

## The Sundance Kid

By ADRIENNE PAPP

Westsider Robert Redford is the Sundance Kid in more ways than one. When Redford decided to create an American alternative to the Cannes Film Festival, he decided on a name and a place that had significance for him. In 1981, the landscape of American cinema changed when the first film premiered at Redford's Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

With Redford's support, the festival steadily grew in stature. By any standard, Sundance has become the envy of all other U.S. film festivals and has turned into a feverish industry event populated by attendees in ski parkas and Ugg boots. The atmospheric old mining town has become a place not only to see, but also to be seen.

Today, tens of millions of dollars change hands over hot cocoa; the scene has dramatically changed since the original festival debuted in 1981. Sundance 2008 featured 125 feature-

length films picked out of 3,624 submissions from 34 countries in a cinematic celebration that has become an industry hotbed for showcasing and purchasing independent films.

Well over 50,000 people descended on Park City this year, and film purchases are expected to significantly exceed the \$45 million studios spent on films in 2007.

Filling the slate at Sundance 2008 were films featuring Hollywood stars ranging from Maria Bello and Adrian

Grenier to Woody Harrelson, Dennis Quaid and Tom Hanks.

In Hanks' new film, "The Great Buck Howard," he appears as the father of Troy Gable (played by his real-life son Colin Hanks). Young Gable becomes the protege of Buck Howard (John Malkovich), a magician/mentalists whose career is in decline. Other lauded films at the festival included "The Wackness," winner of the Audience Award for Dramatic Film, starring Mary-Kate Olsen and Ben Kingsley.

Another paternal connection appeared with the contribution of Amy Redford, Robert's gifted daughter. Amy directed "The Guitar," a film about a young woman's search for independence, which is fitting for a woman making her own way in the industry; both Robert and Amy say that her directorial debut at the event was all Amy's doing.

"He saw it for the first time last night," Amy said in an interview on AMC's *Shootout* with Peter Guber and Peter Bart, "and I think he was taken aback and probably a little relieved."

Sounds like a good start for the original Sundance Kid's kid.

*Note: Highlights from the awards ceremony and many of the films shown at the festival can be seen on the Sundance Channel in the coming months.*



Photo by George Pimentel, Wire Image

Robert Redford and Robert DeNiro