

Hideout in the Sun

Reviewed by

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It's been a while since I reviewed a nudist camp movie. Once you've seen one of these yarns you've seen 'em all, right? Well, yes and no. If you're a fan of C-movie sexploitation in general and of woman-in-a man's-world Doris Wishman in particular, there's always something to grab your attention, to make you smile, to get you scratching your nudist-movie buff head. And *Hideout in the Sun* (1960) is no exception – not least of all because it was Wishman's first ever movie and because it was the first ever nudist camp film to have a 'proper' plot.

Earlier movies in the genre were pseudo-documentaries filmed at real nudist camps, with voiceovers expounding the virtues of naturism. Then along came Wishman with her glorious Eastman colour, her wonderfully wooden actors and her bright-spark plots, and the boring documentary with lots of nude volleyball was transformed into the not-quite-so boring drama-cum-love story set in a nudist camp.

As the title sort of suggests, *Hideout in the Sun* is about a couple of hard-boiled gangsters on the run. Duke is the nasty Tarantino-type nutter, and Steve, his easily-led, good-person-at-the-bottom-of-his-heart sidekick and brother. When their getaway car breaks down they kidnap the pretty Dorothy and force her to drive them to safety. Dorothy just happens to be a member of the Hibiscus Country Club, which just happens to be a nudist camp, and which just happens to be where she suggests her kidnappers hide out. While Duke lies low in the cabin, Dorothy has to pretend that Steve is her new husband. You can pretty much guess what happens – except perhaps for the extraordinary scene near their end where Duke gets his comeuppance at the Serpentarium, a genuine Miami roadside attraction from the 1950s.

As with all of Wishman's early films, the actors are dubbed, atrociously so, and there is much filming of dialogues between the backs of people's heads. You wouldn't want it any other way. Along with the vivid blues and greens of the Miami skylines, the palm-treed boulevards, the pastel-coloured convertibles, the sharp suits, the saccharine love story, the corny theme tune, the beach ball as cover-upper of 'rude bits', and the happy frolicking 'nudists' (i.e. glamour models) with their slightly plump and un-worked out bodies, these are all celluloid reminders of a bygone age. And of an extraordinary woman.

Before *Hideout in the Sun*, Wishman had worked in film production and distribution. With no experience or background in film-making at all and with just a few thousand dollars borrowed from her family she did almost everything on this movie apart from the camera work. During the first year its release, the film did amazingly well – until it was lost when the original distributor ended up in jail. Some 40 years later while having a spring-clean, Wishman came across a 16mm print of the movie and the picture was restored.

The DVD itself, published by Retro-Seduction Cinema, comes with all sorts of goodies. There are two DVDs, one a full-frame version, the other in anamorphic widescreen.

Extras include a rare interview with Wishman (not long before she died in 2002 at the age of 90), a commentary by her biographer, Michael J. Bowen, a newsreel from 1960, a 27-minute featurette, *Postcards from a Nudist Camp*, and a bunch of trailers for smouldering titles such as *Moonlighting Wives*, *Seduction of Inga* and *Swedish Wildcats*. Enough retro-trash to keep you amused for days ...

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