

August, 2000 Edition: IMAGINE

PROVINCETOWN PARTYING GOES UPSCALE

By Vinca Liane Jarrett

The 2nd annual **Provincetown International Film Festival** opened with a resounding thumbs up Thursday night, June 15 at the chi-chi **Brass Key Guest House** where the who's who of independent film and the local P-town community gathered by invitation only for the opening night gala celebration. Food was enticingly provided around the glimmering pool and Jacuzzi by the excellent **Front Street Restaurant** to tantalize even the most discerning taste buds, including more than 600 fresh oysters, sushi and rack of lamb, and champagne provided by none other than **Moet Chandon**, spilling over the top and indulged in by the well-coifed, international (dare I say, Jet Set?) patrons arriving from as far as London, Santa Fe, Washington D.C. and Miami. Guests chatted about films seen that afternoon or debated those still to come, as I made my way to the delectable French cream-filled pastries hidden in a spacious living area where the sweet-toothed and beautiful gathered.

Amongst the celebs were **Christine Vacchon**, executive producer of the Academy Award winning **Boys Don't Cry** (Hilary Swank, Best Actress) to be presented Friday evening by super star indie film maker **John Waters** (**Pecker**, **Hairspray**) with the "Filmmaker-on-the-Edge" award. Mr. Waters received the first of such awards last year. Ms. Vacchon expressed excitement at the coming honour as she held on tightly to her small tot, and described upcoming films in the works, such as a film rendition of the dark hit Broadway musical **Hedwig and the Angry Inch**, directed by sometime actor John Cameron Mitchell; Todd Solondz's (**Welcome to the Dollhouse**, **Happiness**) still-as-yet untitled work to be filmed next fall in New York; and her soon-to-be-released **Crime and Punishment in Suburbia** directed by Rob Schmidt and starring Ellen Barkin (**The Big Easy**, **Sea of Love**).

The always congenial and accessible John Waters, serving this year's P-town festival in grand consultant style, talked freely about his upcoming film, **Cecil B. Demented**, an adventure comedy story about a lunatic indie-film director and his renegade group of teenage film makers who kidnap an A-list Hollywood actress and force her to star in their underground film, due for release in August and starring **Melanie Griffith**, and will likely continue Water's fame as the quirky-comedy genre king. Mr. Waters, in one of his more comically endearing moments of the evening, smirked ruefully about his "personal favorite" film of the last year, **American Psycho**, and recommended to young film makers breaking into the business today that in order to "make it" in Hollywood, they should "put sex and violence in[to] your movies."

Other notable guests included **Keith Stone**, representative of IceStorm Distribution, working out of Northampton, Massachusetts, distributors of the campy re-release of the 1968 East German musical **Hot Summer**, directed by Joachim Hasler who died in 1995; **Amico Sante**, local artist here to support his friend **Wolfgang Hastert's** documentary **Pink Narcissis**, by underground gay filmmaker James Bidgood, appearing with **The Queer Reveries of James Bidgood** directed by and introduced by Mr. Hastert; festival volunteer and composer, **Beth Heinberg**, who created the film score for the family mocumentary/musical **Could be Worse**, directed by Boston local Zack Stratis whose

film premiered and won praise at the Sundance Festival last January; and documentary filmmaker, **Debbi McInter** visiting from England.

Local community veteran Louise Robbins declared aptly, that the P-town festivities is a "very special festival...[with] appeal for all people [and an] eclectic assortment of films." Movies most talked about and anticipated by film festival gatherers included **Urbania**, directed and produced by new-comer **Jon Matthews**, and written by **Daniel Reitz** based on his play by the same name, which premiered this evening to rave reviews by attendees and guests at the gala event; **Kristine Hart's Cafe Blase**; **Bad Hair Days**, a film short by **Laurel Brooke** and **Christiane Arbesu**; Canadian feature film **Chutney Popcorn**, directed by Nisha Ganatra; **The Eyes of Tammy Fay**, co-directed by Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato and narrated by RuPaul Charles; the highly praised Cuban flic **Life is to Whistle**, straight from Havana and directed by Fernando Perez; the classic Paramount picture **Sunset Boulevard** directed by Billy Wilder, and starring Gloria Swanson and William Holden; and the notable array of Lesbian Film Shorts gleefully entitled: **Anyway She Likes It**.

P.J. Lang, film festival organizer exclaimed her heartfelt thrill at this year's increase in turn-out, noting that the "increase [is] in quantum leaps [with] tremendous programs[, and] 40 films in 4 days." She was personally most looking forward to the upcoming event honouring **Lily Tomlin** at which **Senator Ed Kennedy** will be presenting the first "Lily Award" to the super star comedienne. Lang noted that next year the festival would increase to five days (from 4), and include an additional 10 films.

It's hard to predict how the P-town International Film Festival will outdo itself next year. This year's opening gala entertained the poolside crowd with titillating food, drink and intense debate over what to wear to each film event. After hours activities included partying at local hotspots such as a drag club with entertainment with P-town local celebrities **Michael Soldier** and **Paige Monroe**, and dancing the night away at varying hipster discos with the in-crowd from the festival. This reporter gives the gala a resounding high-five and looks forward to an increase in star-studded attendees next year from the ranks of the indie world, dare I suggest the Weinstein and Coen Brothers, or even the might Tarantino or invisible Jim Jarmusch? Stay tuned film-lovers for what will prove to be an unimaginable and always impressive rising star event of the film world and the best party Provincetown has ever seen.

If you have questions about any of the contents of this article, you may contact the author at (617) 821-6772. Vinca Jarrett is an attorney of counsel to the firm of Shames and Litwin, a full service law firm with foremost experience in the field of entertainment, including film, music and television. She is also the owner and principal of the script consulting company SKRIPTease, which specializes in screenplay drafting, editing and consulting on feature and television projects both on spec and in production. For more information on Skriptease, please contact Vinca at Skriptease@aol.com.

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