

Cannes Confidential VIII: Meetings, Screening, Shopping, More

Added May 20, 2011

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

Day 11.

I rise sometime around 5 a.m. to get ready for the [Short Film](#) Corner (SFC) Buyers Breakfast. I join a group of nervous-looking SFC filmmakers on the terrace in the Palais. These breakfasts are invaluable. In 2008, this is how I found a distributor and sold my short “I Heard the Mermaids Singing.”

Today we meet with about 12 buyers from around the world — Canada, Germany, France, [Australia](#), U.K., Hungary — who proceed to introduce themselves with the following information:

- What they buy (fiction, [animation](#), [documentary](#), etc.)
- Maximum running time
- How many films they buy
- The percentage of national versus international films on their slate
- Rate per minute and terms of contract

Tables are set up, and we circulate and pitch to the buyers over coffee and croissants. I manage to pitch to eight of the 12 buyers despite periodic explosions of yelling outside the terrace. After our pitch breakfast I go outside to see what the ruckus is about. [Sean Penn](#) is doing a press conference for “This Must Be the Place” directed by Paolo Sorrentino. The press photographers are all attempting to get the stars to look in their direction for the money shot. I snap pictures of the setup from my crow’s nest, but a security guard puts his hand in front of my camera and says, “No picture.” Really? No picture of a hundred people taking a thousand pictures?

I check out a screening of “Polisse,” directed by Maiwenn Le Besco. Surprisingly, although “Polisse” is in competition, there are plenty of empty seats in this 73-seat screening room.

At 2 p.m. I make my way down to the Screen Australia office on la Croisette. It’s on the eighth floor with a great view. I have a meeting here with young French composers (twins) who are looking for filmmakers to work with. Somehow from the melee of filmmakers, they have singled me out for a meeting. They’re charming and I will listen to their CD.

At 2:45 p.m. I take a meeting at the Grand with an executive VP of a company that sold its database to IMDb.com and now advises filmmakers and producers on everything from who they think is the right fit for you to work with on a particular project to [film festival](#) strategy. I also find the time to take a walk down Rue d’Antibes to show the shops to a friend enjoying her first visit to Cannes. Key on the tour is the Monoprix, where you can buy everything from underwear and toilet tissue to fine wine and truffle oil.

The last event of my day is presented by Aquitaine, which is hosting a tasting of the finest wines and gourmet specialties from the Bordeaux region at the Plages des Palmes next to the Palais. The swag bag contains travel brochures and location information for filmmakers. I am on the list as a result of attending the Producers Workshop. Despite my RSVP, I am told there are “*Trop de gens et trop peu de vin*” (“Too many people and too little wine”). I let them know I’ve RSVPed, am expected and don’t want to seem rude by not showing up. Security softens, and we are grudgingly permitted to enter. I meet a gentleman whose festival pass is clearly from the 63rd [Festival de Cannes](#) — the year before! He says he got into the party without a tussle. In fact my friend says she has seen him enjoying parties all over town! *Quelle étrange!*

Photo: Shopping on the Rue d’Antibes; photo by [Victoria Charters](#)