



Roger Ebert.com

Bagdad Cafe

Roger Ebert September 09, 1988



Jack Palance in "Bagdad Cafe"

The heavysset German lady, her body and soul tightly corseted, her hair sprayed into rocklike permanence, is having a fight with her husband, right there in the Mojave Desert. They are in the middle of some kind of miserable vacation, touring America as a version of hell.

She can take no more. She grabs her suitcase and stalks away from their Mercedes, he drives away into the red, dusty sky, and she walks to a miserable truck stop and asks for a room.

An opening like that makes you stop and think, doesn't it, about how cut-and-dried most Hollywood movies are. There would seem to be no place in today's entertainment industry for movies about fat German ladies and homesick truck stops, and yet "Bagdad Cafe" sets us free from the production line of Hollywood's brain-damaged "high concepts" and walks its own strange and lovely path. There is poetic justice in the fact that this movie, shot in English in America by a German, is one of the biggest box office successes in recent European history.

The German woman is named Jasmin (Marianne Sagebrecht), and she is appalled by the conditions she finds at the Bagdad Cafe. It is simply not being run along clean and efficient German lines.

The proprietor is a free-thinking black woman named Brenda (CCH Pounder - yes, CCH Pounder), who shares the premises with her teenage children, a baby, a bewildered Italian cook, a tattoo artist and a shipwrecked former Hollywood set painter who is played by Jack Palance as if he had definitely painted his last set.

Jasmin sets to work. She gets a mop and a pail and begins to clean her room, while the motel regulars look on in amazement. Back and forth she goes, like some kind of natural force that has been set into implacable motion against dirt. Gradually her sphere extends to other rooms in the motel, and to the public areas, and she gives Brenda little lectures about cleanliness and the importance of maintaining high standards for the public.

Day by day, little by little, however, Jasmin herself is changed by this laid-back desert environment. Her too-tight hausfrau dresses give way to a blouse that billows outside her slacks. A stray wisp of hair escapes from the glistening spray, and then finally her hair comes tumbling down in windswept freedom. And she reveals that she can do magic tricks.

Yes, magic tricks. After she whips the cook into shape and the truck stop's restaurant begins to do some business, she starts entertaining some of the customers with closeup illusions, which eventually grow in scale until the Bagdad Cafe is presenting its own cabaret night after night, with all the regulars pressed into the act.

All of this sounds rather too nice, I suppose, and so I should add that Percy Adlon, the director, maintains a certain bleak undercurrent of despair, of crying babies and unpaid bills and young people who have come to the ends of their ropes.

He is saying something in this movie about Europe and America, about the old and the new, about the edge of the desert as the edge, about the American Dream. I am not sure exactly what it is, but that is comforting; if a director could assemble these strange characters and then know for sure what they were doing in the same movie together, he would be too confident to find the humor in their situation. The charm of "Bagdad Cafe" is that every character and every moment is unanticipated, obscurely motivated, of uncertain meaning and vibrating with life.

Indie

Drama

Comedy



[Roger Ebert](#)

Roger Ebert was the film critic of the Chicago Sun-Times from 1967 until his death in 2013. In 1975, he won the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished criticism.

MOVIE REVIEW : 'Bagdad Cafe' Serves Endearing and Quirky Version of America

By KEVIN THOMAS

MAY 4, 1988 12 AM

TIMES STAFF WRITER

"Bagdad Cafe" (AMC Century 14 and the Beverly Center Cineplex), an adorable comic fable set in a ramshackle motel-restaurant on the edge of the Mojave Desert, is West German director Percy Adlon's first English-language film. It is a triumphant teaming of Marianne Sagebrecht, the irresistible Rubens-esque star of Adlon's "Sugarbaby," and the formidable black actress CCH Pounder.

This sparkling little gem is not just a hilarious and touching account of the friendship that develops between two women of jarringly different cultures. It also offers a renewed, endearingly quirky vision of America as the land of opportunity, not in the economic sense, but as a place with plenty of room for self-discovery and individuality. Adlon celebrates the possibilities of a uniquely American sense of community, of harmony between disparate peoples, with an unabashed zest and affection that recalls vintage Frank Capra optimism, filtered through the sophisticated European detachment of a Billy Wilder.

