

BERNARD MENEZ, DOUNIA COESENS, SEBASTIEN THOEN
PATRICK MIMOUN, XAVIER BERNARD ET LEA FRANCOIS IN

LA NUIT ESPAGNOLE

UN FILM INTERNATIONAL DE XAVIER BERNARD

The Spanish Night

With Bernard Menez (playing himself, actor known for the film « *Day for night* » from François Truffaut, Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1973)

Adapted from a 40-minute short film directed by Xavier Bernard.

Duration : 1H40 `

Teaser vimeo of the film (7 minutes):

<https://vimeo.com/1072241631>

Password: 2025

Tagline: It's the story of a 50-year-old man chasing after his youth... and finally catching up with it.

Logline: Xavier, a fifty-something actor and party animal, travels to Spain to free his old British friend from a tyrannical marriage with a Spanish woman. Between clubs, beaches, nostalgia, and an unconventional fatherhood with Bernard Ménez, he searches for his youth... and perhaps finally finds his freedom.

Format: Feature film around 1H30

Genre: Comedy, road-trip

Languages: Trilingual film shot with dialogues in French, English, and Spanish. The majority is in French.

Pitch: Xavier, a fifty-something actor in the middle of an existential crisis, embarks on a road trip along Spain's Costa Blanca in the charming seaside town of Moreira, accompanied by Juliette, a thirty-something lawyer he met in a club. Between confessions, humor, and unexpected encounters, Xavier tries to free his old British friend, Oliver, who is trapped in a marriage to a tyrannical Spanish woman, with the help of his father, the iconic French actor Bernard Ménez. A free-spirited and tender comedy about friendship, the passing of time, and the desire to reinvent oneself.

Why Moreira?: A small seaside town where my English and Spanish friends live, and where we have already secured all locations and filming permits, which significantly reduces the film's budget.

Why three languages?: The film is designed as a trilingual road movie, seamlessly shifting between French, English, and Spanish—authentically reflecting the origins and paths of the characters. These language

changes are never gratuitous: they reflect human relationships, cultural contrasts, or the budding complicity between the protagonists. The French audience, already familiar with subtitles, will find a richness of tone and an openness to the world, while this multilingual aspect also offers strong prospects internationally, especially in Spanish-speaking and English-speaking markets.

Short Synopsis:

Xavier, a fifty-something actor and screenwriter, celebrates an unexpected inheritance that acts as an electric shock. In the midst of a midlife crisis, he decides to escape his routine in Paris. A hardened bachelor and inveterate party animal, used to the nights at Castel in Paris, he embarks on a final symbolic journey with Juliette, a thirty-something lawyer he randomly met in a club in Saint-Tropez.

Their growing bond leads them into deep discussions: the meaning of life, the precariousness of the artistic world, the refusal to age, manic depression, the cost of living in Paris... always with humor, distance, and irony. Xavier opens up, recounting 25 years of highs and lows in the entertainment world, his passions, his disillusionments, his loves, and his youthful fantasies. On a whim, they drive off into the night toward the Costa Blanca, to Moreira, to reunite with Oliver, a long-time British friend. But Xavier's arrival, during the wake of Oliver's fiancée's grandfather, Sabrina—an authoritarian and castrating Spanish woman—shocks him. Xavier

quickly realizes that Oliver is trapped in a life he never chose. With the help of his own father, actor Bernard Ménez (playing himself), Xavier comes up with a wild plan to "free" his friend. Their adventure will take them to a group of French vacationers who are fans of Bernard, on the beach at Moreira, for a series of comic and moving scenes. This initiatory journey will mark a turning point in Xavier's life and offer Oliver a new beginning, between regained freedom and emotional rebirth.

Intentions – The Spanish Night

The Spanish Night is an existential, burlesque, and melancholic comedy, dialogued in French, English, and Spanish. A road movie between Paris, Saint-Tropez, and Costa Blanca, blending the trivial with the poetic, the absurd with the deeply human.

Through Xavier, a borderline and flamboyant fifty-something actor, we tenderly and ironically explore the inner chaos of those who, halfway through life, seek a second wind—or simply a final burst of youth. Xavier is both ridiculous and moving in his race against time, emptiness, and the fear of being forgotten. He also reflects a precarious artistic world, a generation confronted with erasure, loneliness, and the dictates of success.

This film is a love letter to all the luminous misfits, the stubborn dreamers, the battered artists. To those who don't fit in, sometimes to the point of shipwreck, but with flair.

The film's tone oscillates between 1960s French comedy,

irreverence à la Blier, and a road movie under the influence of psychedelics. Spain becomes a space of disruption and exposure: hedonism, masculinity, seduction, jealousy, freedom. A sun-soaked and excessive mirror of our contradictions.

The father-son relationship between Xavier and Bernard (played by Bernard Ménez himself) introduces a joyfully offbeat generational tension: two men each fleeing erasure in their own way, between past glory and the refusal to grow old. Humor here is never an escape, but a form of raw humanity. It allows us to touch the intimate without pathos.

We firmly believe that laughter can be a powerful vehicle for empathy. And that in an increasingly normative world, it's urgent to rehabilitate ambiguous, excessive, imperfect—but desperately alive—characters.

Universe & Tone

The Spanish Night unfolds in a sun-drenched and quirky world, where the French Riviera and Costa Blanca become the stage for an initiatory road trip between existential crises and endless parties.

