

'An American Pickle' provides consumers with a few sharp notes

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 14 August 2020 04:46



Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time:
90 minutes

This movie became available Aug. 6 for streaming on HBO Max.

If you ever wanted to know how to make homemade pickles, you might want to check out the latest comedy premiering on HBO Max. On second thought, you should probably avoid using the fermentation methods employed by the main character, as you may do yourself serious harm. Instead, just grab yourself a jar from a reputable manufacturer, sit back and simply enjoy *An American Pickle*

. It's far from faultless, but this is an enjoyable little flick that provides consumers with a few sharp notes.

‘An American Pickle’ provides consumers with a few sharp notes

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 14 August 2020 04:46

The opening introduces viewers to Herschel Greenbaum (Seth Rogen), a Jewish laborer in Eastern Europe. After meeting Sarah (Sarah Snook) and wooing her (despite their less-than-pleasant quality of life), the couple marry and emigrate to America. The protagonist lands a new and lucrative job killing rats with a mallet at a local pickle factory. Unfortunately, he falls into a large vat and is preserved for 100 years, eventually brought back to life in modern Brooklyn.

Lost and alone, he is taken in by his great-grandson and aspiring app creator, Ben (also Seth Rogen). The gruff and aggressive Herschel quickly butts heads with his descendant and the relationship soon sours. In fact, it turns ugly as the elder family patriarch becomes a successful street vendor hawking, well, very fresh pickles.

Early on, the movie takes a silly tone with a rapid-fire barrage of jokes. In fact, Herschel's life in the opening five minutes delivers some of the funniest gags in the picture. Shot in black and white, the environment looks amusingly oppressive as the worker endures absurdly harsh conditions, particularly while digging ditches. Later on, the character's confusion, anger and outmoded beliefs result in some amusingly blunt comments.

One of those comments appears in a modern vodka advertisement that reminds the character of his Cossack tormentors from a century ago. Additionally, plenty of the pickle-related gags earn laughs as Herschel decides to branch out and start an “organic” pickle business using bottles found in the trash and a makeshift brine.

As events progress and the two relatives come into more serious conflict, the movie begins throwing in too many added elements. When the older man separates himself from Ben, hires a staff, takes to the internet, becomes a media sensation and is then coaxed into making politically incorrect comments, this material all feels a bit rushed and forced into the story. While it's admirable to try to address so many issues over its running time, some of the situations are introduced and resolved too quickly. Not all of these later elements transition smoothly and later sections of the film aren't as effective.

But at least Rogen does a fine job of creating two distinct personalities onscreen and manages to interact with himself convincingly. The dramatic arc of the movie attempts to find a bridge between the two very different men. Both have suffered tragic losses involving family members

‘An American Pickle’ provides consumers with a few sharp notes

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 14 August 2020 04:46

and the conceit forces them to deal with their own failings. Ben is too meek for his own good, while Herschel is blunt and politically incorrect in the extreme, with some outdated ideas that ostracize him from the modern world.

While this material isn't handled in the most sensitive manner, at least the flick tries to delve a little deeper into the psyche of its protagonists.

Admittedly, some chunks of *An American Pickle* are overripe and taste a little unbalanced. Yet the lead performance is impressive and every so often there's a very funny gag that hits the mark. In the end, the overall flavor of the film is tasty and satisfying enough to recommend, and it should provide ample home entertainment for anyone desiring something fresh to enjoy.

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun