



Last revision: 2022-Apr-24

So you're here, which means you know about SteelBooks and/or want to know more about them. I've been collecting these pieces of metal for a few years now and have amassed over 500 in that time. Yes, I have a problem, but I've learned a lot about the hobby in this period and would like to share what I know. If you see an acronym you don't understand, check the index at the end.

My up front disclaimer: I only deal with movies, so while I know of the existence of video game SteelBooks and own a few, I cannot speak to the value of them or how feasibly acquirable they are, as they are often bundled with the most expensive collector editions of games.

So here we go, I'll try to keep things organized.

Also, I apologize for the formatting, it probably looks bad. It is optimized for desktop formatting, so I know it looks goofy on mobile.

Edit note: With each revision, I usually go into editing with a specific update in mind. I may miss some other info that needs updating, so some information may be outdated at times regardless of the last revision date.

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[What is a SteelBook?](#)

A SteelBook is a brand of packaging for movies (or videogames and sometimes other forms of media) that most people associate with any media packaging made of metal. Much like people refer to any tissue as Kleenex, SteelBook is a brand of metal cases produced by a Danish company called Scanavo. There are other brands which we will briefly discuss later, but SteelBook is by far the most popular.

Why collect SteelBooks?

As when it comes to collecting any medium, it's a personal choice. I'll just overview why I collect. Usually the art is unique in some way. Some people have a preference for SteelBooks that only feature art, while some people have a preference for those with titles featured in the front.

For me, I enjoy having a more special version of a movie that I think I will watch more than once, because metal just "feels" more premium, right? Sometimes, and this is a habit I'm trying to break for my wallet's sake, it just feels good to own something that others don't. I'm certainly guilty of purchasing some SteelBooks for movies I still haven't seen just because the SteelBook itself is rare.

Collecting SteelBooks is also my way of supporting the physical media industry that I don't want to see die out. Yes, Netflix is more convenient, but it just doesn't feel the same picking a movie to stream in upscaled resolution versus popping a case open and inserting a (mostly) lossless-quality disc you know you own.

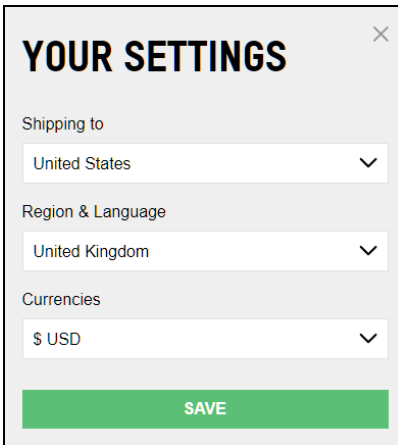
Where can I get SteelBooks?

There is a plethora of retailers that offer selections of SteelBooks, let's go over some of the most popular ones. There are unquestionably more, feel free to let me know.

- Best Buy ([US](#) and [Canada](#))
 - These are two exclusive entities as they do not ship internationally. While they typically receive the same artwork as each other, sometimes the disc formats differ (one will receive 4K while the other only receives Blu-ray).
 - Do they restock out-of-stock releases?
 - In the event that a pre-order sells out, the release usually becomes available once again the evening before a SteelBook is due to come out. (If a release is sold out and is due to come out November 12, check that same day at midnight PST or 3 AM EST). If the release date has passed and it is OOS, it may come back, but don't bet on it.
 - Do they ship worldwide?
 - No, only to the US and Canada respectively and not to each other
 - How do they ship?
 - In cheap thin cardboard mailers, sometimes a small box with an air pillow. They also often ship early, releases that come out on a Tuesday may ship as early as the prior Thursday and arrive before the street date.
 - Some may disagree with me, but if you can afford it, I recommend buying two copies of SteelBooks when pre-ordering. Best Buy shipping is notoriously unreliable, and if you receive a damaged copy of a release that is sold out, you're out of luck. You'll get a refund, but no SteelBook. Then you have to decide if Ebay is the way to go. If both come undamaged, you can return one, or sell the second.
 - Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Upon shipping, though a pre-authorization charge will be levied

- [Zavvi](#)

- This somewhat infamous retailer almost certainly has the largest catalogue of SteelBook offerings. The quality of these offerings can also widely vary, as there is generally no prior indication if it will be glossy or matte, and feature embossing or not. They have different versions of their website, but it's generally recommended to use the base website and simply change the region to the UK and the currency to yours.



YOUR SETTINGS ×

Shipping to
United States ▼

Region & Language
United Kingdom ▼

Currencies
\$ USD ▼

SAVE

- Different regional versions of the website often feature less SteelBooks than the base UK variation. Be mindful: they liberally use the word “exclusive” to make you think all of their SteelBooks are only offered at Zavvi. This only applies to the UK market, as you may see the same artwork offered in the US, Italy, Germany, France, or other markets, albeit with a potentially different finish and prices. They will also use a trick we’ve all seen, but should be wary of all the same, in which they list new SteelBooks at very high prices (sometimes as high as \$60) and mark it as “on sale” for much less (\$40) to make you think you’ve substantially saved money. Just food for thought.
- Do they ship worldwide?
 - Yes
- How do they ship?
 - In thicker cardboard mailers. Even if you order multiple SteelBooks, they package each one individually into its own mailer. International shipping can take a long time (up to a month), so be patient.
- Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Upon shipping

- [Amazon](#)
 - An interesting component to the SteelBook scene. They don't offer many releases, but when they do, they may be exclusive to the region of Amazon you're using. For example, Running Man had a release exclusive to the German version of Amazon (Amazon.de) not seen in any other versions of Amazon. The most exclusive of Amazon regions is typically Japan, which offer more premium releases that sometimes become highly coveted after selling out.
 - Be mindful, releases of a SteelBook are often tailored to the region it's being produced for. For example, Amazon Italy may offer a SteelBook that's in every way the same as the offerings of other regions, however, the disc may feature only Italian subtitles in addition to the native subtitles. Research is often necessary. Amazon France often modifies the art to feature French text on the front or flips the spine layout to the reverse of how most SteelBooks display their spine.
 - Here are some of the other Amazons, do note: your pre-existing account will login to all of these, except for Japan, where you'll have to make a new account.
 - [Canada](#)
 - [France](#)
 - [Italy](#)
 - [Germany](#)
 - [Japan](#)
 - [Spain](#)
 - [United Kingdom](#)
 - Do they ship worldwide?
 - Yes, provided it's coming from Amazon and not a third-party seller
 - Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Upon shipping
- [Target](#)
 - Not as prevalent in the SteelBook scene as they once were, they still occasionally license exclusives such as DC animated films or Glass (2019).
 - Do they ship worldwide?
 - No, to US only officially, but you can check international [here](#)
 - Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Upon shipping, though a pre-authorization charge will be levied
- [Walmart](#)
 - Similar to Target, they are not big players in the SteelBook scene, but will sometimes have a rack full of SteelBooks whose exclusivity deal with another retailer ran out.
 - Do they ship worldwide?
 - No, only to US
 - Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Upon shipping, though a pre-authorization charge will be levied

- [EYE](#)
 - Somewhat reminiscent of Amazon's place in the SteelBook scene, they don't stock as many exclusives as Best Buy or Zavvi, but they do get some.
 - Do they ship worldwide?
 - Unsure
 - Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Unsure
- [HMV UK](#)
 - Another main component of the UK SteelBook scene, their releases are sometimes the same as other UK-based retailers such as Zavvi, Zoom, or Amazon UK, but are sometimes exclusive.
 - Do they ship worldwide?
 - No, only to UK
 - Do they charge at time of preorder or upon shipping?
 - Unsure
- FutureShop
 - You may see this old name thrown around from time to time. This retailer was responsible for some now-famous exclusives until they were acquired by Best Buy Canada and had their brand eventually dissolved.
- Play.com
 - Another name you'll see next to some old, now-famous, exclusives. They too were acquired and are now defunct.
- EverythingBlu
 - Now out of business as of 2022 - a former upcomer in the UK scene, this smaller site made a name for themselves with WEA releases of the Cornetto trilogy and WWA full slips. However, they were plagued by delays and quality control issues, and ultimately shut down. Their remaining stock can be found on Zavvi until it is all gone for good.

