



MICHEL PICCOLI: A FEARLESS TALENT

Belle de Jour

Belle de Jour

A film by: Luis Buñuel

©: Paris Film Production

Co-production: Paris Film Production, Five Films

Production/Presented by: Robert Hakim,
Raymond Hakim

Production Manager: Henri Baum

Unit Manager: Marc Goldstaub

1st Assistant Director: Pierre Lary

2nd Assistant Director: Jacques Fraenkel

Script Supervisor: Suzanne Durrenberger

Adaptation/Dialogue: Luis Buñuel,
Jean-Claude Carrière

Based on the novel by: Joseph Kessel

Director of Photography: Sacha Vierny

Camera Operator: Philippe Brun

1st Assistant Camera: Pierre Li

2nd Assistant Camera: Lionel Legros

Stills Photography: Raymond Voinquel

Supervising Editor: Louissette Hautecœur

Assistant Editor: Walter Spohr

Art Director: Robert Clavel

Assistant Art Director: Marc Robert Desages

Set Decorator: Maurice Barnathan

Properties: Pierre Roudeix

Catherine Deneuve's Dresses by:

Yves Saint Laurent

Costumer: Hélène Nourry

Key Make-up: Janine Jarreau

Hairstylist: Simone Knapp

Sound Recording: René Longuet

Sound Assistant: Pierre Davoust

Sound Re-recording: Poste Parisien

Novel 'Belle de Jour' Published by:

Editions Gallimard

Studio: Franstudio-Saint Maurice

Cast:

Catherine Deneuve (*Séverine Serizy*)

Jean Sorel (*Pierre Serizy*)

Michel Piccoli (*Henri Husson*)

Geneviève Page (*Madame Anaïs*)

Pierre Clémenti (*Marcel*)

Françoise Fabian (*Charlotte*)

Macha Méril (*Renée*)

Muni (*Pallas*)

Maria Latour (*Mathilde*)

Claude Cerval (*chauffeur*)

Michel Charrel (*footman*)

Iska Khan (*Asian client*)

Bernard Musson (*major-domo*)

Marcel Charvey (*Professor Henri*)

François Maistre (*the professor*)

Francisco Rabal (*Hippolyte*)

Georges Marchal (*the duke*)

Francis Blanche (*Monsieur Adolphe*)

uncredited:

Bernard Fresson (*Le Grille*)

Dominique Dandrieux (*Henriette*)

Brigitte Parmentier (*Séverine as a child*)

D. de Roseville (*coachman*)

Pierre Marçay (*intern*)

Adélaïde Blasquez (*maid*)

Marc Eyraud (*barman*)

Max Elloy (*the duke's butler*)

Luis Buñuel (*man at café*)

Louis Viret (*debt collector*)

Stéphane Bouy, Antonio Passalia (*men in bar*)

Pierre Vaudier, Albert Daumergue (*surgeons*)

Claude Salez (*man who strikes Marcel*)

France-Italy 1967©

101 mins

Adapting Joseph Kessel's novel about a married bourgeois Parisienne led by idle curiosity to work afternoons in a high-class brothel, Buñuel consistently gives only scant indication as to what is real and what is part of her colourfully masochistic fantasy life. Eschewing sensationalism for cool discretion, he elicits marvellously nuanced performances from Catherine Deneuve as the perversely innocent Séverine and from Piccoli as Husson, her perversely principled womanising suitor.

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Most of all, Buñuel wanted to go back to work in Spain again. He had been encouraged by reports that the brouhaha over *Viridiana* had calmed, that censorship there had been relaxed. He returned. Then, after months of preparation, in the summer of 1963, Franco's government refused the shooting authorisation for his version of Galdos' *Tristana*. Later that year, in France, he made one of his finest films, *The Diary of a Chambermaid*. When shown in Paris, in 1964, it was coolly received. A year later, one of his old pet projects, an adaptation of Lewis's *The Monk*, was finally about to take shape. At the last minute the production company was dissolved, and it too had to be written off. The Hakim Brothers then approached Buñuel to ask him to consider a screen version of Joseph Kessel's novel, *Belle de Jour*. He accepted, and cloistered himself in an ultra-modern building in Madrid with Jean-Claude Carrière (co-scenarist on *Diary* and *The Monk*). They finished the script in five weeks. The shooting schedule for this, Buñuel's 27th film, was ten weeks. He brought it in in eight.

Belle de Jour is a masterpiece, technically Buñuel's most accomplished, free-flowing work. It is unique, the only one of his films in which his obsessions, his purity, and his convulsive spirit have all been fully, satisfactorily organised into an architectonic whole. It unfolds so smoothly, with such sustained legato, that there is no chance to catch a breath. *Viridiana* was a step in this direction, the underrated *Diary* a near-arrival. *Belle* is the many-faceted and perfect Golden Bowl which crowns a life's work. When released in Paris recently, it was greeted with shock, reticence and disappointment by most of the critics for the daily and weekly papers. The great man, tired, deaf, 67 years old and alcoholic (his own admission), now only wants to return to Mexico and rest.

