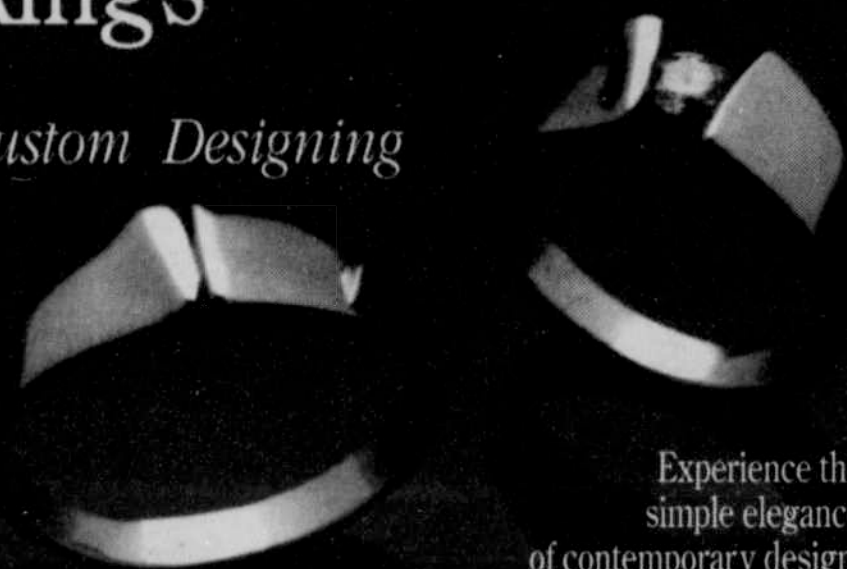


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A jaded view of contemporary dysfunction

The long awaited world premiere of Claire of the Moon was anticlimatic compared to the anticipation of it. It's triggered some very lively discussions at the office. We had high expectations and our own vision of what a lesbian movie should be. All five of us who saw Claire had five different opinions.

Renée LaChance—Nicole Conn (director, writer and the woman whose energy made the movie happen) has put her life on the line with this film. I can honor the incredible work, dedication and perfectionism of all the participants who helped in the production of this film. It is a miracle when things come together like this movie. The cinematography is beautiful, and the scenery of the Oregon coast is not diminished at all in the translation onto film.

The film is the story of one woman's journey to her sexual identity. Many lesbians and gay men have lived similar stories and will relate to Claire's drama and trauma. Anonymous heterosexual sex, alcoholism, fighting attraction to members of the same sex, Claire lives it all over again for us in painfully graphic detail. Lesbians will drink this movie up because it is all that is out there for us. I hope that Conn is able to realize a profit from her venture so that her second movie will reflect all she's learned from this one.

Ariel Waterwoman—This movie seduced my self-destructive coping mechanisms with its endless alcohol, cigarettes and anonymous sex scenes. I left fighting my alcoholism and long gone cigarette addiction.

Unfortunately, I believe that life is a lot like this movie: Incredibly beautiful and rich scenery, racist, classist, misogynist, homophobic, passionate people using words but not communicating with each other in painful, indulgent, moody, redundant and shallow ways.

I don't think any lesbian movie company anywhere, would be able to meet the lesbian community's desperate need for validation and acknowledgment up on "the big screen." Demi-Monde certainly doesn't.

It was fun watching people I know in places I have been, doing things that I've done, alive on "the big screen."

On the whole, it's been a remarkable effort of time, money and emotion to create such a mediocre movie. Yes, Claire has a delightfully engaging smile.

Meg Grace—This movie is promoted as a "lesbian" film - the *Desert Hearts* of the '90s. Before the opening credits begin, the viewer is treated to the sight of a man and woman making love. Then the credits and the story begins.

Claire, a tormented heterosexual woman attends a women's writers retreat on the coast. She shares a cabin with Noel, a psychotherapist doing research in intimacy, communication and pornography. The premise of two people who are outwardly hostile toward each other and secretly love one another is an old one.

Stiff acting (had these women studied with William Shatner?) and stilted writing create a slow, pedantic piece. The setting and dialogue are like a see-through dress on a mannequin. The only purpose is to tease the viewer with hopes of a lesbian love story. Except, it is just a tease. There is no relationship between Noel and Claire. When they finally do have sex, it is based on their mutual lust for one another. I had no doubt that when the retreat was over, Claire and Noel would go their separate ways. When we see them walking on the beach during the closing credits, are they holding



hands? Does one snuggle her head on the other's shoulder? Has intimacy been created? No. There's no story here.

Amanda Colorado—What an accomplishment! Dream of a movie of one lesbian's coming out story, find the money (a lot of money), the professionals to create the film, and a downtown theater to show lesbians making love on the big screen. Nicole Conn did that. For those of you who do not find everything you want in this movie, I encourage you to create your own dream, Conn has shown us it *can* be done.

Thank you Nicole, for showing us what *Fried Green Tomatoes* left to the imagination! No movie is perfect, but I found enough to like in this one that I will be paying to see it again.

E. Ann Hinds—Five stars to Nicole Conn and Pam Kuri as producers. This is a full-length feature on 35mm film! It is a positive thing to hear the words "dyke," lesbian," and "dildo" spoken on the big screen. It's great to see local women larger than life, given an opportunity to work in their chosen professions. The cinematography is often sensuous and of high quality. (Do I hear a "but" coming?) Yes, and here are my objections to the movie: once again stereotypical characters born of misogyny are reflected back at me and I am left wanting to see something akin to my own lesbian life; relationships that speak of emotional connection rather than hostility; interactions that are not drowning in alcohol or suffocated by smoke; motivations that include looking outside my personal cultural conditioning to include the broader conditions of humanity and nature. I think the advance promotion material awakened hopes and expectations for me that were truly unreasonable. I cannot hold Nicole or her hardworking crew responsible for my years of movie-going disappointment.

The point is, this movie is so similar to generic mainstream love stories that it's easy to feel assimilated. It's difficult for me to relate to the idea of sex as the single overpowering aspect that differentiates the *me* today from the *me* that bought into a privileged, white, heterosexual reality for the first 30 years of my life. This movie would have me believe that the only difference between the straight girl I was, and the queer woman I am, is the genitalia of my sexual partner. This is not a message in keeping with my life as I perceive it. Still, I encourage people to support this movie and those who made it. I hope it serves as an empowerment to lesbians to make more movies. I look forward to Nicole's next effort with the hope that her audiences' responses will be a support to a broader vision and her persistent creativity.