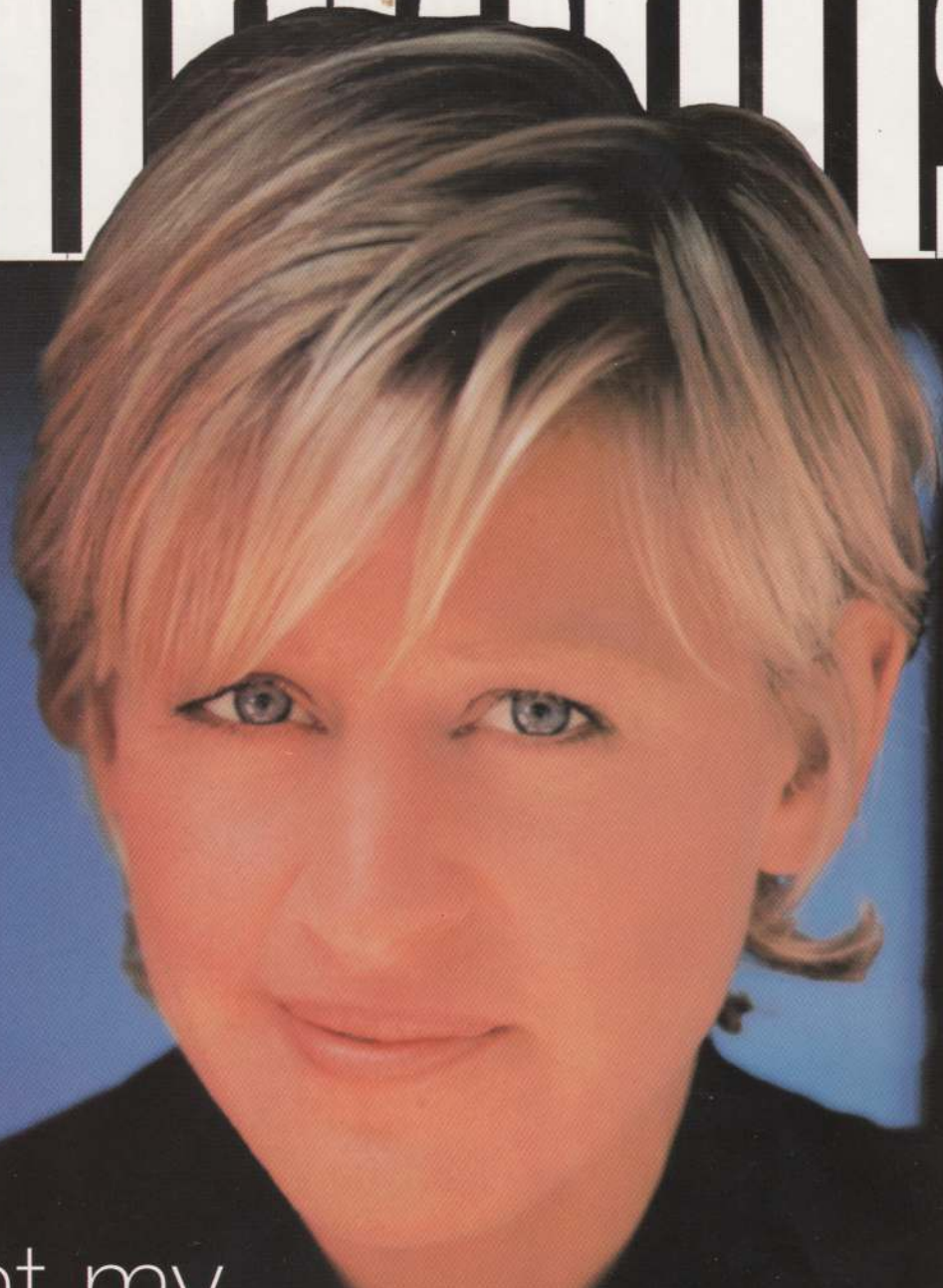


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Lesbian Culture, Politics, and Entertainment

September 2001

Girlfriends



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War-Torn Lovers

Even the Nazis can't stop these queer affairs.

by Candace Moore

Alexandra von Grote's *November Moon*

Moon is one of the most delicate films to tackle lesbian love amidst the degradations that engulfed Nazi-occupied Europe during WWII. With movies involving the Holocaust, "hard to watch" is an understatement, and this just-released German and French co-

November Moon
Alexandra von Grote
Wolfe Video, 2001



A Parisian and her Jewish lover outwit Nazis in *November Moon*.

