

# Review: 'Love & Gelato' is a sweet, endearing romp through Rome



CHENNAI: In many ways Rome plays second fiddle to Paris, a city that is often lauded as the most romantic and picturesque in the world. But if one were to watch Brandon Camp's "Love & Gelato" — and read the novel by Gina Evans Welch upon which the movie is based — the Italian capital could soon replace Paris as the internationally recognized city of love.



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Indeed, Rome is a principal character in the film, with its aura of twinkling magic, imposing structures and grand Colosseum, as well as the haunting ruins of the world's first shopping mall, Trajan's Market (built between 100 and 110 AD). Wide-eyed Lina Emerson (Susanna Skagga) is so overwhelmed by these magnificent sights that it eases the pain of the recent loss of her mother, whose last wish was to see her daughter visit Rome where the older woman found her first love — Lina's father.



The movie is based on the novel by Gina Evans Welch. (Supplied)

When a paranoid Lina, whose list of fears is seemingly endless, meets Lorenzo Ferrazza (Tobia De Angelis), she finds the pull of adventure so hard to resist that she jumps on his scooter as he races across a magically lit city, brought alluringly to life by cinematographer Thomas Scott Stanton. The initially hesitant Lina is also given a journal that her mother had kept when she lived in Italy, leading our protagonist to uncover a magical world of secret romances, art, and hidden bakeries chock full of traditional Roman sweet buns called maritozzi.

“Love & Gelato,” now streaming on Netflix, may seem like a silly portrait of a young woman’s first flirtation, but Camp and author Welch transformed it into a story that will resonate with audiences due to Lina’s relationship with her late mother pushing the narrative forward.

For cinema lovers, there are call-backs that make the movie a delight to watch — scenes of the Trevi Fountain will remind you of Federico Fellini’s 1960 classic “La Dolce Vita,” with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg taking a midnight dip in the historic site. Meanwhile, seeing Lorenzo and Lina zip along on a scooter will remind

ardent cinema fans of Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn in the unforgettable “Roman Holiday.” “Love & Gelato” may not be a great work on the level of those masterpieces, but it is sweet —as sweet as maritozzi!

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