Progressing from bleak reality to Utopian fantasy, "Bagdad Cafe," which offers the flip side of "Paris, Texas," is an inspired charmer of the first order abounding in images that recall the quaintly tinted post cards that preserve the history of roadside America. (Bernd Heintz is the film's first-rate cinematographer.)

To the accompaniment of a jaunty polka on the sound track, a middle-aged German couple (Sagebrecht, Hans Stadlbauer), dressed in heavy-looking Bavarian suits, have a spat in the Mojave, and the wife, Jasmin, strikes out on her own. She trudges down the highway, pulling along a large suitcase on wheels. Brenda (Pounder), the overworked proprietress of the Bagdad Cafe complex, has just told her lazy husband (G. Smokey Campbell) to get lost, when Jasmin comes into view. She's so unlikely a sight that Brenda's instant suspiciousness ignites into near-paranoia. Not helping communication is the fact that Jasmin is so stunned by the bold step that she has taken, so in need of sorting herself out, that she's not ready to explain herself to anyone.

"Bagdad Cafe," which Adlon wrote with his wife, Eleonore, and Christopher Doherty, is a miracle of timing and control for all its aura of zany, off-the-cuff spontaneity. It is the work of a director who has such a clear idea of what he wants and where he's going that he can take his time to build up every joke for the maximum payoff.

Yet there's nothing slow or leisurely about the film: It involves us in its humor the way Hitchcock involved us in his suspense; we can feel that something is always in the works.

With Jasmin and Brenda there is, of course, more than laughs at stake. As skinny, dark and sharply angular as Jasmin is pale, rounded and plump, Brenda is a smart, quick woman with a perpetual hair-trigger temper, the reward of exhaustion. Pride combined with anger blind her to the purity of Jasmin's motives, her need to be helpful and to become part of Brenda's extended family.

What a family it is. Her son (Darron Flagg) is a classical pianist caught up entirely in his music (although he found time to father a baby, who's now another responsibility for his mother). All her pretty teen-age daughter (Monica Calhoun) has on her mind is her headset (and, naturally, boys). George Aquilar is Brenda's native American cook, who has strung up a hammock behind the counter. Her permanent residents are a sexy, silent tattoo artist (Christine Kaufmann, whom Adlon featured in his gentle Munich period piece, "The Swing") and a retired Hollywood set painter-turned-primitive artist (Jack Palance), a weathered macho guy who gets away with an exotic Navajo look, complete to headband.

Sagebrecht, Pounder and Palance are a constant revelation and delight. Talk about knowing how to hold a pause: In this ability Pounder is right up there with Meryl Streep as she takes us through Brenda's rage, and an aftermath of numbed calm, to the dazzling smile and uninhibited laughter of a woman who has rediscovered her long-misplaced sense of humor. Nobody has ever directed Palance the way Adlon has, making him walk a tightrope as he constantly balances the painter's vast amusement at Jasmin and his growing affection for her. No question about it: Palance, who never goes over the top, emerges as a terrific comedian.

Then there's Sagebrecht, this amazing actress who, as in "Sugarbaby," gradually releases the free and alluring spirit lurking inside a massive body. Sagebrecht's women proceed with a majestic, impenetrably calm determination, cherishing their secrets with a childlike glee. Her Jasmin's greatest moment occurs after she has mastered a parlor trick and exclaims "Magic!" with a joy that is truly boundless. Magic--that's what "Bagdad Cafe" is itself. (Its PG rating is for a bared bosom.)

'BAGDAD CAFE'

An Island Pictures release of a pelemele Film GmbH Production in cooperation with Pro-Ject Filmproduktion and BR/HR. Producers Percy and Eleonore Adlon. Director Percy Adlon. Screenplay Percy and Eleonore Adlon; screenplay co-writer Christopher Doherty; based on a story by Percy Adlon. Camera Bernd Heinl. Music Bob Telson. Art director Bernt Amadeus Capra. Costumes Elizabeth Warner, Regine Baetz. Film editor Norbert Herzner. With Marianne Sagebrecht, CCH Pounder, Jack Palance.

Running time: 1 hour, 31 minutes.

MPAA-rated: PG (parental guidance suggested).

IMDB User Review

Mesmerizing Cafe, Mesmerizing Movie

9 April 2003 | by [calm](#)

When this film first started, my first thoughts were to turn to something else because Bagdad Cafe was not what I thought it would be. The movie guide said it was about a large woman who brings change to another woman's business.

