

EUROFICOP présente UNE COPRODUCTION EUROFICOP et TFI FILM PRODUCTION

*mon meilleur pote  
de toute ma vie*

Anne Brochet  
Angela Molina  
Lluís Homar

# UN CHATEAU EN ESPAGNE

un film de Isabelle Doval

JEAN SENEJOUX MARTIN JOBERT avec la participation de STEPHANE FREISS SOPHIE MOUNICOT AZELLE LAFITTE  
MONTAGE NATHALIE LANGSLADE MUSIQUE JEROME DEJON DIRECTEUR DE PRODUCTION JACQUES KATIA  
EN COOPERATION AVEC EUROFICOP TFI FILM PRODUCTION EN ASSOCIATION AVEC MIP PRODUCTIONS avec la participation de CANAL+ et de CINEMA 14  
EN ASSOCIATION AVEC SICRA EUROPRODUCTION avec MICHEL PROFFER JEROME ANGE LE PUGAM

**UN CHÂTEAU EN ESPAGNE**  
**MY VERY BEST FRIEND**

## Review from Mulderville website

(Translation)

### ***Tootpadu review***

Your good mood is guaranteed with this **summer comedy** that will warm up the frozen hearts of the French audience as it is opening during the winter vacation! After a not so bad first feature film (*Laughter and Punishment*), that mostly allowed José Garcia's comic talent to thrive, Isabelle Doval **charms** once more by **her remarkable way she directs her actors**, which quickly makes you forget the initial weaknesses of her second feature film. The presentation is not devoid of some formal awkwardness that seems to slant the film towards a pleasing mediocrity. The overuse of an overwhelming music to the point that it drowns the lines, with a movie-of-the-week photography, made it difficult for us to stick to the film at first.

But **Anne Brochet's performance**, always **so fantastic**, playing an almost unfit mother, a character that becomes more substantial in the second part of the film, along with the **growing confidence** of the two young actors, resulted in **definitely captivating us**. It is in fact too bad that we cannot see more of this superb French actress on our theatre screens, so much that she inhabits her parts with irresistible intensity and genuineness.

Martin, who is a real ball of energy and contagious charm with his acting, and Jean Senejoux, who is more introverted but as intense with his performance, also hold their own to turn "*Un Château en Espagne*" into a **strongly attractive work**.

At last, Isabelle Doval knows how to end her film on a **particularly moving poignant note**. Instead of exhausting the theme of the Billy Elliot style artistic rise, she creates a sudden but beautiful break that refocuses the film onto its main topic: **the vital but fleeting nature of childhood friendships**.

## A sampling of other reviews from Allocine website

(translation)

### **L'Express**

-Christophe Carrière

Two kids, friends and neighbours, will be separated because the family of one, plan to return to the country of their origins. The other takes some initiative to keep his friend near him. A synopsis worth classifying **this story as "G" for audiences of all ages**. But the label might be deceiving. Because, **although we can take our children to see this smaller scale comedy**, it cannot be limited to a tall story- like treatment. Isabelle Doval (*Laughter and punishment*) is more ambitious than that. **She favours the sourness of reality over the sweetness of fiction**. Her young protagonists are neither angels nor devils. They are very often funny and sometimes irritating. **In one word, believable**. And their sweet dream, intrinsic to children of their age – to pursue a career in show biz – is tied with getting that first part in a show, which would enable the kids to stay together. The parents (among whom Anne Brochet, too scarce on our screens) also have their problems. Their little joys too. **In short, everyone finds his own way. And everyone should be very happy**.

## **TéléCinéObs**

-Bernard Archour

Here is a comedy that makes you more smile with tenderness than laugh. From this angle, this chronicle on childhood (...) fills out its contract with rhythm and dignity. And the end is pleasantly surprising.

## **Elle**

-Hélène Villovitch

Even if we are grateful to the filmmaker for avoiding the "clichés" and the typical language used by these youths, we cannot stop thinking that this pre-teenage story happens in a perfectly idyllic milieu.

## **Ouest France**

-La Rédaction

A chronicle on childhood and friendship that does not deliver all that it promises.

## **20 Minutes**

-La Rédaction

The filmmaker of "*Laughter and Punishment*" beautifully falls back in to childhood with that kind of fantasy with sour-candied flavours.

# DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

## Language

Use of expletives like "shit" mostly by adults (Maxime's mother especially), "dammit" (once). The words "bitch" came twice, "jerk" once, in the course of the film.

"**Petit merdeux**" is translated by "*Little shit*" when Esteban tries to distract the mover from Maxime who is stealing some clothes for their theatre.

"**Tais-toi**" is translated by "*Shut up*" (once) which pushes the meaning of "tais-toi" to a more vulgar level in English

Maxime and Esteban are 12 year-old boys who speak a standard French with some Parisian words such as "**une torgnole**", Parisian for "une gifle" ou "une correction" for "*a slap*" or "*spanking*" or Parisian expressions like "**J'ai la dalle**", Parisian for "J'ai faim" which means "*I am hungry*".