- [Ebay](#)

- Commonly referred to as EvilBay, now you've entered the belly of the beast, where prices can be truly volatile depending on the type of seller you've encountered. You will be able to find almost any SteelBook you're looking for if you're willing to pay a bit (or more likely a lot) more than it originally sold for. In my experience, the types of sellers you'll encounter generally fall under the following categories:
 - *The ruthless scalpers.* These are the people that buy SteelBooks with no intention of ever keeping them. They buy what they think will become valuable, and immediately list it for double the sale when the SteelBook in question becomes OOS. Sometimes we don't have a choice when we really want something, but my personal opinion is that it's not a nice practice and I do my best to not support the people that engage as such.
 - *The people who are looking to trim.* SteelBook collecting can unquestionably be an addictive hobby. It's not uncommon to find that our collection has suddenly ballooned in size, often times ending up with movies we don't truly care to own or see again. It's these people that decide to trim their collection to be more selective, and they'll list their unwanted SteelBooks for prices that will be slightly more than they paid or just enough to break even. I support these kinds of sellers.
 - *The people who don't know what they have or don't care.* Sometimes a long OOS SteelBook has, for whatever reason, become much more sought after and therefore valuable. Your Guardians of the Galaxy SteelBook that you bought years ago for \$20 could now be worth, in the right conditions, over \$100. Someone who doesn't do their due diligence in research might list that Guardians of the Galaxy for \$25 and have it purchased within minutes. Or perhaps the seller is very cash-strapped and knows the true value but needs the guarantee of a fast transaction and willingly lists it at a price that they know can't be ignored. Should you feel bad for them? Maybe. But if you have the opportunity to seize such a bargain, if you don't take it, someone else certainly will.
- In summary, the Ebay market is very volatile. To maximize your value, use the "saved searches" functionality to be notified of when something you're searching for has been listed. Whether or not it's at a price you're willing to pay is completely up to you. Do your research; make sure the SteelBook you're looking to buy is actually OOS. More than once did I overzealously purchase an imported SteelBook from Ebay only to later see it was still in stock on one of the regional Amazon websites for half the Ebay price I paid.

The screenshot shows an eBay search interface. At the top left is the eBay logo with a 'Shop by category' dropdown. The search bar contains the text 'national treasure steelbook' and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there are filters for 'Categories' (set to 'All') and 'Shop by category' (set to 'DVDs & Movies'). The search results section shows '6 results' and a 'Save this search' button highlighted with a red box. The search filters include 'All Listings', 'Accepts Offers', 'Auction', 'Buy It Now', 'Condition', and 'Delivery Options'. The sort order is set to 'Best Match' and there is a 'View' button.

- Some others:
- I don't know enough about these to give them a proper summary, but I know they can all get exclusives from time to time, or at least exclusive amongst their region.
 - Canada - [Sunrise Records](#)
 - France - [Auchan](#)
 - France - [Bluecats](#)
 - France - [E.Leclerc](#)
 - France - [fnac](#)
 - Germany - [Media Markt](#)
 - Germany - [Saturn](#)
 - Germany - [Mueller](#)
 - Italy - [DVD-store](#)
 - Japan - [HMV](#)
 - Taiwan - [JS DVD](#)
 - United Kingdom - [Zoom](#)
 - United States - [RightStuf](#) (Anime-only releases)
 - United States - [Shout! Factory](#)
 - [And many many more](#)

What is embossing / debossing?

Embossing is when the design of the SteelBook protrudes from the rest of the surface.

Debossing is when the design is "pushed in" to the surface.

A common combination of these two is when the bulk of the front is debossed (usually with ~ half inch margins) and then the title or some other aspect of the main design is embossed to be level with the margins. For the sake of simplicity, I generally refer to any elevation changes of this nature as embossing. The correct term may be twinbossing.



What are finishes?

A finish is the treatment a SteelBook receives to its design. I'm certain there are some that I will miss, but here are some of the most commonly seen ones.

- Matte
 - The most common production likely because it's the cheapest. The image is generally printed onto the SteelBook and given no polishing or reflective coating. It's important to note that not all matte finishes are the same, as being matte does not automatically disqualify a SteelBook from being "premium".

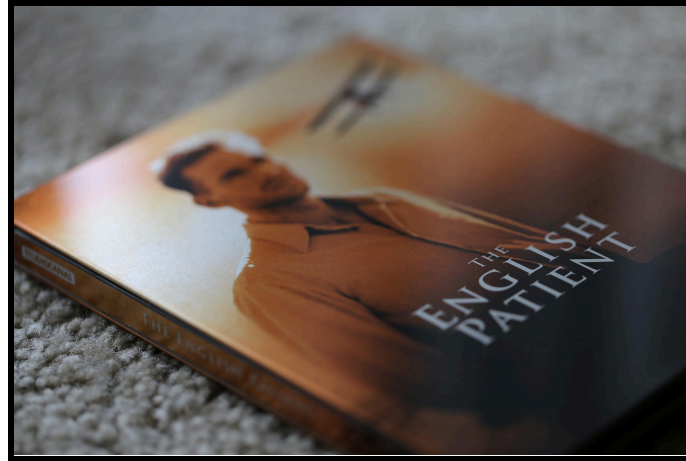


- Glossy
 - Usually considered the most premium of finishes, the image will be polished and given a coating to create a reflective effect. Much more susceptible to fingerprints and (more visible) scratches.



- Some people [custom-gloss](#) their matte SteelBooks to give them a more premium feel. You would do so at your own (and the SteelBook's) risk, however.

- Zero
 - Almost as though a mixture between gloss and matte. Usually distinguishable by the “streaking” of the image to create high color contrast. My apologies, as it was difficult to capture an accurate picture of the effect.



- Spot Gloss
 - A true mixture between gloss and matte as some or most of the design will be matte, while aspects of the design intended to stand out are given the glossy treatment.



- “Powdery”
 - I am unsure if this has a formal name or if it even merits its own category. But some SteelBooks of matte finish seem to be printed in a comparatively low resolution and have a “powdery” texture. I think you’d know it when you feel it.



What is a J-Card?

I’m unsure if this is the formal name, but when people ask the question, “what’s on the J-card?“, they generally want to know the specifications of the disc(s). It is the slip of paper on the back of the SteelBook that sometimes wraps around the bottom of the SteelBook (forming a J-shape) which contains the information typically featured on the back of any movie packaging.

