



the movies  
**Louise Snider**

# 'Atlantic City' glows with life

Leave it to a French film maker to be superb and subtle in catching the flavor of an American city and using it to reflect the lives of its inhabitants.

This is what director Louis Malle has done in "Atlantic City" (R), where he has meshed the lives of a few individuals while exploring the gap between the reality of their existence and the possibilities of their dreams. The city itself provides the metaphor.

The decaying Victorian hotels remain like artifacts from a past glamorous era. As tourists discovered other playgrounds, neglect set in. Elegance faded to genteel shabbiness and then seediness.

When the movie opens, a wrecking ball is demolishing one of the grand old structures. After New Jersey legalized gambling in the late '70s, the wrecking ball became a familiar sight, razing the old buildings to make room for new hotels and gambling casinos. Atlantic City was transformed from tatty to tawdry in swift strokes.

**BURT LANCASTER**, as Lou, belongs to the Old Atlantic City. He used to be somebody in those days, a friend of important mobsters, a cellmate of Buggy Siegel, he says.

Early in the movie we see him in his shabby apartment ironing a necktie. It's a remarkable scene because it tells us so much about him.

In other scenes we see him standing behind his window blinds to watch the young woman across the way (Susan Sarandon) bathe herself with a lemon rinse. He's snapped back to reality by the demands of the complaining, bedridden widow (Kate Reid) of a crook for whom he once worked.

He makes a few bucks by preparing her meals and looking after her apartment. He makes a few more by running numbers in a black ghetto. But that scene with the necktie tells us that this is a man with dignity and self respect, whatever his circumstances.

He is a braggart yet somehow he makes his youthful days on the fringe of the mob seem almost wholesome, a golden age compared with the impersonal, corporate-owned, neon and plastic casinos.

**SALLY (MS. SARANDON)** is the new generation in Atlantic City. She works in a casino oyster bar and is trying to "better" herself by learning to become a dealer. Her ambition is to work in Monte Carlo. Things seem to be going well for her until her deadbeat husband shows up with her sister who is pregnant by him.

The husband (Robert Joy), a grungy, obnoxious bum, gets involved in a cocaine deal and ends up dead. She is left with funeral expenses, no job (the casino fired her because of her criminal connections) and her simple-minded sister (Hollis McLaren) whose one talent seems to be Korean foot massage.

To the rescue is Lou. He becomes the beneficiary of her late husband's dope deal and uses the unexpected windfall to pay for the funeral and finance his own dreams. He tries to convince Sally to abandon her dream of Monte Carlo and go with him to Florida.

They are not right for each other, but they are not wrong for each other either. He befriends her when she needs someone, she restores his old bravado and confidence.

This is one of the best roles Ms. Sarandon has ever had, and Lancaster is brilliant as Lou. He slips into the character so naturally, develops him so smoothly, you almost don't notice what an exceptional performance it is.

The movie grows in the same way. "Atlantic City" is a wonderfully rich and vibrant film.

## what's at the movies

**EXCALIBUR (R)**. Sweeping adventure of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, with Nicol Williamson as the wizard, Merlin.

**HARDLY WORKING (PG)**. Slapstick comedy with Jerry Lewis as mid-die-aged, unemployed circus clown creating havoc in a variety of jobs.

**LA CAGE AUX FOLLES II (R)**. Albin and Renato get involved with spies in this sequel to "La Cage aux Folles." It's not as funny as the first, but it does offer some sharp commentary on sex roles and expectations.

**NIGHT HAWKS (R)**. Fast-action drama as a pair of special N.Y. cops (Sylvester Stallone and Billy Dee Williams) confront a vicious terrorist.

**NINE TO FIVE (PG)**. Comedy with Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton as three secretaries who scheme to get rid of their boss.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audience admitted.  
PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.  
R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.

## table talk

**DARLING LILLY'S** has a new look with new owners (Chris and Steve Mihalovich, Eva and Dan Spasovski) of the club at 29200 Orchard Lake Road, between 12 and 13 Mile roads, Farmington Hills.

A portrait of Lily Langtree by local artist Michael Zane hangs prominently above one of the restaurant's five fireplaces. Lily's biography is on the back of the menu, telling about the famous entertainer.

Cocktails are 69 cents for women on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Food choices include an appetizer of fresh vegetables with dip, entrees such as barbecued ribs, chicken, catfish of the day and a spinach salad.

Detroit personality Pat Flowers is featured at the keyboard Tuesdays-Saturdays.



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## U.S. and Canada start N.Y.-Toronto train run

Now you can incorporate a trip to the Big Apple while vacationing in Canada. VIA Rail Canada and Amtrak have joined hands to provide train service between Toronto and New York City.

Called the Maple Leaf, it represents the first cooperative venture of its kind between the two national passenger rail corporations and marks the return of a Toronto-New York City through service after an absence of over a decade.

Consisting of Amtrak's Amfleet equipment, the new train will be operated and staffed by VIA personnel and will run over Canada's Amtrak tracks as far as Niagara Falls, Ontario. There crews will be changed, and responsibility for the train will transfer to Amtrak as the Maple Leaf crosses the border bound for New York City.

Departing Toronto daily at 9:05 a.m., the Maple Leaf will service Oakville, Burlington West, Hamilton, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, Ontario before crossing the border. Stateside, the train will service Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany and several other points before arriving in New York City at 8:05 p.m.

A one-way fare from Toronto to New York City will cost \$74 Canadian, with a 30-day round trip excursion fare available for \$105 Canadian. The regular one-way fare to Buffalo from Toronto will be \$12.50 Canadian. A circle fare is also available for travel between Toronto, New York, Montreal and back to Toronto (via Ottawa if so desired) for \$118 Canadian.

The Maple Leaf started service April 26.

For further details on this service, contact your travel agent.

## Artrain in Detroit

The Michigan Artrain is celebrating its 10th anniversary with a three-day visit, through May 10 at the SEMTA depot, just east of Renaissance Center, Detroit.

The show will view "Traditions: The Region/The World." It includes selected works of William DeKooning, Edward Hopper, Amedeo Modigliani and other 20th century artists. Museums which have loaned works to this collection include Detroit Institute of Art, Indianapolis Museum of Art and Cranbrook Institute of Science.

Detroit artist Robert Sestok was commissioned by Artrain to produce a work commemorating the 10th anniversary of the traveling museum. "Kilic's Klack," a multi-media collage will be produced as a poster in signed and unsigned editions. It will be available on the train.

## Crafts at ice arena

Arts & Crafts Expo '81, to be held at Birmingham Ice Arena, May 15-17, will feature some well-known and unusual craftsmen.

One of these is Alfred Ponte of Avon, Pontiac, a woodcarver who specializes in decorative decoys and bird carvings, has earned many awards for his work. But he is best known as the person who carved an eagle for the president of the United States to commemorate the release of the hostages from Iran. He spends between 40 and 100 hours on each bird he carves. He is a member of Metro Woodcarvers.

John Metry of Grosse Pointe will exhibit and sell scrimshaw and

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