

SUNDANCE INSIDER

By Adrienne Papp

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 with the first film to premiere at Redford's Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

With the 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 where attendees in ski parkas and Ugg boots convene in an atmospheric old mining town that has become a place to not only see but also be seen. Today, tens of millions of dollars change hands over hot cocoa and the scene has dramatically changed since the original festival debuted in 1981. Sundance 2008 exhibited 125 feature length films out of 3,624 submissions from 34 countries in a cinematic celebration that has become an industry hotbed for showcasing and purchasing independent films.



Photo by George Pimentel, courtesy of Adrienne Papp

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.

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.

Heading up the slate at Sundance 2008 were films featuring Hollywood stars ranging from Maria Bello and Entourage's Adrian Grenier, to Woody Harrelson, Dennis Quaid, and Tom Hanks.

In Hank's new film, *The Great Buck Howard*, he plays the father to son Colin who is a protegee to John Malkovich, a mentalist with a career in decline. Other lauded films included audience award winner for drama *The Wackness*, starring Mary Kate Olsen and Ben Kingsley.



The Great Buck Howard



2008 Sundance Film Festival, Photo By Fred Hayes - Bono; Robert Redford; Adam Clayton; U2

Another paternal connection in the festival was the contribution of Amy Redford, Robert's gifted daughter. Amy directed *The Guitar*, about a young woman's search for independence, which is fitting for a woman who is 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.



The Wackness