effort (on the festival circuits since 1984) is no exception. A blonde Parisian masquerades as an SS supporter to deflect suspicion from her Jewish lover. The women's lovely courtship starkly contrasts the ensuing cruelty. As the girlfriend becomes unable to inhabit the most miniscule amount of public or private space without risking seizure, rape, or worse, the film takes on a claustrophobic urgency that is excruciatingly compelling. Grade: **A-**

Bent (Orion Home Video, 1996)

Director Sean Mathias based this film on Martin Sherman's stunning, sobering play, which revisits the myth of Sisyphus. Two queer prisoners in a Nazi work camp learn to love while transporting absurdly heavy rocks, in an homage to the imagination's ability to transcend torture. Berlin's fantastical cabaret scenes contrast minimalist Dachau. Near-perfect performances by Clive Owen and Lothaire Bluteau are supported by cameos from Rupert Graves, Mick Jagger, and Ian McKellen. A graphic, emotionally debilitating tear-jerker, *Bent* dramatizes the horrific experiences of the "pink triangles" seen recently in Friedman and Epstein's documentary *Paraglyph 175*. Grade: **A**

Entre Nous (MGM/UA Home Video, 1983)

Lena (arresting Isabelle Huppert), a Belgian Jew deported to a French holding camp in 1942, marries soldier Michel in order to escape an imminent convoy to Germany, only to find his surname more outwardly Semitic than her own. The two strangers travel frozen mountains on foot to Italy to keep alive. Cut to ten years later: unhappily, drably married Lena meets moist-lipped Madeleine (Miou-Miou) at their children's play, and the two beauties slowly seduce each other into abandoning their stultifyingly dull housewifery lives for Paris, decadence, and *haute couture*. Grade: **A-**

Countdown (Women Make Movies, 1991)

Film maverick Ulrike Ottinger offers a fluid, unrelenting tour through a reunited Germany rife with disjunction. Ottinger's camera is continuously on the move, investigating and reframing the variety that is contemporary, postwar, reunified Germany, creating larger metaphor from tiny cinematic meditations joined together. Street merchants hawk Coca-Cola outside a zoo, a gay pride event gets rained on, pubescents pound holes in graffitied slabs of the ex-Berlin Wall, Jewish grave sites shimmer, forests are wild with growth, waterways flow dreamily. Grade: **A-**

Candace Moore, co-editor of the small press *Runcible Spoon*, lives in L.A.

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inside girlfriends

One-Night Newsstand

Summer is on the wane as you read this, but as I write, the staff at *Girlfriends* is just recovering from Pride season. We danced to the B-52's at San Francisco's Civic Center, hobnobbed with director Pratibha Parmar at the opening night gala of the International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, and ogled Courtney Love in *Julie Johnson*. But the impression that really sticks with me after the dyke march and the parties is that you need your *Girlfriends*.

Every June, the queer community enjoys extensive coverage on the pages and screens of the straight media. This year, *The Village Voice* printed a very special gay issue, Salon.com increased its LGBT coverage, and our local *San Francisco* magazine put Alice Walker and Susie Bright on the cover.

Come July, all that media attention shuts down. We're rudely awakened from a pleasant dream of people caring about lesbian issues, journalists being paid to write about dykes, and—never mind that both Walker and Bright now live with men—gay women being represented in living color.

This dreary post-Pride reality made me love *Girlfriends* all the more. We focus on lesbian culture, politics, and entertainment 24/7/52. Readers are special to us, but you're not a "special issue"—a chic topic we commit to once a year, a one-night (news) stand.

On the brighter side, the small screen seems to be enjoying a repeating lesbian moment. Review our prime time visibility with Carson Hunter in "Dyke TV" (page 18). But don't miss Victoria Brownworth's take on the symptom of our invisibility: depression (page 30). Wash it all down with my personal fave, a deliciously tart essay about dyke bust-ups by *On Our Backs'* newly promoted associate editor, Diana Cage (page 48).

Heather Findlay, Editor in Chief

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Girlfriends

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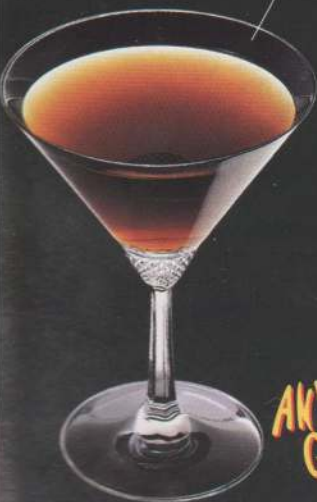
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