

Mr Hobbs Takes a Vacation

US : 1962 : dir. Henry Koster : 20th Century Fox / Company of Artists : 116 min
 prod: Jerry Wald : scr: Nunnally Johnson : dir.ph.: William C Mellor
[Michael Burns](#)
 James Stewart; Maureen O'Hara; Fabian; John Saxon; Marie Wilson; Reginald Gardiner;
 Lauri Peters; Valerie Varda; Lili Gentle; John McGiver; Natalie Trundy; Josh Peine

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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All set for an enchanting summer in the bosom of his family... Source: *The Films of 20th Century Fox*

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"Glossy Hollywood family fare, '60s-style, about various misadventures as Stewart and O'Hara's clan rent a house by the ocean for the summer. Based on a novel by Edward Streeter, the same man who wrote **"FATHER OF THE BRIDE"**. Shot in CinemaScope. **½"

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Splendid family amusement. Stewart and O'Hara go on holiday with their brood to a summer house on the coast and are confronted there with all sorts of family problems. **½"

Halliwell's Film Guide review

"A city dweller takes a seaside house for a family holiday, but it turns out to be a crumbling ruin. Overlong, sloppy comedy which devotes too much time to teenage romance but manages occasional smiles. *"

The Films of 20th Century Fox review:

"Like many family men, Mr Hobbs (James Stewart) takes a vacation somewhat against his own desires and ends up in a weird old house on the Pacific coast, with his wife (Maureen O'Hara) and their children and grandchildren. The plumbing is bad, the children misbehave, and some of the local people are strange. Mr Hobbs finds himself even more harassed on his holiday than during the rest of his year. The substance of the film is slight, but the witty script of Nunnally Johnson and the skilful playing of Stewart make the vacation amusing, at least for the viewer. Based on a novel by Edward Streeter."

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"Mr Hobbs (James Stewart) loathes family holidays and proves his point via a flashback, when he rented a beach house resembling the motel in **"PSYCHO"** and got locked in a bathroom with a drunken Marie Wilson; he

also took along his wife (Maureen O'Hara), some awful brats and a lumpen Finnish daily (Minerva Urecal). Fabian, John Saxon, Reginald Gardiner and John McGiver are also in this soft-centred but amusing comedy, which was written by Nunnally Johnson from a book by Edward Streeter, the author of **"FATHER OF THE BRIDE"**. * "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
review:

"Family encounters plenty of trouble when they try to take a vacation in a run-down beach house. Typical father-against-the-world domestic comedy, which Stewart can play in his sleep. **½ "

The Time Out Film Guide review:

"A wholesome family comedy with Stewart and O'Hara as a couple whose quiet vacation becomes a noisy free-for-all for the kids. Fabian, one of the first rock singers to be created overnight by publicity hype (with hit songs like "Tiger" and "Turn Me Loose"), apart from singing one song, gives a performance so wooden it has to be seen to be believed."

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

"The first of James Stewart's three "harassed father" comedies at 20th-Century Fox in the early Sixties. Here he tries to cope with a nightmare holiday home as well as a difficult family, whose members include Lauri Peters, whose next role took her to Britain as Cliff Richard's leading lady in **"SUMMER HOLIDAY"**. There are some amusing anecdotes involving plumbing and the like, but the enterprise is rather a long way from such previous Stewart comic glories as **"THE JACKPOT"**. ** "

Variety Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Togetherness, all-American family style, is given a gently irreverent poke in the ribs in **"MR HOBBS TAKES A VACATION"**. This is a fun picture, although it misfires, chiefly in the situation development department. Nunnally Johnson's screenplay, based on the novel "Hobbs' Vacation" by Edward Streeter,

is especially strong in the dialogue area. The film is peppered with refreshingly sharp, sophisticated references and quips. But Johnson's screenplay falls down in development of its timely premise, leaving the cast and director Henry Koster heavily dependent on their own comedy resources in generating fun.

Hobbs (James Stewart) is a St Louis banker who has the misfortune to spend his vacation at the seashore with 10 other members of his immediate family, setting up a series of situations roughly designed to illustrate the pitfalls of that grand old Yankee institution, the family reunion.

The picture has its staunchest ally in Stewart, whose acting instincts are so remarkably keen that he can instil amusement into scenes that otherwise threaten to fall flat. Some of the others in the cast, endowed with less intuitive gifts for light comedy, do not fare as well.

Maureen O'Hara is decorative as Mrs Hobbs. Fabian struggles along in an undernourished romantic role, and warbles, with considerable uncertainty, an uninspired ditty, tagged *"Cream Puff"*, by Johnny Mercer and Henry Mancini, who has composed a satisfactory score for the film. John Saxon is mired in a stereotypical role of a pompously dense intellect."

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Somewhat against his better judgement, ever-patient James Stewart takes his wife Maureen O'Hara and their children and grandchildren on vacation. They wind up in a ramshackle old house on the Pacific coast, and he winds up more hassled than when home or at work. Good acting and a clever script make this thin-plotted comedy amusing. *** "

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Interest (as Hercule Poirot once tartly informed a would-be client) *dwindles*... Since the film couldn't quite decide if it was a James Stewart family romp or a teen-market vehicle for Fabian, it disappears neatly between both stools. Other American attempts in the same vein – Cary Grant in **"HOUSEBOAT"** (58) and **"ROOM FOR ONE MORE"** (52) for instance – always look clumsy and forced when compared with the gentle charm, rich character observation and inventive sight gags of Jacques Tati in **"M. HULOT'S HOLIDAY"** (53), easily his most endearing film. The children, as you've guessed, do not have much room to show themselves between messers Stewart and Bonaparte. Michael Burns, playing Danny Hobbs, was 14, his only other reported film as a boy being **"THE WIZARD OF BAGHDAD"** (60). In 1969 he showed up in **"THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK"**.

See subject index under **COMEDY, GRANDPARENTS** and **SEASIDE HOLIDAYS**.