



64^e Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama



NATURAL RESISTANCE

JONATHAN NOSSITER

10 years after Mondovino, world acclaimed director Jonathan Nossiter offers a model of charmed and joyous ecological and cinematic resistance against the new world economic order.

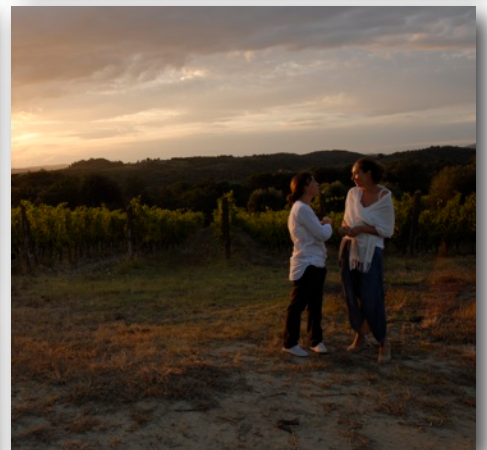


TECHNICAL INFO

Duration: 86 minutes
Ratio: 1.85
Sound: 5.1

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Les films du Rat
10, cité d'Angoulême
75011 Paris



WORLD SALES - REZO

Sebastien Chesneau
sebastien.chesneau@rezofilms.com
+336 2171 3911

Laurent Danielou
laurent.danielou@rezofilms.com
+336 6420 9160

PRESS CONTACT

Makna Presse
festival@makna-presse.com
Giulia Fazioli +41 79 617 00 31
Audrey Grimaud +336 717 498 30
Chloé Lorenzi +336 081 660 26



SYNOPSIS

Four Italian winegrowers live a life we all dream of: Giovanna Tiezzi and Stefano Borsa in their converted 11th century monastery and winery in Tuscany find a way to grow grains, fruits and wine that creates a link to their ancient Etruscan heritage ; Corrado Dottori and Valerio Bochi, refugees from industrial Milan in their grandfathers farmstead in the magical Marches labour for a rural expression of social justice; ex-librarian Elena Pantaleoni working her fathers vineyards in Emilia, strives to make her estate a utopian reality; and then Stefano Bellotti, the Pasolini of Italian agriculture, a radical farmer poet, disrupts everyone's rules from his avant garde farm in the Piedmont.

But these protagonists of a rapidly spreading European natural wine revolution have encountered fierce resistance. Not everyone believes in their struggle for an ecologically progressive, economically just and historically rich expression of Italian agriculture. With the help of their delightfully eccentric film curator friend Gian Luca Farinelli, these very contemporary peasants use the power of fiction films to combat the institutional lies that make any act of freedom today an act of dangerous dissent.

10 years after Mondovino, the wine world has changed just like the world itself. The enemy is now far greater than the threat of globalization. Its everywhere and nowhere. Its them. And us. But these natural wine rebels against the "New World Economic Order", offer a model of charmed and joyous resistance. Natural Resistance mixes documentary and fiction in the hope of stirring the hidden rebel inside all of us.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan Nossiter, an American-Brazilian dual national now based in Rome, was born in Washington D.C. in 1961 and grew up in France, England, Italy, Greece and India. He has directed six feature films. The most recent is "Natural Resistance" (2013). His previous films include "Rio Sex Comedy" (Toronto, 2010) starring Charlotte Rampling, Bill Pullman and Irène Jacob and "Mondovino", an anthropological comedy nominated for the Palme D'Or in Cannes in 2004 -one of only three documentaries ever nominated in the history of the festival. A 10 part series derived from the feature had its world premiere at MOMA in New York in 2006.