On some older SteelBooks, the information is printed onto the SteelBook itself, a practice not really seen these days.

Most relevant to collectors are likely the featured languages / subtitles on the discs and the region coding. Some people discard the J-card in favor of seeing the SteelBook’s back artwork. Some people fold it and store it inside the SteelBook. Some people leave it intact and store the SteelBook in the same shape as they purchased it. You own it, you can do whatever you want with it.

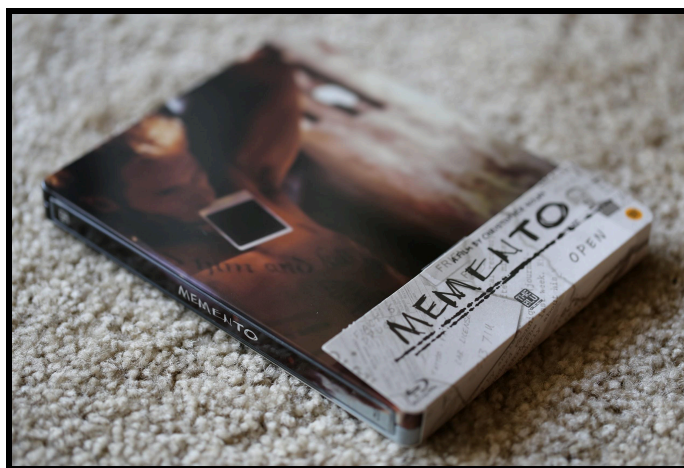
What is a premium SteelBook?

Not all SteelBooks are created equal. You may hear people talking about premium SteelBooks and want to know more about what they are and how to get them. These generally come from retailers that specialize in SteelBook production, who put themselves through a long and arduous process of designing (usually) exclusive artwork, or picking from the studio's catalogue of official artwork and wallpapers, getting said artwork approved by the movie's studio or director, and packaging said SteelBook with enough goodies to make the more expensive purchase feel more worthwhile.

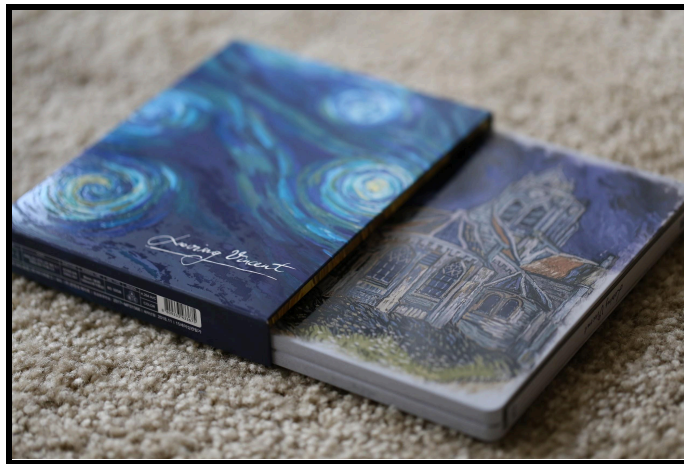
These productions are of much more limited nature where the quantities available are usually between a few hundred and a few thousand. It's also notable that these releases will almost never come as early as the non-premium releases. They could release as soon as a few months to years after the initial wave of standard studio releases. These premium variants usually come with a few choices in regards to what version of packaging you'd like the SteelBook to be housed in.

Let's go over some of the choices you'll most often see.

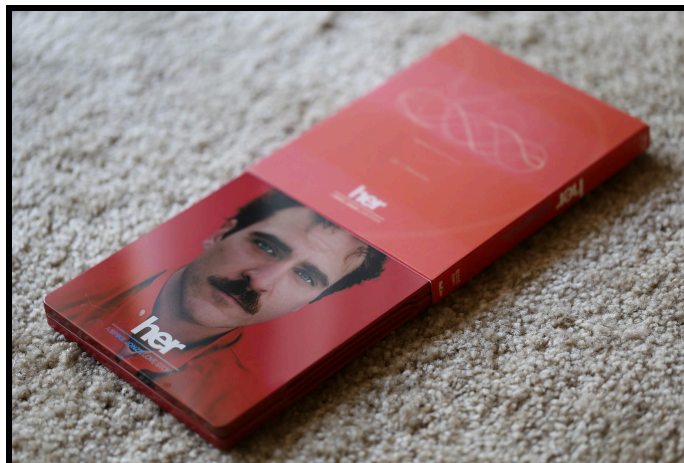
- Quarter (1/4) Slip
 - The name speaks for itself, the SteelBook will come housed in a slipcover that usually covers the entire back and a quarter of the front. Good for those that want to keep the display sizes of their SteelBooks on the shelf uniform.



- Full Slip
 - A slip where the SteelBook slides in from one side.



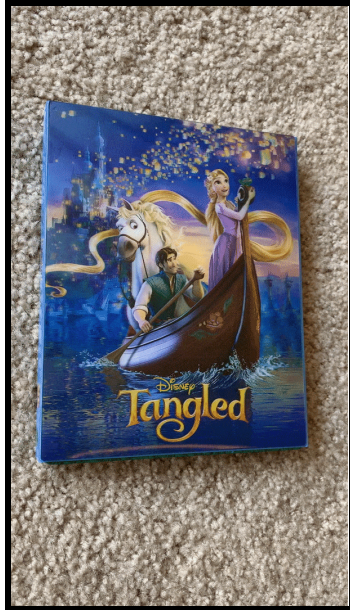
- O-Ring
 - Similar to a full slipcover, but the SteelBook slides in from the top or bottom



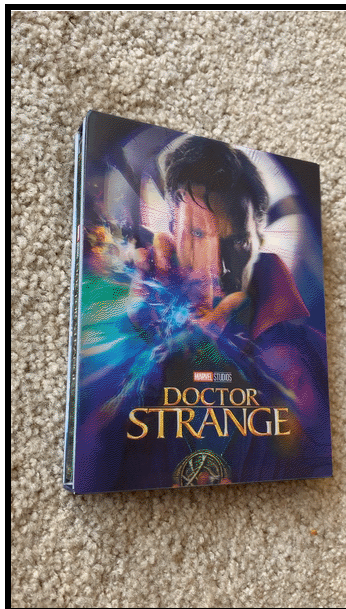
- (Single) Lenticular Slip
 - Again, similar to a full slip, but the front will be an image that “moves”.



- Typically, the type of lenticular (loosely referred to as lenti) will be transitional or depth. Transitional (right) is when there are a preset amount of images that you can see depending on the angle you view it from. Depth (left) is a set image that will appear to be 3D.



- Double Lenticular Slip
 - The same concept as the single lenticular slip, but with a lenticular image on both sides of the full slip



- One-Click
 - The most premium version offered, it's usually a box-set that contains one of each version of the slips. To clarify, the SteelBook is typically the same in each of the versions. So, you will effectively have multiple of the same SteelBook housed in different slips. For example, if a company has a full slip, a single lenti, and a double lenti, the one-click will contain all three. If there was also a quarter slip produced, it's up to the company's discretion if it is included in the one-click; it often isn't. Now why would you want multiple versions of the same movie? That's a question you'll have to answer yourself if you find yourself considering it. I do not own one and therefore have no personal picture to show.