For some reason, I stuck with the movie and was pleasantly surprised. I found myself laughing, crying, cheering, standing, sitting, jumping and even talking to myself. All of this equates to happiness, I felt happy by the time the movie ended and of course, I didn't want Bagdad Cafe to end.

An unlikely German woman named Jasmin (played by Marianne Sägebrecht) appears at this cafe/motel out of no where. She has a suitcase of men's clothes and no car. Her appearance raises the eyebrows of the owner, whose husband just left her, as well as some of the permanent residents of the Cafe. Jack Palance, for one, is a painter who finds Jasmin mesmerizing and wants desperately to paint her. The owner (Brenda) has a son who plays classic piano that no one cares to hear until this woman, who later performs magic, comes along.

By the end of the movie, things are jumping, attitudes have disappeared, and the camaraderie among the cafe staff is unbelievable. This is truly a feel good movie that picks up long after it's slow beginning. It took me to a place, in my heart, that was filled with emotion, song and dance. Bob Telson won an Oscar for best song (Calling You) for this movie in 1989. The song was also mesmerizing and would win again in 2003 if it were up for an award. The owner, played by CCH Pounder, played the role of a lifetime. She should have gotten an award for her performance as well. There's a lot to be learned at the Bagdad Cafe.

begins a hilarious and touching account of these two women of different cultures, joined together in the middle of desolation in an oasis of friendship.

Also featuring the Academy Award® winner Jack Palance [‘City Slicker’ and ‘Shane’]. BAGDAD CAFÉ is a charming and eccentric celebration of the possibilities of a uniquely harmonious sense of community. Loosely based on Carson McCullers' novella “The Ballad of the Sad Café” [1951].

FILM FACT No1: 1988 23rd Guldbagge Awards: Win: Best Foreign Language Film. 1988 Bavarian Film Award: Win: Best Screenplay for Eleonore Adlon and Percy Adlon. 1988 Win: Ernst Lubitsch Award for Percy Adlon. 1989 Academy Awards®: Nominated: Best Music for an Original Song for Bob Telson for the song "Calling You." 1989 Win: Amanda Best Foreign Feature Film for Percy Adlon. 1989 Win: Artios Best Casting for Feature Film, Comedy for Al Onorato and Jerold Franks. 1989 Win: César Best Foreign Film for Percy Adlon.

FILM FACT No2: The actual location setting is Bagdad in California and is a former town on the U.S.A. Route 66. After being bypassed by Interstate 40 in 1973, it was abandoned and eventually raised. While the town had an actual "Bagdad Café," the film was shot at the then Sidewinder Café in Newberry Springs, California, 50 miles west of the site of Bagdad. The café has become something of a tourist destination and to capitalize on the film's success it changed its name to the Bagdad Café. A small notice board on the café wall features snapshots of the film's cast and crew.

Cast: Marianne Sägebrect, Hans Stadlbauer, CCH Pounder, Jack Palance, Christine Kaufmann, Monica Calhoun, Darron Flagg, George Aguilar, G. Smokey Campbell, Alan S. Craig,

Apesanahkwat (Sheriff Arnie), Baby Ashley (uncredited),
Ronald Lee Jarvis (Trucker Ron), Mark Daneri (Trucker Mark),
Ray Young (Trucker Ray) and Gary Lee Davis (Trucker Gary)

Director: Percy Adlon

Producers: Dietrich von Watzdorf, Eleonore Adlon and Percy Adlon

Screenplay: Christopher Doherty (co-writer), Eleonore Adlon (screenplay) and Percy Adlon (story/screenplay) (uncredited)

Composer: Bob Telson

Cinematography: Bernd Heidl (Director of Photography)

Magic Coach: Walter Kruska

Image Resolution: 1080p (Metrocolor)

Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1

Audio: English: 2.0 DTS-HD Master Audio Stereo

German: 2.0 DTS-HD Master Audio Stereo

English: 2.0 Dolby Digital Audio Stereo

German: 5.1 Dolby Digital Audio

Subtitles: English and German

Running Time: 108 minutes

Region: Region B/2

Number of discs: 1

Studio: STUDIOCANAL

Andrew's Blu-ray Review: 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' is a German film and was originally entitled 'Out of Rosenheim' and is directed by Percy Adlon. Set in the Mojave Desert in the United States and with an unrelenting sun and constant dusty wind, creates an inhospitable place that appears to be detached and isolated from anywhere else in America.

