

Document Citation

Title	Amazing women by the sea
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1998 Oct 26
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Ihanat naiset rannalla (Amazing women by the sea), Olsson, Claes, 1998

AMAZING WOMEN BY THE SEA

(IHANAT NAISSET RANNALLA)

(COMEDY — FINNISH)

A Kinoproduction production, in association with FilmLance Intl. (Sweden) and Pandora Film (Germany). (International sales: Nordisk Film, Copenhagen.) Produced by Claes Olsson. Co-producers, Borje Hansson, Karl Baumgartner.

Directed by Claes Olsson. Screenplay, Tove Idstrom, based on the novel by Monika Fagerholm. Camera (color), Pertti Mutanen; editor, Lena Paersch; music, Yari; production designer, Minna Santakari; costume designers, Karin Sundvall, Elina Kolehmainen; sound (Dolby Digital), Tero Malmberg. **Reviewed at Haugesund Film Festival, Norway, Aug. 28, 1998. (Also in Montreal Film Festival — Cinema of Today.)** Running time: 104 MIN.

Bella	Marika Krook
Rosa	Asa Karlin
Gabbe	Nicke Lignell
Thomas	Onni Thulesius
Renee	Outi Paasivirta
Kajus	Micke Rejstrom

By GUNNAR REHLIN

Based on a bestselling novel that has been translated into nine languages, "Amazing Women by the Sea" is a highly stylized, often entertaining look at summer life in Finland's archipelago during the '60s. Combination of colorful locations and off-beat story and characters should help this local B.O. success swim offshore.

Set in Paradise, a favored vacation spot for Helsinki's monied class, the film depicts the events of three consecutive summers and is centered on two families, especially the wives. One is Rosa, who, with husband Kajus and son Thomas, is a regular in Paradise. The other is the volup-

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tuous Bella, who arrives one summer with her womanizing, U.S.-crazed husband, Gabbe, and their daughter, Renee. Despite their major differences, the two families start to socialize, and Rosa and Bella become friends.

They remain friends even after Rosa has started an affair with Gabbe. Events during the third summer lead to the two women disappearing on a trip to Copenhagen together.

Film is far from realistic, with all the characters a bit over-the-top and the setting, with its eternally sunny skies, very stylized. Evidently, director Claes Olsson intended some of the visuals to evoke commercials of the period. Thesps are all good, and technical credits are fine.

Pic had its Scandi debut (outside Finland) at the Haugesund festival, where it was greeted with both brickbats and bouquets. Some found it a piece of hillbilly-style trash, while others saw it as an efficient combination of satire, a story of two women who gradually find their own strengths and a depiction of a vanished lifestyle.

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