

Entertainment

The scenery's great in Tequila Sunrise

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

I spent the first hour of Tequila Sunrise admiring the scenery. Not the beaches, not the sunsets, not the ocean, although they were all beautiful. No, I was admiring the two stars, Mel Gibson and Michelle Pfeiffer; they are gorgeous. Gorgeous is the only word for it. Oh, and Kurt Russell was in there too somewhere.

Tequila Sunrise is lovely to look at, although it doesn't always work. Sometimes the film doesn't know what it's supposed to be: romantic, suspenseful, comic, or scary. However, it is always slick and stylish.

I think the three characters were the best part of the movie. Jo Ann Villanova, (Pfeiffer), Dale 'Mac' McKussic (Gibson) and Lieutenant Nick Prescia (Russell) are three-dimensional people and the movie hinges on their personalities.

The two men have been friends since high school; however, Mac became a drug dealer while Nick became a cop. Jo Ann is the beautiful restaurateur who is caught between them.

After years of avoiding Mac's territory Nick is finally forced to take part in an operation intent on bringing Mac to justice. The problem is that Mac has, in fact retired and simply wants to lead a normal life. Drug Enforcement Agency (D.E.A.) agent Mcquire isn't ready to let Mac lead the good life just yet. Nick is caught in Mcquire's schemes, while Jo Ann is caught in Nick's investigation of Mac.

The plot sounds predictable but it isn't really. The relationship between the two men never becomes hostile, and Jo Ann is not some passive little creature caught between two men she loves. The movie starts a little slowly but

AT THE MOVIES

builds well. There is a sense of humor that saves Tequila Sunrise from being just another police thriller.

I liked the acting and especially enjoyed Gibson. He manages to make Mac sympathetic and heroic - unusual attributes for a drug dealer, especially in the movies. Russell has a tough job too - Nick isn't a nice guy, despite being on the right side of the law. Nick is too manipulative for his own good and Jo Ann realizes this.

Pfeiffer is just so beautiful you forget to think about her acting. But she is very good and becoming one of my favorite actresses. Raul Julia, another favorite, is delightful as a Mexican cop coming in for the kill.

Robert Towne, who directed Chinatown and Shampoo, wrote and directed Tequila Sunrise. Despite credits like these and an all-star cast, Towne is unable to fulfil the promise of this film. That doesn't mean Tequila Sunrise is bad. It just isn't great.

I enjoyed this movie, despite the flaws. I recommend Tequila Sunrise. It does what movies should do: make you forget real life and just let you enjoy yourself. After all, does every film have to be meaningful?

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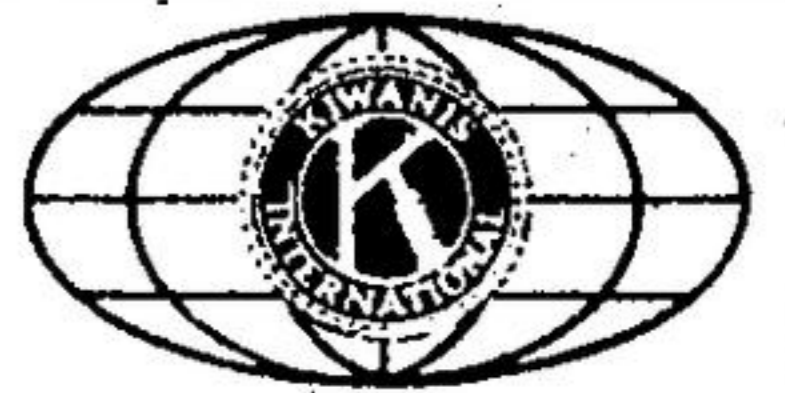
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