entertainment. Part of 25-year-old City Lights Media Group, the company was born in December 2006, when Scamardo brokered a deal with WEA Corp. to distribute City Lights' feature, TV and other programming.

The division released its first title, *Suicide Killers*, in May 2007 and has since released eight more titles, including the psycho thriller *Descent*, with Rosario Dawson; the Sundance favorite *Manda Bala*; David Wain's screwball comedy *The Ten*; and the lauded foreign film *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation* (coming to DVD July 15).

Other upcoming DVD releases include the 1985 cult classic *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, with William Hurt and Raul Julia (see story, left); *Harold*, a comedy with Cuba Gooding Jr. that opens theatrically in July; and the documentary *Matador*, about legendary bullfighter El Fandi.



It's a diverse slate and a strange time for an indie to be ramping up the way City Light is, with ambitious plans for up to 20 DVD releases a year. The home entertainment business, after all, is flat, and several high-profile companies have recently gone out of business, most notably New Line Home Entertainment, whose parent, New Line Cinema, this month is being folded into Warner Bros.

"We recognize that the traditional DVD distribution business is a mature one," Scamardo said. "But we also know that DVD — and now Blu-ray — is still a very robust and viable format."

While the big theatrical features from the major studios are typically

viewed as commodities when they come out on DVD, selling for \$15 or less at Wal-Mart and Target, with indies it's a different game.

Mass merchants are not the sole, or even the primary, distribution channel

for independent product. A title such as *Mitzi Gaynor: Razzle Dazzle! The Special Years*, a retro TV musical that City Lights is releasing in November, may sell mostly at music stores.

Meanwhile, video rental stores are still very important to independent DVD distributors, Scamardo said — particularly those that cater to film buffs that can't find what they want at the local big-box discounter. "There is never a shortage of demand for high-quality entertainment fare," he said.

Scamardo also is beefing up City Lights' presence on various VOD platforms. "Discovery is important to the independent film consumer," he said.