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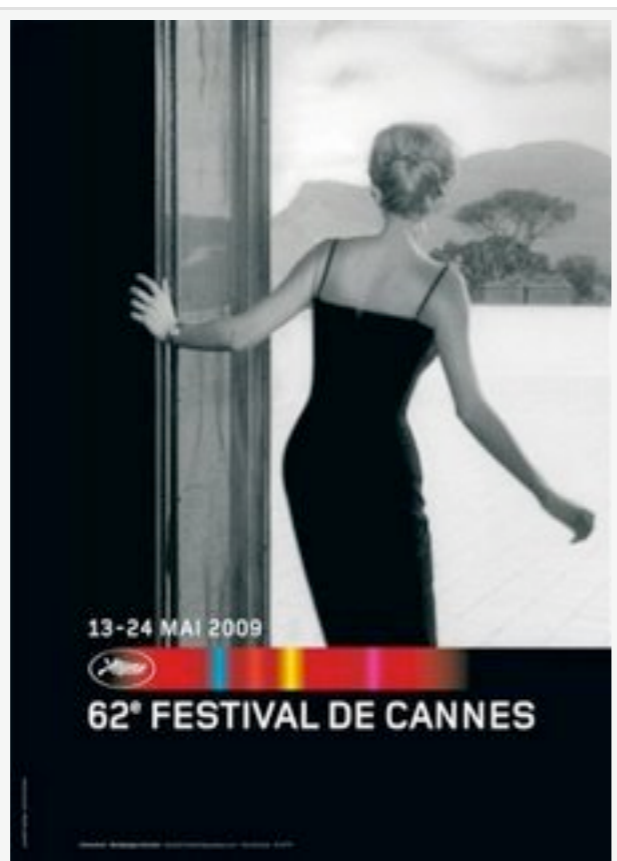
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**Spotlight on the Cannes Film Festival 2009**

By Adrienne Papp 0 comments

Posted on 28 May 2009 at 7:37pm



Courtesy of Festival-cannes.fr

Drinking champagne in **Air France's** business class en route to the **Cannes Film Festival** is how most days should be. Ah, but the French are notorious for all things "Franchie-fabulous," just like their elegant welcome and superb service on their flights. A graciously tasteful presentation with a touch of perfection, unparalleled personal attention, and that special European etiquette is the sweet prelude of the next two weeks in France. The food alone is *magnifique* and makes the choice of flying the official airline of the festival more than worthwhile. Air France is really the best: their world of elegance and gracious hospitality goes really well with the exquisite yet flirtatious glamour of Cannes.

It was good to see that there was little sign of economic hardship along the French Riviera. The place was buzzing busy, with local scooters zipping around

everywhere, limos dropping off celebs creating the aura of glitz and glamour brought to the world's most famous film festival by the international film community. The French are famous for lots of things, but their espresso is an important accompaniment to the hundreds of parties starting in the late afternoon and ending in the wee hours of the morning with champagne and wine flowing like the body of water holding up the multi-million dollar yachts that are home to most cocktail receptions.

The Festival opened, in a big break from tradition, with the Premiere of a delightful animated **Pixar** production. The studio responsible for *Monsters Inc.* and *Finding Nemo* was given the honor of showing *Up*, a heartfelt film enhanced with 3D technology. The French have always been great admirers of animation, and their instincts were right on this one—it was a real crowd pleaser. **John Lasseter**, Pixar's Chief Creative Officer confirmed that all new Pixar and Disney animations will be made in 3D going forward adding an additional "wow" factor to the impressive visuals. Another interesting development based on animation was the announcement of a six-country effort to produce a live-action version of the Japanese anime series *Bubblegum Crisis*, a popular cyberpunk, sci-fi-style anime set in the distant future. It will be the first ever Singapore-Japan-Australia-Canada-China-United Kingdom co-production. Could not be more international.

The press screening of *Up* was followed by the first competition entry, *Spring Fever*, which depicted complicated sexual relationships with a realism that ensures it certainly won't be released in the country in which it was made: China. Afterward, Director **Lou Ye** preferred to talk about free artistic expression, and not so much about the commercial market for his film in China. The dark film set the tone for what was to be a fairly dark slate of entries at the Festival.

Other highly anticipated films shown during the festival were **Quentin Tarantino's** *Inglourious Basterds*, which clocks in at 2 hours and 40 minutes. It's an ambitious film that reinvents history with a plot about Jews killing Hitler, and has added star power with the comic acting of **Brad Pitt** as an Army Lieutenant, and **Christoph Waltz** as his SS nemesis. It was the only American film to win an award at Cannes, with Waltz taking the award for top actor.

