presenteert

Swimming Pool

Een film van François Ozon

FESTIVAL DE CANNES
Sélection Officielle

SWIMMING POOL - Synopsis

Sarah Morton, een succesvolle maar rigide Engelse schrijfster van detectiveromans (Charlotte Rampling), kampt met een writer's block. Om inspiratie op te doen voor haar volgende roman stuurt haar uitgever (Charles Dance) haar naar zijn rustieke villa in het zuiden van Frankrijk. Daar ontmoet ze Julie, diens mooie, excentrieke dochter (Ludivine Sagnier).

Van een rustige werkvakantie lijkt op het niets terecht te komen: de afstandelijke, conservatieve schrijfster kan absoluut niet wennen aan het wulpse meisje en de seksuele escapades die ze het huis inbrengt. Maar ze raakt ook geïntrigeerd door de jonge vrouw die zoveel meer lijkt te genieten van het leven.

Er ontspint zich een spel van waarheid en leugen tussen de twee, wat uiteindelijk voor de schrijfster met writersblock zeer inspirerend en bevrijdend werkt. In het web van fictie en realiteit ontstijgt ze zichzelf.

Swimming Pool is François Ozon's eerste grotendeels Engelstalige speelfilm. De film is losjes gebaseerd op de Franse klassieker van Jacques Deray uit 1969 *La Piscine* met Romy Schneider en Alain Delon.

Met *Swimming Pool* is dit de eerste maal dat François Ozon samenwerkt met acteur Charles Dance (Gosford Park, Hilary & Jacky). Eerder maakte Ozon met Charlotte Rampling de speelfilm *Sous le Sable*, en met Ludivine Sagnier Sagnier de speelfilms *Gouttes d'Eau sur Pierres Brûlantes* en *8 Femmes*, waarin ze de jongste dochter Catherine vertolkte.

SWIMMING POOL - Crew
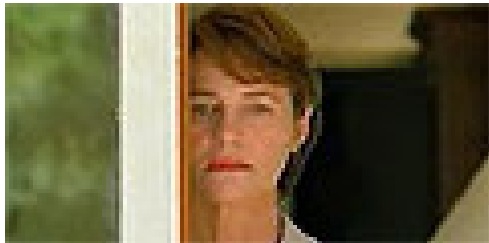
Regie	: François Ozon
Scenario	: François Ozon & Emmanuelle Bernheim
Productie	: Olivier Delbosc & Marc Missonnier
Camera	: Yorick Le Saux
Geluid	: Lucien Balibar
Montage	: Monica Coleman
Geluidsmontage	: Benoît Hillebrant
Muziek	: Philippe Rombi
Production Design	: Wouter Zoon
Costume Design	: Pascaline Chavanne

SWIMMING POOL - Cast

Charlotte Rampling	: Sarah Morton
Ludivine Sagnier	: Julie
Charles Dance	: John Bosload
Marc Fayolle	: Marcel, de huisopziener
Jean-François Lamour	: Franck, de bartender
Michel Fau	: eerste 'lover'
Jean-Claude Lecas	: tweede 'lover'

SWIMMING POOL – Over regisseur François Ozon

François Ozon (Parijs, 1967) kwam in 1990 met zijn Masters in Film op zak binnen in de beroemde Franse Filmacademie La Femis waar hij regie studeerde. Sindsdien heeft hij een hele reeks films op super-8, video, 16mm en 35mm gedraaid. Veel van zijn korte films deden mee voor competitie in verscheidene internationale festivals. Met *Une Robe d'Été* won hij de Léopard de Demain Award op het filmfestival van Locarno. *Sitcom*, zijn eerste lange speelfilm, ging in competitie voor het Semaine Internationale de la Critique tijdens Cannes 1998.

2003	*Swimming Pool*
2002	*8 Femmes*
2000	*Sous le Sable*
2000	*Gouttes d'eau sur Pierres Brûlantes*
1999	*Les Amants Criminels*
1998	*Sitcom*
1998	*X 2000*
1998	*Scènes de Lit*
1997	***Regarde la Mer***
1996	***Une Robe d'Été***
1995	*Jospin s'Éclaire*
1995	*La Petite Mort*
1994	*Action Vérité*
1994	*Une Rose entre Nous*
1993	***Victor***
1992	***Thomas Reconstitué***
1991	*Deux plus Un*
1991	*Peau contre Peau*
1991	*Le Trou Madame*
1991	*Une Goutte de Sang*
1990	***Mes Parents un Jour d'Été***
1988	***Les Doigts dans le Ventre***
1988	***Photo de Famille***

SWIMMING POOL – Filmografie actrice Charlotte Rampling

Charlotte Rampling (1945 Sturmer, Engeland)

