

FILM

If you're the sort of person who had fun with a Rubik's Cube, then you might enjoy *Mulholland Drive*, director David Lynch's latest puzzle. It's a film you can debate with friends ad infinitum and still not solve. Because there is no solution. Lynch unspools the timeline of events, then whips it around and ties it into knots of bewilderment: Who was who, what was real, and when did this story really begin?

If you enjoy cryptography, those conundrums add to the appeal of the film. But if you're someone who needs storylines to make sense with everything tied up in neat packages, do not go to this movie. It will drive you nuts.

Lynch fans will recognize many *Twin Peaks* touches, including a quirky coffee shop and some exceedingly peculiar characters—the tall-hatted cowboy is classic Lynch. Surreal and real trade places so often, perhaps it's best just to sit back and let it flow over you. Trying to reorder the film in your head as it unfolds could lead to an aneurysm.

Also in pure Lynch form, it is beautifully lit and shot in dreamy California half-light; the camerawork both perfectly captures and creates his darkening mood. Set on some of the lower rungs of the La-La Land ladder, this film adeptly uses architecture and setting to reveal character.

And oh, what a roster! *Mulholland Drive* is perfectly cast with a Greyhound busload of little-known actors. A few minor stars are sprinkled around in cameos for marquee value, but the unknowns carry the picture.

It's impossible to say much about the plot without ruining it, because it is nothing if not surprising. The ingredients sound hackneyed—amnesia, murder, adultery, ambition, manipulation and deception—but the resulting salad is unlike anything you've ever tasted. One hallmark of great storytelling is a lead character who

Sharp curves and soft shoulders

Two maps to *Mulholland Drive*, a long and winding road

BY ORIANA GREEN AND CHRISTOPHER MCQUAIN

is changed by the events she experiences, someone who is fundamentally different by the time the credits roll. And in this film, Betty is that gal.

Mulholland Drive even has a few steamy but short lesbian scenes, and sexual orientation does fuel a pivotal plotline, but so much else is going on here that the Sapphic twists are just a few of the turns the tale takes.

This film might be even more fun the second time around—or perhaps even

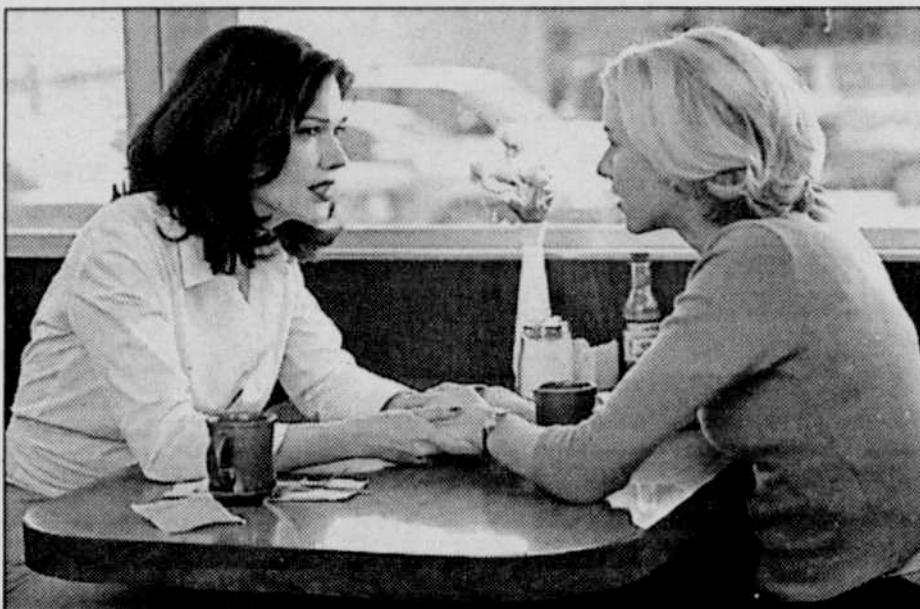
more maddening, as you finally surrender to Lynch's elegant disorder. My only real complaint is the fractured emotional connection this kind of storytelling causes—can viewers identify with characters who might not be who they say they are?

You'll have to decide that for yourself.

—OG

Mulholland Drive, the latest from all-American eccentric David Lynch, tells the story of two women who find themselves in circumstances that start out mysterious and wind up indescribable.

Betty (Naomi Watts) is an aspiring actress,



Rita (left) and Betty conspire to sort out their lives

fresh off the plane at LAX from rural Ontario. The other woman (Laura Harring) calls herself Rita (as in Hayworth) because she can't recall her own name as a result of a terrible car accident on the famous drive.

After Rita turns up in the apartment Betty is borrowing from her aunt, the actress decides to help the amnesiac deduce her true identity. These are practically the only relatable shreds of reality the film has to offer, because as Betty simultaneously pursues her career and tries to help Rita find out who she actually is, the viewer is taken on a journey through Hollywood and show biz in which reality and identity fade

in and out and around each other, creating an endless loop of eerie scenarios, bizarre occurrences and mutating, mysterious characters.

The cast—peripheral indie film actors and virtual unknowns from television—is remarkable, conquering what must have seemed a daunting, inexplicable task. One doesn't exactly picture either of the superb leads asking Lynch for her character's "motivation" as they inexplicably metamorphose, literally becoming entirely different people.

The filmmaker displays throughout an almost tender love of artifice. When Betty departs her plane and simply beams, Pollyanna-like, as the score swells and the California sun glows down on her through the palms, it's at once a campy exaggeration and a sincere tribute to hope and innocence.

Later, during the sudden moment when Betty and Rita become lovers, the dialogue turns melodramatic and the score swells again, but it's a serious, gorgeously erotic scene likely to arouse anyone of any orientation who has a pulse. *Mulholland Drive* contains many such moments, reminders that Lynch can be a much more generous, inventive director than he usually is given credit for.

"Surreal" hardly seems an adequate term to describe the film. It makes giant shifts and leaps, radically subverting its own narratives and characters until the only sense one can make of what's happening on the screen has to come from some subconscious, instinctive place. It's an experience that's profoundly disorienting and disturbing yet strangely moving.

Is *Mulholland Drive* maddening? Perhaps.

Watchable? Compulsorily.

Brilliant? Without a doubt.

—CM

Secondhand smoke kills.



Protect the ones you love.

If you are ready to quit tobacco call toll free:

1-877-270-STOP(7867)

TTY: 1-877-777-6534.

Oregon Department of Human Services

Counter Media

EVERY SINGLE BOOK OF GAY EROTICA ALWAYS IN STOCK!

- ☆☆ Mountain Men. Photos from the 50s and 60s more alluring than any done today. \$35.
- ☆☆ Boys of Swithins Hall / Boys in Shorts. Filthy schoolboy stories. \$13.95 / \$14.95.
- ☆☆ Little Joe Superstar. Joe Dallesandro, from physique mags to Warhol flicks. \$18.95.

DOWNTOWN @ 927 SW OAK • 226-8141

FLAMBÉ QUEER NIGHT

@ LE HAPPY

MONDAYS 9PM TO 1AM
1101 NW 16TH • 21 & OVER • 503.226.1258

hip CHICKS



WINE

a winery

4510 SE 23rd Avenue Portland 97202
503-753-6374

Turkey Weekend Extravaganza

Yummy down on...

Shardoneaux
Vin Nombriil

1999 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir
1999 Columbia Valley Merlot

Open Fri•Sat•Sun Nov 23•24•25
Noon — 6pm

\$5.00 includes tasting, souvenir glass and holiday nibbly things and good times.