Joseph Kessel's novel, published in 1929, whipped up a fair *succès de scandale* at the time. Although Buñuel has said of it: 'La novela no me gusta nada,' it is a far from uninteresting book, firmly in the tradition of the French *roman psychologique*, and a precursor of the post-war, but already classic *Histoire d'O*. It concerns a beautiful young *grande bourgeoisie*, Séverine Serizy, wife of a handsome young surgeon (Pierre) whom she deeply loves. She has every reason to be happy, but of course isn't. She learns that an acquaintance, a woman of her own class, is working in a brothel. Séverine gradually becomes obsessed by the thought of such a situation, finds out the address of one of these bagnios, and applies for a job there. She only works afternoons from two to five – thus her sobriquet, Belle de Jour. Frigid in the arms of her kindly, well-behaved husband, she is impelled by a masochistic urge for humiliation which leads her to seek out 'rough trade'. Marcel, a doting young gangster, falls in love with her; she soon becomes very fond of him. The devoted hoodlum

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La Mort en ce jardin (Evil Eden)

Thu 1 Jun 20:35; Tue 6 Jun 18:15

Le Mépris (Contempt)

From Fri 2 Jun

The Diary of a Chambermaid

(Le journal d'une femme de chambre)

Fri 2 Jun 18:15; Fri 16 Jun 20:55

Belle de jour

Fri 2 Jun 20:40; Sun 25 Jun 18:45

Les Choses de la vie (The Things of Life)

Sat 3 Jun 12:30; Tue 13 Jun 20:45

Themroc

Sat 3 Jun 15:00; Wed 14 Jun 18:15

La Grande Bouffe (Blow-Out)

Sat 3 Jun 20:30; Mon 12 Jun 18:10

Ten Days' Wonder (La Décade prodigieuse)

Sun 4 Jun 15:20; Sat 17 Jun 20:40

Vincent, François, Paul et les autres

Sun 4 Jun 18:00; Sun 18 Jun 13:10

Beyond Good and Evil:

The Discreet Charm of Michel Piccoli

Mon 5 Jun 18:15

Passion

Tue 6 Jun 21:00; Fri 16 Jun 18:20

Spoiled Children (Des enfants gâtés)

Wed 7 Jun 18:10; Mon 12 Jun 20:40

Une chambre en ville (A Room in Town)

Wed 14 Jun 20:45; Sat 24 Jun 13:00

Mauvais sang (The Night Is Young)

Sat 17 Jun 15:15; Thu 22 Jun 20:40

Milou en mai (Milou in May)

Sun 18 Jun 16:00; Mon 26 Jun 20:40

Belle toujours

Wed 21 Jun 20:50; Sun 25 Jun 16:30

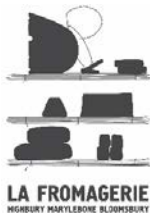
La Belle Noiseuse

Sat 24 Jun 15:20; Wed 28 Jun 18:10

Habemus Papam – We Have a Pope

Sun 25 Jun 14:00; Thu 29 Jun 20:45

Promotional partner



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attempts to kill a friend of her husband who is about to inform Pierre of Séverine's double life. The murder misfires when Pierre intervenes, and it is he who is seriously wounded. He recovers, but is paralysed, condemned to a wheelchair. Overcome by guilt, Séverine confesses everything. Pierre never speaks to her again.

Kessel elevates this novelettish plot through a convincing portrayal of the frightening divorce between the heart and the senses. In 1936, Philippe Hériat adapted the book for the stage. The play was rejected by 16 theatre directors and as many actresses. It is a sentimental watering-down of the novel, with an unconvincing happy ending. It has never been performed; with luck, it never will be.

Although Buñuel does not fancy the novel (he didn't like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* much either), he stated: 'I found it interesting to try to make something I would like, starting from something I didn't ... I enjoyed complete freedom during the shooting of *Belle*, and consider myself entirely responsible for the result.' He took pains with the editing, modifying several sequences in the process – a procedure rare for him. Hindered often in the past by tight budgets, his only inconvenience here was the producers' insidious auto-censorship; several cuts were made by them before *Belle* was sent to the censors.

Buñuel's last great film is close in spirit to his first great film, *L'Age d'Or*. Indeed, one of the things in *Belle de Jour* which seems to have bothered people is its fidelity to what can only be called the true spirit of surrealism: not the tacky Surrealism to be found in the moth-eaten commemorative art shows which have popped up from time to time in Paris, London or New York art galleries since the war, but the invigorating, positive, liberating surrealism which marked *L'Age d'Or*, caused riots when that film was first shown, and resulted in its being banned for a generation. The result is more mellow, less overtly aggressive than *L'Age d'Or*, even calm. But it is all there.

Buñuel: '*Belle de Jour* is a pornographic film ... by that I mean *chaste* eroticism.'

Elliott Stein, *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1967

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