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■ DOUGHBOYS

Street 11/18

MTI, Drama, \$24.95 DVD, 'PG-13' for some drug-related references.

Stars Louis Lombardi, Mike Starr, Vincent Pastore, Andrew Keegan, Jimmy Madio, Gaetano Iacono.

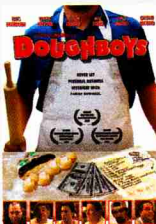
Like the baked delicacies prepared and served with love at this film's central location, Conti's in The Bronx, *Doughboys* is sweet, seriously old-school in the best sense of the phrase, warm, comforting and widely appealing.

Producer-director-co-writer and star Lombardi, instantly familiar to fans

of "24" and "The Sopranos," has fashioned a heartfelt, rich and sweet cinematic love song to his hometown, the different types of people who live there and the distinctive codes of behavior by which they live their lives.

Reminiscent of Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott's Sundance favorite *Big Night*, the film focuses on two Italian-American brothers in the food business. The Conti brothers, Lou (Lombardi) and Frank (Iacono), inherit the family bakery that has become a neighborhood institution. But while

both were born and raised in the business, they now struggle to keep it alive. Always resistant to the family business,



Frank is there against his will, bound to the place by blood ties and an inherent loyalty to the Conti name, but he has to contend with Lou, a natural baker, a wizard with food and a hopelessly addicted gambler whose mounting debt to a local crime boss threatens to put them on the street.

Exquisitely and lovingly produced, the film seduces viewers, drawing them into this vibrant, almost magical

but distinctly down-to-earth world with a host of compelling and amusing supporting characters before it shows its true colors.

Unfortunately marketed as a wacky comedy with mob overtones, the film does have its whimsical moments, but at its heart it is really a genuine drama that tackles serious issues and depicts, at the center, a surprisingly complex and difficult relationship between the two brothers. This is a drama of everyday life about a couple of regular, everyday guys learning to deal with each other in a difficult situation.

—David Greenberg