No slowing down at the Backseat Film Fest

➤A handful of new movies and a 'Tribute to Adam Rifkin' await film fans this weekend in the second half of the Backseat Film Festival.

By Matt Godfrey
Home News Staff Writer

So now that week one of the Backseat Film Fest is in the books, it's time to relax, right?

Wrong.

Week two is already in motion.

Festivalgoers saw the first weekend out with a bang (and a crash . . . and a boom) with a sold-out premier of Bam Margera's newest feature, "Minghags," on Sunday night that had Margera and friends in attendance.

"They're going to lose money on this 'all-the-PBR-you-can-drink' deal they're giving us," co-writer, producer, and director Joe Frantz jokingly warned last week before the festival.

According to festival co-founder Doug Sakmann, the new two-weekend approach, as opposed to the original weeklong festival, is going over well.

"So far, so good," relayed Sakmann. "A lot of the later screenings sold out, the earlier screenings were well attended."

"'The Burnt House' was packed . . . Bam's screening was sold out," said Sakmann of the Sunday offerings.

The very next day, round two began when the BFF presented Adam Rifkin's highly successful movie "Detroit Rock City" at the Trocadero's Movie Monday.

"The Trocadero was packed for 'Detroit Rock City'," Sakmann said. "A lot of people are looking forward to seeing Adam this weekend."

Rifkin also seems to be excited about the weekend.

"Doug contacted me about the Backseat Film Festival and asked if I was interested in showing the movies and coming out and talking," Rifkin explained from his office in Los Angeles.

Citing the reputation Backseat has built up over the years as his impetus, Rifkin signed on immediately.

"They're really creative, I like them a lot," Rifkin explained.

Two more of Rifkin's movies will be screened this Saturday when his newest movie, "Homo Erectus," precedes one of his first features, "The Dark Backward."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADAM RIFKIN

Director Adam Rifkin will be on hand for a question-and-answer session.

"When they said it, I was like 'Are you sure you want to be showing more of my movies?'"

➤Adam Rifkin.

"When they said it, I was like 'Are you sure you want to be showing more of my movies?'" Rifkin joked.

"Homo Erectus," which was actually bought by National Lampoon's and renamed "National Lampoon's Stoned Age," is a comedy about a caveman who is shunned by his tribe after trying to drag them out of prehistoric times with a slew of inventions . . . like pants, for one.

"The Dark Backward" was one of Rifkin's earliest forays in the film world, and features a star-studded cast with names like Wayne Newton, James Caan, Bill Paxton, and Judd Nelson.

Ironically, even though the film was made in 1991, this will actually be its Philadelphia premier.

"It had never been released theatrically in Philly," explained Rifkin.

Rifkin seems to be truly humbled by the gesture of being included in the Backseat fest.

"I was thrilled," explained Rifkin. "It's a real honor, and it feels great to have it."

The writer-director will be on hand this Saturday night for a question-and-answer session as well.

The night of Rifkin's double feature falls between two days of screenings, beginning with Friday night's three features and finishing up on Sunday with a block of short films and two more features to round out the festival.

Another block of short films will be shown on Saturday before the official "Tribute to Adam Rifkin" begins.

One of the most notable movies is Friday night's screening of "Rockabilly Baby," a feature in the vein of the well-known Johnny Cash bio-pic "Walk The Line" that takes on a fictitious rock star.

"We premiered at the Trail Dance Film Festival in Duncan, Oklahoma," said writer-director Ken Farmer. "This will be the Pennsylvania premier."

Actor Todd Farr (a semi-recognizable face from Abercrombie and Fitch ads) will be on hand to present the movie.

"They contacted us and asked us to send them a screener (of the movie)," explained Farmer of the festival.

"We've had some offers (for distribution) but wanted to do the festival thing first to try and create some more buzz," explained Farmer.

That's where the BFF comes in.

The weekend also includes an after-party on Saturday night at the M Room (15 W. Girard Ave.) and closing ceremonies on Sunday night.

"I think this weekend we're going to have a big turnout as well," explained Sakmann.

The weekend's events get a jumpstart on Thursday at 8 p.m. at the 941 Theatre with a "Roast of the Legendary Wid."

Very much like the roasts hosted on Comedy Central, local prop comic The Legendary Wid will be degraded and defiled by a handful of his fellow comics.••