

Diane Lane Hits the Blacktop in ‘Paris Can Wait’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 19, 2017 - 3:32pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The cache of “Paris Can Wait” is what immediately makes it attractive. It’s Diane Lane road tripping through France on the way to Paris, guided by the script and direction of Eleanor Coppola, in her narrative film debut (at age 80!). Along the way there is food, seduction, incredible sights and Alec Baldwin. That formula was destined to work.

Lane is the wife of a famous filmmaker in the story, which sounds strangely familiar. This is autobiographical, a trip like this actually happened to Coppola, not in the same fashion, but with the same atmosphere. By creating a scenario of seduction and high level food, the question of will-she-won’t-see becomes apparent beyond the cliché level. Diane Lane is simply wonderful in the role, knowing just how to balance it. Lane is one of those performers that observers tend to take for granted, because even with less than stellar material, she absolutely shines. The material of “Paris Can Wait” is as savory as the various food encounters the travelers have, and Lane delivers it like a master chef at a State Dinner.

It is sometime right after the Cannes Film Festival in France, and prominent filmmaker Michael (Alec Baldwin) is hot on the trail of his next project. His wife Anne (Diane Lane) is shuffled aside in a sense, as Michael carries out the schmoozing and the endless phone calls. They would be off to Paris, but suddenly Michael cannot go there yet.



Through the Lens with Anne (Diane Lane) in 'Paris Can Wait'

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

But Michael also comes up with a solution. He will take the chartered plane to his meeting destination, and Anne will travel by car to Paris – an appropriately eight hour trip – with Michael's producer friend Jacque (Arnaud Viard). Anne hopes they can make it in one day, but Jacque has other plans. He is a foodie, and must stop at every great restaurant along the way, and it becomes clear that he hopes to seduce the reluctant Anne.

And then comes the road trip. It becomes a tug-of-war between the horn dog Jacque and the not-so-interested-but-flattered Anne. Diane Lane had to find that balance rather quickly in the story, and holds to it even as the character's resolve is being tested. Here is a charming Frenchman, who knows everything about food and wine, and delivers the best of it to her. I may not know women completely, but that's a nice way to break the ice.

What is fascinating about Lane's performance is how she knows – and how the audience knows – that Jacque is kind of creepy (he doesn't carry money naturally, so "promises" to pay her back, for example). But she does eventually enjoy both the adventure and attention, and her and director Coppola broke it down into a nice slow melt. There is an open-ended conclusion, and even that is as tantalizing as the amazing food they eat throughout the trip. What is essentially a two person play is opened up through the countryside, the fine dining and the actors.



Between Michael (Alec Baldwin) and Jacque (Arnaud Viard) in 'Paris Can Wait'

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

Arnaud Viard as Jacque pushes the character a bit too much, and gives hints of English-as-a-second-language distress, but his charm factor is enough to overcome the air of creepiness in the character. He is especially good in being able to turn up the volume on the seduction, but step back if he notes a discomfort. This give and take, which makes up 90% of the story, would have been a tad annoying if it weren't for the chemistry of the road trip pair. That traveling film genre can really spark a disparate relationship if handled in the right way, and Eleanor Coppola – with Diane Lane – delivers that spark.

Is there a more talented filmmaking family than the Coppolas? Here's a partial list with Francis Ford, Sofia and Eleanor... "The Godfather," "The Godfather II," "The Virgin Suicides," "Lost in Translation," "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (Eleanor's first film) and now "Paris Can Wait." Besides that Mrs. Lincoln, how was Diane Lane?

"Paris Can Wait" continues its nationwide release in Chicago on May 19th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Diane Lane, Alec Baldwin and Arnaud Viard. Written and directed by Eleanor Coppola. Rated "PG"



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