At the time when the Bavarian husband Herr Münchgstettner [Hans Stadlbauer] and wife Jasmin Münchgstettner [Marianne Sägebrecht], were in full Alpine regalia, have a massive falling out at a remote picnic place and where quickly the argument escalates, especially with the couple shouting at each other in German and Jasmin Münchgstettner refuses to get back in the car and gets out of the car in the middle of nowhere. Herr Münchgstettner drives off in a rage and leaves Jasmin Münchgstettner in the middle of nowhere . . . and Herr Münchgstettner leaves their Rosenheim thermos/coffee maker on the side of the road before kicking up a cloud of dust and drives off in a rage and Jasmin Münchgstettner never gets to see him again.

The camera pans across the barren land, and focuses on a lonely German woman Jasmin Münchgstettner opts to walk away off on her own and trudges off dragging her overfull suitcase behind her, and along the dusty and empty road, where walks silently towards the place just ahead. Then you hear a most enchanting voice sing:

"Desert road from Vegas to nowhere. Some place better than where you've been. A coffee machine that needs some fixing. In a little cafe' just around the bend . . ."

For us and countless others, Jevetta Steele's haunting lyrics from the song, "Calling You," from the 1987 indie cult classic film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ,' will forever evoke the particularities of a

small desert town on Route 66, contrasted with the vastness of the Mojave Desert, and where eventually Jasmin Münchgstettner comes across the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café, the Gas & Oil station and motel, and the tilted camera angles suggest that everything is more than a little "off balanced."

But just prior to Jasmin Münchgstettner's arrival at the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café, and we are introduced to the characters of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café, which is run by Brenda [CCH Pounder] and her laid back and easy going husband Sal [G. Smokey Campbell] and both have a massive almighty quarrel and the volatile Brenda's chiding drives Sal the husband away, and drives off in a cloud of dust. Brenda is left with her son Sal Jr./Salamo [Darron Flagg] who only wants to practice Johann Sebastian Bach compositions on the piano, and has a six month old baby Ashely who is brought up by everyone, Brenda's daughter Phyllis [Monica Calhoun] is much more interested in men than school. Then we have Mr. Rudi Cox [Jack Palance] an ageing Hollywood has-been who lives in a caravan on the property of the motel and a tattoo artist Debby [Christine Kaufmann] who runs her business from a room on the motel, but the suggestion is truckers get more than a tattoo when they visit her!

In the distance are a rail-road and a busy freeway, both presumably carrying the traffic that used to pass the Bagdad Café, which appears to have very few customers? This is a very dysfunctional and bleak situation that Jasmin Münchgstettner walks into. The welltodo and immaculate appearance of Jasmin Münchgstettner strikes a stark contrast with the dusty, dishevelled and dysfunctional Bagdad Café and the motel. Brenda is suspicious of the German woman Jasmin Münchgstettner walking out of the desert and takes an instant dislike to Jasmin Münchgstettner, but in the end pays for a

room for the night and trudges off to the motel block to find her room. It is then that Jasmin Münchgstettner discovers she has taken her husband's case containing his clothes and a magic set, presumably a souvenir from Las Vegas.

With the desert highway lays the rundown Bagdad Gas & Oil Café, a combined diner, gas station, and motel that has seen better days about 30 years ago. Here too, is a married couple who constantly have regular arguments, and the quick-tempered African-American woman is named Brenda who does all the work, basically tells her husband to get off his lazy butt and do some good around the place. So the stage is set for this German stranger to work her magic not only on the Bagdad Café, but also towards owner Brenda, but also with an array of quasi-permanent motel dwellers is a former Hollywood set painter Mr. Rudi Cox [Jack Palance] who fancies himself as a "real" artist; then there is a tattoo artist named Debby [Christine Kaufmann] who makes getting-by living and servicing the truck drivers that stop to gas up; a backpacker who is into boomerangs and a handful of regular customers. Even the children are quirky, with an out-of-control young female teenager named Phyllis [Monica Calhoun] who ignores her mom Brenda and goes off in the cab of a big rig and returns in a convertible car full of unruly boys; and we also have a boy who just wants to be a concert pianist Sal Jr./Salomo [Darron Flagg] and does nothing but practice all the time; and a baby that Brenda seems very irritated to have to attend to.

The following morning when Brenda is cleaning Jasmin Münchgstettner's room, she is shocked to discover men's clothing hanging up everywhere and shaving equipment set out in the bathroom and Brenda's suspicions are heightened, so she decides to call the local Sheriff Arnie [Apesanahkwat]

and asks him to investigate. The Sheriff arrives and checks Jasmin Münchgstettner's passport and return ticket and discovers that they are in order. Over the course of the following days, Jasmin Münchgstettner works her way into the affections of the residents and becomes accepted by everyone except Brenda. Jasmin helps with the cleaning, childminding and other chores but goes too far with Brenda when she cleans and tidies the chaotic and filthy motel office while Brenda is on a trip into town. Brenda orders the rubbish to be returned and while Jasmin unpacks it, Brenda comes to her senses and accepts Jasmin Münchgstettner's gesture.

All the while, Jasmin Münchgstettner has been learning magic tricks and tries some on the few customers in the cafe. Discovering she is really good at it and starts to develop her magic skills and combines this with waiting on tables in the café. Truckers start to spread the word and soon the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café is bursting to its seams every day. Jasmin Münchgstettner has worked her magic and through it has transformed the community that centres its life at the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café. The Sheriff stops by and on discovering Jasmin Münchgstettner still there informs her that her visa has expired and that she must leave. The Bagdad Gas & Oil Café returns to its past moribund state and one of the characters observes that "the magic is gone." Then one day Jasmin Münchgstettner returns and life and the energy are totally restored to the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café and the truckers return in their droves. Brenda and her husband are reconciled and everyone lives happily ever after, or does the opposite happen, and that you will have to find out when you purchase this brilliant 4K remastered Blu-ray disc.

Nine years after the Utah/US Film Festival was founded to encourage independent filmmaking and four years before it was renamed the Sundance Film Festival, a little comedy called 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' (originally titled 'Out of Rosenheim' in Europe) seemed to herald a full-blown "Indie" movement that would emerge in the 1990s, both in America and overseas. Fans of independent films will recognise the ingredients: small subjects with big implications, a script that's more artful than commercial, an emphasis on character over plot, a tone that appeals to the intellect as much as the emotions, leisurely pacing, distinctive camera work despite the low budget, quirky/offbeat situations and characters, and a heavy dose of irony or dry humour. 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' has all of those things, and while it obviously aims for a sophisticated audience, just as the main character slowly grows on people in the film, it can draw in reluctant viewers.

This is an odd quirky comedy film that you need to let it wash over you. At the time of the film's release, the critics had too much critical analysis, bemoaning that there was too much patchy acting, lumpy dialogue and also felt it had too much fantasy elements to make any sense. That the power of transformation is dependent on Jasmin Münchgstettner's presence is totally paramount. The musical fantasy number at the end of the film belongs to a different era. 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' is a film that plays out like a fable, with any number of morals: walk a mile in someone's shoes before you judge them; strangeness and foreignness are both relative; kindness wins out over anger; and there is magic to be found in everyday life . . . even in an isolated, windblown outpost like the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café in California. Too many indie directors confuse realism with pessimism, but director Percy Adlon isn't one of them and at least not for the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ,' which is his first film in English and shot in the USA. Though he would

never recapture the magic in his other films with this quirky comedy, at least this one time he wasn't afraid of positive developments or happy endings. Percy Adlon is not afraid of using literal magic to suggest the metaphoric kind.

The script relies on one coincidence after another, especially in the heat of the moment, Jasmin Münchgstettner grabs her husband's suitcase instead, inside which is a magic kit he apparently bought in nearby Las Vegas and readers are asked to believe that from this one little magic kit from Las Vegas, a German tourist can learn enough magic over a short period of time to help transform the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café into a thriving entertainment destination. But it's easy enough to accept that, because the focus is so much on the very diverse characters and the bleak surroundings that we are more than ready to buy into some of that wonderful beautiful magic.

