

Movie review: 'Guardians Vol. 2' out of this world

By Howie Nave

I'll say it from the start: not quite as good as the first one but still a galactic roller coaster. And c'mon, it's tough to follow the unexpected hit from something so out there as the first one did.

Like the first sci-fi, pop culture fantasy, "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" follows a similar formula of the first, but amps things up with its mix of pop-rock hits of the 1970s and over-the-galaxy use of CGI special effects.



This sequel boasts an impressive cast of newcomers (along with the original cast) with some pretty impressive folks making cameos in this outing. Marvel Comics (with a little help from the Disney folks) seems to have it down going from comic book to the big screen pretty easily without sacrificing the core of the characters one has grown used to seeing in print format. But it's the lunacy of the dialogue and attitude that floats this space odyssey.

Back to bring justice to the universe are Chris Pratt as the heart-of-gold, wisecracking Peter Quill/Star-Lord, his love interest in the way of green heroin, Gamora (played by Zoe Saldana), Dave Bautista as the nonstop laughing and somewhat dim-witted Drax, the best role model for raccoons everywhere, Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper) and the latest, youngest (and smallest) regular cast member, Baby Groot (voiced by Vin Diesel).

The villains are top notch and run the gamut of alien personalities from the golden-skinned, High Priestess warrior princess Ayesha (Elizabeth Debicki), who leads an army of followers who suck at video games pursuing the "Guardians of the Galaxy" because Rocket stole some batteries (that keep these golden-skinned aliens active) after they were hired to protect them to the blue-skinned Yondu (played brilliantly by Michael Rooker) a pirate of sorts with a red mohawk looking device on his head and sporting British teeth. Closer to family we have Gamora's sister, Nebula (Karen Gillan) who takes the definition of dysfunctional to a whole different level wanting to kill her sister. Speaking of dysfunctional family members (and kicking off the movie) is Kurt Russell as Quinn's long lost father with a few god-complex issues living on (or more like he is) Ego the Living Planet. Yeah, it's a trip and even though he's no Darth Vader there are more than enough serious attachment issues that makes Peter wanting to ask more questions than receive answers.

I've often said that I love my family the farther away they live, but some of the family members here? Not even another galaxy is far enough for our principle characters here.

I saw "Guardians 2" in 3D and whoa! If you get an opportunity, you must try the 3D version because you feel as if you're adrift in space and some of the scenes will have you grabbing your seat to make sure you don't drift too far away from whatever spaceship you might be in. I actually felt my head get that same sensation drinking an ice cold margarita too fast in a hot temperature environment with the effects of 3D. What a rush! Co-writer-director James Gunn it seems was given a lot of creative leeway with this sci-fi, pop-culture of a flick that includes references to actor (and he's big in Germany) David Hasselhoff, "Cheers" and "Mary Poppins."

The beginning kicks butt after the introduction of a young Kurt Russell (the effects are amazing how they can shed years off a familiar face) in 1980 then fast forward 34 years later

with Quinn announcing "Showtime A-holes!" There's a bit of a lag in the 2nd act but more than makes up for it in the final act. "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" is rated PG-13 and clocks in at 2 hours, 15 minutes.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9. He has been reviewing movies for years. They may be heard on four other stations each week where he does "A Jew Doing a Movie Review," and he occasionally writes reviews for Lake Tahoe News.