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GILA! (2012)

Published by [David Carter](#) on 2014/9/14 (59 reads)

Directed by Jim Wynorski
Review by David Carter

BUY IT

Released by Polyscope Media
Running Time: 79 minutes
Rating: Not Rated
Color format: Color
Audio/Subtitles: 2.0 Stereo English
Region Code: 1, NTSC
Aspect Ratio: Widescreen
16:9 Enhanced: Yes
Special Features: Slideshow, tribute to THE GIANT GILA MONSTER, cast and crew info, "the Mushroom song," drive-in featurette
Trailer Online: [Yes](#)



Short Version: Well executed remake

Everyone has a personal favorite decade for horror cinema. Many of you out there are big fans of the eighties' slashers, while others of you prefer the more supernatural spooks that the seventies had to offer. The atomic horrors of the 1950s have no shortage of fans either, including many horror fans that weren't even alive in that decade. The horror films of the 1950s gained new life on television, where they could be picked up cheaply and used to fill out late-night programming slots. These cheesy black & white masterpieces became the perfect fodder for numerous horror hosts, and served the robots on MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATRE 3000 well also.



B-movie impresario Jim Wynorski was born in 1950, so doubtlessly he has a soft spot for the giant monsters and alien invasions that flooded drive-in screens during that era. His latest is a lovingly made tribute to drive-in horrors, a remake of 1959's THE GIANT GILA MONSTER simply titled GILA! Wynorski has spruced up the special effects and colorized it, but has lost none of the charm that made the original a perennial favorite more than fifty years since its release. GILA! is available from Polyscope Media.

Good-guy hot rodder Chase Winstead loves nothing more than racing cars and his girlfriend, Lisa. Chase is something of a hero in his small town, but there's one resident that doesn't share the love for him. "Waco Bob" is a tough juvenile delinquent who has been nursing a hatred of Chase since before they were old enough to drive. With his fast car and even faster girlfriend Carla by his side, Waco Bob challenges Chase to many drag races but always seems to end up staring at his taillights.



Chase has bigger problems on his hands than Waco Bob's endless taunting, however. The sheriff enlists his help looking for a pair of missing teens and, while searching, Chase believes he sees something big moving around in the distance. Unfortunately for the town he's right, there's a giant Gila monster lurking in the countryside. Chase and the sheriff journey to the creature's home cave to attempt to destroy it but find that their firepower is no match for the lizard. The monster continues rapidly gobbling up the citizens of the small town, but Chase has a trick up his sleeve to save the day.

GILA! is very faithful to its source material and doesn't attempt to modify the story to appeal more to modern

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4. Annabelle	\$16.4 M
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Source: Box Office Mojo
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audiences. That’s certainly a good thing for those of us who appreciate fifties horror, but judging from some of the reviews of the film posted online, this tactic might have gone over some viewers’ heads. The only major change is that Wynorski’s giant Gila monster is a digital creation; impressively done but lacking in the cheesy charm of the green-screened actual lizard from the original. I appreciated the fact that GILA! plays it straight for the most part and doesn’t attempt to call attention to its hokeyness with winks and nods to the audience. There’s a fine line between clever and pretentious, and GILA! chooses to remain reverent to spirit of the 1959 version. GILA! lets the audience decide what they find humorous, and is ultimately a more successful film for not attempting to ram the comedy down our throats.

Polyscope Media’s DVD of GILA! looks great; better than to be expected for the low price point. My only complaint is the misleading “Unrated” stamped on the back of the cover. While technically true, the implication is that this is a sexy or gory horror flick, which couldn’t be farther from the truth. We’re strictly in G-rated territory here, which may come as a surprise to those of you familiar with Wynorski’s work. He proves here that he is still a very capable director when everyone keeps their clothes on, and GILA! will be a great time for fans of drive-in movies.



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