

Dana Hills' "Steel Magnolias" shows the beauty of an uplifting community

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Filled with the gossip, banter, and hardships of the women in Truvy's beauty salon, Dana Hills' "Steel Magnolias" captures what it means to stand united as a strong, uplifting, and loving community.

The story opens with a young newcomer named Annelle (Amelia Bellah) is applying for a position as a hairdresser at Truvy's beauty salon. Nervous and hesitant, Annelle is initially skeptical of the unusual lifestyle of the town, but soon comes out of her shell as she opens up to the ladies of the salon. Contrasting Annelle's dubious attitude is the exuberant Truvy (Audrey Parker). Parker embodies Truvy's spicy, yet sweet, manner with precision and ease. Her saucy attitude is complemented by an impressively consistent Southern accent, making the setting of the show quite clear.

The resident curmudgeon of the town, Ouiser, is brilliantly played by Rachel Kupfer-Weinstein. As she forcefully stomps into the salon, slamming the door behind her, Kupfer-Weinstein makes it clear that Ouiser is not a woman you want to heckle with. Ouiser's sharp demeanor is complemented by Clairee (Natalie Pearl), the former first lady of the town. As Clairee, Pearl skillfully exemplifies the wit and sassiness of the character, never failing to brighten the most dismal of moments with her dark sense of humor.

When Shelby (Natalie Creech), the prettiest girl in town, is getting married, she becomes the talk of the town and the center of gossip in Truvy's beauty salon. Through her relaxed tone and physicality, Creech creates a contrast between herself and the older women in the salon, distinguishing her youth and free-spirited manner. Her mother, M'Lynn (Kendall Santos) is a wise and educated woman that attempts to reason with Shelby regarding her daring decisions. As M'Lynn, Santos composes herself with poise and calmness, embodying a motherly presence in the salon.

The costumes are beautifully done by Makenzie Kruger and Christina Sleek. Each costume fits the fashion style of the time period and complements the character's personality. In addition to this, the costumes wonderfully match the set (by Natalie Pearl) and props (by Kendall Santos and Christina Sleek), creating a color palette that is teeming with florals, pinks, purples, and blues.

Combining the efforts of skilled technical teams and wonderful actors, Dana Hills' "Steel Magnolias" shows us the beauty behind creating a supportive, tight-knit community.