There are some fun touches in 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' as well. When the camera zooms in on Brenda and her husband Sal [G. Smokey Campbell] and she storms off stage right, she reappears suddenly stage left, having circled the camera/viewer and broken that fourth wall in a grand way. It's fun to see how director Percy Adlon and co-writer Eleonore Adlon use the running gag of Mr. Rudi Cox painting Jasmin Münchgstettner holding various fruits and in gradual stages of undress to suggest her growing comfort not only with the painter, but with a budding friendship that develops with Brenda and her children. Same also goes for with the use of Brenda's husband after he leaves. As he watches from his car through binoculars and says, "Oh Brenda!" every time her short fuse turns into another explosion, you realise that it's a clever variant on the Greek chorus.

Percy Adlon is saying something in this film about Europe and America, about the old and the new, about the edge of the desert as the edge of the American Dream. I am not sure exactly what it is, but that is comforting of sorts; if a director could assemble these strange characters and then know for sure what they were doing in the same movie together, he would be too confident to find the humour in their situation. The charm of 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' is that every character and every moment is unanticipated, obscurely motivated, of uncertain meaning and vibrating with life.

What stood out for me in the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ,' was the haunting recurring theme "Calling You," which is such a magical emotional song, and I loved it so much I bought the Soundtrack Compact Disc Album, which is a must have, as you get the bonus of director Percy Adlon explaining in great detail about the film and how different it is to the finished film, that you now have available with this STUDIOCANAL Blu-ray disc and in having this longer version, which originally was only unique to the French Blu-ray disc release and if you want an evening of quirky comedy, with an odd cinematic fable, is really an amazing totally magical experience. Jack Palance, CCH Pounder, and Marianne Sägebrect are fun to watch. The 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' film is rated Adult for nudity and strong language. This poetic film may not be to everyone's cup of tea, but I know it will haunt you for days if you let yourself go and relish the quirky comedy nuances of the film. The film is a story about transformation and redemption for everyone, and of course a very interesting and brilliant off-beat film. If by the end of the film you do not shed a few emotional tears of emotional pleasure, then obviously the message resonating out of the film is not resonating to people of that calibre, and that person must have a heart of stone.

BAGDAD CAFÉ MUSIC TRACK LIST

BAVARIAN BRASS MUSIC [Performed by Deininger Blasmusik]

CALLING YOU (Word and Music by Bob Telson) (Harmonica by William Galison) (Guitar by Tiberio Nascimento) (Keyboards by Bob Telson) [Performed by Jevetta Steele]

BLUES HARP (Written by Bob Telson) [Performed by William Galison]

ZWEIFACH (Written by Otto Ebner) [Performed by Deininger Blasmusik]

BRENDA, BRENDA (Written by Lee Breuer) (Music by Bob Telson) [Performed by Jearlyn Steele-Battle, Marianne Sägebrecht and Tommy Joe White]

PRELUDES AND FUGES FROM JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH'S WELL TEMPERED CLAVIER [Performed by Darron Flagg]

CALLOPE (Written by Bob Telson) [Performed by Bob Telson]

CALLING YOU (Written by Bob Telson) [Performed by Bob Telson]

Blu-ray Image Quality - This STUDIOCANAL 1080p 4K restoration presentation can sometimes look a little grainy at times, but that was what Percy Adlon wanted it to look like. Where there are large expanses of white there is considerable noise, and any colours look as if they are a black-and-white film that has been slightly colourised, but again this is how Percy Adlon wanted the image to look, but maybe due to the challenge of all that harsh atmospheric light or the colours may just seem so out-of-place in the desert scenario image,

but overall it really makes the image presentation really stand out and adds to the perfect ambiance of this unique and special film. 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' is presented in an awesome 1.66:1 aspect ratio, so making this film look really extra special and totally unique. **Please Note: Playback Region B/2:** This will not play on most Blu-ray players sold in North America, Central America, South America, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Learn more about Blu-ray region specifications.

Blu-ray Audio Quality - STUDIOCANAL presents us with a stunning 2.0 DTS-HD Master Audio soundtrack that is nicely clean and clear presentation, but sadly about 30 minutes into the film, for about 10 minutes the sound goes out of sync, but luckily after that the sound goes back to normal. From a balanced stand point, everything is well mixed and appropriately natural. One highlight is of course the film's continuous stunning theme song, "Calling You," which is very nicely reproduced with a beautiful ambience sound experience, and will sound so awesome via your Home Cinema set up.