Where can I get premium SteelBooks?

There are a handful of reputable companies that produce these highly collectible objects. As the community seemingly continues to grow, there's always the chance that more will emerge, so these are just some of the big names for now. Most of these are most easily paid via PayPal. Exceptions apply obviously, but often when a WEA is offered, its quantity is in the range of 2000-4000. When a WWA is offered, the print run can be substantially smaller (250-500).

- [MantaLab](#)
 - A Hong Kong based company known for their high-quality gloss and embossed finishes. They typically obtain the license for WEA, and usually have access to produce the latest DC movies for direct competition to HDZeta.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide
- [HDzeta](#)
 - A Chinese based company that mixes their releases between WEA and WWA. These are usually distinguishable by their label, [Gold](#) for WEA and [Silver](#) for WWA. They also usually obtain access to the latest DC movies with their own WEA. One note to keep in mind is that they will sometimes only offer releases as a one-click. So if you want that WEA SteelBook, you'll have to pay extra and get multiple versions of it.
 - Their Silver label releases are often very limited (no more than 400) and will not go live on the site, thus a group buy is generally recommended to get these releases. Though Gold label releases sometimes go live on their site, they don't always, or they sell out quickly, so I would recommend a group buy for these as well.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes and they ship worldwide, but their site is lackluster in functionality.

- [Blufans](#)
 - Another Chinese based company that (at least for now) operates very differently from other premium retailers. They too mix their releases between WEA and WWA, distinguishable by Blufans Exclusive for WEA and Only at Blufans (OAB) for WWA. Their main source of traffic, at least as of late, is providing access to the latest Marvel releases in WEA format.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - No, you must participate in a [group buy](#) to purchase these SteelBooks.
- [Plain Archive](#)
 - A smaller Korean company that specializes in niche movies. You won't see the most popular movies here, but they take great care in garnering appreciation to movies that would otherwise almost certainly not receive a SteelBook let alone premium treatment. Their finishes are usually glossy and typically do not involve embossing.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide
- [NovaMedia](#)
 - A Korean company that has no discernible pattern to the genre of releases they offer, but they almost always come with a premium gloss finish and embossing. Their releases used to be mixed between WEA ([Nova Exclusive](#) [NE]) and WWA ([Nova Choice](#) [NC]), but they now seem to be focusing on exclusive art.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide
- [Kimchi DVD](#)
 - Yet another Korean company that offers a range of WEA and WWA. As far as I know, there is no obvious categorization that distinguishes the two on their website, as they are all labeled [Kimchidvd Exclusive](#)). For example, Kimchidvd Exclusive No.69 features WEA while No.68 features WWA.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide
- [FilmArena](#) / [Black Barons](#)
 - A Czech company that I admittedly do not have much experience with but are famous for their large slipcovers and very premium WEA releases.
 - I believe "VIP" customers can "own" collectible numbers. Meaning, if you've supported the site and buy every one of their releases, you can get the same number on every release. So if you "own" the number 489, you reserve the right to buy every release that has a print run of 500 or more.
 - If you are not one of these people that own a number, you can hit the "I want to Buy" button to be added to a waitlist. They'll eventually email you if any slots to purchase open up. Forewarning: the emails usually come in Czech.
 - Black Barons is technically unaffiliated with FilmArena, but uses their site for distribution of their releases. To this point, they've been largely responsible for creating premium slipcovers for WWA releases, but are branching into WEA art.

- Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide (albeit very expensively)
- [Weet](#)
 - A relatively new Korean company that has produced a handful of WEA exclusives ([Weetcollection Exclusive](#)) to date (I can only assume more are on the way) and a handful of WWA releases ([Weetcollection Collection](#)). They seem to be following a similar track to that of Nova's and Kimchi's.
 - Lately their focus has been on WEA Marvel releases, somewhat taking over the mantle from Blufans after China has been unable to work out a licensing deal with Disney.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide (but they can sell out within seconds and their site does not handle high traffic well)
- [U'Mania](#) --- Out of Business
 - Yet another new Korean company that has produced (as of now) one WEA exclusive ([U'Mania Exclusive](#)) and a handful of WWA releases ([U'Mania Selective](#)).
 - Edit as of August 19, 2021: The latest word is that they are out of business and will no longer produce exclusive releases. Their site is still "active" in that it accepts orders, but you will not receive anything in exchange nor receive a response from customer support when asking for a refund.
- [Cinemuseum](#)
 - An Italian company that has produced a few WEA exclusives, but for the most part produces WWA premiums.
 - They are, to put it kindly, not good at time management. You may often find yourself waiting years (not exaggerating) for a release to go from announcement to delivery.
 - Can you purchase directly from them?
 - Yes, and they ship worldwide
 - A personal note: Cinemuseum seems to operate in the grey area of legality sometimes. They use very unique artwork, but sometimes this is because they have not obtained the explicit rights to use that artwork. Simply tread carefully.

What is a Mondo?

A Mondo, as generally referred to by the community, is a line of SteelBooks produced by the company Mondo. They are typically distinguishable by their distinct art and a clear Mondo-branded slipcover they come housed in. Officially named the Mondo X Collection, an up-to-date list (at least for now) can be seen [here](#). Be careful, if you get one, you may be tempted to complete the collection.



What is a Grail?

Also known as a holy grail, you'll see Ebay sellers advertise this term a lot. If you've seen Indiana Jones then the name speaks for itself. It generally refers to a SteelBook that is very rare, very old, very beautiful, or some combination of at least two of the above three criteria. Or it could just be a personal grail, something that others may not drool over but that you have been pursuing for a long time and will continue to seek until you own it.

At the end of the day, buy what you want to, don't let an advertised "grail" fool you into buying something you don't really care for or one that isn't actually all that rare.

My personal grail has shifted as time has gone on as I've acquired the things I've most sought. My current one is FilmArena's Wolf of Wall Street release, it was originally only offered to customers who had bought every prior release to that point, and it will occasionally surface on Ebay for over \$1000. I will not buy it at that price, but it's fun to keep an eye on it.

How do I keep up with all the releases or get the latest news?

SteelBooks are almost always of limited quantity. Depending on how popular the release in question is, it can sell out in days or even hours. If it's a very limited premium release, it could sell out in minutes or even seconds. So how do you know what's coming out and when you can get them? The biggest players are forums with active communities that track any and all SteelBook releases. Be mindful of mentioning another forum on the forum you're currently on; they seem to dislike any and all references to a site that isn't theirs. But otherwise, you'll find most members, regardless of which forum you spend most of your time on, will be very helpful with any questions you might have. It's important to note that there should be no obligation to "pick" one and stick to it. I use two of them interchangeably to stay as up-to-date as possible.

- [Hi-Def Ninja](#)
 - A very active community that tracks all SteelBooks, but seem weighted towards European, Canadian, 3D, and premium releases. They also track Mondo X releases on a [separate forum](#) for reasons I do not know.* They have a substantial group of staff, moderators, and supporters that are very passionate about SteelBooks.
 - As of the latest revision, HDN have currently locked all HDZeta threads as protest for not receiving allocation for group buys. So if you want to follow the HDZeta premium releases news, you'll have to check blu-ray forum, MP, or reddit.

