



Pokémon Concierge

A stop-motion for all ages

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Pokémon, the highest-grossing media franchise in the world, has a plethora of spinoffs and adaptations aside from its main lineup of video games, anime, and merchandise. The newest adaptation, an ambitious project by Netflix, promises to be perhaps the most unique of them all in the form of stop-motion animation.

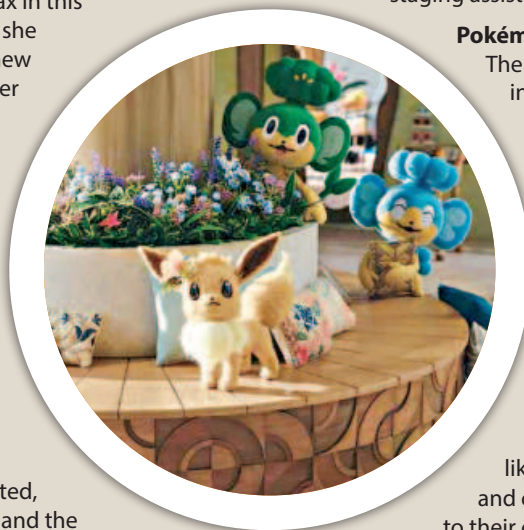
A story about finding yourself

Pokémon Concierge tells the story of Haru, a 20-something young adult riddled with anxiety, coming to the luxurious Pokémon Resort to start a new life as a concierge. However, even when told to do so, her constant stress won't let her relax in this peaceful environment. As such, she has to come to terms with her new carefree lifestyle, letting go of her worries so she can be the best concierge that she can be.

While there hasn't been a full story-centric plotline in the four episodes released so far, each episode deals with themes of growing up, realising your passion in life, and adapting to self-assigned expectations. Such heavy concepts, instead of being shoe-horned into the limited runtime, are subtly featured through the light-hearted, kid-friendly adventures of Haru and the various Pokémon and human guests visiting the resort.

Fantastic stop-motion

While the story is decent at best, it isn't what you came for. The main appeal of *Pokémon Concierge* is its unique animation style – stop-motion. Stop-motion, while not particularly common in modern media, has produced memorable animation movies over the years, including but not limited to *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Coraline*, and *Kubo and the Two Strings*. Even though the use of stop-motion in *Pokémon Concierge* is nearly not as extensive as that of a full-length feature



film, it is still a gorgeous piece of work to behold.

The environment is beautifully crafted and wonderfully dynamic, with something always happening in the background even when not in focus. The human models, while not fitting the typical Pokémon character style, blend well into the hand-crafted sceneries. And of course, the Pokémon models are absolutely fantastic, easily being more quirky and lively than the 3D models in modern Pokémon games. The plush-like puppets used to portray the Pokémon look and act the same as the original designs. But perhaps that's expected, with GameFreak Inc, the maker of the mainline Pokémon games, being credited for staging assistance in this show.

Pokémon like never before

The stop-motion goes a long way in making the Pokémon in the show feel like living, breathing creatures - constantly engaged in one activity or another, not unlike real animals in the wild. The show also does a good job of adding a lifelike feel to the colourful creatures by incorporating a unique variety of sounds. Unlike the anime where Pokémon only say their names, in this series, Pokémon sound like actual animals, making groans and chirps to communicate, similar to their cries in the games. Speaking of sounds, the background music deserves special attention, with soundtracks from the games often being used during important moments.

All in all, the presentation alone makes this short series a treat to the eyes. The four episodes released so far constitute about an hour of full watch time and are an easy recommendation for viewers of all ages. While dedicated Pokémon fans will fall in love with their beloved fictional creatures being portrayed in such a cute animation style, even non-fans with little to no idea about Pokémon will find this unique series a chill, fun watch.

FEEL-GOOD ANIME TO ENJOY DURING WEEKENDS

HORIMIYA

Horimiya is not your typical shoujo love story. It is straightforward with its romance without any complicated plot twists. The characters are the main focus, and their simplistic yet sweet romantic interactions make this show realistic and endearing.

K-ON!

The quintessential slice of life anime, *K-On!* is an easy recommendation for anyone to lighten up their mood. A group of five aspirational high school girls operating a music band in such carefree fashion lets the viewers relish in their innocent comedic antics and appreciate their friendship, while their dedication leaves the viewers in admiration.

SKET DANCE

Sket Dance bears resemblance to *Gintama* in many ways, in a sense feeling like a version of *Gintama* held in a school setting. This has led to the shows often having several collaborations. *Sket Dance* however feels much more relaxed, the comedy is also more approachable and the feel-good scenes are plenty.

NICHIJOU

A slice of life to its core, *Nichijou* is a comedy that has jokes about everyday life on a wide spectrum, from mild-hearted quips to elaborate gags. However, the humour is made that much more impactful through outlandish execution accompanied by jaw-dropping animations just for added comedic effect.