- # ***Generally speaking the language used in the film emphasizes the psyche of the two pre-teenagers and sets the tone of this charming comedy filled with emotions. It corresponds to what one should expect from how two little guys like Maxime and Esteban should speak.***
- # ***Some Spanish is spoken mostly as song lyrics***

## Violence

The film starts with a family having a picnic:

- o Maxime and Esteban are "bullfighting": Maxime plays the bull and Esteban the torero. No depiction of violence. Bullfighting here is accepted as a customary entertainment and is treated more like a game without judgment nor discussion.
- o Maxime plays a video game that briefly shows two football players (?) boxing.
- o In their secret theatre, Esteban plays the role of a cow-boy playing with toy pistols and pretending to shoot by making a noise with his mouth.
- o Very brief brawl between Maxime and a schoolmate in the yard with threats like "**Tu t'approches, t'es mort!**" "*You come closer, you're dead!*"

## Sexual activity

Maxime's mother is a widow: her husband, Maxime's father died over 10 years ago. She is grappling with her relationship with Gilbert whom she leaves at one point. In her difficulty to adjust, she sleeps with a self-absorbed, bombastic lawyer, colleague of hers.

**Nothing is shown: everything is suggested.**

***Maxime's mother is seen dining with her colleague. She drinks wine; he speaks of himself. She asks him if they can go to his place.***

***Next scene: she is slightly inebriated or off-kilt, bumps into Esteban's father on his way to get medication for one of his sick children: an opportunity for the filmmaker to emphasize that Maxime's mother is lost and tries to change her life around somehow.***

Esteban is in love with Lucille. Close to the end of the film, Esteban reads her a poem written by Maxime to express what he, Esteban, feels. **Lucille is so touched that she kisses him very briefly on his mouth.**

***The effect is that of a cartoon when Esteban is transported in an enchanted world where he is so happy that he faints and frightens everybody including Lucille who announces that Esteban is dead.***

## Miscellaneous remarks:

- Maxime and Esteban spend all of their time together. They have a hiding place where they act, they dance, they play at being performers so, as a game, **they steal** accessories from their parents or in one comic occasion from a mover's truck.



- As a fact of everyday French living, wine is present at dinners, little pre-dinner gatherings called "**aperitifs**".
- Rare brief shot of man smoking: again, nothing particularly out of context in France.

# Film interest for a young audience



## ■ Looking at childhood friendship(s) on an entertaining mode:

- This comedy shows the two friends Maxime and Esteban as inseparable in all the good and bad actions they do.



They are depicted as pre-teenagers who have their secret lives away from their parents: is it acceptable for them to have this attitude with everything that it implies?

- In the discussion, it is an excellent opportunity to introduce the classic film "**Les 400 coups**" (400 *Blows*) by François Truffaut who marked generations of adolescents and filmgoers since its opening in 1959.

- The end of the film is bitter sweet as it closes one friendship to open up glimpses of future friendships. Is the closeness going to be the same?

## ■ The role of their parents

- On one hand the Spanish family is seen very close to their children but at the same time delaying the news of their return to their country. An interesting reflexion on the influence of parents who are loving, maybe stifling at times
- On the other hand, Maxime's mother is distant. She is not present in the life of her son who does tell her that he wished she were with him when he is invited to visit museums or got to picnics by Esteban's parents.



- Some thoughts on the ideal parents could be the object of either a written essay or an open discussion.

## ■ The identity theme

- Belonging to 2 cultures/ speaking 2 languages: Maxime views Esteban as a French person like him. Although he pretends to be the bull, although the singing and the music are in Spanish, he seems to be oblivious of the duality.
- Maxime's mother explains this duality with a simple example hued with some humour.
- When Esteban feels that he will not be staying in France, his farewell song is sung in Spanish as an affirmation of his Spanish identity, his belonging to his Spanish parents and as a present of himself to his very best friend Maxime.
- The characters bring back to the immigration theme and what it represents to the young Cinéfranco audience in terms of their own identities.

## ■ The story morality

- You can love 2 countries:  
**"Ils aiment la France mais l'Espagne c'est le vrai chez eux"**  
***They love France but Spain is their real home***  
Maxime's mother tells her son.
- **"Tu travailles, tu es le roi"**  
***You work hard, you are the king***  
Esteban's father tells his son and who wants to hear him.
- **"C'est mes parents qui décident"**  
***My parents are the decision makers***  
Esteban tells his friend Maxime
- Love, friendship can make you do things that are not legal (Maxime's mother lying about her identity to help Esteban have an audition for instance)
- Life is not "a box of chocolates" as the ending shows.

