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Yes, We Cannes

The annual Cannes Film Festival never fails to combine a sampling of the best in cinema with the not-as-great.

By Michael Giltz

An Advocate.com exclusive posted May 27, 2009

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The big news at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival -- at least for queer cineasts -- was the ho-hum reception to new films from Pedro Almodóvar and Ang Lee and the breakout success of Montreal's out talent Xavier Dolan. Dolan wrote, directed, and stars in *I Killed My Mother*, a blisteringly funny account of a mother and son's love-hate (or, more often, hate-hate) relationship. It dominated the Directors' Fortnight, winning three top prizes, including best French-language film and best first or second feature.



Pedro Almodóvar and Penelope Cruz

Dolan's film will play at the Toronto Film Festival this fall and is rumored to be in the running for the New York Film Festival (which selects only the cream of the crop from other festivals around the world). Confident, handsome, and charming, with just the dash of ego needed for a director, Dolan proved himself a serious talent and is certain to be making films for years to come.

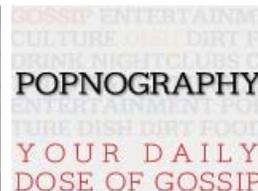
Almodóvar's *Broken Embraces* came and went in the competition without causing much of a fuss. Starring Penélope Cruz, it features his currently typical mix of melodrama (involving a blind director turned screenwriter, a secretary turned mistress, an angry gay son turned would-be director, a dead titan of industry) that adds up to much less than the sum of its parts. Critics shrugged after checking with each other to see if they'd missed something. Was that all there was, they asked? Yep. On the other hand, the brochure that was distributed to the press to promote the film was by far the most lavish and eye-catching of the fest -- it looked more like a fabulous edition of *Vogue* than something as banal as a promotional item. Almodóvar still has style.

Lee's mild, amiable *Taking Woodstock* has a gay central role played by Demetri Martin, and that alone is cause for celebration among his gay fans. It tells the modestly diverting story of a closeted young gay man in the 1960s helping his parents with their ramshackle Catskills hotel when Woodstock comes to town and upends their lives. It too barely caused a ripple even among serious Lee fans and seemed more like a throat-clearing by Lee (who had made a string of serious films) than a substantial work.

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Savoring Artistic Freedom

Costel Iarca survived the oppression of Communist Romania, became an American citizen, and has watched his art thrive as a result.

It's All *Greek*

Dante's Cove star Gregory Michael goes gay (again) on ABC Family's *Greek*, proving the range of gay characters portrayed on TV is bigger than ever.

View From the Hill: Obama's Silence

Next month the Obama administration is expected to present a package of pro-LGBT announcements. But on the heels of his silence surrounding Prop. 8, will it be enough to satisfy the masses?

Gay Marriage Debates vs. *Wipeout!*

Summer TV is here. So where's the brainless fun? Coverage of the California supreme court's Prop 8 ruling or *Wipeout!*? Decisions.

Designing Women Made You Gay

The shoulder-pad sisterhood of ladies from Atlanta that paved the way for *Sex and the City* is now on DVD -- and Dave White is all over it.

Going *Mental* for Marisa

In Fox's new drama *Mental*, Marisa Ramirez plays a lesbian doctor trying to keep the peace and navigate a long-distance relationship in a hospital full of patients gone mad.

San Francisco Scene

When the California Supreme Court handed down its decision to uphold Prop 8, San Francisco's LGBT community instantly took to the streets, determined to be heard -- whatever the cost.

Gloria Allred on Losing Prop. 8

She's spent the last five years trying to bring marriage equality to California, and now, after winning once, attorney Gloria Allred finds herself on the losing end of the state's marriage battle.

Legal Experts Concerned by Fed Prop. 8 Case

Attorneys responsible for a new federal challenge to Prop. 8 rebuffed apprehension from LGBT legal organizations, which contend that such a case before the U.S. Supreme Court could have disastrous consequences.

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