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TURKISH PASSION

(LA PASION TURCA)

(SPANISH)

A Columbia/TriStar Films de Espana release (in Spain) of a Lolafilms, Cartel production, in association with Sogepaq. (International sales: Iberoamericana Films, Madrid.) Produced by Andres Vicente Gomez.

Directed, written by Vicente Aranda, based on the novel by Antonio Gala. Camera (color, Panavision widescreen), Jose Luis Alcaine; editor, Teresa Font; music, Jose Nieto; art direction, Josep Rosell; costume design, Nereida Bonmati; sound (Dolby), Gilles Ortion; associate producers, Manuel Lombardero, Eduardo Campoy; assistant director, Jose Luis Escolar. Reviewed at Berlin Film Festival (market), Feb. 14, 1995. Running time: 113 MIN.

Desideria Ana Belen

Yamam Georges Corraface

Ramiro Ramon Madaula

With: Silvia Munt, Helio Pedregal, Francis Lorenzo, Blanca Apilanez, Rasim Oztekin, Guzin Ozipek, Laura Mana, Patrick Gillermin, Claude Brosset.

A widescreen feast of gorgeous photography, "exotic" locales and pulsating musical accompaniment, "Turkish Passion" is nonsense of the ripest sort. Toplining well-known Spanish thesp Ana Belen as a kind of Iberian Emmanuelle in Istanbul, this operatic grindfest may be too rich a banquet for traditional foreign-lingo outlets, but in Latino territories at least should carve out a tony slice of business to match its takings in Spain, where the pic has already become the fourth-highest-grossing local

Turn to next page

TURKISH PASSION

Continued from previous page

movie of all time since bowing last December. Vid biz should also be robust.

Vet director Vicente Aranda ("Lovers") originally penciled in his favorite actress, Victoria Abril, for the central role of Desideria, but Abril's Hollywood commitments forced a switch to Belen. Adapted from a popular novel by Antonio Gala, the \$4 million picture has already grabbed almost \$5 million at Spanish wickets, where it went out unusually wide for a local item.

VARIETY

VARIETY, 4/3-4/9/95, p. 143-144.

Desideria (Belen) is first seen getting sex tips from girlfriends on the eve of her marriage to Ramiro (Ramon Madaula). Some time later, they're still seemingly a model couple, but the marriage is blighted by the fact that Ramiro's machinery isn't in full working order.

The pair vacation with friends in Istanbul, where Desideria is intoxicated by the city's sensuality — and, more to the point, by hunky Turkish guide Yamam (Georges Corraface). Faster than you can say Turkish delight, the two are getting it on like bunny rabbits in spring at every available opportunity.

Back home, Desideria finds she's pregnant and, to maintain appearances, her hubby agrees to keep the baby. But when the sprig dies in infancy, a distraught Desideria flees to Istanbul.

Tracking down Yamam, Desideria shackles up with him and embarks on a hotsy affair that even begins to tire the tireless Turk. Following revelations about Yamam's background, an aborted pregnancy and another trip back to Spain, Desideria returns yet again to Istanbul, happy to become Yamam's sex slave, servicing rich clients to further his carpet business.

Pic should rightly have ended here but instead careens on for some 20 minutes more, with foolishness about Yamam skimming off drug consignments hidden in his carpets. When Desideria finds him *in flagrante* with a French couple, she devises some very pointed revenge.

The movie has a shameless, go-for-broke quality that it sustains for most of its length and, though the brain is never remotely engaged by the ridiculous script, the eyes are constantly kept busy with Jose Luis Alcaine's sumptuous lensing and full-throttle perfs by the leads. Jose Nieto's rhapsodic, Mideastern-flavored score is a big help in buoying the early stages.

Though too mature-looking for the part (which requires a younger, more girlish thesp), Belen brings a flashing-eyed, immaculate beauty to the part of Desideria — and a willingness to engage in strenuous sexual athletics — that perfectly fits the material, and she's well matched by Corraface in the physical department. Actual nudity is low-key. Other roles are competently handled. —Derek Elley