

HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE: DON'T GO HOME WITHOUT IT

the word on lesbian lifestyle

girlfriends

The
Holiday
Issue

SMOKIN' RESOLUTION

One Dyke **Quit:**
How You Can, Too

MIXED MARRIAGES

Two Women,
Two Spiritualities

A Desperate
Housewife Goes
'TRANSAMERICA'

32

PERFECT GIFTS

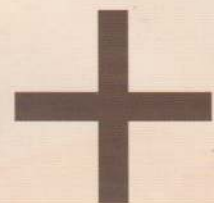
For Her,
the Family,
The Crew,
and You

NIGHT SHIFTS

Hot Jammies
To Spice
Up Your
**Slumber
Party**

THE WINE IN SPAIN

Tasting Through
Gay-Friendliest
Europe



Seattle's Re-bar • Le Tigre
TV's Dykes: Scoring the Networks
DIY Holidays • Dan Savage



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GIRL GUIDE

FILM AND DVD

'Rent' Strike

The film version of the stage hit has a lesbian plot and backstory.



Phil Bray

Adam Pascal and Rosario Dawson get close in *Rent*.

The film version of rock musical *Rent* is big budget and high profile—Chris Columbus directs and Robert DeNiro is a producer. The film reprises Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer-prize winning play, an ensemble piece that centers on a group of East Village bohemians, including a lesbian couple, struggling to pay bills, make art, find love, and stay healthy during the AIDS epidemic. Surprisingly the film stars most of the original stage actors, including Taye Diggs, Jesse Martin, and Idina Menzel. Joining the cast are *Sin City*'s hottie Rosario Dawson and *Wonderfall's* Tracie Thomas, who plays Maureen's (Menzel) new girlfriend Joanne.

It is well-known that Larson borrowed narrative structure from Puccini's *La Bohème*, but lesbian author Sarah Schulman once told *City Pages* that, "*La Bohème* was the straight plot and *People in Trouble* [Schulman's 1990 novel] was the gay plot, and he just wound them together." Schulman

dropped a lawsuit, but her 1998 book *Stagestruck: Theater, AIDS, and the Marketing of Gay America* includes a section entitled "Rent: The Dirt."

—Candace Moore

REVIEW

TRANSAMERICA

Dir. Duncan Tucker
(Weinstein, 103 minutes)

The road movie genre is well-worn to gravel, but director Duncan Tucker's delightfully off beat first feature makes it fresh. Tucker combines the parent-meets-long-lost kid-and-they-bond story line with the buddies-bond-over-kooky-road-adventures plot and makes smart twists on both. Playing off audience expectations these cliché plot conventions produce, Tucker renders an original, subtly crafted depiction of an emotionally complex relationship between a seventeen-year-old druggie male hustler, fresh out of jail, and a prim pre-op MTF transsexual, who discovers she may have fathered him.

Between phoning out telemarketing pleas from her pink LA apartment, understated diva Bree (*Desperate Housewives'* Felicity Huffman), gets a call from Toby (Kevin Zegers), a teen in a New York City slammer who is searching for the dad he never knew. But "Stanley" doesn't live there anymore, and Bree, only one week from her anxiously awaited gender reassignment surgery, wants to leave her born-gender and any progeny it may have spawned, behind her.

Toby is likely the product of an early college romance. Bree characterizes the fling to her therapist as seeming so lesbian, she didn't consider it might have been procreative too. But her therapist,

who is also her only visible friend, refuses to sign off on Bree's surgery before she ties up all loose ends in her past. Posing as a missionary whose goal is to bring the male prostitute closer to the lord, Bree bails out dope fiend Toby



c/o Frameline

Felicity Huffman (left) gets some friendly advice from Bianca Leigh in *Transamerica*, and offers him a cross-country ride to LA where he dreams of striking it rich as a porn star.