He co-wrote and directed "Signs & Wonders" (2000), a psychological thriller set in Greece, with Charlotte Rampling and Stellan Skarsgard (nominated for a Golden Bear, Berlin Film Festival 2000). "Sunday" (1997), a black comedy he directed, produced and co-wrote, starred David Suchet & Lisa Harrow and won the Sundance Film Festival's Grand Jury Prize for Best Film and Best Screenplay and the Deauville Film Festival's Grand Prize for Best Film and their International Critics' Prize and was shown in "Un Certain Regard" at Cannes. He also wrote, produced and directed "Resident Alien" (1991), a feature length comedy mixing documentary and fiction about the end of Manhattan's bohemia, with Quentin Crisp, John Hurt, Sting and Holly Woodlawn. (Panorama, Berlin Film Festival 1991).

His non theatrical documentaries include "Losing The Thread" (2001) for RAI in Italy and the Sundance Channel in the US, an hour long film on art fraud, tourism and the elasticity of the male ego in Tuscany (Rotterdam Festival) and "Searching for Arthur", a look at Arthur Penn, for Telepiu's series "Directors on Directors" (Locarno Festival) and "Making Mischief" on the preparations for "Signs & Wonders".

His book "Le Goût & Le Pouvoir" was first published in 2007 by Grasset in France and won the World Gourmand Award for Best Book of Wine Literature in 2008. In the US & UK it was published as "Liquid Memory" in 2009 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux and 2010 from Grove Atlantic, with the Italian edition published as "Le Vie del Vino" by Einaudi in 2010 (winner of "Best book on wine and culture" at Pescara) and in Brazil, Greece, Portugal and Japan. He studied painting at the Beaux Arts in Paris and the SF Art Institute and Ancient Greek at Dartmouth College. He worked as an assistant director in English theatre and for Adrian Lyne on "Fatal Attraction". He's made wine lists for restaurants in New York, Paris, Rio, São Paulo and Rome.



FILMOGRAPHY

"Rio Sex Comedy" (2010) w/ Charlotte Rampling, Bill Pullman, Irène Jacob (Toronto Fest Gala)

"Mondovino The Series" (2007) (Museum of Modern Art, premiere)

"Mondovino", (2004) (Competition - Cannes)

"Losing The Thread" (2001) (Rotterdam)

"Making Mischief" (2001) (Rotterdam)

"Signs & Wonders" (2000) w/ Charlotte Rampling, Stellan Skarsgard (Competition - Berlin)

"Searching for Arthur" (1997) w/ Arthur Penn (Locarno) (Italy)

"Sunday" (1997), w/ David Suchet, Lisa Harrow (Sundance Grand Jury Prize, Regard - Cannes)

"Resident Alien" (1991) w/ Quentin Crisp, John Hurt (Panorama - Berlin)

CREDITS

Director: Jonathan Nossiter

Producers: Jonathan Nossiter; Paula Prandini, Santiago Amigorena, Giacomo Claudio Rossi

Co-producers: Santiago Amigorena, Giacomo Rossi

Production Companies: Les Films Du Rat, Prodigy, Goatworks Films with the Cineteca di Bologna

Camera & sound: Jonathan Nossiter, Paula Prandini

Editor: Jonathan Nossiter

Assistant Editor/Post production director: Alberto Rigno

Sound Design: Marcos Molina, Rec'n'Play

Color: M141, Prodigy, Antonio Centonze

Animated Sequence: Chiara Rapaccini, Loïc Sturani

Posr Production: M141, Paris

CAST

Stefano Bellotti, Elena Pantaleoni, Corrado Dottori, Giovanna Tiezzi, Stefano Borsa, Valeria Bochi, Gian Luca Farinelli, Anna Pantaleoni, Bobby Vernon, Mario Soldati, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Charlie Chaplin, Alberto Sordi,

SCREENINGS

MARKET SCREENINGS

Saturday 8 12:15pm CinemaxX 9
Monday 10 3:50pm MGB Kino

OFFICIAL SCREENINGS

Saturday 8 8:00pm CineStar 7
Sunday 9 10:00pm Zoo Palast 2
Monday 10 2:00pm International
Thursday 11 7:30pm MGB Kino
Saturday 15 8:00pm CineStar 7

INTERVIEW with the Director Jonathan Nossiter

How did the film come about?