Blu-ray Special Features and Extras:

Audio Commentary with Percy Adlon and Marianne

Sägebrecht: With this particular audio commentary, with director Percy Adlon and actress Marianne Sägebrecht, they speak in their native language German and you get what they are saying with English subtitles, and I feel very angry, and especially as the Blu-ray is going to be viewed in a country that speaks English, and I feel STUDIOCANAL should of made them do the audio commentary for an English speaking people, as they do speak English, with a German accent.

Despite this, there are certain scenes in the film that Percy Adlon points certain aspects of certain scenes in the film, like with the German couple are in what is a rental car, and of

course they did not inform the Rental Company that three times the car was reversed into the metal object and slightly damaged the car. But sometimes when they are chatting away in German, the English subtitles do not appear to translate what they are talking about. They talk of great praise for Bob Telson and his beautiful song "Calling You" and explain how the song came about and its meaning, which was specifically written for the film and they also inform us that Bob Telson usually only writes Gospel songs. They talk about the Bavarian snuff that the German put on his hand and how the American actors did not understand the reason the German man wanted to sniff it up his nose, as they have never seen it before and suspected it was drug related. They talk about when they first contacted the actress Whoopi Goldberg and offered her the part of Brenda, but declined as Whoopi Goldberg did not feel the part was for her, but did appear in the TV version of 'Bagdad Café' that unfortunately was not a big hit with the American public. Marianne Sägebrecht talks about visiting lots of replicas of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café around the world and all have their own very style of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café. We find out that the actor Apesanahkwat who played the Sheriff Arnie, usually only appears in bit parts in other films, and is an Master Carpenter and served in the Vietnam war, and felt Apesanahkwat off camera was a very wise person and liked him very much. When Brenda is very angry with Jasmin for cleaning up her office, when the camera was not shooting, CCH Pounder said that she did not mean any harm when she was acting in a very aggressive shouting stance at Marianne Sägebrecht, and Percy Adlon and Marianne Marianne Sägebrecht commented that they loved it when Brenda says, "In the garbage." They also both say they loved the scene where the daughter Phyllis doesn't notice that the office is 100% clean, until Brenda tells Phyllis to get rid of

her shit. When you see the rainbow in the distance, which of course happened after the area had been raining, but before that happened the camera crew wanted to stop filming, but Percy Adlon decided to carry on with some more filming, and of course through the intervention of the director, the camera crew was able to capture that spectacular rainbow. Percy Adlon talks about Jack Palance and the cowboy boots he wears all the time and Percy Adlon informs us that Jack Palance was not a big fan of having to wear those cowboy boots, and informs Percy Adlon and said, "I can't wear cowboy boots, as it hurts so much." When Jasmin arrives back at the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café from Germany and at the point they start the Magic Show, where they sing the song "BRENDA, BRENDA" you see sitting at the front row of the audience the three men sitting on the chairs, well Percy Adlon points out that the song writer Bob Telson is sitting in the middle of the two truck drivers either side of him, and that point they start talking nothing anymore about the film and of course we finally come to the end credits and still they talk nothing of interest and so the credits end and film ends. Although in general I do like audio commentaries, as you find out a lot about the film and the character actors, but with this audio commentary I found it extremely hard to concentrate on what they were speaking in the German language, and trying to watch what you view in the film and having to read English subtitles at the bottom of the screen, by the end of the audio commentary for the film, I was totally exhausted and so all in all I would say it is one of the worse audio commentary I have ever had to listen to and can only give in 3 star rating for their effort, as at times only about 50% of what they talk about had nothing to do towards the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ.'