*According to r/Steelbooks moderator u/citricacidx, this is because of an arrangement HDN has with Mondo to feature their SteelBooks more prominently.

- [Blu-ray.com](#)
 - Again, another active community that tracks all SteelBooks but are weighted toward US releases. Blufans also has a more noticeable presence on the site due to the frequent activity of a direct [liaison](#) in that community. The site format itself may seem a bit outdated, but another very useful aspect of this site is the provision of information on the [region coding](#) and other disc specifications of most versions of a Blu-ray release. Again, a very helpful and passionate community.
- [Media Psychos](#)
 - Admittedly, I have not used this site and cannot speak from personal experience about it. If you have a blurb you'd like for me to insert here about them, please let me know. I do know that they have paid membership tiers that grant facilitated access to more limited release group-buys, but you are never guaranteed anything.

- [r/Steelbooks](#)

- A much smaller community that is more heavily weighted towards showing off recent acquisitions than tracking all releases. As of now, there seems to be only two or three active moderators, but the community will be as helpful as they can when you ask questions.

Due to the nature of Reddit and less moderation than more populated subreddits, there will often be an influx of posts about the same SteelBook when it releases, with everyone wanting to show off their newest toy. Nothing wrong with that, just an observation. Be mindful of people that DM you asking for [digital codes](#), chances are, they just want to sell it for pure profit.

I find myself using this subreddit more for seeing what other people are getting in their mail days, and then deciding if I want to pursue that same SteelBook.

- Those who are interested in trading SteelBooks or purchasing for what are hopefully more reasonable prices than Ebay can head over to [r/SteelbookSwap](#): a trading subreddit that follows standard trading conventions of other trading subreddits such as gear, keyboards, cards, etc.

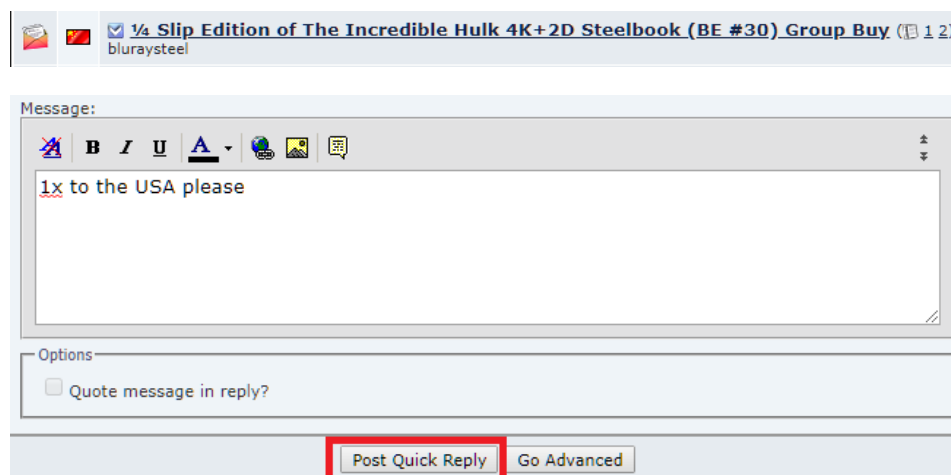
What is a group buy?

A general description of a group buy is when somebody purchases a large quantity of SteelBooks with the intent of redistributing them to people who otherwise don't have access to it. A common example in this community is if someone in Europe wants the version of a SteelBook only offered by Best Buy in the United States (which doesn't ship internationally). So, somebody in the US may get a headcount of all the people who want this SteelBook in particular but can't get it, purchase that large amount, and manually ship them out to the people who asked for it. It's assumed that the person in charge of the group buy will be reimbursed for the cost of the SteelBook plus shipping and maybe a little extra for their time spent doing so.

How do I get into Blufans group buys?

This is what most people are interested in right? As of now, there are three online ways (that I know of) of accessing these group buys. Blu-ray.com, HiDefNinja.com, and MediaPsychos.com. I do not have experience with MediaPsychos, so if somebody wants to fill me in on the process there, that would be appreciated.

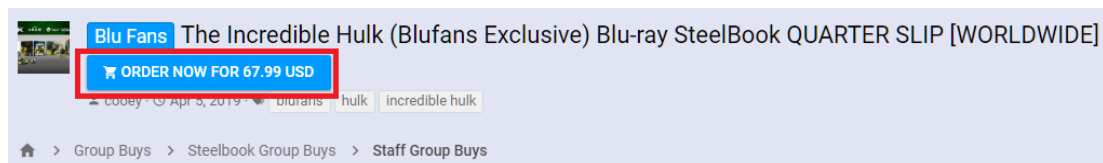
- Blu-ray.com (registration required = yes)
 - A forum-based website where all things Blufans will be communicated via a man named Kevin (bluraysteel). His FAQ on how to participate in his group buys can be found [here](#). Quickly put, when his group buys become active, he will post a thread where it will be first-come, first-served based on your reply post where you specify what you would like, the quantity desired (usually limited to 1), and the shipping destination.



After he processes these orders, if you were fast enough, you will receive a DM from him containing an invoice, at which point you will pay him via PayPal. If you did everything quickly and correctly, you'll receive a tracking number before long and the highly coveted SteelBook will be yours.

- [Hi-Def Ninja](#) (registration required = yes)
 - A slightly more modern forum-based website where most things Blufans will be conducted via a user named Wreck. At some point, a window will be provided for when the group buy will open on the SteelBook-in-question's thread. Their unofficial FAQ for the process is stickied [here](#).

Unlike Blu-ray.com, the purchase will be made directly via PayPal on the spot. Assuming you're fast enough, if the purchase goes through, then you have successfully reserved your copy and there will be no suspense waiting for an invoice via DM. For popular releases that are of low quantity, the stock made available to the site can sell out in minutes if not faster, so plan accordingly.



Note: the system here is more refined than that of Blu-ray.com, but the costs are usually marginally higher due to the fee the site takes for acting as a middle-man. For example, The Incredible Hulk Quarter Slip went for \$67.99 here, versus \$62 on Blu-ray.com. As priorly stated, the group buy dates are usually sooner and the process is more modern, so it's a matter of if you're okay paying extra for the convenience.

- [Media Psychos](#) (registration required = yes)
 - As stated earlier, I do not have personal experience with Media Psychos as a whole or their group buys, so if someone wants to provide me with a blurb on an overview of their process, I will credit you for it.
 - Update: [video tutorial](#) courtesy of u/Pandicorns_are_real

Other Premium Group Buys

The group buy process for other premium retailers is generally the same as Blufans on Hi-Def Ninja and Blu-ray Forum. They will simply be conducted via other users, and unlike Blufans, the price you pay upfront may not be shipping inclusive. Depending on who's hosting it, you may receive an additional invoice via Paypal invoice or DM to pay for shipping after the host has received the SteelBook(s) you ordered. I'll quickly go over my recommendations for which sites are worth investing into group buys, since you will pay some extra for the convenience of not having to deal with the premium sites yourselves.

