



Stiffy upper lip?

The trailer oozed sex. The film is rather polite. From script to set to screening, Buzz delves into the cleaning up of *Brideshead Revisited*...

Blame it on Merchant Ivory. The starchy duo's eight-year heyday of literary adapts – from the mid-'80s and *A Room With A View* to *The Remains Of The Day* – bred a rep for handsome but oppressively stuffy British period dramas.

sexual pulse and his previous *Pride & Prejudice* came laced with a modern glint. Even Julian Jarrold's previous flick *Becoming Jane* had authoress Austen given to lusty imaginings. Maybe it's crass to say it's vital to sex up

today's period flicks – but that's what the brain trust behind *Brideshead Revisited* clearly wanted us to think, with a bodice-shredding trailer that oozed sexual vibes and depicted

a louche Michael Gambon offering up two of his children as bedroom playthings with the lascivious line, "What a lot of temptation..."

But having caught a sneak peak, *Buzz* can reveal the new £10m adaptation of *Brideshead* is no raunchfest. It's all toffs, teddy bears and a tormented portrait of a dysfunctional aristocratic family, ruled by the iron-fisted, über-Catholic Lady Marchmain (Emma Thompson). It's also about the middle-class interloper Charles Ryder (Matthew Goode), who trespasses into their haughty, emotionally frozen domain, moving from the crude innocence of his relationship with Lady Marchmain's tortured son Sebastian (Ben Whishaw) to destructive, socially ambitious desire with her daughter Julia (Hayley Atwell).

BRIDESHEAD WORDS: MATT MUELLER. PICTURES: RETNA, SPLASH NEWS

'You can't just suddenly have a couple of bottoms slamming

Being branded "a bit Merchant Ivory" these days is practically a death knell. Hence, Joe Wright's *Atonement* throbbed with an overtly



Cream tease: (top) director and Thompson; (below) Goode and Atwell.



attached itself to *Brideshead*. Davies is the writer who turned Mr Darcy into the housewives' heartthrob by pouring Colin Firth into a wet T-shirt in *Pride And Prejudice* and his filter made explicit what Waugh had only hinted at. "Andrew Davies' script was like, 'She holds her ankles as he takes her,'" says Goode. "And you're like, [bemused] 'Really? She holds her ankles?' That made us laugh. I expect Andrew's a slightly dirty fellow."

"Andrew's an irascible character and he is very interested in sex," agrees producer Douglas Rae. "I felt he had gone down that road but it wasn't something that we particularly wanted to follow." Indeed, after Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly were approached to play Charles and Julia, only for original director David Yates to jump ship for *Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix*, the producers turned to screenwriter Jeremy Brock (*Mrs Brown*) to tone down Davies' YouPorn version. Now Charles and Julia bump uglies but, says Goode, "It's not porn. You can't just suddenly have a couple of bottoms slamming away."

Eroticising *Brideshead* included taking creative licence with Waugh's novel. Scenes were added at the Venice Carnivale to show Julia's first stirrings of lust for Charles and to ramp up the love triangle, when Julia doesn't go to Venice with the boys. Another add-on to Waugh's novel is the quick, come-on kiss Sebastian plants on Charles' lips and their naked swim in Castle Howard's fountain. In fact, the duo's relationship is saturated with homoerotic tension but it's left up to the viewer to decide if they're ravishing each other every night — which is all a bit of a tease. So, do they shag or not?

"There was nothing in the novel that suggested that Charles Ryder had had a physical — and penetrative — relationship with Sebastian," says Rae. "So it would have been wrong to put that in." "There's no doubt Sebastian's gay, but was in a period where people didn't pigeonhole things like that so I prefer to not nail it," says director Jarrold. "It isn't an explicit gay love story and I didn't want to make it that."

Why so coy? Yes, it's set in the upper echelons of unfailingly polite society, where tasteful decorum is essential and you wouldn't expect anything too lascivious but, with its >>

Shot over 11 weeks last summer — with filming taking place in Yorkshire, Oxford, London, Venice and Marrakech — *Brideshead* comes 27 years after the devoutly faithful (and beloved of most Brits born before the '70s) Granada mini-series adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's 1943 novel. While Waugh's tome is all homosexual repression and Catholic guilt, Charles' social-climbing ambitions are given more airing in the new version, which Ecosse Films producers Robert Bernstein and Douglas Rae thrust into development five years ago, hiring Andrew Davies, the doyen of prestige crit-lit telly, to adapt.

