Alfred Hitchcock was, despite his English origins and early career, an American master. Arriving on U.S. shores in 1939, over the next three decades he created a series of masterpieces that redefined the nature and possibilities of cinema itself: Rebecca, Notorious, Strangers on a Train, Rear Window, Vertigo, and Psycho, to name just a few. In this Companion, leading film scholars and critics of American culture and imagination trace Hitchcock’s interplay with the Hollywood studio system, the Cold War, and new forms of sexuality, gender, and desire through his American career. This Companion explores the way in which Hitchcock was transformed by the country where he made his home and did much of his greatest work. This book is invaluable as a guide for fans and students of Hitchcock and twentieth-century American culture, providing a set of new perspectives on a much-loved and hugely influential director.

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( Rutgers University Press, 2005 ); An Eye for Hitchcock ( Rutgers University Press, 2004 ); Savage Time ( Oberon 2005 ); and Magia D’Amore ( Sun and Moon, 1999 ).

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I would like to thank Ray Ryan, for proposing this Companion; Caitlin Gallagher, for patiently shepherding it through the pre-production process; and Aran Ruth, for working long and hard to help produce the manuscript in manageable form. Thanks are due too to the amazing Sara Blair, for aid, comfort, and support, and to Ben and Miriam Freedman, for making it worthwhile and keeping it real.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
CHRONOLOGY

For a complete list of Hitchcock’s American films, plus availability on DVD and Blu-ray, see the Filmography.

1899 Born, just outside of London, to William and Emma Hitchcock, a prosperous greengrocer’s family; Roman Catholic in Anglican England.

1920–1925 After working for Henley Telegraph and Cable by day and taking art courses by night, Hitchcock moves to the advertising department and then lands a job with Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount), designing titles. He rapidly learns the new craft of moviemaking. Lasky bought by Gainsborough Films, and Hitchcock continues his process of self-education there.

1921 Becomes engaged to Alma Reville, a film editor. They marry in 1926.

1925 Hitchcock loaned to the UFA studio in Berlin, where he sees firsthand the techniques of German expressionist filmmaking.

1926 Having directed two inconsequential films, The Pleasure Garden (1926) and The Mountain Eagle (1927), Hitchcock teams with star Ivor Novello to make The Lodger, which premieres to great acclaim the following year.

1927–1934 Hitchcock works in a number of different genres, including an adaptation of Sean O’Casey’s Juno and the Paycock (1930), followed by a turn back to the thriller/mystery/suspense film with The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934).

1935–1938 Hitchcock masters this form with The 39 Steps (1935), followed in rapid succession by a number of others – Secret
CHRONOLOGY

Agent (1936), Sabotage (1936), Young and Innocent (1937), and climaxing with The Lady Vanishes (1938).

1939
The Hitchcocks move to the United States; Alfred works with David O. Selznick on Rebecca.

1940
Rebecca released; wins an Academy Award for Best Film of 1940. Hitchcock nominated for an Oscar as Best Director but does not win.

1940–1946
Working largely but not exclusively with Selznick, Hitchcock turns largely to the thriller genre – Foreign Correspondent (1940), Suspicion (1941), Saboteur (1942), Spellbound (1945), and, most gloriously, Notorious (1946).

1948–1953
After completing his last film for Selznick, The Paradine Case (1947), Hitchcock works with friend Sidney Bernstein in an independent production company, emerging with Rope (1948) and Under Capricorn (1949). Neither is a box office success. He moves to Warner Brothers, for whom he makes one of his most memorable American films, Strangers on a Train (1951), as well as I Confess (1952) and Dial M for Murder (1954).

1954–1960
Working variously at Universal, Paramount, and Warner Brothers, and almost always serving as his own producer, Hitchcock enters his major phase of undeniable masterpieces: Rear Window (1954), Vertigo (1958), North by Northwest (1959), and Psycho (1960). Psycho had to be produced by Hitchcock’s own production company, Shamley Productions, because Paramount refused to be associated directly with such shocking material, although it distributed the film. There are a number of lesser-valued but still estimable films from this period as well: To Catch a Thief (1955), The Trouble with Harry (1955), the remake of The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956), and The Wrong Man (1956).

1955–1965
Hosts Alfred Hitchcock Presents on television; directs 20 (out of roughly 360) episodes.

1963–1969
At Universal. The Birds (1963) and Marnie (1964) – quirky and troubling investigations of themes of arbitrary terror and mental extremity – date to this period. Followed by Torn Curtain (1966) and Topaz (1969), generally considered to be
among Hitchcock’s weakest films (although some critics have made a case for each).

1968  Hitchcock is awarded the Irving Thalberg Award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences – still never to win an Oscar as Best Director.

1972  Hitchcock returns to England to shoot *Frenzy*.

1976  *Family Plot*, his last film.

1980  After receiving the last rites, Hitchcock dies on April 29. He is survived by Alma, who dies two years later, and his daughter Patricia, an actress (who appeared in three of his films, most memorably *Strangers on a Train*).
GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Included here are many of the major critical responses to, and accounts of, Hitchcock’s Hollywood films, his engagement with America, and other aspects of the forty-odd years he spent in the United States. Several of the DVDs included in the filmography contain excellent critical commentary and contextualization as well. These are marked with an *.

Biography

Critical Studies
Guide to Further Reading


*The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock, or the Plain Man’s Hitchcock*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974.


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GUIDE TO FURTHER READING


Marnie. BFI Film Classics. London: British Film Institute, 2014.


Guide to Further Reading


Interviews, Conversations


FILMOGRAPHY:
HITCHCOCK’S AMERICAN FILMS


North by Northwest. 1959. MGM. Producer: Alfred Hitchcock. Starring: Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Martin Landau. Screenplay:


NOTES

* Particularly recommended commentary, critical apparatus on DVD or Blu-ray.

** Shot in England with British crew, but American financing, distribution.

N.B: Alma Reville is credited on the screenplay or story of six of these films, but she had a hand in virtually all of them.