

THE HEAD OF ITS CLASS.



When you're talking big, brawny, full-bodied, robust, great tasting ale, you're talking Old Scotia.

Bob and Doug, eh?

by Ken Burke

By now most people should have divided themselves into either the anti-Bob & Doug McKenzie camp or that of the happy hosers. It doesn't take an IQ of Bob McKenzie's to figure out who the movie "Strange Brew" was made for, but the pleasant surprise is how funny it is if you're of the hoser persuasion (like myself).

Strange Brew is a movie made for the people-watchers of the world. That people-watching is exactly what the characters of Bob & Doug McKenzie are all about. Their success on the brilliant TV show SCTV was based on people's love of listening in on humans so stereotypical, and so familiar you laugh as much at yourself as at the buffoon-of-the-moment.

The movie, like all their "Great White North" bits on TV, is really about nothing except for what Rick Moran's "Bob and Dave Thomas" are about -- that particular kind of Canuck that wanders through adulthood with a bad case of Junior High brain-lock. The obsessions in Bob & Doug with dressing the same, kung fu, hockey (ice and table, 'course), beer, donuts, and Junior High lingo strike a common chord with anyone who ever went through that stuff, knows the many, many Bob & Doug clones walking our streets, or (G'day) is a hoser themselves.

It doesn't take long into the movie to see any worries fans of the TV series had that the ability to stretch Bob & Doug out for ninety minutes aren't justified. SCTV was actually at its best when it went on extended trips with a set of characters like Guy Caballero of Johnny LaRue. On at least two shows before Moran and Thomas quit, Bob & Doug had almost the entire show time for themselves and they managed to survive the transition to the outside world, so maybe this movie shouldn't be too surprising after all.

There's also not much need to needlessly burden this review

with things like "plot" or "directional skills" because the appeal of the movie rests on how much you can relate to the Brothers McKenzie and their specific jokes about table hockey, arguing immature (not to mention moronic) brothers, and the senseless juggernaut that is Canadian popular culture. All the plot you need to know is that writers Moranis, Thomas, and Steven De Jarnatt somehow manage to borrow from Hamlet (!) and generally provide as much or more plot than most other Hollywood movies this summer. As for their artistic filmmaking skills, Moranis and Thomas needn't bother waiting for any plaster statuettes from any Academy for a while.

The duo especially needn't be proud of its unfair (and truly moronic) treatment of the mentally ill. By portraying the inmates of the fictitious Royal Canadian Institute for the Mentally Insane as gibbering mindless zombies Moranis and Thomas only perpetuate a destructive stereotype, instead of sticking with inoffensive satire. But this is the film only real lapse into bad, bad taste.

In the movie's assorted scenes, there's plenty of ideas funnier than anything Moranis and Thomas came up with for SCTV. For instance, the McKenzie Bros. nome-movie-within-the-movie, "Mutants of 2051 A.D.," looks like it used a budget of the better part of a UIC cheque, and is revenge on every bad, but earnest science fiction film ever made. Villanous Max Von Sydow (as the evil Brewmeister Smith, bent on world control) and his cronies are neatly dispatched at the end by a series of hockey penalties, ranging from elbowing to spearing (ouch). And best of all, the movie contains a fool-proof scheme to get your money back from any movie, courtesy of Doug. And what's more, you won't even feel like using it for Strange Brew. It's worth, oh, about 3 Keith's and an Old Scotian in my book.



Bob and Doug show how to get free cases of beer with the old "live-mouse-in-the-beer-bottle" trick.