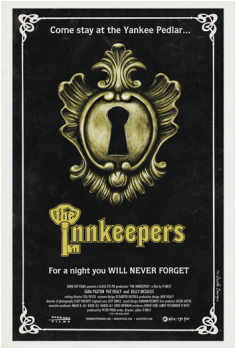
One of the most anticipated horror films of the year, Ti West's haunted-hotel chiller THE INNKEEPERS has just been added to the Fantasia program—a surprise move that recalls the similar last-minute addition of THE HOUSE OF THE DEVIL back in 2009.

Ti West blew audiences away with that masterful tale of suspense, supported by a steady build-up structure, creepy atmospherics and genuinely inspired aesthetic evoking the Satan-scare films of the '80s. HOUSE OF THE DEVIL is one of my favorite contemporary horror films, and when THE INNKEEPERS failed to turn up in the 2011 lineup, my heart skipped a beat. Luckily for me—and for all Fantasia attendees—it was just a matter of time before the stars aligned (read: the programmers took the pressing matter into their hands) to bring us Montrealers the much-anticipated film.



Ti West's minimalist, almost deconstructive approach to genre filmmaking is incredibly inspiring, and serves as a reminder that quieter and restrained stories can be as (if not more) effective than any hectically edited jump-scare bonanza. Achieving great feats of atmosphere with very limited budgets, THE ROOST (2005) and TRIGGER MAN (2007) hinted at West's fascination with minimal storylines and methodically suspenseful progressions, while CABIN FEVER 2: SPRING FEVER (2009) introduced us to his playful side—despite West disowning the much-tampered-with film. THE HOUSE OF THE DEVIL saw him fully come into his own as a filmmaker and up-and-coming auteur of the macabre.

In THE INNKEEPERS, tomboy Claire and geeky Luke (Sarah Paxton and Pat Healy) are part-time workers at the (real-life) Yankee Pedlar Inn in Connecticut, and full-time amateur supernatural investigators. Fortunately for them, the hotel sees few guests, giving them plenty of time to practice their hobby—and uncover the Yankee Pedlar's darkest secrets. If the aforementioned films are any indication, THE INNKEEPERS should be a chillingly slow-burning and original film, and a breath of fresh air in a world saturated with sequels, remakes, 3D gimmicks, torture porn and fake scares.

An essential addition to this year's phenomenal Fantasia lineup, THE INNKEEPERS will have its Canadian premiere on Monday, July 25 at 9:45 p.m. at the Hall Theatre. For more information, visit the film's Fantasia page , and for a taste of things to come, read Fango's first set report on the movie here and our review here .