

# Décor Heaven

## Vintage Froth

**DOWN WITH LOVE:** Directed by Peyton Reed. Written by Eve Ahlert and Dennis Drake. Producers Bruce Cohen and Dan Jinks. Executive producers Paddy Cullen, Arnon Milchan. Cinematography Jeff Cronenweth. Production design, Andrew Laws. Costumes, Daniel Orlandi. Editor, Larry Bock. Music, Marc Shaiman. Starring Renee Zellweger and Ewan McGregor, with David Hyde Pierce, Sarah Paulson and Tony Randall. Fox 200 Pictures and Regency Enterprises, 2003. PG-13. 100 minutes.

I approached this 1960s-era romantic comedy with high hopes. Ewan McGregor gave an inspired performance in *Moulin Rouge* both as an actor and singer. He's ingenious at projecting sincerity without hitting a single ironic note. I loved Renee Zellweger's droll comic turn in *Bridget Jones' Diary* and wanted to see more from-the-heart naturalism and less of the iconic posturing of *Chicago*.

While McGregor and Zellweger sing one song together — "Down With Love" — I would have felt closer connections to the characters if each had sung at least one solo. Screenwriters Ahlert and Dennis Drake chose to rely instead on clever banter and smug conversation to carry the emotion of the stars' on-again, off-again relationship. The double entendre gets a vigorous workout here, but the film doesn't fulfill its potential as a witty battle of the sexes because contemporary notions inflect the humor and confuse the viewer.

Barbara Novak's (Zellweger) sexual lib-

eration is subverted by the silly bunny coquette she plays to catch Catcher Block (McGregor), who's only pretending to be a chaste astronaut with a Southern drawl. He's really a wolf, a suave, bachelor playboy who wants to add Barbara to his little black book, and then publish an expose of her sell-out in *Know* magazine, where he works as a writer. Instead of making the characters more lovable, their deceit makes Catcher too knowing and Barbara becomes brittle, even desperate.

Barbara pals around with Vicki Hiller (Sarah Paulson), an editor at her publishing house. The all-male board under the leadership of its chairman (Tony Randall) decides to dump Barbara and her manifesto for women, *Down With Love*. But Vicki gets Barbara a television appearance, and the book catches fire. Catcher's pal, Peter McMannus (David Hyde Pierce), is also his boss at *Know* magazine. You don't have to be a palm reader to see that Peter and Vicki are destined for each other. But it's a lot more fun watching them get there than observing Catcher and Barbara swap repar-tee. Thank God, Hyde Pierce steals every scene he's in with his neurotic, fussbudgety insecurities. He's good.

The film's success is its look, which is smashing. From various stage sets to the décor, hairstyles, fashions, colors and sleek



BARBARA NOVAK (RENEE ZELLWEGGER) AND CATCHER BLOCK (EWAN MCGREGOR) HAMMING IT UP IN THE ULTIMATE NEW YORK PAD.

MERRICK MORTON, FOX 2000, REGENCY ENTERPRISES, 2003

look of the automobiles and textured fabrics, this movie expresses the richness of the dream of 1962. It's elegant and futuristic but doesn't have a single idea in its pretty little head. While Todd Haynes' *Far From Heaven* acknowledged the darker side of the era, looking deeper than its beautifully detailed surface, director Peyton Reed sticks strictly to the frothy, light-as-a-breeze '60s here. After the success of *Chicago*, Reed knows what viewers like.

What bad timing, though. When I went to

see *Down With Love* last Sunday, the ticket taker clearly expected to see a ticket for the *Matrix* but caught himself before he waved me on to one of its theaters. These two films couldn't be more different from each other in style, look and story — one dark, brooding and active; the other sunny, bubbly and dashing. Each has something for the audience, but both are forgettable.

*Down With Love* is now playing at Cinemark and Cinema World in two theaters. **EW**

## movie clips

**OPENING OR RETURNING:** **Blade Runner:** Director's cut released last year of Ridley Scott's 1982 futuristic adventure set in Los Angeles is "now seen as a nightmarish blueprint of the '80s and beyond," *The NY Times* notes. Harrison Ford plays a cynical former cop on the trail of deadly android replicants. With Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, Darryl Hannah, Edward James Olmos. R. At 7 pm on 5/28 in 180 PLC, UO campus. Free.

**Boat Trip:** Onboard a tropical cruise ship Cuba Gooding Jr. and Horatio Sanz discover that everyone else is gay. From the trailer, you can see this movie's one-joke premise coming a mile away, so don't be surprised if some of the "jokes" are homophobic. R. Movies 12.

**Bringing Down the House:** Domestic comedy starring Steve Martin and Queen Latifa is directed by Adam Shankman. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Bruce Almighty:** Jim Carrey, Morgan Freeman and Jennifer Aniston star in this tale of a TV reporter, who has a really bad day, rages against God and receives more than he expected. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

**Enjoy Your Bath:** 1975 film by Eldar Riazanov about a young doctor's New Year's Eve misadventures, it's called "the Russian *Miracle on 42nd Street*." Special showing at 6:30 pm on 5/23 in 115 Pacific, UO campus. Free.

