

OFFICIAL SELECTION:
Festival du Film de Paris
AFI Film Festival
Austin Film Festival
Sidewalk Moving Picture Film Festival
Cleveland International Film Festival
Sonoma Valley Film Festival



"Terrific performances infuse this well-written comic drama with a realistic ease."

—Sheri Linden, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"The great Anthony LaPaglia is never less than 100 percent convincing."

—David Chute, LA WEEKLY

"Captivating."

—Phillip Jordan, BIRMINGHAM WEEKLY

"Absolutely Authentic."

—Robert Draper, GQ and other publications



Anthony LaPaglia

Eric Stoltz

Caroleen Feeney

and Robert Vaughn

"Mike Bencivenga's film has the rich characterization and observant sensibility of classic literature."

David Denby, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

"By an act of alchemy, director Mike Bencivenga has turned a low budget indie into a golden experience."

Bobby Cramer, FILMS IN REVIEW

For more reviews visit www.HappyHourTheMovie.com

Happy Hour

FILMS IN REVIEW

Happy Hour

Reviewed by Bobby Cramer

Money isn't everything. By an act of alchemy, director Mike Bencivenga has turned a low-budget indie into a golden experience. HAPPY HOUR is one of the most extraordinary collection of talent ever gathered together onscreen. The sensitive, luminous performances by LaPaglia and Stoltz, both familiar yeoman character actors, should raise them to the next level of renown. Both have never been better. But the big "find" here is the little-known Feeney, around for eons in mostly B films. With barely any change in wardrobe and devoid of makeup she comes across as a beautiful woman and authentically beautiful person.

Finally, to helmer Bencivenga goes the crown for this jewel of a film (only his second feature). His tight, always-in-control direction and intense dialogue between three people who really matter to each other, makes you feel you're eavesdropping.

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Happy Hour

Reviewed by Sheri Linden

Terrific performances by Anthony LaPaglia, Eric Stoltz and Caroleen Feeney infuse this well-written comic drama with a realistic ease. Director Mike Bencivenga and his co-scripiter, Richard Levine, have crafted a Manhattan-set tale that strikes a fine balance between sardonic banter and poignancy. Centered on the last days of an alcoholic, "Happy Hour" deftly avoids the grimness and maudlin sentimentality one might expect.

LaPaglia's hard-boiled voice-over notwithstanding, the real focus of "Happy Hour" is Levine, and Stoltz portrays him with an appropriate ambiguity. An aspiring writer who hides himself behind a low-stress numbers-crunching job, he's effete and urbane, the consummate fifth wheel to Tulley and Natalie's relationship and possibly in love with his friend. Stoltz and Feeney convey the fallout and the rewards for people who attach themselves to alcoholics, while LaPaglia's Tulley is charming, awful and utterly believable.



(Director Mike Bencivenga on location with Anthony LaPaglia)

NEW YORK MAGAZINE **HAPPY HOUR**

Reviewed by Logan Hill

Anthony LaPaglia's affecting turn as an alcoholic copywriter falling for a schoolteacher anchors this understated, intriguingly pitched urban tale about dashed promises among aspiring literary types in New York. Mike Bencivenga's film has the rich characterization and observant sensibility of classic literature; as such, it's never cloying, despite a setup rife with opportunities to pander.

FILM THREAT **HAPPY HOUR**

Reviewed by Merle Bertrand

Director Mike Bencivenga takes what could so easily have been a trite, cliché-riddled melodrama and instead, somehow turns it into...well, a wry and moving melodrama. This is due in no small part to the substantial, if necessarily understated heft given to the roles of Tulley and Levine by LaPaglia and Stoltz, respectively.



(Eric Stoltz on location with Director Mike Bencivenga)

TV GUIDE ONLINE

HAPPY HOUR

Reviewed by Maitland McDonagh

Director-co writer Mike Bencivenga and Richard Levine's sharply written, flawlessly acted feature evokes the giddy highs and stygian lows of an alcoholic writer who's used up his second chances.

