

“Two Thumbs Up!”

Richard Roeper and Aisha Tyler, Guest Critic, **Ebert&Roeper**

“Very Smart...”

It just really rings true...you're rooting for these characters...
This is smart and good and honest and true and
I hope people check it out.”

Richard Roeper, *Ebert & Roeper*

“Very Funny...”

Put ‘THE LAST KISS’ first on your list.”

Neil Rosen, *NY 1*

The Last Kiss

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“Million Dollar Baby”
and co-writer of “Crash”

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film reviews



Krista Allen in *Feast*

MONSTER MASH

Feast

review by Greg Lamberson

The goal of *Project Greenlight*, produced by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, was inspired: Run a contest for aspiring filmmakers, allow the winner to direct a feature film and document the production process in a weekly reality TV show. The films resulting from the first two seasons—*Stolen Summer* and *The Battle of Shaker Heights*—were neither commercial successes nor indie darlings. For their third venture, Damon and Affleck, joined by horror maestro Wes Craven, opted to produce a commercial monster movie, *Feast*.

Greenlight's third season proved to be its most entertaining, thanks to the unlikely selection of John Gulager as its featured director. Gulager didn't fit the mold of previous *Greenlight* winners: He's chubby and middle-aged, uncomfortable in social and political situations and has an odd propensity for casting his offbeat family members (including his dad, Clu Gulager, veteran of 150 movies and TV appearances) in his quirky projects.

In the end, the Dimension marketing execs were pleased with the finished product, which they believed they could sell. It looked like *Greenlight* had produced its first success story. Then Bob and Harvey Weinstein split from Miramax/Dimension, leaving the film—and Gulager's career—twisting in limbo. Finally, after two years, *Feast* is receiving token midnight screenings before its DVD release in just one month. (Oddly, it will only play twice locally, at 10pm Friday and Saturday night at the Amherst Theatre).

Why so much preamble for a low-budget horror flick? Because if you've watched

Project Greenlight, as I have, it's impossible to separate the final film from the hours of behind the scenes turmoil that preceded it; they're parts of the same monster. If anything, *Feast* should be included as a bonus feature on the show's season three boxed set, because it's ultimately less entertaining than the documentation of its creation.

Feast begins promisingly, with humorous character introductions that play against audience expectations, then quickly deteriorates into an unwatchable mess. The story is simple enough: Redneck types trapped in a bar battle slimy creatures intent on devouring them. But there are too many characters for us to develop sympathy with any of them, shot in too much darkness, in a jittery, hyperkinetic style; there's plenty of gore, you just never know what you're looking at. Half the time I couldn't see what was happening, and the other half I didn't care.

The fault lies not so much with our hero, Gulager, who demonstrates some flair here, but with his screenwriters, Marcus Dunstan and Patrick Melton (also *Greenlight* winners). The film's trailer informs us that our government created the fake-looking monsters, but the lazy screenplay offers no such explanation. And the seams of post production tampering are clearly visible: Dimension execs probably ordered the film's quieter moments excised to give it a faster pace, but the end result of all the chaos is boredom. The only reason to sit through this torturous exercise is to support Gulager, but you're better off waiting for the DVD, or watching the series instead. **av**

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MONDO video

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