**How To Lose a Guy in 10 Days:** Magazine columnist Kate Hudson and ad agency professional Matthew McConaughey try to get the other to fall in love, but things go awry. High-energy romantic comedy. PG-13. Movies 12.

**In-Laws, The:** Andrew Fleming directs Michael Douglas and Albert Brooks as the reluctant fathers of the bride and groom. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

**Italian Job, The:** Mark Wahlberg leads a heist that's double-crossed by one of his crew. Charlize Theron plays a safe cracker and they plot revenge. Also stars Edward Norton, Mos Def and Donald Sutherland. PG-13. Sneak at 7:30 on 5/24. Cinemark.

**Kindergarten:** Endearing tale of young Russian street violinist during WWII, who meets a variety of interesting people throughout the USSR. Directed by poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, it stars Klaus Maria Brandauer. At 6:30 on 5/28 in 115 Pacific, UO campus. Free.

**Korean Film Fest: Chi-Hwa-Seon:** Directed by Im Kwon-Taek, this film took best director award at Cannes 2002. It's about a 19th century artist

who lived life fully. Korea's natural landscape before WWII is pictured. At noon on 5/24 at Bijou. **Nowhere to Hide,** acclaimed 2000 Korean film noir by director Lee Myung-Se, is about Korean homicide detectives. Stylish, with atmospheric settings, critics say. At noon on 5/25 at Bijou. **Laurel Canyon:** Frances McDormand plays an L.A. record producer who still smokes pot, drinks and is what *The NY Times* calls "a proud, post-hippie roustabout who is not about to be anybody's doormat." Her lifestyle doesn't go over big with her Harvard Medical School graduate son, played by Christian Bale. Written and directed by Lisa Cholodenko (*High Art*). R. Bijou.

**Princess Bride, The:** One of the truly memorable films of its genre, Rob Reiner's 1987 fairy-tale adaptation stars Cary Elwes, Mandy Patinkin, Robin Wright, Wallace Shawn, Peter Falk, Andre the Giant and Chris Sarandon. With cameos by Billy Crystal, Carol Kane and Peter Falk. Mark Knopfler's song took '87 Academy Award. Ironic humor and great dueling scenes make it a real crowd pleaser. PG. LateNite Bijou.

**Talk to Her:** Pedro Almodóvar's film about two men who take care of two comatose women — and the complicated inter-relationships that develop — exceeds expectations to become the most interesting and resonant film of the year. Very highest recommendations. 2002 Academy Award for Almodóvar's original screenplay. R. At 7:30 pm on 5/27 in 115 Pacific, UO campus. Free. **Online archives.**

**What a Girl Wants:** Teen Amanda Bynes is "trying to fit in, born to stand out." She wants a fairy tale relationship with her absent dad and is tired of living with her unconventional mom, played by Colin Firth and Kelly Preston. Oliver James plays her love interest. PG. Movies 12.

**Films open the Friday following date of EW publication unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com.**

**CONTINUING:** **Adaptation:** Director Spike Jonze and writer Charlie Kaufman blur boundaries between reality and fictional representation. Nicolas Cage plays Charlie Kaufman, stuck while writing a screenplay of Susan Orlean's book, *The Orchid Thief*. Meryl Streep gives a fabulous, comic turn as Orlean, and Chris Cooper's an avid orchid collector. 2002 Academy Award to Cooper. Very

highest recommendations. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Anger Management:** Adam Sandler plays a man who must undergo anger management. His shrink, played by Jack Nicholson, moves in with him. Also stars Marisa Tomei. PG-13. Cinemark.

**Bend It Like Beckham:** Soccer-crazy girls in London suburb drive their respective families crazy because they'd rather play soccer than think about marriage and shopping. Warm-hearted, generous film is likely to be a big hit. Get onboard early and enjoy!. Highly recommended. PG-13. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Cowboy Bebop:** Dubbed English version of animated tale of four Bebop bounty hunters on the trail of a terrorist in the Martian city of Alba City in 2071. R. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Daddy Day Care:** Eddie Murphy and Jeff Garlin lose their jobs and can't afford day care for their sons, so they open their own facility. Comedy directed by Steve Carr also stars Anjelica Huston, Steve Zahn and Regina King. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark. PG.

**Down With Love:** Peyton Reed reinvents the look and feel of a 1962-era Doris Day, Rock Hudson musical with Renee Zellweger and Ewan McGregor. Also stars David Hyde Pierce, Tony Randall and Sarah Paulson. Entertaining froth. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark. **See review this issue.**

**Holes:** Adventures digging holes at Camp Green Lake for Stanley, who comes from a strange family that's been cursed for generations.

Embarrassingly, Jon Voight, Sigourney Weaver and Tim Blake Nelson co-star. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

**Hours, The:** Complex, critically acclaimed film directed by Stephen Daldry stars Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore and Meryl Streep. Based on Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Michael Cunningham's novel. Inner lives, daily experiences of three strong women. Also stars Ed Harris, Stephen Dillane, Claire Danes, Miranda Richardson and John C. Reilly. Very highest recommendations. 2002 Academy Award to Kidman. PG 13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Hunted, The:** Tommy Lee Jones plays a retired special-ops trainer and Benicio Del Toro is his former student, now an ace assassin gone bonkers. Directed by William Friedkin. R. Movies 12.

