

Film Notes

by Alyssa Wint

Denmark | 2021 | 117m | 12A | subtitles

Director: Thomas Vinterberg

Starring: Mads Mikkelsen, Thomas Bo Larsen, Lars Ranthe

Another Round / Druk

Director Thomas Vinterberg takes the usual comedic theme of drinking alcohol to new heights in this Danish comedy-drama. The film follows four high school teachers (Mads Mikkelsen, Thomas Bo Larsen, Magnus Millang, and Lars Ranthe) as they test out the theory of Norwegian psychologist Finn Skårderud that we are born with less-than-optimum amount of alcohol in our blood. 'It's about having lost inspiration, risk, curiosity, exploration,' Vinterberg said at the Lumière Film Festival. 'These four teachers have been caught up in a sense of repetition.' As the four men drink a specific amount of alcohol every day, we are introduced to both the positivity of life and the negative impacts of alcohol consumption as they navigate the story's twists and turns.

In the '90s, Vinterberg was one of the founding members of the Dogme filmmaking movement. 'It felt dangerous and great,' he told *Variety* recently. 'If there's an element of risk or of scandal you wake up, you become curious. And when you do it as a group, it's a great sensation.' He says the plot of *Another Round* is 'the same thing: four crazy guys who get drunk at the wrong time and see what happens.'

This is the fourth collaboration between screenwriters Thomas Vinterberg and Tobias Lindholm, whose films together have already amassed over 50 awards. The basic idea behind the film had been brewing for many years, but it was the discovery of Skårderud's hypothesis that 'sparked things forward', Vinterberg said in a London Film Festival interview. The theory 'resonated right away' for Lindholm, who remembered realising he became a better father to his children after his first glass of wine. 'It's not the answer to life,' he said in the same interview, 'but ... maybe it was a reminder that it's positive to let loose and just become a playful person once in a while.'

They were determined to make an honest film — 'we don't want to give the answer,' said Vinterberg. 'We don't want to be moralistic; we don't want to be crazy, celebrate it. We want to investigate this alcohol thing.' However, 'this film is not only about alcohol,' Vinterberg clarified in an interview at the Toronto International Film Festival. 'This film is about being alive. This is





Excellent

Fair

Poor

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

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Film Notes

about being awakened when you're, sort of, dwelling through your midlife crisis, or in your everyday grey routine. It's about being reawakened.'

In terms of production, there was a focus on how to portray the pros and cons of drinking alcohol not only through the acting, but also in the filmmaking. Sturla Brandth Grøvlen, the award-winning cinematographer of *Victoria* (2015) and *Shirley* (2020), took risks by experimenting with camera angles and movements to incorporate the experience of drinking into the film's visuals, allowing the handheld camera to drunkenly sway or swagger.

Careful consideration was also given to the film's

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use of music. 'Music is part of the drinking ritual,' says Lindholm, and so the cowriters discussed how music should be incorporated into the film, including the possibility of having no music at all. In the end, they made the decision to not have a traditional music score, but instead use everyday music that the characters would listen to.

The ultimate result of these decisions is a film that provides a refreshing insight into life, the reality of midlife crises, and examines our relationship to alcohol with an open mind. Indeed, at the end of his London Film Festival interview, Vinterberg thanked 'the United Kingdom for understanding how to drink and wanting to learn more about drinking.'

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