

'SUNSPASH' FROM PAGE 32
very senior police officers who were trying to close it down. In the interests of public order and safety, the police finally relented and allowed Half Pint to finish, so happy crowds poured out into the sun-rising streets of Montego Bay.
Me? I'm still coming down. Next year is the 10th anniversary of Sunsplash and it promises to be special. Start saving ...
Duncan Campbell

Film

HANNAH AND HER SISTERS

Director: Woody Allen
Woody Allen's latest film is very much a family portrait. Although there are superficial parallels with his earlier, Bergmanesque *Interiors* (1978), *Hannah and Her Sisters*

achieves a sense of resolution that is a far cry from the bleakness of the older film.

Hannah deals with the entangled lives of three sisters, complicated, one might add, by the male characters of the film, principally Michael Caine, who plays the husband of Mia Farrow and falls in love with her sister (Barbara Hershey). Although this is perhaps the main thread of the film, deeper down Allen gives us a glimpse of various aspects of contemporary dissatisfaction: at its broadest in the antics of Allen himself and at its most disturbing in the urban neurosis of the third sister (brilliantly played by Dianne Wiest).

One hesitates before describing this as Allen's masterpiece, but the director has never controlled the structure of a film so effortlessly, each chapter of his cinematic tale being introduced by its own wry title. It is also revealing that he has

now chosen to move away from the fantasy-derived worlds of his earlier films of the 80s and tackle more realistic subject material.

The ensemble playing is perfection — amazingly so considering the range of the players which, apart from Michael Caine, also include the Swedish actor Max von Sydow. Some of the characters might be a shade less believable than others (and Caine's e.e. cummings-quoting accountant is perhaps one of these), but Wiest's razor-edge portrait of Holly, together with Lloyd Nolan's and Maureen O'Sullivan's bitter-sweet portrait of the parents are straight from the heart.

DESERT HEARTS

Director: Donna Deitch

Desert Hearts is a low budget film (made for \$1.5 million and shot in 31 days) which tells the story of a 35-year-old English profes-

sor who spends six weeks in Reno in order to get a divorce and falls in love with the dashing young Patricia Charbonneau who works as a "change apron" at one of the casinos. It might well sound like the stuff that television films are made of, but there's one important difference: the professor is played by Helen Shaver.

Taken from Canadian writer Jane Rule's *Desert of the Heart*, this film is a delightfully evocative picture of America in the late 50s, with sharply observed playing from the two protagonists as well as a number of memorable minor characters: Audra Lindley (Mrs Salter in TV's *Three's Company*) plays Charbonneau's feisty stepmother and Gwen Welles (the much-abused Suleen Gay in Robert Altman's *Nashville*) plays a fellow "change apron" with bristling energy and a nicely-judged sense of the vulgar.

It's not a perfect film — some of the dialogue gets a little heavy at times and the continuity between scenes is not the best. To balance this, there are those wonderful characters and scenes crackling with wit — such as the one in which Shaver is trapped in the front seat of a '59 convertible between Charbonneau and her sassy girlfriend for an agonised drive into town.

One reviewer in the States commented that this film made her remember when lesbianism wasn't about politics, factions or meetings, but about falling in love. On one level, that sums up the magic of *Desert Hearts*. In the wider arena, its achievement, like Stephen Frear's *My Beautiful Laundrette*, is that it presents a gay world without apology and with its fair share of humour and, above all, humanity.

William Dart

Records

Metallica Master of Puppets (WEA)

One of the new breed of heavy bands to break through in the States, and this album shows a marked improvement on the previous two. Helpful factors are the polished production from Michael Wagener and new lead guitarist Kirk Hammett, but guitarist and vocalist James Hatfield remains the main force. 'Battery' is likely to give more than sausages a battering when played at a pleasantly undesirable volume, while 'Disposable Heroes' and 'Damage Inc.' show how tightly these speed metallers can perform. Recommended if your foundations can handle it.
GD

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