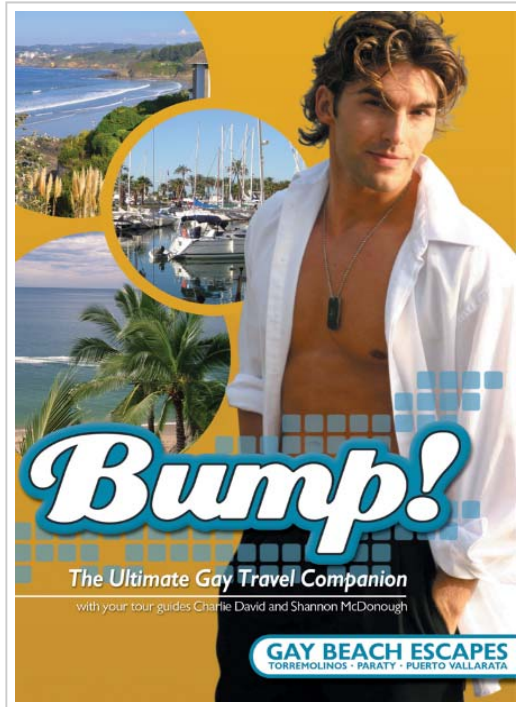


The Movie Rambler

Monday, June 8, 2009

DVD Review: BUMP! GAY BEACH ESCAPES



THE FLICK

In each of the three segments of the series *Bump!* presented on the *Gay Beach Escapes* DVD, hosts Charlie David and Shannon McDonough take us on a whirlwind tour of three different locations, ducking into bars, restaurants, shops, beaches and other hot spots, all with an eye toward the queer traveler. These aren't the stereotypically gay vacation spots, either. McDonough

explores Torremolinos, Spain, while David is the guide for both Paraty (pronounced par-a-chi), Brazil, and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The first common element between the episodes is the laid back, fun loving nature of everyone who happens to come onto the screen. McDonough has the more bubbly personality, not to mention a kinky side David doesn't get to show. In Torremolinos, she visits a gay shop and picks up a unique sex toy. David may be more boisterous, as evidenced by his almost childish behavior. Whether he's knocking back shots with tour guide Brian in Brazil or eating grasshoppers in Mexico, there's never a feeling he's being anything but genuine.

Another common element is the way in which they carry themselves. In a way, this ties in with their comfort in front of the camera and with who they are. At no point is being gay an issue for them or anyone else. Of course, it makes

Twitter Updates

 This is a screenshot of a Twitter feed. At the top, the profile name 'TMovieRambler' is shown with a green profile picture and '36 Followers'. The feed contains four tweets:

- Tweet 1: 'Depp's PUBLIC ENEMIES cl' with a link 'http://bit.ly/DjS9x' and '2 hours ago'.
- Tweet 2: 'Swank, Gere, McGregor, Ec... Madsen get lost with AMELIA' with a link 'http://bit.ly/17HDhm' and '3 hours ago'.
- Tweet 3: 'DAYBREAKERS gets a traile' with a link 'http://bit.ly/DcCyh' and '3 hours ago'.
- Tweet 4: 'Roberts, Owen star in DUPLI' with a link 'http://bit.ly/19tEov'.

 The Twitter logo is visible at the bottom of the feed.

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sense, since a gay travel program isn't going to promote a place which isn't at the very least gay-friendly, right? At one point in the first episode, it felt like every third word out of the hosts mouth was either "gay" or "lesbian"...so much so I almost thought about rewatching the brief interview and counting. *Almost*.

While it is assumed all three locations are safe for gay visitors, there's only one mention of the actual safety. It comes in Paraty in a mention about being able to walk hand-in-hand down the street without anyone batting an eye. Not every queer traveler will necessarily be comfortable with displaying their homosexuality in a strange place; however, since violence against gays and lesbians is commonplace in much of the world, David and McDonough need to take that into account and ask the question, no matter how obvious the answer may be.

Each episode runs roughly 23 minutes (to fit into a 30 minute time slot with commercials) and, as such, tends to fly through each location. This isn't a major problem, per se, though I wonder what a longer, more complex episode would look like. As is, tidbits of history are sprinkled through each installment alongside shopping, bars and shopping. Neither host really excels in the interview segments; both are stiff, with reaction shots giving the impression they're trying to figure out how to respond to the interview instead of following up on the answer. (This is painfully obvious when David talks to former Paraty mayor Jose Claudio Araujo, an openly gay man.)

In that same episode, a tour guide by the name of Brian is David's companion, giving the host someone to play off of and have fun with for the duration of the trip. Their goofiest moment-and one I'm 99% convinced in genuine-involves the duo downing shots. The host takes them like a sport, even though Brian barely flinches as they try each of the bottles lined up on the counter. No one can dispute traveling with a friend or a group is more fun than doing so all alone. It stands to reason and is subsequently borne out in Paraty *Bump!* is better when there are two different personalities on the screen at the same time.

THE LOOK

Both the Torremolinos and Paraty installments are windowboxed, meaning, on a 16:9 television, the picture is framed in black bars. (On a 4:3 display, the bars on the side would not be visible.) These 2007 destinations generally look good, with vibrant colors, relatively deep blacks and impressive detail recreation. Puerto Vallarta, however, is another story. From the very beginning, this episode has a desaturated look, resulting in a washed out picture. None of the places David visits pop in any sense of

(DVD)

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(DVD)

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(Movie)

2/01/09: [Brideshead](#)

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the word while the second half of the episode, taking place at night, has a major issue with providing reasonable black levels. Instead, the entire picture is bathed in an undetailed gray haze. It is also presented in the 1.33:1 aspect ratio.

THE SOUND

Basic English stereo (2.0) tracks are provided for all three episodes. They turn out to be solid (even the Puerto Vallarta installment), if unspectacular. Understanding dialogue is only a problem when a speaker has a heavy accent; these moments are few and far between. The track provides a feel for each location, faithfully recreating ambient sound. Only a sometimes obtrusive soundtrack interferes with the rolling waves or other natural noises. No subtitles are provided.

THE STUFF

Bump! Gay Beach Escapes contains three episodes of the series accessible either individually from the main menu or through the "Play All" option. A [series of trailers](#) for other Alluvial product are included: *First Out* (along with the second, third and international iterations), *Girls' View* (1 and 2), *Chris and John to the Rescue* (the original season, Provincetown and *Chris and John's Road Trip!*), *Laughing Matters...More!*, *Fake ID*, *The House of Venus Show* (Season 1 and Season 2) and *Cruel and Unusual*. A [text-based screen](#) promoting the Bump! DVD website is also included.

Posted by TMR at 5:53 PM 

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