

Mission: Compare Cruise and Chan

'Shanghai,' 'M:I-2' kick-start interest in martial arts

Everybody is kung fu fighting. The ancient art of martial arts suddenly looks new again as two of the top films, *Mission: Impossible 2* and *Shanghai Noon*, make the most out of martial arts stunts.

In *M:I-2*, **Tom Cruise** does amazing airborne kicks and somersaults, all captured in stunning slow-mo by director **John Woo**. **Jackie Chan** camps it up in Western gear in *Noon* with his trademark slapstick moves.

We asked two experts, **Michael DeMarco**, publisher of the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, and **Tom Muzila**, a teacher and stunt coordinator, to compare the films for style, skill and substance.

Both gave *M:I-2* thumbs up for Cruise's newly acquired expertise, even if DeMarco says the somersaults and airborne acrobatics "go astray from fighting logic. A real martial arts master would not go to that extreme."

Muzila found Cruise's combo of street fighting and karate realistic but credits Woo with making the moves look magical.

"I was impressed with Cruise's flip kicks and the spinning back



By Douglas Curran, Touchstone

Shanghai Noon: Jackie Chan's campy kung fu is a mixture of Chinese styles.

heel kicks," Muzila says.

The differences: Cruise's tense style is more Korean/Japanese karate — "usually a little more straight and linear," says DeMarco. "After you punch, you are still holding the tension."

Muzila says Chan has a more flexible Chinese kung fu style. "It's a mixture of several southern styles," DeMarco agrees.

Their favorite stunts?

Muzila loves the sequence in which Cruise kicks a gun from the sand, catches it, dives and shoots.

DeMarco appreciates Chan swinging a horseshoe on a rope as a weapon. "Most people would say that is Hong Kong comedy, but it's really an ancient martial arts weapon called a rope dart."

By Elizabeth Snead