Special Feature: The Trip to Bagdad Gas & Oil Café [2018]
[1080p] [1.78:1/1.66:1] [24:20] Journey deep into the area where the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café is located, which is in Newberry Springs, California, somewhere in the middle of nowhere in the Mojave Desert. With this brand new special feature, featuring writer and director Percy Adlon, his wife Eleonore Adlon who co-wrote the screenplay and their granddaughters Gideo Adlon, Odessa Adlon and Roxanne Adlon, as they go back to the location of the famous creation set of Bagdad Gas & Oil Café. At the start of this special feature we get to see vast landscapes that is littered with lots of terrible illegal rubbish that is just dumped, which I cannot understand the authority allowing the landscape to be scarred with wilful vandalism, especially as it is not far from the location of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café. We get to see everyone visit a real American 1950s Diner/Restaurant entitled Peggy Sue's. As they journey around, they talk about the unusual special optical light phenomenon effect in the sky you get to see in the film, which Percy Adlon explains was produced by many mirrors in a nearby solar energy research centre and the first solar energy project. We get to view rare still images of the behind-the-scene filming of the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ.' Finally, we get to visit the location of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café and there is a shell of Mr. Rudi Cox's trailer still there, and they meet the owners of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café and thanks Percy Adlon, as it is now the famous location in the world and people have visited from around the world and inform the owners that the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' is their most favourite film. It also has the original piano that Sal Jr./Salamo [Darron Flagg] played in the film and how they found this young man, and one of the granddaughters plays one of the Johann Sebastian Bach's compositions that Sal Jr./Salamo played in the film which they found at an Academy for Music and we hear why Percy Adlon

chose CCH Pounder to appear as Brenda, who was really excited to appear in his film. Percy Adlon talks about the lucky shot of the young man's boomerang hitting the water tower. But what is also amazing as Percy Adlon shows his granddaughters some the original paintings of Jasmin that is featured in the film. We get to see Percy Adlon and his family at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival reopening of the 'BAGDAD CAFÉ,' where the 30 years old film enjoyed a massive revival in the restored version, and screened in the presence of the director, Percy Adlon, at the Cinéma de la Plage to a very enthusiastic audience. So all in all, anyone who is a massive fan of the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' like I am, will find this special feature is a joy to watch, as we experience a magical moment on looking back to where the film was shot in 1987 and brought back to me so many emotional memories of this Percy Adlon brilliant unique film.

Special Feature: 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' - The Story [2018] [1080p] [1.66:1] [20:33] In this audiobook style presentation, experience the visual scenario of the 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' film that is narrated by director Percy Adlon. Here Percy Adlon gives us his personal audio commentary on the original outline scenario for the film 'OUT OF ROSENHIEM,' which of course eventually was changed to 'BAGDAD CAFÉ.' As we hear Percy Adlon talking, you get to view massive amount of images of scenes from the film relating to the outlined storyline and at the same time in the background you get to hear all the music used in the film throughout the audio commentary. By the way, this is a very similar audio commentary by Percy Adlon you get to hear on the "Bagdad Café" Compact Disc. This is of course the abridged synopsis for the original film 'OUT OF ROSENHIEM.'

German Blu-ray Trailer [1987] [1080p] [1.66:1] [1:55] This is the Original Trailer for the release of the Blu-ray 4K Restoration of the film 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' and can now be viewed for the first time in this 4K Restoration. This is the German 5.1 Dolby Digital Audio presentation with English Subtitles.

Finally, 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' is a radiant, brilliant oddball comedy-drama about the relationship that develops between a Bavarian tourist, and an irritable African American of the Bagdad Gas & Oil Café owner, and a slightly eccentric artist, set in the dusty Arizona desert, at a well-known motel beloved by all who enter it. The 'BAGDAD CAFÉ' film is a beautiful wish-fulfilling fable about culture-clash and the melting-pot of society; it is also firmly grounded in cinematically original observations of life in general. Percy Adlon's method is at once intimate, quirky and affirmative: precise evocation of place we would all love to visit, expressive colourful imagery, and a slow build-up of melting pot characters, allow him to raise the film effortlessly into realms of fantasy, shafted with magic and moments of epiphany. It also offers a renewed, endearingly quirky vision of America as the land of opportunity, not in the economic sense, but as a place with plenty of room for self-discovery and individuality. That is why it is a total honour that I have the ultimate Longer Version in viewing the awesome beautiful character driven film, which I have always loved when I first viewed it in a special cinema in London and some people say they cannot watch this film too often, well I have watched this film more time than I can remember and I never get tired of viewing this very unique special film and you can see why director Percy Adlon has won some many incredible awards, which says a lot about why this is such a powerful beautiful film and that is why it has now gone pride of place in my Blu-ray Collection, especially being the ultimate film presentation. Very Highly Recommended!

Andrew C. Miller - Your Ultimate No.1 Film Aficionado

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