

Please not another teen trip: 'Eurotrip' fits the format

Sean Hennen
Reviewer

You can see the studio pitch-meeting for "Eurotrip" as clear as day. A group of business execs are sitting around a table trying to decide how best to once again tap the vast demographic of American teenagers in a post-"American Pie" wasteland.

One of these sharp execs declares, "I've got it! 'Road Trip' did a decent amount of business four years ago. Let's take that premise, recycle it for the umpteenth time and set it in Europe! The little buggers will eat it up and we'll laugh all the way to the bank!" That is basically what DreamWorks Pictures has done with the release of "Eurotrip," another of these disposable comedies that achieves moments of genuine hilarity but ultimately too often lets the effort show. It's a stupid movie that's smart enough to hit all the right notes as far as the comedic set



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pieces go, and still pull just enough sentiment from its fresh-faced leads, passing for a film with a heart.

The central storyline of "Eurotrip" doesn't really meet the criteria of a real plot, but it tries so hard. Primary protagonist Scott (Scott Mechlowicz) is dumped at his high school graduation by his girlfriend Fiona (Kristin Kreuk, of the WB's "Smallville") and a night of heavy drinking ensues.

In the midst of his beer-induced stupor, Scott responds negatively to an e-mail from his longtime German pen-pal Mieke, who Scott thinks is not only male, but trying to hit on him. Informed the next morning by his younger brother that Mieke is a girl's name and that a misinterpreted photograph reveals her to be quite attractive, Scott decides to head to Berlin to track down this potential love interest.

Tagging along for the ride is best friend Cooper (Jacob Pitts) who is present at Scott's side merely to enjoy "all the crazy European sex." Along the way they meet up with their high school chums, fraternal twins Jenny and Jamie (Michelle Trachtenberg and Travis Wester, respectively) who join in the raucous mayhem.

The movie is entirely comprised of the comedic hijinks that arise along the way to get to Berlin as the quartet of travelers hops around the continent, hitting such famed hotspots as London, Paris, Amsterdam and Rome. Needless to say, their boisterous adventures provide ample opportunity for laughter-inducing situations.

With a movie like "Eurotrip," it's practically Hollywood dogma that some of the jokes will work, and others will fall flat on their face. Fortunately for the writing team of Alec Berg, David Mandel and Jeff Schaffer (who also directed), the jokes come at such a clipped pace

that the flops dissolve from memory so fast they barely register. A veritable smorgasbord of European stereotypes, the film tackles crazed British soccer fans, nude beaches, Dutch hash bars, Parisian street performers and in the movie's funniest scene, the infamous Amsterdam sex clubs.

It's all fun and games to an extent, and thankfully none of the mildly-xenophobic humor ever gets too mean, but there shouldn't be a moviegoer under 25 years of age who doesn't realize that these filmmakers are yet again clearly pan-handling us for the price of admis-



Photos courtesy of movies.com

Scott Mechlowicz leads a group of adventurous teens throughout the motherland in "Eurotrip."

sion with what amounts to reused theater fodder. See it to enjoy it, but just realize that you're being patronized.

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Audiences find there's something special about 'The Girl Next Door'

Blake Hinton
Reviewer

It sometimes is hard to remember that just 10 years ago studios made teen movies with substance. That's not to say that every teen film today is bad, but it seems that most either focus on bathroom humor or



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tired clichés that have been used hundreds of times before. Yet, the new film "The Girl Next Door" refuses to fall into this trap, creating a surprisingly witty and mature teen comedy.

It is easy to have low expectations for the film, as the plot does spell potential disaster if it was handled wrong. The film follows high school student Mathew Kidman, (Emile Hirsch) an overachiever, who, among

other things, is in the running for a competitive scholarship during his senior year. He gets a beautiful new neighbor named Danielle (Elisha Cuthbert). After a bit of humiliation on Mathew's part he starts going out with her, but things take a turn for the worse though when it turns out Danielle is actually an adult film star. Mathew's life becomes very complicated when her boyfriend/producer shows up.

The best thing is the surprisingly well-written script. Currently, this film is being compared to "Risky Business," a logical comparison. Both films are teen flicks that rise above their genre. Also, both films deftly mix drama and good physical comedy.

It's interesting that the preview of Girl Next Door doesn't reveal the surprisingly mature and dark nature this film takes, especially toward the end. Rarely have teen films done anything outside the box.

All the characters here are well-rounded. Even Mathew's two best friends that get involved later in the film are given a fully rounded

nature. It's hard to believe this comes from the same director who gave us a wreck like "The Animal."

Also, the acting is quite good. Hirsch, if there is any justice in the world, will become a big star. For his first big, starring role he carries himself quite well and has a knack for shifting between the more broad comedy to the serious parts. Cuthbert has already made herself very well-known on the show "24." Here she also distinguishes herself in her first major starring role, thankfully staying far away from her whiny character in "24."

The biggest asset to this film is without a doubt the relationship between Mathew and Danielle and Mathew and his friends. It is very rare to see in this kind of film relationships of so much substance. The movie is not Shakespeare, but it is far above average.

Of course, the movie is not perfect. Toward the end it takes some big leaps of logic, but this is all really irrelevant. The point is for the first time in years we have a smart and deft teen comedy that anyone

can enjoy. This is reason enough to celebrate and see the movie.

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Photo courtesy of movies.com

Elisha Cuthbert and Emile Hirsch arouse audience enthusiasm in the surprisingly charming "The Girl Next Door."

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