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TRUCK STOP (1975)

Published by David Carter on 2009/6/25 (14 reads)

Directed by Jean-Marie Pallardy
Review by David Carter



Released by Le Chat qui Fume
Running Time: 90 minutes
Rating: Not Rated
Color format: Color
Audio/Subtitles: 2.0 Dolby Stereo English
Region Code: 1, NTSC
Aspect Ratio: Widescreen
16:9 Enhanced: No
Special Features: 100s of stills from Pallardy's films, Hour-long interview with Pallardy
Trailer Online: No



Short Version: Bizarre French eroticism mixed with Greek epic poetry

A large truck winds down a deserted road before coming to a stop. Driver Geoffrey has stopped to switch places with his partner, the sleeping Gene Ulysses. Gene won't wake up and Geoff wanders off into the surrounding wastelands, believing that he sees beautiful women in his heat-induced delirium. Gene finds Geoff wallowing in the empty sands some time later and the wastelands soon become like a prison for them when they are unable to find their rig again.



A year passes during which no one hears from Gene or Geoff. Gene's girl, Pam, holds out hope that he is still alive and will return - ignoring the unsolicited advice of friends who say he's either died or left her for another woman. Unbeknownst to her, she's right. Gene and Geoff are being pampered by a bevy of beautiful women at Calypso's oasis. Their accommodating hostess has been using Gene as a sex slave for what seems like forever to them and one day Gene finally decides he'd prefer to be back home with Pam and they depart.



Meanwhile, Gene's fellow truckers have gathered at Pam's truck stop demanding that she choose one of them to be her new man. Her refusals fall on deaf ears, so she and her waitresses devise a series of impossible challenges in an effort to stall the men. Gene is still working his way back to her, however, although there are more trials he'll have to face before returning home.

TRUCK STOP is, of course, Homer's *Odyssey* remade as an erotic film. Much of the epic has been trimmed down to fit into the scope of the film but more than enough remains to make the allusion recognizable. Geoff's temptation by voices at the film's opening is a reference to the Sirens and is the first give away to the audience/director/star Jean-Marie Pallardy's intent for the film. The Sirens are reimagined and modernized to be nude women offering champagne and whisky, and later we are shown Calypso literally reimagined as a Caribbean beauty and the Cyclops replaced with a one-eyed woman who tries to rape Gene.

Unlike so many adaptations of the epic, TRUCK STOP focuses very little on Gene - the Odysseus character - instead opting to focus on Pam, the Penelope of the story. It is in Pam's aspect of the film that TRUCK STOP remains truest to the source material. Just as Penelope was beset by cavorting suitors, Pam must deal with a gang of horny truckers who are barely able to stop having sex with her waitresses long enough to vie for her hand. In the film's only main divergence from the source, Gene and Pam's reunion is a happy one and doesn't end a bloodbath.



Clever though its premise is, TRUCK STOP is not too far removed from its fellow European sex comedies of the mid-seventies. The majority of the film's running time is taken up with bawdy humor and comedic, generally non-sexual cavorting with some very attractive French starlets. An early scene hinted that the film would be more transgressive than the standard fare, however. Annick Borel - a biological female - plays a transgender prostitute picked up by a pair of the suitors. The film doesn't acknowledge that the actress is female, so the joke - the sex scene is played for laughs - would have been well outside the norm even for the permissive Europeans.

The DVD of TRUCK STOP contains previously unseen footage from the director's archives and a lengthy interview, making it worth the effort to upgrade any previous versions you have with this release. I will note that the DVD I reviewed had a few minor image issues in early scenes but seemed to clear up around the twenty-minute mark. I'm not sure if it is an issue with the print (it didn't appear to be a defect of the film stock) or just my copy, but worth noting. Fans of European erotic cinema will find that what TRUCK STOP lacks in inventive or transgressive sexuality it more than makes up for through its unique premise. It is a unique cinematic curiosity that will easily help you win

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