Books and movies are full of charming drunks who bear little resemblance to real-life boozers; the genius of LaPaglia's performance is that his perfectly calibrated Tulley embodies the best and the worst of world-class drinkers.

Stoltz and Feeney match LaPaglia scene for scene, and Bencivenga elicits strong supporting performances from Sandrine Holt as Tulley's boss, writer Malachy McCourt as his mentor and Robert Vaughn as his remote, disapproving father, the successful writer whose long, cold shadow slowly asphyxiated Tulley's promising literary career.

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New York Post, Sunday, May 20, 2001 nypost.com

Scribes recreate bar 'scene'

IT WAS Hollywood's reparations to Brooklyn for stealing the Dodgers to La-La Land.

We were cast as "Crony One" and "Crony Two" in a scene of art imitating life.

Snuggled in the corner of the literary shrine known as The Algonquin Hotel, Walter O'Malley, who ripped the heart out of Brooklyn, at long last, got it between the ears.

And all the world will see and hear it when the movie "Happy Hour" arrives at your cineplex right around World Series time.

Our supporting actors were Robert Vaughn, who has been in more than 100 movies, and actor Anthony LaPaglia, who was born in Australia. Poor guys, they didn't have a chance against scene-stealing Method actors like us.

We played ourselves. LaPaglia plays a drunk — that's a switch.

The devastating scene started with Newfield whispering into director Mike Bencivenga's ear.

"I can't remember lines," Newfield claimed.

"You gotta let us recreate a true scene that happened in 1983 at the Lion's Head bar."

The event, re-created by Jack and Pete Hamill of the Daily News and every other paper, actually happened in real life when



they were trying to out-Brooklyn one another.

The contest? On bar napkins both would write their list of the 10 worst humans of the 20th century.

Without knowing what the other was writing they both listed in order Hitler, Stalin ... and Walter O'Malley.

Jack and Pete were so outraged at O'Malley's treason to their native borough, they used mass murderers Hitler and Stalin as mere props.

Director Bencivenga, who worked faster as the sun got hotter, said: "You guys take no prisoners." Our superstardom and scene stealing were aided and abetted by ace Channel 5 reporter Bob O'Brien, also playing his tabloid self.

LaPaglia showed his famous Australian capacity for liquid as, take after take, he had to swig from a bottle to act drunk. Is that iced tea, he was asked.

"It better be," said LaPaglia. When Pete didn't like his line, he improvised, because he was playing himself.

The scene at the Algonquin was supposed to represent a modern "tabloid" version of the highbrow elite writers of the 20th century. People such as Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Harpo Marx and Ring Lardner drank and exchanged one-liners to cope with writer's block and missed deadlines — nothing like us of course.

"Of course we're more Charlie Parker than Dorothy Parker," said Newfield. In one scene, Vaughn, playing the rich father to the alcoholic son, explains, as he lifts a cup of tea to his lips, why his son isn't present: "Unfortunately, tea is not the beverage of his choice."

Nor is it Dunleavy's.

It will be "Happy Hour" in Brooklyn when O'Malley takes his rightful place with the monsters of the last century.

Between takes, Hamill recalled that his kid brother, Joey, until he was 15 thought O'Malley's first name was Son of a Bitch.

Because that's how Papa Hamill always referred to the man who betrayed Brooklyn.



OK, ROOKIE ... Movie superstars Steve Dunleavy (left) and Jack Newfield (center) talk shop with acting novice Robert Vaughn outside the Algonquin yesterday.
Dan Cronin



Behind the scenes shooting "Happy Hour" at The Algonquin with Steve Dunleavy, Robert Vaughn, Pete Hamill and Jack Newfield. With Mike and co-writer Richard Levine.

PHOTOS FROM THE SET OF "HAPPY HOUR"