This past summer on a family visit to a magical 11th century monastery-turned-winery in Tuscany, I found myself in the most amazing company. Giovanna Tiezzi and Stefano Borsa of Pacina generously hosted a meeting between two other natural winemakers, Corrado Dottori and Stefano Bellotti and Gian Luca Farinelli, director of Italy's leading film restoration lab and cinemathèque, the Cineteca of Bologna. The purpose of the late summer meeting was to discuss an event we're planning in Bologna at the Cineteca to celebrate the spirit of resistance among Italian farmers who continue to make agricultural products of historical and cultural value –from salamis, grains and cheeses to wine- that have become somehow illegal in the repressive eyes of the Brussels « bureaucratarchy. »

As they sat discussing the challenges of transmitting the vitality of the past through the present –via wine grapes or via cinema- I suddenly had the feeling that this exchange between an entirely new breed of radical farmers and an equally enlightened defender of urban culture, was itself a moment of cinema. It was a passionate, moving, effortlessly ironic and provocative encounter that felt like a privilege to attend along with my wife Paula Prandini (documentarian & photographer) and our three children. And since we happened to have the film camera with us, I fetched it from my room. From then on, the barriers between friendship and work, a camera and its subject, the eye of two different filmmakers all seemed to merge naturally in this idyllic garden with these enchanting and compelling characters.

That they were also discussing issues of vital ecological, social and cultural importance -but always in a joyously anarchic and personal (Italian) way- made the delight of being there all the more intense. For the next week, my wife and I became junkies, deciding to go visit these winemaker guests (and another friend of theirs) in situ. The camera we shared between us followed our accidental protagonists into the fields and vineyards where they farm, as we took our three children from the Marche to Emilia-Romagna and the Piedmont.

But in a way the seeds for this film were first planted with Gian Luca Farinelli two years ago when we organized together a delirious series of encounters at the Cineteca di Bologna. Over the course of three weeks, we paired anticonformist filmmakers with anticonformist winemakers in a series entitled « Cinevino ». One night, Ettore Scola presented his 1972 masterwork « Più bella serata della mia vita » while the audience drank the wine of Elena Pantaleoni of La Stoppa. And after the film, served with a second wine from Elena, the audience had a chance to talk wine, cinema and politics with both artisans. Another night, there was Gian Vittorio Baldi with his underground classic from 1968 « Fuoco » discussing the fine art of dissent in Emilia-Romagna with natural Lambrusco producer Camillo

Donati, as the audience drank the latter's frothing red wines. The fact that Baldi, director and producer of Godard, Bresson and Pasolini was also the first winemaker in the region to make natural wine in the early 1970's made the conversation flow even faster.

What felt different about shooting with winemakers in 2013?

It's true that after Mondovino I never imagined I'd ever return to shoot in vineyards again. After editing the ten part series in 2006, I was quite sure my passion for putting wine in the movies had been utterly exhausted and I actively refused numerous requests in the following years to do "another wine film". I think the only way it could've happened was exactly the way it did. By total accident. And by becoming something very different from "a wine film." But until I sat down in the editing room I wasn't even sure there was a film at all. The felicitous accident of the shoot (and Arthur Penn once told me during a documentary we made together on the subject of film directing that "all cinema is a series of felicitous accidents") brought me a bolt of energy but not necessarily a complete story. But as the underlying storyline of these four winegrowers emerged, so did a sense of how a larger narrative could take shape. Their life and death struggle for the survival of the truly independent artisanal gesture in a post-globalised world resonated deeply with me, as it had to, as a filmmaker. And the happy presence of Gian Luca Farinelli, one of the most impassioned defenders of our (endangered) collective cinephilia, became critical to establish a link between the world of the dissenting farmer –genuine agriculture- and the world of dissenting cinema – so-called "high culture".