- MantaLab (Collectong) - Groupbuys
 - Both [HDN](#) and [blu-ray forum](#) currently offer Manta Lab group buys
 - Blu-ray forum groupbuys are conducted via user [Triggers](#), who will post an all inclusive price (usually), with no shipping to be billed later. Like Blufans, simply post your quantity and what you want (1x to the USA please), he'll "like" your post as acknowledgment, then you'll later receive an invoice via Paypal.
 - Total: (for a USA user, Joker OC as an example): \$216
 - HDN groupbuys are conducted via user [Aniv](#), who will post a non-shipping-inclusive price, with shipping to be billed later. You will conduct the same checkout process as a Blufans groupbuy, but later, when he has the products in hand, he will send you a DM with your billing invoice that includes the price of shipping from Manta Lab to him, then from him to you.
 - Total: (for a USA user, Joker OC as an example): \$183 + \$33 = \$216
 - For reference, buying directly from Manta Lab / Collectong is cheaper, but you risk missing out on popular releases that may sell out in minutes. A group buy secures your copy before purchases go live for the rest of the world
 - Total: (for a USA user, Joker OC as an example): \$150 + \$30 = \$180
 - Would I recommend group buys for Manta Lab / Collectong?
 - No. Their site is modern and works well. If you know the pre-order time in advance, all you have to do is be on the site refreshing at the time it goes live. Just make sure you're registered and signed into their website, and also make sure you're signed in on Paypal already.
 - With that said, I partake in Manta Lab group buys because the site releases usually go live at 4 AM local time (for me) and I'm too lazy to get up that early to refresh the site and make the purchase. Or, you get a vibe that a release is going to be very hot and sell out within seconds. If you don't trust your internet to load fast enough to refresh a page, click on an item to add to cart, and check out via Paypal in less than a minute, use a group buy.

- HDZeta - Groupbuys
 - Blu-ray forum currently offers HDZeta group buys
 - Blu-ray forum groupbuys are conducted via user Triggers, who will post an all inclusive price, with no shipping to be billed later. Like Blufans, simply post your quantity and what you want (1x to the USA please), he'll "like" your post as acknowledgment, then you'll later receive an invoice via Paypal.
 - Total: (for a USA user, Shazam! OC as an example): \$185
 - For reference, buying directly from HDZeta is cheaper, but you risk missing out on popular releases that may sell out in minutes. A group buy secures your copy before purchases go live for the rest of the world
 - Total: (for a USA user, Shazam! OC as an example): \$118 + \$29 = \$147
 - Would I recommend group buys for HDZeta?
 - Yes. Their site is archaic and slow. While it is cheaper to buy direct, it's not uncommon for a lot of their stock to be sold on an external Chinese site exclusive to Chinese citizens prior to going live on HDZeta. So it's happened before where a release never even goes live on HDZeta as it's all gone beforehand. This is more likely to happen with their Silver label over their higher print-run Gold label, but it can happen nonetheless. If you're willing to take that chance, just make sure you're registered and signed into their website, and also make sure you're signed in on Paypal already.
- KimchiDVD / NovaMedia - Groupbuys
 - Both HDN and blu-ray forum currently offer Manta Lab group buys
 - Same hosts apply, and same recommendations generally apply as seen above for Manta Lab. The site works fine for buying direct, provided you're registered and signed into Paypal.
 - You may want to register for a group buy on high-profile releases that you think are likely sell out very fast (Akira on KimchiDVD or John Wick on Novamedia)
- Plain Archive - Groupbuys
 - I don't think either blu-ray forum or HDN currently offer Plain Archive group buys, and that's because it's usually not necessary. Their niche releases usually remain in stock for a while after going live. Two exceptions in recent memory being The Handmaiden and Parasite. You'll most likely be fine buying directly, just make sure you're registered and signed into their website and signed in on Paypal beforehand.

- Film Arena / Black Barons - Groupbuys
 - Both HDN and blu-ray forum currently offer FilmArena group buys
 - Blu-ray forum groupbuys are conducted via user Triggers, who will post an all inclusive price, with no shipping to be billed later. Like Blufans, simply post your quantity and what you want (1x to the USA please), he'll "like" your post as acknowledgment, then you'll later receive an invoice via Paypal.
 - HDN groupbuys are conducted via user [carllenc](#), who will post a non-shipping-inclusive price, with shipping to be billed later. You will conduct the same checkout process as a Blufans groupbuy, but later, when he has the products in hand, he will send you a DM with your billing invoice that includes the price of shipping from Manta Lab to him, then from him to you. He will also ask that you send an email to him right after purchasing with relevant details, instructions for that are in the group buy posts. Carl doesn't speak much English; if you need to contact him, contact [CollectorEmtee](#) as a translator, and include Carl in the message chain.
 - For reference, buying directly from FilmArena is probably cheaper, but as usual, you risk missing out on popular releases that may sell out in minutes. A group buy secures your copy before purchases go live for the rest of the world
 - Would I recommend group buys for Film Arena / Black Barons?
 - Yes. Due to their system of people "owning" collectible numbers, there's often a chance of releases never going live on the site, as they all go claimed in the pre-processing stages. As such, for limited WWA releases, sometimes even a group buy can't be offered as there's no stock left to offer. If you have a chance to get into a group buy for a release you want, take it.

- Cinemuseum
 - Both HDN and blu-ray forum currently offer Manta Lab group buys
 - Blu-ray forum groupbuys are conducted via user Triggers, who will post an all inclusive price, with no shipping to be billed later. Like Blufans, simply post your quantity and what you want (1x to the USA please), he'll "like" your post as acknowledgment, then you'll later receive an invoice via Paypal.
 - HDN groupbuys are conducted via user Aniv, who will post an all inclusive price, with no shipping to be billed later. You will conduct the same checkout process as a Blufans groupbuy, and that should be it.
 - For reference, buying directly from Cinemuseum is cheaper, but you risk missing out on popular releases that may sell out in minutes. A group buy secures your copy before purchases go live for the rest of the world
 - Total: (for a USA user, Joker OC as an example): $\$150 + \$30 = \$180$
 - Would I recommend group buys for Cinemuseum?
 - Yes, I'm sure their site works fine, but the very limited nature of their WWA releases can make them difficult to acquire before others do.

Region Coding - Why won't this SteelBook's disc(s) play in my player?

This problem isn't exclusive to SteelBooks, but I'll go over it briefly anyways. Unfortunately, all Blu-ray discs have some form of encoding that determines whether or not your player is eligible to play the disc. Bit of a silly practice in my opinion, but there is undoubtedly some complicated bureaucracy behind why studios want to region lock certain discs and that's not what I'm here to discuss. Per [Sony](#), the region codes break down as the following:

- Region A: North America, South America, U.S. Territories, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and other areas of Southeast Asia
- Region B: Europe, Africa, Middle East, Australia, and New Zealand
- Region C: Asia (except for the aforementioned regions of Asia already in region A)

Your disc will almost certainly be coded according to the region the SteelBook was manufactured for. Whether or not it is region-free / region ABC typically depends on the studio. For example, Universal releases are almost always region-free regardless of the SteelBook's market. On the other hand, StudioCanal or Lionsgate releases coming out of the UK are almost always Region B locked. My workaround for this (Studio Ghibli releases in particular) is to purchase the SteelBook, then substitute the disc with a Region A replacement disc. It costs a bit extra and, to some people, "ruins the integrity" of the original packaging. But again, if you own it, I'm a firm believer that you can do with it as you please.

