

Film Review: 'The Queen of Versailles' Takes Comedic Look at Riches-to-Rags Tale

Submitted by [mattmoviemann](#) [1] on August 3, 2012 - 9:33am

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CHICAGO – Whenever I hear someone complain about the inexplicable popularity of an obscenely rich and distressingly vapid non-celebrity, I'm reminded of the last scene in "Chicago," when murderess-turned-superstar Roxy Hart blows a kiss to her adoring fans after exclaiming, "Believe us, we could not have done it without you!" No one maintains a celebrity status without a whole lot of help from the general public.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

So what is it that attracts us to watching the triumphs and tantrums of "one percenters" as they bask in their exorbitant wealth? Are audiences merely viewing out of envy? Or do they view the cluttered yet empty lives of these people as an empowering cautionary tale? I suspect it's a combination of both, which is what makes shows like "My Super Sweet 16" and "Bridezillas" register as the guiltiest of exploitative pleasures.



[Read Matt Fagerholm's full review of "The Queen of Versailles" in our reviews section.](#) [12]

At first, "The Queen of Versailles" appears to be little more than an extended episode of a TLC-style reality TV series in which the rich are mocked for the amusement of the 99 percent. With her blonde hair, Botox injections and tight clothes designed to frame her buxom cleavage, Jackie Siegel comes across like a larger-than-life caricature of a stereotypical trophy wife. Her husband, David, is thirty years her senior, and candidly admits that he finds no strength in their marriage. He sees her as more of a child than a partner, and if there's one thing the Siegels like to collect, it's children. Their 26,000 square foot mansion houses a total of eight children, and though their home is indeed spacious, the family is still in need of more room. In 2007, construction began on the family's 90,000 square foot palace modeled after Versailles, which resembles (in a jaw-dropping helicopter shot) Millionaire Estates in The Game of Life. While touring the house's unfinished interiors, a friend points at an enormous self-contained space and asks, "Is that your room?" to which Jackie replies, "No, that's my closet!" The utter lack of irony in Jackie's voice causes her to sound like a skilled deadpan comedian, but her near-pathological compulsion to consume causes many of the laughs to stick in one's throat. How can the family afford such an outrageous abode? Because David is the owner of Westgate Resorts, a timeshare company that specializes in selling lower class couples the opportunity to "feel rich" for a weekend. David's adult son from another marriage, Richard, is the company's senior executive, and is seen rallying his troops by comparing the vitality of their work with that of doctors and firefighters.

'The Queen of Versailles' features Jackie Siegel, David Siegel and Virginia Nebab. It was directed by Lauren Greenfield. It opened August 3rd at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema and the Music Box Theatre. It is rated PG.



[Continue reading for Matt Fagerholm's full "The Queen of Versailles" review.](#) [12]



David and Jackie Siegel in *The Queen of Versailles*, a Magnolia Pictures release.

Photo credit: Lauren Greenfield/Magnolia Pictures

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