The universe wavers between apparent carefree-ness and latent discomfort, populated by eccentric characters, absurd encounters, and ironic dialogues.

The film moves between situational comedy and social satire, blending biting humor with melancholy. It lightly touches on deep topics: aging, the need for recognition, the precariousness of the artistic world, and the exhaustion of a generation torn between performance

and disillusionment.

The tone ranges from farce to tenderness: the characters are exaggerated, sometimes ridiculous, but profoundly human. We laugh at their excesses as much as we recognize ourselves in them. Through this bittersweet comedy, the film questions our relationship with time, appearance, and the desire to live fully, even when everything seems already behind us.

Main Characters

Bernard Menez:

Xavier's father, a former actor of the French New Wave and the 70s/80s New Naturalism, is an offbeat figure in French cinema, always nostalgic for his younger years. He is a bit old-fashioned, but his popularity remains intact in his own mind. He is the comic counterpoint to his son's cynicism.

Xavier:

The son of Bernard Ménez, a comedian and screenwriter in his 50s, a hardened party-goer, cynical, immature, and a womanizer. His charisma and humor are his only weapons in the precariousness of his artist's life. He embodies the archetype of the fifty-something who refuses to accept his age and the responsibilities that come with it. His philosophical reflections and social critiques are often drowned out by his debauchery, making him both endearing and frustrating.

Juliette:

A thirty-something divorced woman, caught up in Xavier's world during their road trip through France and Spain. She plays the role of confidante and mirror, listening to Xavier's woes while offering a more realistic and pragmatic perspective on life. Her pragmatism and lucidity often clash with Xavier's excesses.

Oliver:

Xavier's old British friend, an essential secondary character who suffers from the manipulations of his wife Sabrina. Oliver is adrift, more calculating and pragmatic than Xavier, but tormented by his dependence on a luxurious life imposed by his wife.

Sabrina:

Oliver's authoritarian and unpleasant wife, always seeking social status, and the polar opposite of Xavier in her view of life. She represents ambition and narrow-mindedness, and her interactions with Xavier and Oliver go beyond mere rivalry to become a satire of inequality and human weaknesses.

Dounia: A French actress in her thirties who meets Bernard at a nightclub. Impressed by the actor's fame, she makes advances toward him, hoping to work with him in the industry.

Lea: Dounia's friend, a public law attorney also in her thirties, tries to reason with Dounia and advises her not

to start a relationship with Bernard due to their age difference. She falls in love with Oliver on the beach.

Romain and Thomas: A gay couple who bring color and energy to our little group of tourists.

Diego: A Latin lover, gigolo, and Sabrina's lover, who is also under the influence of her tyrannical behavior.

Author's Vision

The Spanish Night is an uninhibited comedy that questions freedom and youth as one approaches fifty. Through a journey in places emblematic of festivity and exuberance, the characters confront their illusions of youth with the realities of their life choices.

The film blends existential crisis, social satire, and dark humor, offering a sharp critique of capitalism and its devastating effects on the individual. It shows that the quest for meaning and judgment errors are not exclusive to youth but traverse all life stages, confronting each person with their own dilemmas. Through absurd interactions and poignant moments, the film questions contemporary society, particularly the entertainment and consumerism world.

The narrative style, alternating between time ellipses and tone breaks, aims to create a fast rhythm while allowing the viewer to take a step back and reflect between farce and introspection.

Why this film?

- A generational and international comedy: midlife crisis, fatherhood, freedom, nostalgia.
- A multilingual project naturally integrated into the story (French, English, Spanish)—reflecting modern Europe.
- A cult character: Bernard Ménez returns in a role written for him, blending nostalgia and self-mockery.
- A unique setting: Moreira, the filming location with direct access to sets, local partners, and logistical support already in place.

Target Audience

- Ages 30-60, urban, CSP+, fans of auteur comedies, vintage French cinema enthusiasts.
- Spanish-speaking and English-speaking audiences: subtitles and multilingual version embraced.
- European comedy festivals, TV channels like Arte, Canal+, Netflix (international section).

Artistic Ambition

Reconcile popular comedy and auteur perspective.

Talk about life's big themes through laughter, the absurd, and imperfect but human characters.

References and Positioning

The film positions itself as a social satire, inspired by both French and international comedies such as *There's*

Something About Mary (1998), *The Goat* (1981), and *The Bronzés* (1978) for its absurd and offbeat tone. It draws from French auteur cinema of the 70s-80s, where films focused on class relations, identity quests, and internal contradictions of characters. Louis de Funès' films are also a significant reference, especially for their moments of physical and absurd humor.

Possible Spin-Off as a Series or Franchise

If *The Spanish Night* were to be turned into a series, each episode could focus on a new adventure of the characters, exploring similar themes of existential crisis and the search for meaning in different contexts or through secondary characters who cross paths and drift apart throughout the episodes. Character arcs like Oliver's struggle to free himself from his marriage to Sabrina or Xavier's evolution in light of his inheritance and possible redemption could fuel an entire season.

The series could also introduce recurring characters like the Spanish doctor, Xavier's friends, or authority figures like the Guardia Civil police, to maintain a balance between comedy and dramatic tension. The tone could adapt to a more serialized approach with heightened emotional stakes in each new encounter.

