



Cannes Confidential V: Pitches, Parties and Footwear

Added May 17, 2011

[Share](#)



By [Victoria Charters](#)

(from the [2011 Cannes Film Festival](#))

Day seven, 8 a.m.

I check my phone to determine what time I last sent a text message — 3:45 a.m. Four hours of sleep feels like not enough, especially when I have an on-camera pitch this morning. *Tant pis pour moi*. Time to get up.

I am determined not to make the same mistakes I did the last time I had the opportunity to pitch a feature idea in three minutes to ShortsHD (the short movie channel) at Cannes 2008. In camera-ready business attire, I'm already well beyond the indie schlump reflected back at me three years ago. At check-in, I introduce myself in French well enough that the girl at the desk notes on her forms that I will be pitching in French. Pleased but panicked, I request English. I am number 49.

The waiting area corrals a stable of fidgeting filmmakers. The guy next to me starts a conversation about his nervousness, not my favorite topic. I attempt a joke about not being

organized enough to have had breakfast. In 2008, I over-rehearsed my pitch, then crashed and burned. This time I know my topic and will improvise for three minutes.

As I pitch, I slow it down and repeat certain phrases that I am familiar with in French. Good start to the day.

Je cherche pour le petit déjeuner. The casino in the Palais has a circular atrium where you can sit and digest both the market and some decent food. Since it is convenient and popular, it is a meeting place at which you are often forced to share a table. Selection dictates that I sit with a high-energy Italian producer and an American director. The Italian producer (currently putting together a \$20 million film helmed by a Palme d'Or winner) regales me with war stories of his last picture and having to remove a frenzied director who crashed a Ferrari two hours after it was entrusted to him. He describes it as a *bagno di sangue* — a blood bath.

6 p.m. The SaskFilm party (for the Saskatchewan, Canada, film commission) is being held in one of the exclusive buildings behind the Grand Hotel. On the walk there, magic hour hits. There is something special about the light here. In the party's manicured gardens, I am extended an invitation by the Film Nova Scotia girls to the Screen [Australia](#) party. Why do these parties all fall between 6 and 8 p.m.?

Instead, we end up at the Bankside Films party on the top floor of one of the buildings along la Croisette. I spend most of my time hanging out over the balcony taking pictures, where I meet a girl who works for the Chanel boutique. She invites me to visit the store later in the week, something I would not normally dare to do. I'm tempted.

Speaking of Chanel, and all things couture, lets talk about shoes. In Cannes it is *très important* to look chic and, like thousands of other women here, I'm a sucker for the sexy four-inch heel. There's a measure of impracticality for which to account as you traverse the cobblestone streets without sight of a spare taxi. The solution that most eventually resort to is carrying little flimsy ballet-style "flats to go" in our purses to save on the ibuprofen and podiatrist bills.

The evening ends with a lovely walk down la Croisette to a friend's yacht moored at the harbor. We take him out to dinner in the rustic quarter of Cannes as a thank you for including us in his Egyptian party escapade earlier in the festival. He tells us the royal family of Qatar had been there. This is information that I wish I'd known beforehand — I would have danced with more restraint. Perhaps.

Photo by [Victoria Charters](#)