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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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Pedro Almodóvar and Penelope Cruz

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.

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.

Story continues on next page...

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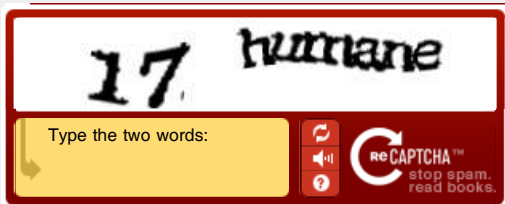
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### Finding Depth

*Finding Me* is not your average "boy meets boy" love story -- few films actually are -- but the new flick sizzles, thanks in part to its emotional depth.

### Gay Watch: Croatia

A onetime Yugoslav republic embraces equality via one of Europe's most sweeping sets of LGBT rights laws. It's a shame too few of its gay citizens are out enough to put them to use much.

### Fish Out of Water

*One Life to Live*'s Scott Evans talks about playing a gay cop's coming-out story and being the openly gay brother of A-List hunk Chris Evans.

### The Great Undoing?

Could a seemingly obscure Supreme Court ruling from 37 years ago prove the undoing of the effort to overturn California's Prop. 8 and establish a federal right to same-sex marriage?

### Frameline Kicks Off

Last night at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco, the 33rd annual Frameline LGBT film festival kicked off to a packed house. The opening-night film -- *An Englishman in New York*, a sequel of sorts to *The Naked Civil Servant* -- this time follows Quentin Crisp in the later years of his life, after he had jumped the pond to Manhattan and become an American treasure, only later to become the scourge of the gay community for a time, following a remark he made about AIDS being a fad in the '80s.

### View From the Hill: The Dems

Despite a last-minute effort from President Obama, for the moment, the LGBT movement -- from big-dollar establishment donors to the grassroots troops -- seems to have turned its proverbial back on the administration.

### Crystal Chappell Says Goodbye to Otalia

Crystal Chappell heads back to *Days of our Lives*, leaving gay soap fans saddened that it's *Lights* out for daytime's same-sex super couple Otalia.

### The Hot Sheet

Michelle Pfeiffer gets her cougar on with Rupert Friend (pictured), the return of Regina Spektor and Felicity Huffman's trip down the rabbit hole round out what's hot in entertainment for the week.

### Lady of the Night

After coming out as a lesbian in 2006, Batwoman finally gets her own comic book series -- and this time, she's out, proud, and here to stay.



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## Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur  
Posted: May 24, 2009 08:22 PM

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# Cannes 2009: Chat With Award-Winning Director Xavier Dolan (Video)



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One of the big discoveries of the festival was Xavier Dolan, the 20 year old writer, director and star of I Killed My Mother. The film won three major awards at the Directors Fortnight and is already guaranteed to be playing at the Toronto Film Festival and -- if the rumours are true -- will probably be invited to the New York Film Festival as well before opening commercially. I've got a full length profile of Dolan that should run on **The Advocate website** in the next few days. Come back here to find a direct link when it goes up or just keep checking out **The Advocate's website**.

Until then, here's a clip for cineastes with the Montreal-based Dolan talking about the visual style he used in his very funny but brutal debut. We were chatting at the private beach of the Majestic Hotel in Cannes, so the sound in the background is the crashing surf. Ce qui charme!



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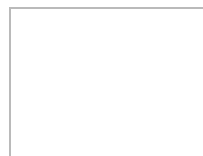
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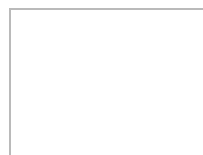
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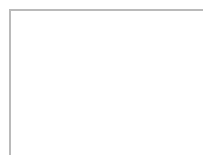
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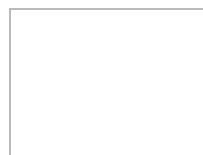
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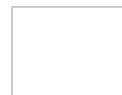
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