

## Mystic Pizza ★★★½

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**Year of Release:** 1988

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** See It

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If you have a hearty appetite for a warm and sentimental slice of life, then *Mystic Pizza* should be just your cup of tea. The movie centers on three young women, two of whom are sisters. The three friends live in Mystic, a small coastal fishing town on the Eastern Seaboard, and they work together in the local pizzeria. The movie follows the trials and tribulations of their respective love lives, alternating between the viewpoint of each character.

Kat, having just graduated from high school, is working to raise money toward her tuition at Yale. Her romantic interest is a 30-year-old architect who hires her to baby-sit his daughter while his wife is in Europe. Kat, who is sexually-inexperienced, develops a strong crush on him.

Daisy—Kat's stunning and shapely, but less intellectual, older sister—attracts the attention of a rich, high society law student. They have that classic problem of being from opposite sides of the tracks. Jo Jo is involved with Bill, a local fisherman who desperately wants her to marry him. Although Jo Jo truly loves Bill, she is not ready to make such a big commitment.

At the heart of *Mystic Pizza* are three fine performances by three relatively unknown, but extremely well-cast, actresses—who seem very natu-

natural in their roles. Kat is the most compelling character in the film; Annabeth Gish gives her just the right touch of vulnerability and innocence. Her heartache as she comes of age is touching and painful. Lily Taylor and Julia Roberts are equally moving as Jo Jo and Daisy. *Mystic Pizza's* supporting cast also delivers the goods. Vincent D'Onofrio, William Moses, and Adam Storke play the three romantic interests; each actor gives his character a sufficient sense of depth.

*Mystic Pizza* successfully integrates the three characters and story lines into one thematic whole. The movie is filled with moments of comic yet poignant drama, such as the scene in which Daisy spills buckets of fish over her boyfriend's Porsche because she thinks he is cheating on her. *Mystic Pizza's* impact lasts well beyond its 90 minute duration. The movie has lingered in my mind, and my appreciation for it has grown with time. Gish, Taylor and Roberts have created in *Mystic Pizza* three characters who are quite memorable and endearing; in fact, I want to know what has happened to Kat, Jo Jo, and Daisy since the end of the film. Hopefully, there will be a sequel entitled *Mysterious Pasta* that will satisfy my curiosity.

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