

Inside The Cannes Film Festival

Posted on June 7th, 2008 by Adrienne Papp



The film festival at Cannes has always been one of the world's most glamorous events. As a showcase of international films, movie stars and the talent that create them, the week-long cinematic extravaganza has no equal when it comes to putting on a party. It's an event that attracts jet setters from all over the world, and the international filmmakers and stars are feted at countless awards dinners and ceremonies.

This year, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, the eagerly awaited fourth installment on the series created by **Steven Spielberg** and **George Lucas**, was the key premiere event of the festival.

As the biggest film festival in the world of film, Cannes was the ideal place to premier the first Indiana Jones film in nearly 20 years. Leading up to its premiere, big budget action/adventure tour de force generated intense media speculation, and hordes of international paparazzi swarmed director Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Harrison Ford and the film's other stars wherever they appeared during the festival.



The festival closed with **Wim Wenders'** film *The Palermo Shooting*, but local favorite *Entre les Murs* (The Class) got a standing ovation when it won director **Laurent Cantet** the **Palme d'Or**, the top prize at the festival, beating out twenty-one other entrants. It was the first time a French film has won the prize for best picture in twenty years.

In addition to France's winning entries, Italy's filmmakers were also well received at Cannes. The Grand Prix, the festival's runner-up award, went to **Matteo Garrone's** dramatic *Gomorra*, a film based on **Roberto Saviano's** bestselling book about the Mafia in Naples.



This year **Angelina Jolie** set off an explosion of flashbulbs at the Chinese-themed beachside festivities for "Kung Fu Panda," where she arrived with **Brad Pitt** and costars **Jack Black** and **Dustin Hoffman**. *Indiana Jones* star Harrison Ford and companion **Calista Flockhart** were besieged by media as they celebrated at glitzy **Hotel du Cap** during the week, and took part in the festivities for **Dennis Hopper's** 72nd birthday party aboard a yacht.

Other awards were voted for two industry veterans doing work characterized by jury president **Sean Penn** as being "so rare and so important." One recipient was **Catherine Deneuve**, star of **Arnaud Desplechin's** "A Christmas Tale," a memorable drama about a weeklong family reunion during the Christmas holidays. The other recipient was **Clint Eastwood** for directing "Changeling," a drama made with his solid low key acting and directing skills. Also, in honor of the 85th anniversary of **Warner Bros.**, the festival featured 10 of the studio's films at public screenings on the beach.

The festival at Cannes is always star-studded and glamorous, but it's also an active business setting. This year a weak dollar meant good news for U.S. media companies looking for distribution. In the international film market, where the vast majority of sales are generated by Hollywood for foreign markets, the current exchange rates can only provide a boost to the film business in the U.S.