It's important to note that the designated region coding on the J-card may not always align with what it's actually coded for. In my experience, region-free coding is always region free. Some discs that have been designated as Region B only will sometimes successfully play in my Region A player. On the other hand, at least for now, all 4K discs are region-free. DVD's have their own region coding system that I am not well acquainted with and 3D discs follow the same rules as standard Blu-ray discs.

The country you buy your Blu-ray player in will determine what region it's coded for. You can "hack" your player to be region-free (would not recommend unless you know what you're doing) or purchase a region-free player from a retailer such as [220-Electronics](#). Also important to note, just because 4K discs are all region-free currently, does not mean a purchased 4K player will have region-free Blu-ray support.

Value - What SteelBooks are worth the most?

I do not sell or trade my SteelBooks, but I would consider myself a prolific buyer. So, having only participated in a 1/3 of a collecting community (**buy/trade/sell**), take my monetary advice with a grain of salt. Whether you collect SteelBooks for their art, their value, or any other reason, the value of them have likely crossed your mind at some point. Due to the limited nature of SteelBooks, the value of them often go up after they are OOS/OOP. But which ones gain the most value? The TL:DR is that there is no exact science. But here are my hypotheses based off trends I've seen.

- Disney / Marvel releases are the most likely to see large growth in value after they go OOS. This is simply because they are amongst the most popular films coming out these days, and people want to own special versions of the films that are most special to them.
 - Premium releases of Marvel releases, especially older ones of limited nature, can see insane hikes in value depending on their availability. For example, the first Thor never received a SteelBook release in the US (it will likely receive a 4K option in the near future). Because of this, very early releases such as HMV's Thor or Blufans Thor are extremely coveted on Ebay. It's not unfathomable to see a mint copy of Blufans Thor Lenticular be listed for \$350 and be purchased within an hour, they're just that sought after.
- Any premium release that is OOS will almost always go up in value provided there is a market for people searching for them. The most common way to ascertain the value of an OOP SteelBook is to filter Ebay listings by "sold". This way you can see the price that SteelBook has recently sold for, rather than what the active listings are asking for.

An active listing of a Blufans Avengers: Infinity War DL for \$500 does not mean it is worth that much, but if you see that a Spider-Man Homecoming OAB recently sold for \$300, you can have a better idea of what other people are willing to pay for a particular release.

- The catalogue titles. These can truly be a crap-shoot in terms of what goes up in value from \$25 to \$40, versus \$10 to over \$100. Sometimes it just comes down to instinct or dumb luck.

Is the SteelBook glossy? Is it embossed? Is the disc 4K/3D format? Does the film have a devoted following? Has it been OOS for a long time? These will often go up in value after going OOP. An example of this can be Zavvi's listing of Last Action Hero, which at one point was on sale for around \$10 and ultimately went OOS around \$25. Due to the immense amount of embossing, the stated quantity of 2000 units, and the somewhat cult-following the film has, the minimum listing on Ebay is currently at \$75. Any future listing below that price will likely be snatched up very quickly.

Sometimes a matte, non-embossed, Blu-ray only SteelBook shoots up in value as the years pass (see: Sleepy Hollow). A counter-example to this is Best Buy's offering of

Fight Club. This film has an obvious cult following, but the SteelBook itself was mass produced with a plain matte finish, no embossing, and no special disc to set itself apart from other releases. You'd be lucky to sell it for \$20.

- Edit as of April 24, 2022: This plain-looking Fight Club release can now be sold for \$70. Goes to show what I know. The \$20 figure via Ebay was accurate at the time of creating this guide.

Should you get into this hobby purely from a monetary standpoint looking to make profits based off the collectable nature of SteelBooks? It's not my place to say what you can or can't do. Just be prepared for a less-than-lukewarm reception from the general community if you are discovered to be purchasing SteelBooks with the intention of directly reselling it at exorbitant prices (referred to as scalping).

Protection - How do I protect my SteelBooks?

It almost seems counter-intuitive, but SteelBooks, due to their metal nature, are much more fragile than their plastic counterparts. Be it vulnerability to scratches or dents, it's natural for us to want to take an extra step to make sure their condition is preserved. Some people simply don't care about protecting their metal packaging, and that's fine.

It is important to note that the nature of metal rubbing on metal will inevitably lead to scratches, which will greatly diminish the value of a SteelBook. If you simply don't care about the condition or never plan to sell it anyways, then perhaps you don't need protection. But for those that wish to keep them in as-mint condition as possible, what options do you have?

I only use "protectors" instead of more flimsy bags/slipcovers, but those would be a fine cheaper alternative. I personally use the following two options, the former for protecting premium slipcovers of all sizes, and the latter for protecting all standard SteelBooks with or without a J-card.

- [Steelbook Central](#)
 - A UK based website that has sizes of enclosed plastic protectors for almost all your needs. I prefer them for premium slip protectors, but shipping can be expensive, so buy in bulk if possible.
- [RetroProtection](#)
 - A US based website that is perfect for standard SteelBooks with or without J-cards. They do offer additional sizes but they're hit or miss in regards to whether or not they'll fit full slipcovers.



Damage - What is a spine slash?

It's as the name suggests. The SteelBook has a "slash" on the spine. But why is it under the shrink wrap? I have no evidence to substantiate this, but my educated guess is that whatever factory receives the unwrapped SteelBooks receives them in large quantity boxes. These boxes are likely packaged tightly with the spines facing upwards, and when the worker responsible for opening the box does so, they likely do so with a knife and without finesse, effectively slashing all spines that were under the cut tape.

So an unlucky batch of people will receive their SteelBook with a lovely line through the spine. What can you do if yours has a slash? You can try to return it for another one. If it's already OOS, then unfortunately you're out of luck. You could always try to sell your current one on Ebay (let potential buyers know about the slash for accountability purposes) and buy a new one.