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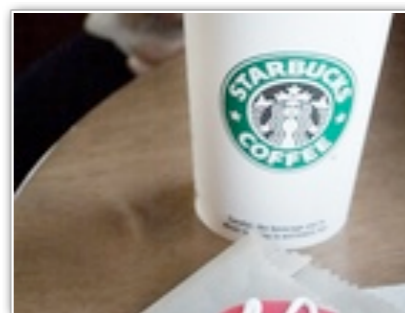
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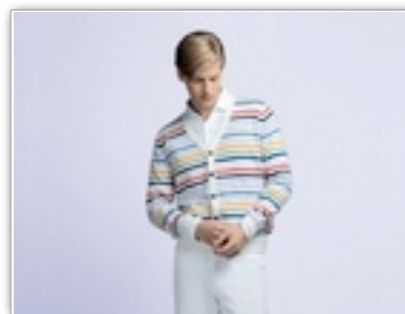


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## Spotlight on the Cannes Film Festival 2009

By Adrienne Papp 0 comments

Posted on 28 May 2009 at 7:37pm

**Lars von Trier**, the adventurous Danish filmmaker, was also on hand with the extremely violent *Antichrist*, his first attempt at a horror film, which earned a best actress award for **Charlotte Gainsbourg**. Gainsbourg tearfully thanked her mother, actress **Jane Birkin**, and her father, the late singer-songwriter **Serge Gainsbourg** at the award ceremony.

With French actress **Isabelle Huppert** serving as president of the jury, three of the eight prizes went to French filmmakers. The Palme d'Or for best film went to director **Michael Haneke** for *The White Ribbon*, which was a return to German-language filmmaking for him. His previous film, *Caché*, was made in French.

The two most popular awards went to French films. **Jacques Audiard's A Prophet** that some attendees thought was the best film of the festival, got the Grand Prix, which is considered Cannes' runner-up prize. The Special Prize, Cannes' version of a lifetime achievement award, went to 87-year-old director **Alain Resnais**, whose film *Wild Grass* was sophisticated, visually inventive, and a crowd-favorite.

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Spotlight on the Cannes Film Festival 2009

At Cannes 2009, the jury seemed to prefer films with darker, edgier themes, ignoring films that were more conventional and upbeat.

Included in the latter category were **Bright Star**, **Jane Campion's** exceptionally well made story of the romance of poet John Keats and Fanny Brawne, along with **Looking for Eric** from British director **Ken Loach**, a crowd pleasing story about a postman who uses a real life football star to advise him on his problems.

Cannes also offered the world premiere of the **UCLA Film & Television Archive's** restoration of 1948's **The Red Shoes**, which was shown to a large and enthusiastic sold-out crowd and was introduced by director **Martin Scorsese**, who told the crowd he'd first seen the film as an 8-year-old in 1950. The restoration couldn't have found a better place to debut than this exciting, passionate, appreciative festival.

Also getting high marks for the color red were **Monica Bellucci** and **Sophie Marceau**, who showed up at the premier of their film **Don't Look Back** (*Ne Te Retourne Pas*) in stunning red dresses. Monica showed off her famous curves in an off-the-shoulder red **Christian Dior** silk gown, which she teamed with a red Dior clutch purse and diamonds. Looking equally statuesque was former Bond girl Sophie in an **Yves Saint Laurent** Editor Soir strapless column dress and killer red heels.

The Cannes Premier of **Anvil! The Story of Anvil** was a real delicacy directed by **Sacha Gervasi** about a legendary rock band reinventing themselves. The documentary is expected to score high this year in its own category at various awards.

Disney pulled an impressive and surprising publicity stunt when they produced snow- flakes and a humongous Christmas tree overnight to market their new production, **A Christmas Carol** starring **Jim Carrey**, which will be released in the winter of 2009. It is never too early to advertise especially when one creates a snowfall in the middle of summer to create a lasting impression.

Once you're at Cannes the screenings and parties never seem to end with their abundant supply of fascinating people shaping the world of art through their extraordinary talent. The Festival was also exceptionally well organized this year due to the amazing job done by Gérald Duchaussoy and Christine Aimé. Their hard work made such a complex event easy to follow in terms of schedule and orientation. It was a privilege for us all to attend this year.

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