That's when the sexing-it-up label first



RUDENESS REVISITED

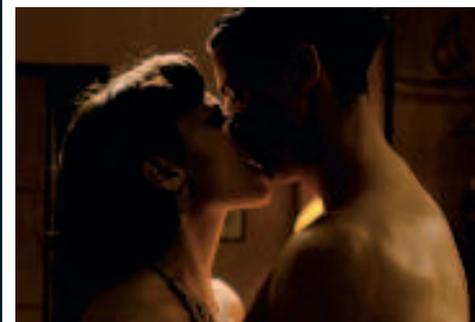
How the trailer fleshed *Brideshead*...



Early on, Matthew Goode (dressed by M&S) does life drawing. Check out those pins. He likes them.



Hang on, what's this? Goode and Hayley Atwell lip-lock... Who needs Channel Five?



Good god! It looks like they're starkers... Back in the 1940s kids went for it! Who needs Playboy?



"Hello, Odeon? One ticket for *Brideshead* please... Back row... Phwoar!" Who needs RedTube?



Fuck! A two-backed monster. Time to bin that copy of *Ripple Rut Pussy Supreme Under 18s*?



Sexy times: (top) Atonement and (below) Dangerous Liaisons.

sexy, sellable cast of young Brit arrivistes – Whishaw, Atwell, Goode – it seems like a strange move (Goode’s got his own concerns too: “I’m just worried that everyone will think Charles is a dick”). Simple reason, really: they needed a PG-13 in America to make the film financially viable. But, as *Dangerous Liaisons* proved, spicing up a costume drama with sexual suggestion can really rake in the readies. Uma Thurman may be the only one who gets naked in Stephen Frears’ pre-French Revolution romp, but watching Glenn Close, Michelle Pfeiffer and John Malkovich run around rococo interiors with pressed bosoms

and lusty intentions is still the benchmark for how to make period movies drip with sex. *Brideshead* tries, but the film’s only bedroom scene is shot largely above the shoulders. Back to that steamy, pulse-quickenning trailer then, which seems to promise so much more. “The British trailer is deliberately aimed at getting an audience in who didn’t see the TV series: ie the under-30s,” says Rae. “If we’ve done our job right, hopefully they’ll come because it looks like an intriguing love story. *Atonement* looked incredibly raunchy but you never saw any flesh in that. You don’t need mountains of flesh flying around to be sexy.” **MM**

WHAT IF... ALL PERIOD DRAMAS WERE SEXED UP?

Old is dull, romping is good in Hollywood’s dirty new world...

With teen boys throwing stuff after being misled by a flesh-filled *Brideshead* trailer, studio execs hit panic mode. From now on all period dramas (1500s-1950s, corsets, based on books, bit fusty) must feature at least one sex scene (unclothed), one fistfight (blood drawn, splattered over virginal white gown) and two uses of “fuck” (thus ensuring PG-13 cert, with a bit of edge).

First up is Ellen Page’s in-the-works *Jane Eyre*, due for 2009 release. For sex, producers bring in Matthew McConaughey as Edward Rochester, who finds the English climate so stifling he walks shirtless all film. He and Page have sex within the first three minutes. Suits don’t want to change the novel too much though so instead they add a coda, whereby Rochester shoots a

random villager, blood pouring as both say, “Fuck!” Score! Kids flock...

Brontë – also due in 2009 – has enough time to take the memo to heart. Starring hot things Evan Rachel Wood, Rebecca Hall and Nathalie Press as the feuding sister lovelies, it has teen boys written all over it. Threesome? Not quite. They’re sisters. But lots of running in the rain in flouncy shirts, reading excerpts from their scribblings, one of which Emily spins as: “My love for Linton is like the fucking foliage in the woods...”

In the works? *Great Expectations* starring Seth Rogen as Pip, Jenna Jameson as Estella (they get it on big time) and *A Room With A View* remake in which no one leaves the (bed)room. *Iron Man*’s got nothing on that shit.

