



fish

*Wild Tales*  
(Argentina/Spain 2014)

DIRECTOR : Damian Szifron  
RUNNING TIME : 122mins  
RATING : MA15+

**Synopsis:**

Inequality, injustice and the demands of the world we live in cause stress and depression for many people. Some of them, however, explode. This is a movie about those people. Vulnerable in the face of a reality that shifts and suddenly turns unpredictable, the characters of *Wild Tales* cross the thin line that divides civilization and barbarism. A lover's betrayal, a return to the repressed past and the violence woven into everyday encounters drive the characters to madness as they cede to the undeniable pleasure of losing control.

**Review:**

Revenge is the common thread that links Damian Szifron's six fearlessly entertaining tales that range from uproariously funny to bleakly black. While not all the tales are entirely successful, they zing with ideas and energy, economically exploring extreme scenarios and characters pushed to their limits. It's a bit like a multi-coloured mosaic in which Szifron has expanded the boundaries of his mind to create diverse characters whose foibles gather speed and momentum.

*Pasternak*, the first and most economical tale, is by far the funniest and most enjoyable. Beautifully set up, it provides information on a need-to-know basis, teasing us from the outset. It mostly takes place onboard an airplane on which a model (Maria Marull) travelling on business gets talking to the music critic (Dario Grandinetti) sitting in the aisle seat opposite. The revelation that they both have a connection to a person named Gabriel Pasternak is the beginning of a springboard to hilarity.

Rita Cortese as the ex-con fat cook is my favourite character in *The Rats*, in which a loan shark and gangster orders fried eggs and chips, much to the distress of the young waitress whose life he ruined. But the cook (who retorts: 'Nothing I regret' to the question what did she do to be sent to jail) has other ideas, involving rat poison. *Road to Hell* pushes the envelope with a dose of road rage between an Audi-driving businessman (Leonardo Sbaraglia) and a red-neck truckie (Walter Donado). The black ending doesn't disappoint.

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**FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC**

10.00 am Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
8.15 pm Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016

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## **Review:** Cont.

In *Bombita*, Ricardo Darin (*Nine Queens*) is terrific as the engineer, whose sense of injustice from a parking fine sets him on a down slide in which his job, marriage and entire life are casualties. (Remember Tom Hardy in *Locke*?) The surprise happy ending is totally unexpected and emphasizes life's ironies. *The Deal* is my least favourite tale, depicting the very worst of human nature and told without humour. It involves a hit and run accident, the patsy and money-hungry vultures that swoop. Although the finale *Til Death Do Us Part* is a little long, this beautifully drawn elaborate wedding scene with jealous bride, unfaithful groom, helpful chef and others reinforces the notion that the turbulent institution of marriage is indeed 'for better and for worse'. The bridal waltz - to the Blue Danube - has never been so tumultuous.

Nominated for an Academy Award in 2014, the film is a real crowd pleaser as it tugs and pushes us in every direction, dazzling us with surprises and humour around every corner. After all, isn't laughter the best medicine?

Source: [www.urbancinefile.com.au](http://www.urbancinefile.com.au)

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## **Contemporary Argentine Cinema**

In the 1990s, decades of stagnation, led a group of young directors to fight to recover their country's cinematic identity and to show the new reality of Argentina – one that focused less on events of the past and more on pervasive social problems faced by everyday Argentinians.

Whilst the directors that emerged are collectively considered part of the New Argentine Cinema, they are, in fact, a disparate group with particular stylistic tendencies. Yet they are linked by a determinedly contemporary, forward-looking focus, smoothly mixing reality and fiction.

Pablo Trapero (b. 1971) is considered one of the founders of this movement. His film *Mundo Grúa* (Crane World) is a melancholic study about the debilitating working conditions of the migrant labor-system. His other works, including *Bonaerense*, *Familia Rodante* (Rolling Family), *Carancho* and *Elefante Blanco* (White Elephant) have been shown at the Cannes and Venice Festivals.

Juan José Campanella (b. 1959) is now the most famous of the current Argentine directors, having won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 2009 for *The Secret In Their Eyes*. Campanella had previously been nominated for his film, *Son of the Bride*. Other films by Campanella *Same Love*, *Same Rain* and *Moon of Avellaneda* were also blockbusters. Whilst the subjects of these films are often heavy -Alzheimers, broken relationships, family crisis - they are told with a deftly light-hearted touch that adds elements of humour yet maintains the emotional truth of the narrative.