If this all seems a little far fetched, it plays that way too. But although *Transamerica* takes flights of fancy, it never makes a gimmick out of its trans main character. In fact the film offers one of the most accurate and loveable depictions of a transwoman in a Hollywood film to date. Bree exhibits the kind of hard-won self-knowledge that comes from struggling to simply be accepted for who she is. During the unlikely pair's adventure through America's heartland, she learns she has a lot of wisdom to share, and director Tucker takes full advantage of the situation to mine both characters for gems of insight. Producers might have offered this hard-to-get work to a transgender actor instead, but bio-woman Huffman delicately pulls off her portrayal of an individual on female hormones and in the last stages of gender transition. **A** —Candace Moore

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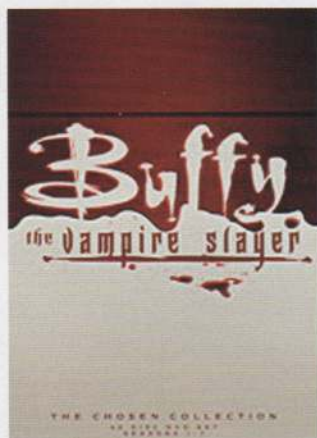


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GIRL GUIDE

FILM AND DVD

REVIEWS



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER COLLECTOR'S SET

(20th Century Fox, \$199.98)

True blue Buffy fans would gladly perform feats of sexual derring-do for their sweeties should they find this seven-series compendium gift-wrapped under the tree (hint, hint, honey). The fact that this primetime horror spoof was the first network TV show to portray a loving lesbian relationship lasting over the arc of three seasons is only one of myriad reasons to fully "geek out" over this brilliantly witty, elegantly scripted serial. The forty-disc set includes all 144 demon-dusting episodes, an hour-long documentary featuring cast and crew, and a letter signed by creator Joss Whedon's own hand! **A+**

—Candace Moore

ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW

(Sony Home Video, \$21.99)

Indy filmmaker Miranda July stars in her first feature as a head-in-the-clouds video artist whose life intersects that of a hapless shoe salesman (who sets his arm on fire), played by John Hawks (*Deadwood*). The pair's spacey, bandaged footwork towards "true love," and other interspersed subplots, highlights the perverse and sweetly revelatory potential of the everyday. July, an openly-bisexual riot



grrrl who spent the last decade encouraging women filmmakers, while touring with her quizzical, awe-inspiring experimental sound albums, performance pieces, and short films, racked up honors at Sundance and Cannes for her feature debut. **A**

—Candace Moore

MY SUMMER OF LOVE

(Universal Studios Home Video, \$21.99)



In the vein of *Lost and Delirious*, this character-driven British import renders the obsessive sexual love between two teenaged girls as gorgeous, palpable, and potentially devastating. The camera is infatuated with both freckled, small Mona (Natalie Press), whose rough edges betray her working class roots, and upper crust schoolgirl Tasmin (divine-eyed Emily Blunt) who quotes Nietzsche on a dime and manipulates all who fall under her whip-smart, sumptuous spell. In the idyllic Yorkshire countryside, the young lovers soak topless, their beautiful bodies dappled by sunlight. But sweet-lipped proclamations of "forever" are quickly tested. **A**

—Candace Moore

INSIDE GIRLFRIENDS



The Ladies Tasting Society and I wish you happy holidays.

My family has always been extremely supportive of my being gay; most of you have probably noticed that my mother even shares top billing with me on *Girlfriends'* masthead. So going home for the holidays, for me, has never been awkward. In fact, mom and the rest of my clan usually have me so booked up during Christmas and New Year's that last year my wife and I ruffled some feathers when we announced that we were escaping to Mexico for a week in late December—and no one else was invited.

Thankfully, my story is common to more and more lesbians. So part of *Girlfriends'* special holiday survival guide addresses how, in this age of increased lesbian visibility and acceptance, to be yourself (and take care of yourself) long after the coming-out dust has settled. Those of you who are dealing with misunderstanding and even rejection from your family, though, will still find the guide handy; plus, *Girlfriends'* breaks new ground by including advice and support in the guide for transgender people who are facing perhaps the most difficult coming-home of all.

Another story that will make your holidays easier this year is our hand-picked list of great gifts made by and for lesbians—and some designed for everybody that we thought y'all might have a special interest in. Enjoy, and season's greetings, **gf**

girlfriends the word on lesbian lifestyle

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