

The Great Gatsby

Reviewed by [Una Cottrell](#) May 2013

"That was more romantic than I was expecting. ♦ To quote my 12 year old daughter after watching the **The Great Gatsby**, the most recent film from the master of romance himself, **Baz Luhrmann** (of *Romeo & Juliet* and *Moulin Rouge* fame).
Starring **Leonardo Di Caprio** and, she who can do no wrong, **Carey Mulligan**, the film **IS** romantic. After all, the film is based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's book of the same name and delves deeply into the lives of the rich and famous of the decadent 1920s. ♦ Set in New York, the film looks at the lives in particular of **Nick Carraway** (**Tobey Maguire**) and his rich and beautiful cousin **Daisy Buchanan** (Carey Mulligan). Unhappily married to womanising **Tom** (**Joel Edgerton**), Daisy re-establishes contact with her cousin Carraway, and he unsuspectingly becomes the conduit between herself and the enigmatic **J. Gatsby** (Leonardo DiCaprio) for them to rekindle their love affair of five years earlier. The story unfolds until its predictable, but still shocking, tragic end.
One of the reasons for watching a Luhrmann film is for the colourful visual feast you can expect and this doesn't disappoint. Set in the sumptuous 1920s, the theme is black and gold with divine and dapper frocks for the ladies (yes, ♦frocks♦ ♦ remember it's the 1920s!) and crisp, elegant suits for the men. Women characters sport bob haircuts a-plenty with men coolly commanding short back and sides. But it's the sets of the film that are the real stars. Both the Buchanan and Gatsby residences are to die for, although, as you would expect the Gatsby mansion has the edge. With chandeliers, jungle sized potted palms and perfectly round swimming pools, the characters play out their narrative, and it's difficult to tell whether Luhrman went to the expense of building these edifices of pleasure or whether it's extremely clever CGI. Either way, it doesn't detract from the delight of the backdrops.
The soundtrack isn't what you would expect either. **Jay Z** (Mr Beyonce) is executive producer on the film and rather subtly sneaks in some of his own hip-hop back catalogue. However these well known pieces become virtually unrecognisable as they've been given 1920s makeovers. Think Beyonce's **Crazy in Love** played by a traditional jazz band sung by **Emelie Sande**. And yep, it actually works! Other recognisable modern day tunes include The XX's **Crystallize** and Amy Winehouse's **Back to Black**, all given the same 1920s treatment.
In no way does the acting disappoint. Di Caprio smoulders as Gatsby and was made for the part, and Mulligan is believable as the innocent and naive Daisy. But it's probably Maguire who audiences warm to the most. His character easily suffers the most angst, and Maguire pulls it off magnificently.
The Great Gatsby has been marketed to be the film of the summer, and it probably will be. If all you want a feast for the eyes and a couple of hours sheer indulgence, go see it. Oh, and don't forget about the romance♦