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Cousinhood (Primos): Taormina Film Festival Film Review

2:09 PM 6/15/2011 by Jordan Mintzer

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The Bottom Line

Crafty Spanish bromance produces a few laughs while piling on the Cojones jokes.

Director, screenwriter

Daniel Sanchez Arevalo

Cast

Quim Gutierrez, Raul Arevalo, Adrian Lastra

This crisply executed, occasionally funny bachelor romp reveals how well Spanish writer-director Daniel Sanchez Arevalo is versed in the teachings of Judd Apatow and the Farrelly Bros.

TAORMINA — *Cojones* might have been the better title of *Cousinhood (Primos)*, a highly bromantic Spanish comedy about three thirtysomething dudes trying to recharge their manhood in the seaside town where they spent summers as children. This crisply executed, occasionally funny bachelor romp reveals how well writer-director **Daniel Sanchez Arevalo** (*Darkbluealmostblack*) is versed in the teachings of Judd Apatow and the Farrelly Bros. The film's February local release took in over 5 million euros. Latin American pickups could follow an international premiere at Taormina.

When Diego (**Quim Gutierrez**) gets dumped on the eve of his wedding, his best buds/cousins — the macho womanizer, Julian (**Raul Arevalo**), and the milquetoast hypochondriac, Jose Miguel (**Adrian Lastra**) — whisk him away to the village where he first “dunked his donut” with puppy love interest, Martina (**Inma Cuesta**), who still lives there.

Hoping to rekindle the flame and forget his pre-nuptial trauma, Diego chases after Martina until he wonders whether she is merely rebound material or something more. Meanwhile, his partners -in-partying face their own dilemmas, one involving a sultry young prostitute, Clara (**Clara Lago**), the other an overbearing nurse, Tona (**Alicia Rubio**), who cracks the whip too often on the anxiety-ridden Jose Miguel.

Taking its lead from a string of American comedies ranging from *The Hangover* to *There's Something About Mary* (Gutierrez actually looks like he could be Ben Stiller's *primo*), *Cousinhood* nonetheless ups the machismo factor even more, modifying the rom-com recipe to better cater perhaps to local tastes: The word “balls” is spoken and shouted in dozens of contexts here, with Jose Miguel reminiscing how his used to be “the size of Spartacus” before he got trapped in a relationship, while Julian badgers his bros to “grow a pair” and ditch their girls back home.

Despite the overtly virile, often in-your-face humor, Arevalo — here in his third feature outing — delivers a solidly crafted work, with great performances from regulars Gutierrez and **Raul Arevalo**, and gags that are extremely well timed, the punch line often withheld till the last possible moment. He especially gets good mileage from the psychosomatic episodes of Jose Miguel, whose friendship with Martine's son (**Marcos Ruiz**) is one of the sweeter subplots in a film that's too much of a three-way urination contest to feel altogether mature.

With slick photography by **Juan Carlos Gomez** (who shot Arevalo's two previous features), and an omnipresent, upbeat score by **Julio de la Rosa** (*Neon Flesh*), this is much more of a Hollywood-style affair than your average Euro comedy. As if to hammer in the notion, there's a Backstreet Boys karaoke number plus loads of popular movie references, including a shout out to fellow Spanish director Alejandro Amenabar — another filmmaker whose inspiration clearly comes from across the pond.

Venue: Taormina Film Festival

Production companies: Atipica Films, Mod Producciones

Cast: Quim Gutierrez, Raul Arevalo, Adrian Lastra, Inma Cuesta, Antonio de la Torre, Clara Lago, Nuria Gago, Alicia Rubio

Director, screenwriter: Daniel Sanchez Arevalo

Producers: Jose Antonio Felez, Fernando Bovaira

Director of photography: Juan Carlos Gomez
 Production designers: Curru Garabal, Satur Idarreta
 Music: Julio de la Rosa
 Costume designer: Fernando Garcia
 Editor: David Pinillos
 Sales: Film Factory Entertainment
 No rating, 97 minutes

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