Lucrecia Martel (b. 1966) whose work has a distinctly formal aesthetic and centres mainly on problems faced by the provincial middle-class - family disintegration and so on. She portrays the complex way in which societies erase their guilt for endemic social inequalities. Her first film, *La Ciénaga* (*The Swamp*, 2001) was awarded the Alfred Bauer Award at the 2001 Berlin International Film Festival.

Daniel Burman (b. 1973) is sometimes compared with Woody Allen and is best known for his semi-autobiographical film trilogy portraying the construction of his own identity as an Argentine Jew. The three films, *Esperando al Mesías* (*Waiting for the Messiah*, 2000), *El Abrazo Partido* (*Lost Embrace*, 2004), and *Derecho De Familia* (*Family Law*, 2006), tell Burman's tale of contemporary Argentine society with humour and melancholy.

## Some Thoughts On: *Living is Easy with Eyes Closed*

What a warm and heartfelt way to start the New Year with. This beautifully gentle little film proved to be quite uplifting and moving as our three lead characters supported and cared for each other across the Spanish landscape, all seeking acceptance and understanding in one form or another, in their 'quest' to meet John Lennon. Filmed with a golden, warm palette with a tender and very humorous script this was such a generous and inclusive piece of cinema on a whole range of levels. I just loved it as did so many other members I spoke to at both our screenings.

Set in 1966, full marks must go to the art design department who captured the period so successfully and to the music department's superb backdrop of acoustic guitars. I think my favourite scene was the opening one in the classroom where the wonderful Antonio, (Javier Camara), had his class vocalising the lyrics from 'Help'. Antonio was such a terrific creation - funny, generous, kind and so determined. He carried us along with him so well as we felt his every frustration and eventually shared his hard won moments of triumph and glory. Yes, the nostalgia and sentiment was laid on fairly thickly and yes, it wore its heart on its sleeve, but what a heart!!

Do you remember those times when even quite modest long hair promoted such angst and outrage from parents/adults??? Those were the days! Oh take me back to that seemingly simpler time. Well, I guess this film just did!! With references to the politics of Franco and the wars kept subtly in the background, the true human spirit was given the full and appropriate focus. Just wonderful.

I conclude with my favourite quote from the film. When one of the youngsters complained about the uselessness of certain school subjects, Antonio replied, "Well, your grandfather's useless - but you wouldn't be here without him!!!" **Ross Armfield.**

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### COMING UP:

May	<i>Marshlands</i> (Spain)	Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> & Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>
May	<i>The Mafia Only Kills In Summer</i> (Italy)	Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup>
June	<i>Far From Men</i> (France)	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>

## Message from the President

Our membership has reached a new high. By my reckoning we are just nudging 390 members. Thank you all for your support. We are well aware that not all films please all members, (how on earth could they?), but be assured that the committee tries extremely hard to get the balance of genre, tone and nationality as diverse and varied as it can. Given our growing numbers and mainly positive feedback, I think we get it pretty well right more often than not.

Speaking of members, long term FISH folk Keith and Kay McMenemy have recently moved to Victoria to be much closer to their family. On behalf of the membership I would like to wish them well and to thank Keith for his many intelligent and insightful review contributions to our newsletter. Thank you and good luck Keith and Kay.

By the time you receive this newsletter the committee will have selected the first seven films in our next season, 16/17. We will inform you of them and their screening dates as soon as Gerard at the Empire locks them in with the distributors and squeezes us into his regular, crowded program. This may seem early but I know many members, who are keen to join again next season, love to know our future dates well in advance so they can plan weddings, birthday celebrations, holidays, general elections, bar mitzvahs, (their lives basically), around our screenings. Wise people!

A reminder that we will have no screening in April this season due to an overly crowded Empire program. Our 'April' film, *Marshlands*, will screen on the 1st and 3rd of May. Our May film will screen right at the very end of the month.

After two very gentle films, we travel to Argentina this month for the BAFTA Award winning and Academy Award nominated black comedy, *Wild Tales*, with its theme of vengeance. A complete change of direction and one I know many are anticipating with some degree of relish.

Yours in film,

Ross Armfield.



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