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Category: Home > Reviews > Thriller > Horror > Mystery > Inn Of The Damned (1973) + It Happened At Nightmare Inn (1970/Cheezy Flicks DVDs)

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Inn Of The Damned (1973) + It Happened At Nightmare Inn (1970/Cheezy Flicks DVDs)

Picture: C- Sound: C-/C
Extras: D/C- Films: D/C

A cycle of the Horror/Thriller is those taking a vacation and finding new murderous meaning in the term "tourist trap". It is not as easy to make such films work as you might think and the recent "torture porn" cycle shows how desperate bad filmmakers will get to cover up not being able to do such stories well. Two earlier examples that show how this does not work are the totally failed **Inn Of The Damned** (1973) and the somewhat effective (but could have been better) **It Happened At Nightmare Inn** (1970).

Damned has zero suspense and deals with an old Western-town type deathtrap hotel where the owners (Dame Judith Anderson and Joseph Furst, the villain once again) is killing people. Bounty hunter Alex Cord investigates and find out that the person he is searching for may have never left. This was made in Australia but is not quite wacky enough to be considered Ozploitation. Still, it will be a curio to some and for those who have to see it, once will be enough.

Nightmare (simply know in some versions as simply **Nightmare Inn**) has Judy Geeson (**Star Maidens**) as a woman meeting her sister at its little Spanish vacation locale, but the sister has "checked out" and not left any forwarding message. Not believing this, she stays and eventually discovers the ugly truth. This has a few good moments and casting as good as the other film despite the use of unknowns, including some suspense, but once is enough despite being a more capable film. If this had been handled by someone who knew the genre better, this could have been even more effective.

The 1.33 X 1 image in both cases is soft and color poor, while the PCM 16/48 2.0 Mono is low, rough and compressed on **Damned**, so be very careful of playback levels and volume switching, while **Nightmare** fares a little better than expected in clarity, as well as maybe being recorded better to begin with. Trailers and Intermission shorts are the only extras.

- Nicholas Sheffo



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