**Identity:** Ten travelers caught in a rip-snorter of a storm seek refuge at a creepy motel in the desert, and sure enough they begin to die. Directed by James Mangold, stars John Cusack, Ray Liotta and lots of screaming women. R. Cinemark.

**Jungle Book 2:** Same song, second verse from Disney. Voices include John Goodman, Haley Joel Osment, Phil Collins. G. Movies 12.

**Kangaroo Jack:** Taking mob money to Australia, two New York doofuses loose it to a kangaroo. Stars Jerry O'Connell, Anthony Anderson, Christopher Walken and Dyan Cannon. David McNally directs. PG. Movies 12.

**Lizzie McGuire Movie, The:** Disney comedy about a girl on a class trip to Italy who is mistaken for an Italian pop star. Stars Hillary Duff, directed by Jim Fall. PG. Cinemark.

**Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers:** Directed and re-imagined by Peter Jackson, part two of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy continues. New characters, a surprise return and great battles. Director Peter Jackson's second masterpiece. Very highest recommendations. 2002 Academy Awards for sound editing, visual effects. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Matrix Reloaded:** Second chapter brings Neo (Keanu Reeve), Trinity (Laurence Fishburne) and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) closer to solving the enigma but also puts them in greater danger. Written and directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski, it also stars Hugo Weaving, Jada Pinkett Smith and Gloria Foster. R. Cinemark. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

**Mighty Wind, A:** Christopher Guest's (*Best in Show*) pseudo-documentary narrative about a folk music reunion show of folk is one of his craziest satirical offerings, critics say. Stars the usual suspects: Eugene Levy, Parker Posey, Bob Balaban, Harry Shearer, Michael McKean and Guest himself. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

**Old School:** From *Road Trip*, Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell and Vince Vaughn try to recapture the fun of their college years by starting their own off-campus frat house. R. Movies 12.

**Phone Booth:** Colin Farrell, Kiefer Sutherland, Forest Whitaker, Katie Holmes and Radha Mitchell star in Joel Schumacher's thriller. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Piglet's Big Movie:** Disney animated film features the whole Winnie-the-Pooh gang looking for Piglet, who has disappeared. Songs by Carly Simon. G. Movies 12.

**Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Works with Time:** Splendid documentary by Thomas Riedelshimer about famous Scottish sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. He makes site-specific art from found natural objects. Accessible to anyone who has ever been a child. A visual treat, it's the most beautiful film of the year. NR. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Shanghai Knights:** Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson are out to settle a score in Victorian London in this comedy directed by David Dobkin. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Tears of the Sun:** Bruce Willis is a Navy SEAL sent to rescue a US citizen who runs a mission, but she (Monica Bellucci) won't leave her charges. Directed by Antoine Fuqua. R. Movies 12.

**X-Men 2:** The next link in the evolutionary chain? Directed by Bryan Singer, stars Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman, Ian McKellen, Halle Berry, Famke Janssen, James Marsden and more, lots more. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458) Cinema World 8 (342-6536) Cinemark 17 (746-5202);c Movies 12 (741-1231)

## video clips

### NEW RELEASES ON VIDEO

Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday following date of EW publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com)

**Guy Thing, A:** Selma Blair, Julia Stiles and Jason Lee star in this film directed by Chris Koch. Lee's character has to iron out the truth to tell his fiancé (Blair), but doesn't seem to know himself. PG 13.

**Love Liza:** Todd Louiso directs Philip Seymour Hoffman and Kathy Bates in a somber tale. Hoffman's wife, Bates' daughter, has just committed suicide, and he can't snap out of his grief. Depressing. R.

**National Security:** Martin Lawrence and Steve Zahn star as LAPD wannabes who end up as security guards, yet still manage somehow to nab the bad guys. PG 13.

**Pianist, The:** Best Picture award at Cannes 2002, this critically acclaimed film is based on the life of Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Polish Jew. A composer and pianist, he survives Poland's six-year occupation by the Nazis.

Directed and produced by Roman Polanski, with Adrien Brody as Szpilman. Both won 2002 Academy Awards, as did Ronald Harwood for adapted screenplay. Very highest recommendations. R. **Online archives.**

**Recruit, The:** Al Pacino and Colm Ferrell star in this story about the inner workings of the CIA. Also with Bridget Moynahan, and directed by Roger Donaldson. PG 13.

**Talk to Her:** Pedro Almodóvar's film about two men who take care of two comatose women — and the complicated inter-relationships that develop — exceeds expectations to become the most interesting and resonant film of the year. Very highest recommendations. 2002 Academy Award for Almodóvar original screenplay. R. **Online archives.**

**Next week: About Schmidt, Animatrix, Bent, Bitter Moon, Black Hawk Down Deluxe Edition, Cry the Beloved Country, Die Another Day, Empire Records Remix, The Guru, Invincible, South Park, Unsung Heroes.**