While I've accompanied closely the international natural wine revolution of the last ten years, nurturing my relations with winegrowers as much as possible, I didn't imagine I could film with its protagonists in a way that would be fresh and stimulating for me as a filmmaker. But the combination of the entirely unplanned nature of the encounters as well as a deeper sense of who these new winemakers really are, created a renewed appetite.

Who are these winemakers?

In fact, these revolutionary "new-style" peasants are able to see their own agricultural activity in a much larger political, social and ecological-economic framework than possibly any farmers before them* (please see the Michel Serres citation at the end of this interview). Though some like Stefano Bellotti have practiced an ecologically and politically radical form of agriculture for many decades, there's no question that the explosion of this trans-European and increasingly international movement (spearheaded by the French and the Italians) has been the result of a newly

converted/created “peasantry”. Like Corrado Dottori and Valeria Bochi in the film, thousands of natural winemakers have fled dying or deeply suffering activities like photography, cinema, journalism, academia etc. But they have also abandoned fields like banking, which are ostensibly thriving though not in a direction that even some (ex)bankers can accept. So for me as a filmmaker, these encounters today with these winemakers –this new “casting”- felt entirely different from the protagonists in Mondovino ten years ago. If the characters of Mondovino seemed like actors on a collision between 1980’s Hollywood and classic French cinema of the 1930’s, the cast of this film feels to me decidedly like they all belong in the deliriously free-spirit of the 1960’s and 70’s “commedia all’Italiana.”

How did this fusion of cinema and a new wine world impact the editing?

I suddenly no longer felt confined. Neither confined by the “high-brow” snobbery of cinema nor by the concrete limitations of wine or farming. In fact, a keen and electric dialogue emerged during the editing between film and wine. The entire process became a joyous conversation between two worlds that have a surprising amount in common and may have something to learn from one another. Most of all, this collision, provoked a series of questions for me and for the film itself;

What does it mean to create something entirely artisanal and personal in a world increasingly intolerant of what isn’t reproducible and marketable on a mass scale? What is the value and urgency of transmitting the past, whether through “high culture” or (so-called) “low culture” in a period in which the past is viewed as an obstacle, if it’s viewed at all? What is ethical resistance to a bankrupt, corrupting political and economic system? How does an artisan-farmer express dissent and civil disobedience and how does a filmmaker or artist do the same? Can it be the same? What has the rebellious gallows humour of a Mario Monicelli hero in Napoleonic times have in common with the irony of a rebel farmer today combating the New Empire in Brussels?

Are Mondovino and Natural Resistance related?

Only superficially. Though they both feature winemakers as central characters, they’re completely different in origin, ambition and scope. Mondovino was the result of four years of investigation across the world, shooting in 12 countries. It presented a vast, anthropological view of a very precise, global culture across 2 ½ hours of film. The 85 minutes of Natural Resistance, instead, is the fruit of a late summer shoot in four Central Italian farms. In the editing, a feeling emerged that I hope will also be felt by those who see the film: that we’re sharing a summer’s day in the

company of a few new/old friends. And the film itself mixes documentary and fiction in a free-spirited way that bears no resemblance to the more specific documentary focus of Mondovino. Finally, ten years ago, most people agreed that the principal threat to liberty and diversity came from globalization. Today, the things that threaten our freedoms and the safeguard of our personal, cultural and political differences seem to me more subtle, but much more dangerous. So while Natural Resistance is infinitely more modest in scale – it may convey a different sense of urgency.

What is the nature of the production?

Given that the film was born from a series of unplanned encounters and that the editing process was conducted in a state of absolute personal and professional freedom, I guess the production could be described as being as natural and instinctively anticonformist as its subject matter. And at least the making of it was as free-spirited. At any rate, this film was born and raised entirely outside of any market considerations and outside of any financial constraints. That is, the only possible way to rival the power of a Hollywood mega budget production where money is not a problem, is to dispense with money altogether.