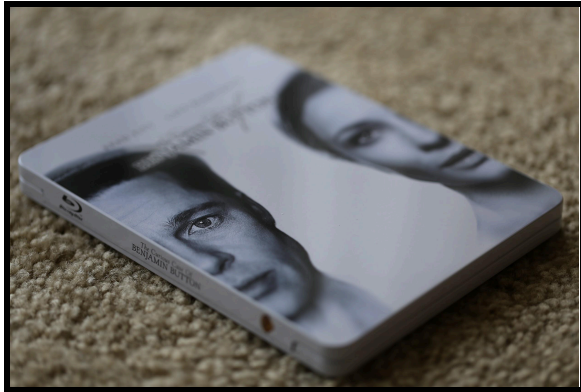


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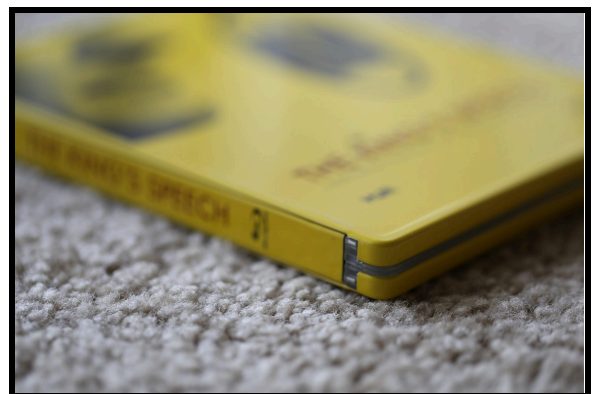
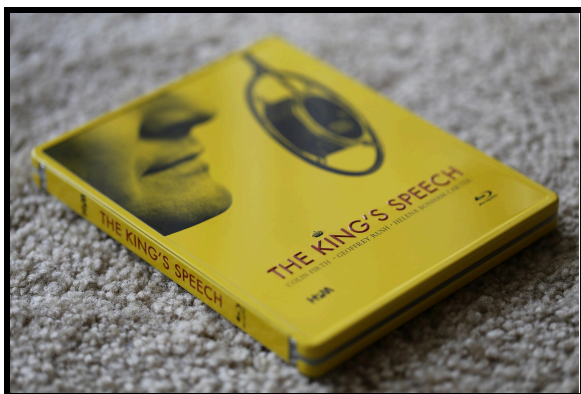
Alternatives - What are the other brands?

There aren't a large amount of alternatives to SteelBooks, but here are a few you'll see referenced from time to time.

- MetalPak / FuturePak
 - Most easily distinguishable by its spine, or lack thereof. In place of a conventional SteelBook spine is a hinge, such that if you were to fully open the case and lay it down, you would not see the spine. I am unsure if these are still actively produced.



- IronPack
 - Similar to a SteelBook in terms of appearance with exception to the spine. I am unsure if these are still produced. I do not own one for picture reference.
- Viva Metal Box
 - Distinguishable once again by its spine, the side that opens is also different from that of a SteelBook. The front is also usually debossed with a smaller margin than that of SteelBooks. These are no longer produced.



- Metal Tins
 - I'm unsure if these are associated with a particular brand, but three prominent examples are Westworld: Season 1 [4K], Band of Brothers, and The Pacific.

Are there different types of SteelBooks?

Yes. To this point, we've only covered G2 movie SteelBooks as these are my area of focus. There are a few others that I know of:

- G1
 - This is the general name for a DVD sized SteelBook. I do not own one for size comparison, but they are taller than G2 Blu-ray SteelBooks. Here is an [online example](#).
- CD
 - These are the size of CD cases, and they hold, wouldn't you know, [CD's](#).
- Jumbo
 - These are the same dimensions as a G2 SteelBook in most aspects except for [the spine width](#). They are no longer used due to manufacturers more efficiently packing the discs in cases now.
- Nintendo 3DS
 - Approximately the size of a CD case but fitted to hold a game cartridge. [Example](#)
- [SWITCH](#)
 - Tailor-made for Nintendo Switch game cases, they look like [this](#).
- Special
 - SteelBooks are special editions in their own right, but every once in a while, a special edition of special editions come along. An example is the slightly-larger-than-a-credit-card digital-only [John Wick](#) from Comic Con 2018. (thanks u/dwbassuk)

What about custom SteelBooks?

These do exist if you can find the people that will take commissions to do them. I'm sure there are others, but the most prominent member of the community that I know of is *BluishSquirrel. (S)he, when time permits, takes orders where you provide the art, and they will print your art on top of a blank or otherwise dull matte SteelBook. I have never personally ordered one, but I hear the results look fantastic. Just be ready to pay premium prices and wait a while for actual delivery.

My opinion is that of my own: I don't buy custom SteelBooks because they are not authentic. That's not to say that they can't look amazing on the shelf, but the fact that they were not licensed or authorized by the official studio / publisher reduces their credibility as a genuine addition to my collection. An example: if you collect Pokemon cards, everyone knows how rare and valuable the OG Charizard Holo is. To get around this high price, some people might print their own copy of the card. While it may look just as good, if not better, it is not genuine.

* Edit: It seems that BluishSquirrel no longer produces custom SteelBooks according to their website. The next most prominent maker I know of is someone named Alberto Varrona. I am unsure where to find him, though some have recommended contacting him on Instagram.

What about custom Spines?

So your spine is "backwards" if it's the original Best Buy release of Deadpool or is a European import, it has a slash, or it doesn't have a title at all (looking at you Doctor Strange). Can this be fixed? Indeed it can. Generally, the solution is a spine magnet.

You have choices, most of which are based on Ebay. The most prominent figure, as of now, for spine magnets is [drumxass](#). I'll let his work speak for itself, but an example of it is the spine seen on Spider-Man: Homecoming up above in this document. As with all things custom, it takes time, sometimes a lot of time, but you'll be pleased with the results.

Will it damage or permanently alter the original spine? No, it's a weak magnet that you can adhere and remove as you please.

Is there a SteelBook or metal variant available for all movies?

As much as I wish it were so, it's probably best for my wallet that this is not the case. I am not familiar with the process of choosing which movies get the honor of being given the metal treatment, but simply put, not all movies are chosen.

These days, the trend seems to be leaning towards all popular movies being given a SteelBook variant. If it does not have one announced before the standard blue case version releases, then it's a toss up as to whether or not it will get one in the future. There are many very good movies that do not have a SteelBook, but that does not mean they won't get one in the future. A few that I'm waiting for are Moneyball, Little Miss Sunshine, Moonlight, and Phantom Thread.

Some acronyms

WWA – World Wide Art

SL – Single Lenticular

FS – Full Slip

OOS – Out of Stock

G1 – DVD sized case

HDN – Hi-Def Ninja

BE – Blufans Exclusive (WEA)

W – Want

WTB – Want to Buy

WTT – Want to Trade

WEA – World Exclusive Art

DL – Double Lenticular

OC – One-Click

OOP – Out of Print

G2 – Blu-Ray sized case

MP – Media Psychos

OAB – Only at Blufans (WWA)

H – Have

WTS – Want to Sell

LF – Looking For

Closing Words

Thanks for checking out this somewhat-impromptu guide. I don't expect anyone will read the whole thing, so hopefully the section(s) you were here to check out were helpful. I know I have the tendency to be overly verbose or unclear, so if you need any clarification or have any questions regarding SteelBooks, feel free to message me on reddit at [u/FFiYWSC](https://www.reddit.com/u/FFiYWSC). I don't post or comment much, but I am very active otherwise at lurking and will do my best to reply to any relevant questions I receive.

I recognize that the pictures throughout this article may have been compressed or hard to see, so [here's an album](#) of (hopefully) clearer shots. All images posted directly to this page and the linked imgur album are mine; any images that were otherwise linked to are not.

It's probably apparent just how much I care about collecting SteelBooks. Probably too much, but that's for me to decide. I love movies. I love being able to hold those movies in my hand and know that I own it. Don't ever let anyone tell you what you should or shouldn't do with your money, but I would recommend caution or the occasional restraint for the sake of your bank account. It can indeed become an addiction as you find yourself constantly saying, just one more.

I also feel morally obligated to say, be careful. Collecting in general, SteelBooks in particular, can be expensive and lead you down a rabbit hole that you never knew existed. No matter how much you may want a SteelBook, don't buy something you can't afford; it isn't worth it.

I will add more information as I think of more to be added. I am also open to suggestions and feedback for things that I could have done better or that I missed.