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What little I know of 1970s sexploitation films comes from modern parody; for instance, I thought there always had to be a pizza delivery guy in one scene. As a result, *Viva*, a loving homage to bad dialogue and oops-my-clothes-came-off nudity, struck me as a documentary; educational, but with breasts.

Sheila (Bridget Brno) and Barbi (Anna Biller) are bored suburban housewives in 1972 Los Angeles. We meet them during a backyard party with their husbands, who do so much mugging for the camera it's a wonder they aren't arrested for assault. The women don't walk through the scene; they sashay.

When the name-your-viceaholic husbands (work-and sex-respectively) briefly split from their spouses, Sheila and Barbi decide to become liberated women and head downtown to see what mischief they can get into. "I've always wanted to be a prostitute," Sheila enthuses, calling herself Candy. Barbi, finding her name too frumpy, chooses to be known as Viva.

Over the next few weeks, Viva meets a hairdresser who can only be referred to as mincing, a sensitive type named Clyde (sensitive being a relative term in this movie; Clyde wins the prize because he appreciates women for their personalities and their asses), a hippie from what the nudist-camp scene in *A Shot in the Dark* would have looked like if it were R-rated, and various other bohemians. Settling into her Viva lifestyle, she starts to feel that something is missing; could it be that dull but loving workaholic husband?

Biller, who plays Viva, also wrote, directed, produced and edited this movie, and she clearly cornered the world market on chintz, tassels and shag in her work as costume and production designer. (Seems she did everything short of fluffing.) The result is definitely not a parody (note: no pizza guy) but doesn't take itself seriously, either. Without making it sound too stilted, the film seems a bit of an exercise in time travel: Can one make a 1972 movie more than 35 years on, with all the gaudy colours, psychedelic references and so-naughty-it's-nice nudity?

Biller delivers a resounding "yes." As one of her characters says, "This is going to be the freshest thing since Liberace!" Whether you're mildly prurient, a touch prudish or just, you know, curious, this is an intriguing trip, from its opening credits in a font last used for *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, through its on-screen costume changes to its final Hammond organ chords. --Chris Knight