

Gibson, Russell mix up a strong Tequila Sunrise

Tequila Sunrise ★★★★★
Famous Players Capitol Square

review by Teresa Pires

Instead of tequila, orange juice, and grenadine, *Tequila Sunrise* combines Mel Gibson, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Kurt Russell to produce an unpredictable, volatile mixture. Throw in a thrilling story, snappy dialogue and polished directing by Robert Towne and you've got one of the year's best movies.

Dale McJussic (Gibson), otherwise known as Mac, is an invincible drug dealer who wants out of the narcotics business after many lucrative years. His ex-wife and Lindroff, a small-time hood and friend, want him to stay in business for their own greedy reasons. However, Mac's best friend, Nick Frescia (Russell) wants him out for professional reasons — he happens to be the head of narcotics in the police force. In fact, Frescia's superiors have ordered him to nab Mac in the hopes that Mac will lead them to Carlos, a big-time Mexican drug smuggler, who has been Mac's friend since they shared a jail cell in Mexico.

Jo Ann Vallehari (Pfeiffer) fits into the story by being the knock-out owner of Vallehari's, Mac's favorite Italian restaurant. Mac's constant patronage of the restaurant brings Nick in to investigate, even though Mac is there not to do business but to be near Jo Ann. As one thing leads to another, Nick also falls in love with Jo Ann and she finds herself caught between the two men.

Both Gibson (hot! hot! hot!) and Russell give exceptional performances in their respective roles. Even though drug dealers aren't known for their warmth and sensi-

tivity, Gibson manages to gain all of the audience's sympathy. His sincere, wholesome charm makes you desperately want him to succeed, not only in getting Jo Ann, but also in leaving behind his shady past.

Russell is everything but wholesome, even though he is the one with the respectable profession. He is also a far cry from his roles in *The Thing* where he played a shaggy, out-doors type explorer and *Escape From New York*, an action/adventure flick. Even though this was his first attempt at playing a sophisticated, urbane character, Russell shows his great range as an actor. He is impressive as a slick fashionable cop with a biting sense of humour.

Raul Julia also deserves credit for his portrayal of Carlos, the Mexican drug dealer. His incongruous personality and "code" of behavior capture the audience's imagination. He is just as likely to be singing opera and playing ping pong with Mac, as he is to be trying to kill off whoever gets in his way.

Tequila Sunrise is full of surprising twists and developments; just when everything seems to be cleared up, something new happens. The audience is left in limbo right up until the final minutes (even when we know who gets the girl, there are problems with that, too). Yet, all these twists are believable except for the fact that Nick and Mac have remained best buddies since high-school. Realistically, cocaine dealers and police lieutenants don't have much in common to talk about over a beer.

Overall, though, *Tequila Sunrise* leaves you with a good feeling as you leave the theatre. And, if a movie is able to do that it is definitely worth seeing, especially at exam time.



Left to right: Mel Gibson, Kurt Russell and Michelle Pfeiffer have a winner on their hands with *Tequila Sunrise*, and it's not just because they're all so darn good looking.

1969 not much better than TV

1969 ★★
Famous Players Capitol Square

review by Dragos Ruiu

It is 1988 and you can see another movie about 1969.

1969 is about the sixties, and what living in that era was like. Scott (Kiefer Sutherland) and Ralph (Robert Downey Jr.) are good buddies who have just entered university. Scott is an idealistic sensitive, poet type, while Ralph is a fun loving happy go lucky guy. They have a good time protesting Vietnam, hanging around, scoping chicks, and generally being hippies.

The movie follows the exploits of these two as they deal with the issues of the sixties: love, war, the draft, parents, jail, police brutality, school, etc... It's all pretty much pretty standard retro-nostalgia. It has a few heart-warming moments, a few get angry at the establishment bits, and a saccharine sweet ending that will make you want to reach for the nearest popcorn container to retch.

It's not really a bad movie; it's just a way to pass 95 minutes. This doesn't come as a surprise when you consider that it was written and directed by Ernest Thompson, the mastermind behind the critically acclaimed fluff, *On Golden Pond*.

He follows the same formula: awww-cute characters, a thoroughly predictable plot, and a little bit of sanitized conflict to involve the audience a bit so they don't go to sleep. Yep, this is a movie you can take Gramps to.

Kiefer Sutherland plays a character he seems to be familiar with — the sensitive psycho who loves the romance of life. You saw the same character in *Young Guns*. His role would be enjoyable if it weren't surrounded by the sappy plot-line of this movie. Destined for teen heart-throbdom, he is actually quite a capable actor.

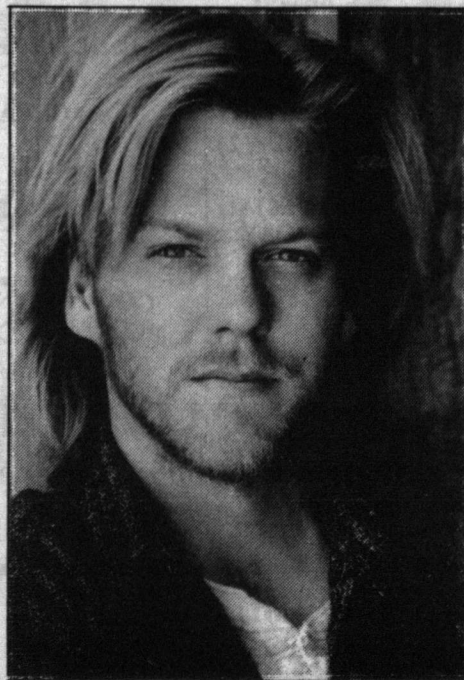
Robert Downey Jr. is also cast in a re-run. You saw his character in *Less Than Zero* — the goofy, fun, drug-using best buddy who refuses to listen to his pal's advice and has his life fall to pieces. But hey folks, don't despair... Kiefer is a good guy and you can be sure he will try to save his pal.

In retrospect, one thing you don't notice is the subtle Orwellian history rewriting. In these "Just say NO" days, a pro-drug movie just wouldn't cut it, so the drug use prevalent in the sixties was re-worked slightly. The main character prefers to stay straight, and Ralph overdoses the first time he tries LSD. Ralph also gets kicked out of school, with the implication being that if he had studied instead of smoking pot it would have been different.

The other conflict in the movie is within Scott's family. Scott's brother is a patriot who has enlisted to go to Vietnam. This gains the approval of Scott's dad (Bruce Dern) who is a veteran. Scott's anti-war feelings incur only wrath from his whole family, except for his mother (Marriette Hartley), who leans towards Scott's idealism. The growing rift in their family is played for all it's worth when Scott's brother is declared MIA.

Then Scott falls in love with Ralph's sister, Ralph gets drafted, and so on ad nauseum. The movie eventually degenerates into a period soap opera. The biggest problem is that given the strong subject matter and the excellent cast, it falls way short of what it could have been.

1969 tries too hard to make money instead of being an interesting movie. Only a few memorable scenes stand out in the prevalent mediocrity, and whoever wrote the ending should have his fingers amputated for the viewing safety of moviegoers everywhere. All in all, it's mildly better than TV.



Kiefer Sutherland: He's a star, but why does he keep getting cast in bad to mediocre movies?

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