



THE MUSEUM OF WESTERN FILM HISTORY

Iron Man

Released May 2008

Paramount Pictures



The first film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, *Iron Man* was directed by Jon Favreau and stars Robert Downey Jr., Terrence Howard, Jeff Bridges, Shaun Toub and Gwyneth Paltrow. In *Iron Man*, Tony Stark, an industrialist and master engineer, builds a powered exoskeleton and becomes the technologically advanced superhero Iron Man.

Marvel put the project in production as its first self-financed film, with Paramount Pictures as its distributor. Favreau signed on as director, aiming for a naturalistic feel. He chose to shoot the film primarily in California, rejecting the East Coast setting of the comics to differentiate the film from numerous superhero films set in New York City-esque environments. Filming began in March 2007 and concluded in June. During filming, the actors were free to create their own dialogue because pre-production was focused on the action. Rubber and metal versions of the armors, created by Stan Winston's company, were mixed with computer-generated imagery to create the title character.

Released in theaters on May 2, 2008, the film was a critical and commercial success, grossing over \$585 million and garnering widespread critical acclaim. Downey's performance as Tony Stark was particularly praised. The American Film Institute selected the film as one of the ten best of the year. It was also nominated for two Academy Awards for the Best Sound Editing and the Best Visual Effects. A sequel, *Iron Man 2*, was released on May 7, 2010, and another sequel, *Iron Man 3*, was released on May 3, 2013.

Synopsis:

Tony Stark. Genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist. Son of legendary inventor and weapons contractor Howard Stark. When Tony Stark is assigned to give a weapons presentation to an Iraqi unit led by Lt. Col. James Rhodes, he's given a ride on enemy lines. That ride ends badly when Stark's Humvee that he's riding in is attacked by enemy combatants. He survives - barely - with a chest full of shrapnel and a car battery attached to his heart. In order to survive he comes up with a way to miniaturize the battery and figures out that the battery can power something else. Thus Iron Man is born. He uses the primitive device to escape from the cave in Iraq. Once back home, he then begins work on perfecting the Iron Man suit. But the man who was put in charge of Stark Industries has plans of his own to take over Tony's technology for other matters.

The entire Afghanistan ambush and escape sequence was filmed in and around the Alabama Hills and also in two other locations several miles away surrounding the Owens Dry Lake bed (the cave entrance and the crash in the sand dune). The overlook used for the Jericho Missile test is set up on a ridge that, well, overlooks almost the entire expanse of the Alabama Hills valley

Scenes were also shot at the Olancho sand dunes where Tony Stark is rescued. The production company also used the The Olancho School, which was turned into a Terrorist camp. The schools multi-purpose room was also set up as a “cover set” where they could film inside if there were weather issues. Note: Chris Langley, the Inyo County Film Commissioner who negotiated the shoot, notes that the deal was for three months and a nice fee was paid to the school district that allowed it to purchase software. Movie production benefits a wide array of different people and organizations.

The Museum’s exhibit showcases the ***Iron Man*** theme with military ammo boxes, boulders and camouflage netting that were used in the movie; posters and comic book covers of the character. The exhibit features the custom tailored suit that was worn by Robert Downey Jr. during the opening scenes where he is shot and wounded.

Our website has a number of pictures from the shooting location (Then & Now) as well as a series of articles written by Chris Langley (Inyo County Film Commissioner) who also writes for the Inyo Register providing interesting background on ***Iron Man’s*** production team shooting in Inyo County and commentary on the behind the scenes activities and politics of movie-making.