I was also directly inspired by a number of fellow directors like Santiago Amigorena (who’s current film on screens in France, “Les Enfants Rouges” was consciously made without the circulation of money from start to finish); Laurent Cantet (just returned from a 3 week shoot in Cuba and a meditation on the tortured fate of the revolution and its meaning for those who’ve abandoned hope for meaningful change anywhere); Ira Sachs in Berlin with “Love is Strange” his second straight film (after the equally tender and bold “Keep the Lights On”) funded entirely by the crowd-funding site, Kickstarter; Karim Ainouz (also in Berlin with the lyrical retro-futuristic “Praia do Futuro”) and other colleagues who are all finding original and diversely personal ways to circumvent the growing “market-ideological” constraints on filmmaking. Over ten years ago, these filmmakers and I (along with Oren Moverman) formed a loose association of directors, designed to combat the fracturing, isolating nature of the film business, which always seems happy to keep filmmakers separated. Slowly and casually we’ve helped each other out here and there (and grown to include over 40 other directors, many of whom I don’t know!) and cross-pollinated in ways that are always surprising to us. Given the difficulties of maintaining a true independence of spirit and action -whether in cinema, journalism or elsewhere- this group is now working on a project (to be announced later this year), directly inspired by what the naturally independent natural winemakers have been able to achieve collectively in the past decade.

So, what inspired you in these winemakers?

The so-called « crisis » in Europe and North America is a euphemism sold by those who've lost nothing in the past few years to soften the otherwise unacceptable shock of the new social-economic order.

Among other victims, the culture of the artisanal gesture - authentic, free and as old as our civilisation- has been damaged as never before. Miraculously in the world of wine a group that unites rich and poor, Left and Right, the middle class and anarchists, has resisted with astonishing success. For years I've been wondering if my filmmaking colleagues would follow their lead.

In the last ten-fifteen years, these natural winemakers have transformed the basic idea of wine, especially in France and Italy but increasingly elsewhere also, exposing the cynicism and chemical manipulation of most conventional wine. Thousands of farmers and recently converted farmers (many fleeing dying businesses and paralyzed or plummeting urban lives) have declared their liberty to make wine, to practice agriculture, with a profound respect for the history and health of a place. These natural winemakers have scorned the cynical bureaucratic compromise of certified « organic » wine (Brussels' and the US's organic regulations are dictated by the chemical and pharmaceutical industry to ensure nothing real can be enacted). Instead, the « vignaioli naturali » have renewed the life of a libation that has provided joy and comfort for eight thousand years. Turning their back on the rules of the marketplace, they are united in their absolute respect for the health of their soils, the people, animals and insects who bring them to life and the humans who will eventually drink the fruit of their labour. They also consider that the most beautiful fruits of the land should be democratic and accessible to all, and price their wines, cereals, fruits and vegetables accordingly. It's no surprise that in Europe and in North America, natural wine bars and restaurants are exploding, followed especially by young people much more lucid about the meaning of commercial fraud than my generation. In fact my young assistant editor Alberto Rigno was very helpful during the editing process in opening out the film's dialogue to his generation.

These characters and their collective response provide, for me, a joyful model of resistance to all soul and liberty-crushing norms and regulations that come crashing down harder each week from corporations and the national and international institutions that increasingly only serve them.

« Natural Resistance », for me, is a love letter to the enduring power of cinema (and agriculture !) as an act of spirited dissent. I also feel the film as a testament to the delight of friendship and family, not just one's own but any expression of them that conveys a sense of both freedom

of interpretation and responsibility : for the past, the present and the future.

*French philosopher Michel Serres has said that "if 200 years ago peasants were ignorant and only people in cities could understand the state of the world" and what the future could –and should- hold in store, today the opposite is true; while urban dwellers become increasingly less autonomous, "only peasants, farmers have any real sense of what's really at stake for the world."

