

# EMX embraces the next generation

Leading content owners, designers, suppliers and retailers will be converging at EMX this August to reveal their thoughts, activities and plans for DVD, Blu-ray and HD DVD, plus there will be awards ceremonies, new products on show, and equipment demonstrations too. Darren Lock reports

This year's 2006 Entertainment Media Expo (EMX), which takes place from 7-9 August 2006 at the Universal City Hilton, California, USA, is using the theme of high definition content.

Now in its ninth year, the DVD Entertainment Conference takes the title "Opportunities for Packaged Media in the Era of High Definition and Digital Delivery" and will examine how physical and electronic formats can not only co-exist, but grow the overall market for the benefit of all concerned. Renowned film critic Leonard Maltin of TV's *Entertainment Tonight* will be taking part in the "Director's Interview" and other topics covered include: new directions in content distribution, manufacturing next-generation discs, authoring Blu-ray and HD DVD titles and the

Entertainment Merchants Association-sponsored retailer panel on packaged media's battle for shelf space. DVD Entertainment also features the annual DVD Awards hosted by Leonard Maltin on the evening of 8 August, which this year has new categories to honour Blu-ray Disc and HD DVD. Now in its ninth year, the DVD Awards honour creators and marketers of movie, music and games labels, distributors, producers and authoring houses. Each will be vying for the coveted trophy in 30 categories.

This year, EMX includes the DVD Forum's North American DVD conference, where delegates can find out more about the Forum's activities, conferences, and technical discussions. The event highlights the ongoing roll out of HD DVD, with speakers from Intel, Microsoft, Toshiba, Deluxe, Cinram, CEA and many others. Studio leaders, including Warner Home Video, Paramount, Universal, New Line Cinema, and HBO, will discuss their direct experiences and plans for continuing the roll out of HD DVD titles. The DVD Forum conference will also discuss the latest on higher-speed recordable DVD formats and their application in new products, plus there will be demos of the first generation HD DVD players, the first HD DVD integrated PC platforms, HD DVD authoring demonstrations, high-speed recordable DVD equipment, and demos of next-generation DVD kiosk products.

The fourth annual Entertainment Packaging Conference has taken the theme "Making the Case for Packaged Entertainment Media" and aims to bring together content owners, designers, suppliers and retailers to share their opinions and innovations in the production of outstanding packaging, materials and marketing in the media marketplace. The popular designer roundtable returns to the Entertainment Packaging Summit.



Pozzoli scooped an Alex Award for Beck's *Guero* album in 2005

## THE ALEX AWARD PACKAGING CATEGORIES

- Best DVD Package, single- or double-disc
- Best DVD Package, multi-disc
- Best Limited Edition DVD package
- Best High-Definition package, HD DVD
- Best High-Definition package, Blu-ray Disc
- Best Standard CD Package, illustrated cover (single- or double-disc)
- Best Standard CD Package, photo cover (single- or double-disc)
- Best Alternative CD Package (single- or double-disc, non-jewel-case)
- Best CD Boxed Set (multi-disc)
- Best Vinyl Record Package
- Best Entertainment Software Package, console platforms
- Best Entertainment Software Package, handheld devices
- Best Entertainment Software Package, computer platforms
- Best Structural Design (audio, video or game package)
- Best Disc Decoration (CD, DVD, high definition disc or game)
- Best Package Printing (audio, video or game package)
- Best Promotional CD or DVD, marketing
- Best Promotional CD or DVD, music/movie trade
- Best Entertainment Retail Marketing Materials

The jewel in the packaging crown is the Alex award ceremony on the last night of the event, which is hosted this year by Craig Braun, the legendary designer behind such classic album covers as the Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers*. A first for this year is the new category 'Best Limited Edition DVD package', which has been created to recognise the work and design that goes into collection edition packaging. There will also be categories to honour high definition titles and the programs Entertainment Software category has been split into three new classifications: console platforms, hand-held gaming devices, and computer platforms. Other new categories for the awards include The Best Structural Design, Best Disc Decoration, and Best Packaged Printing. In addition, the event will also present a Lifetime Achievement award, which previously has honoured Jim Ladwig, creator of the Digipak and founder of AGI; leading packaging designer Alex Steinweiss, and a posthumous award to Blue Note Records' Reid Miles for excellence in branding and design direction.

Running concurrently on 8-9 August is the show exhibition, where you can expect to see new products from AGI, Bert-Co, CMC, MIP, NAPCO, Nexpak, Scanavo, Stora Enso, Univenture and many others. ●