

Quilt: How women love men

UNIVERSAL PICTURES -- In the spirit of *Bridges over Madison County*, Universal pictures has released an excellent film for romantics.

Winona Ryder, Ellen Burstyn, and Anne Bancroft star in *How to Make an American Quilt*, a touching and often hilarious story which explores a rich subject: *how women love men*.

The challenges involved in making a quilt are not so different from those faced by lovers -- with each love we hope to find their perfect union. Though some fabrics become dazzling when placed beside a contrasting pattern, others fight each other for harmony.

When the ideal pieces are stitched together, they may fade and fray with time, but still keep their innate beauty.

Berkeley graduate student Finn (Ryder) is spending the summer at the home of her grandmother, Hy (Elle Burstyn), and great aunt, Gladys Joe (Anne Bancroft).

Surrounded by orange groves in Grasse, California, her grandmother's house is a quiet haven where Finn intends to actually finish her latest thesis, this one on the rituals of women's handiwork in tribal cultures.

More important, Finn needs the summer to think over a marriage proposal from her boyfriend, Sam (Dermot Mulroney).

Her eyes are about to be opened by the women who've seen it all.



Hy and Gladys Joe's house is also the longtime home of the Grasse Quilting Bee, made up of a group of remarkable women (Maya Angelou, Kate Nelligan, Jean Simmons, Lois Smith and Alfre Woodard) who are Finn's extended family.

As they gather to make her wedding quilt, the women tell Finn the stories of the loves that shaped their lives.

Tales of true love, betrayal, joy and heartbreak come to life in scenes which span from 1860 to the present, each story as individual as the women themselves.

An Amblin Entertainment and Sanford/Pillsbury Production for release by Universal Pictures, *How to Make an American Quilt* is directed by Jocely Moorhouse.

While the women are the driving force of the story, director Moorhouse wanted equal attention paid to the male roles.

"I wanted the men to be loveable and as complex as the women, for the audience to understand why these men are loved by these women," she explains.

Screenwriter Jane Anderson created several male characters who interact romantically with the women's expanded roles.

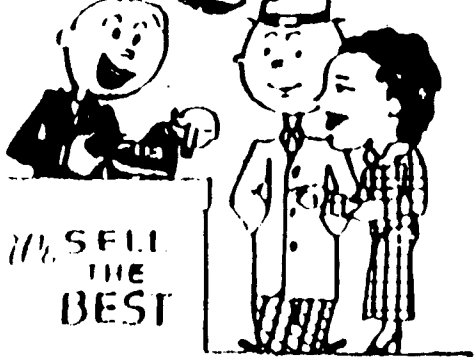
Among those are Winston (played by Mykelti Williamson, who brought the character of Bubba to life in *Forrest Gump*), the poet who shares a brief Parisian counter with Marianna, and Leon, the romantic young man who tempts Finn from her work and her engagement, played by newcomer Johnathon Schaech.

Moorhouse said of her cast, "It was very emotional for me, because I'd admired all these women for quite a long time. It was sort of like a wish list from the golden age of American cinema."

Quilt: (top) The highly spirited Gladys Joe (Bancroft) has a quite an interesting tale of her grandniece, Finn (Ryder). (bottom) Finn (Ryder) loves her boyfriend, Sam (Dermot Mulroney), but harbors doubts about marriage.

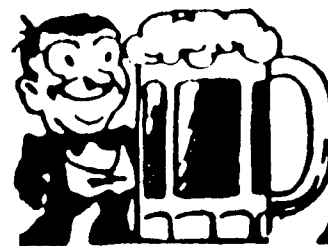


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