

DVD Review: *Jean-Marie Pallardy - Classics of French Erotica*

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Good news for those of us who enjoy kicking back and watching funky foreign flesh flicks: MVD Entertainment has teamed up with the folks across the pond at Le Chat Qui Fume to bring us three vintage erotica movies from director Jean-Marie Pallardy.

Out of all the European filmmakers who were cranking out one softcore film after another during the '70s and '80s (and there were many), Jean-Marie Pallardy has managed to make a name for himself with moviegoers from several generations for his carefree style and his tendency to drop a lot of humor into his projects. Beginning his career as a male model in the '60s, Jean-Marie soon became “bored” with standing around striking poses all day long and decided things would be a lot more exciting if he were on the other side of the camera. After producing a handful of short films, Pallardy quickly made the move into feature-length films, producing several memorable (as well as non-memorable) skin flicks along the way.



We start out our journey through MVD’s first wave of *Classics of French Erotica* collection with *My Body Burns* (1972), one of Jean-Marie Pallardy’s first efforts, and the duller entry in the set. The “story” (?) features a getting-darn-close-to-elderly village notary named Doug (Claude Sendron) who is the subject of most of the town’s gossip (provided by a male and female voiceover) due to his sexual habits (orgies and whatnot -- which is perfectly acceptable in a prison town nowadays).



In an effort to keep the shit-talkers at bay, some business acquaintances suggest that the notary get married. Easy, right? No, not even in a sex film are things easy: Doug’s latest young girlfriend Evelyne (Evelyne Scott) is willing to marry the old fart for his money (again, just like in a prison town) but things gets held up when Evelyne’s lesbian partner Michelle (played by the hard-to-look-

at-when-you're-looking-to-get-hard Angela Hansen) starts making threats -- and the plan for a marriage soon turn into plan for a murder.

If you're in the mood for something on par with those terribly amusing late-night Cable TV sex thrillers, *My Body Burns* will more than suffice. Everything about this movie is bad: the editing, acting, dubbing, photography... But my favorite problem is the lack of continuity -- it's so bad that you really begin to wonder if France has ever been introduced to Ritalin. Plus, co-star Angela Hansen's butter face is one that need only surface once to engrain itself into your nightmares for all eternity. *My Body Burns* makes for ideal drunken entertainment on a Friday night.



Next up from Jean-Marie Pallardy is the much better *Truck Stop* (1978). Taking its cue from Homer's epic poem "Odyssey" (seriously, it does), *Truck Stop* tells the crazy tale of Eugene (or, Ulysses in the original Euro version, and portrayed by Pallardy himself), a young trucker who gets lost in the desert when his aging partner starts seeing scantily-clad bisexual sirens bearing bottled water, champagne, and J&B Scotch (a staple of '70s Euro films). While Eugene is held "captive" by Calypso (transsexual Ajita Wilson), his beautiful young wife Penelope/Pamela (Elizabeth Turner) is left to run a wayside truck stop inn full of horny truckers with her girlfriends.

As with many Euro sex comedies, *Truck Stop* doesn't have the balls to take itself too seriously (to do so would result in something like, well, *My Body Burns*) and its "good-natured" attitude of promiscuous sex makes it a fun movie to whittle the time away with.



Fans of Annik Borel (star of *Werewolf Woman*) will also want to take note of *Truck Stop* as it features the final performance of the elusive actress -- as a transvestite.

Moving on (I'm going in no particular order, incidentally), we find ourselves with the final DVD in this series, *Erotic Diary Of A Lumberjack* (1974)...

(I'm going to pause for a moment to allow you to get Monty Python's "Lumberjack Song" out of your system)...

Erotic Diary Of A Lumberjack stars Georges Guéret (also in *Truck Stop*) as Professor Muller, a man on the verge of winning a Nobel Peace Prize, but before learning of the news, he retreats to the countryside to get



away from it all. Finding himself in a village that has turned into a huge brothel (and this village is located *where?*), Muller is at last able to fulfill the sexual urges for which “normal” society would judge him too harshly. Assuming the position of “the Lumberjack” (aka “the pimp”), Muller and his grown son (Pallardy) take on what look like the sweetest jobs in the world. Several horny heavy-drinking politicians (read: regular old politicians) arrive for some cheap thrills, much to the disdain of disapproving government authorities. That’s really about all of the “plot” there is here, kids -- so just sit back and enjoy the flesh.

All three films here are presented in non-anamorphic widescreen ratios (*Truck Stop* is 2.35:1 while the other two are 1.66:1) and feature mono stereo English dubbed dialogue (well, *some* of the movies feature dialogue *some* of the time: there are a few moments in *Erotic Diary Of A Lumberjack* where the dialogue was completely left out while the actors are talking!). Each DVD claims that the film has been “remastered” but I doubt if such a thing is true: the transfers aren’t the best in the world and often look like they’ve been copied straight from a PAL video source (which I think they were). *Truck Stop* and *Erotic Diary Of A Lumberjack* also feature a banner stating “Unrated” on them, but, again, I doubt it.

Each disc includes the same special features. There’s an interview with Jean-Marie Pallardy (1:01:10) interlaced with footage from his works; trailers for the three films in this series, plus two others (*Lucky Lucky & The Daltines* and *Gunfight At OQ Corral*); and a collection of photos/stills/artwork from Pallardy’s personal collection (12:49). The only DVD to feature any additional supplementary materials



is *Erotic Diary Of A Lumberjack*, which features several deleted scenes (11:39) of softcore sex that border on hardcore porn once or twice (it was common in Europe to shoot hardcore footage for softcore sex films -- or “inserts” as they are called -- to use in certain markets).

While the audio/video presentations on these titles leaves a bit to be desired (I can handle the shitty sound, but the image could probably look better), these titles have already become hits with fans of classic Euro/French erotica films and Jean-Marie Pallardy alike. Good job, MVD/Le Chat Qui Fume! Now bring us some Brigitte Lahaie films!