2003	*Swimming Pool* (François Ozon)
2002	*The Cherry Orchard* (Michael Cacoyannis)
2001	*Vengeance secrète* (John Irvin)
2000	*Sous le sable* (François Ozon)
2000	*Signs and Wonders* (Jonathon Nossiter)
1999	*La Cerisaie* (Michael Cacoyannis)
1997	*Les ailes de la colombe*
1996	*Asphalt Tango* (Nae Caranfil)
1995	*Invasion of privacy* (Anthony Hickox)
1994	*Time is Money* (Paolo Barzman)
1993	*Hammers over the anvil* (Ann Turner)
1990	*Rebus* (Massimo Guglielmi)
1989	*Frames of the edge* (Adrian Maben)
1988	*Mort à l'arrivée* (Rocky Morton & Annabel Jankel)
1988	*Mascara* (Patrick Conrad)
1987	*Paris by night* (David Hare)
1987	*Angel Heart* (Alan Parker)
1986	*Max mon amour* (Nagisa Oshima)
1985	*Tristesse et beauté* (Joy Fleury)
1984	*Viva la vie* (Claude Lelouch)
1983	*The Verdict* (Sidney Lumet)
1980	*Stardust Memories* (Woody Allen)
1977	*Un taxi mauve* (Yves Boisset)
1976	*Orca* (Michael Anderson)
1975	*Foxtrot* (Arturo Ripstein)
1975	*Jackpot* (Terence Young)
1974	*Yuppi du* (Adriano Celentano)
1974	*La chair de l'orchidée* (Patrice Chéreau)
1974	*The Passager* (Geoffrey Reeves)
1973	*Zardoz* (John Boorman)
1973	*Night Porter* (Lilana Cavani)
1972	*The Six wives of Henry V111* (Waris Hussein)
1972	*Asylum* (Roy Baker)
1971	*Dommage qu'elle soit une putain* (G Patroni-Griffi)
1970	*The Ski bum* (Bruce Clark)
1970	*Corky* (Leonard Horn)
1969	*The Damned* (Luchino Visconti)
1968	*Le séquestré* (Gianfranco Mingozzi)
1967	*Les Turbans rouges* (Ken Annakin)
1966	*Georgy girl* (Silvio Narizzano)
1965	*Rotten to the core* (John Boulting)
1964	*Le Knack et comment l'avoir* (R Lester)

SWIMMING POOL – Filmografie actrice Ludivine Sagnier

Ludivine Sagnier (3 juli 1979, La Celle-Saint-Cloud, Hauts-de-Seine, Frankrijk)

Peter Pan van P.J. Hogan (2003) .... Tinkerbel

La Petite Lili van Claude Miller (2003)

Swimming Pool van François Ozon (2003) .... Julie

La Légende de Parva van Jean Cubaud (2003) (voice) .... Lula

Petites coupures van Pascal Bonitzer (2003) .... Nathalie

8 femmes van François Ozon (2002) .... Catherine

Ma femme est une actrice van Yvan Attal (2001) .... Géraldine

Un jeu d'enfants van Laurent Tuel (2001) .... Daphnée, de baby-sit

Bon plan van Jérôme Levy (2000) .... Clémentine

Gouttes d'eau sur pierres brûlantes van François Ozon (2000) .... Anna

Les Enfants du siècle van Diana Kurys (1999) .... Hermine de Musset

Cyrano de Bergerac van Jean-Paul Rappenau(1990) .... kleine zus

Les Maris, les femmes, les amants van Pascal Thomas (1989) .... Élodie

I Want to Go Home van Alain Resnais(1989)

What was the starting-point for *Swimming Pool*?
After *8 Women*, I felt an urge to return to something more intimate and simpler, with fewer characters. Naturally, I wanted to work with actresses who were familiar to me, with whom relations would be less complicated. Charlotte Rampling came to mind immediately because *Under the Sand* had been an fine experience for both of us.
Originally, Ludivine's part was going to be a boy's. But I thought it would be more interesting to deal with a relationship between two women and I was especially keen to explore the kind of relationship I had touched on in *8 Women* between Gaby (Catherine Deneuve) and Louise (Emmanuelle Béart).
The decision to cast Charlotte Rampling opposite Ludivine Saigner provided an opportunity to examine a mother/daughter relationship and also to confront an experienced actress with a young one. I have a sense that I gave Ludivine insufficient attention on *8 Women*, compared to the other actresses. And also, she was playing a tomboy. Now I wanted to give her a part that would be more fun, a sexy bimbo part. As a result, she got herself into shape physically, becoming a kind of Mediterranean Marilyn Monroe.

What made you want to make a film about the creative process?
I kept being asked how can you make so many films one after another? What inspires you? It occurred to me that the best way of answering these questions might be to project myself into the character of an English lady novelist, rather than offering an analysis of myself as a film-maker. Where do writers find their inspiration? How does one make up a story? What is the connection between fiction and reality?
Sarah Morton needs solitude for her work, she needs to lock herself up in a comfortable house, go on a diet, live by certain rules. Then all at once, reality bursts in on her.
Her first reaction, needless to say, is rejection. She turns in on herself. Then she decides to incorporate this new reality into the work she is engaged on. Sooner or later, artists have to come to terms with reality.

What made you want to shoot in English?
Given that the film is about an English writer and that Charlotte Rampling was cast in the part, it seemed only natural that the film's language should be English. And anyway I thought it might be fun to try and direct actors in English, which I speak imperfectly. Charlotte speaks French, so the

difficulty did not seem insurmountable. Also, there is a play on language. I wrote the screenplay in French, then had it translated. Shifting into English altered the script, because some of the French nuances didn't come across in English. We had to find corresponding notions and these did not necessarily relate to the expressions I'd used in the first draft.

How did you go about defining Sarah Morton's character?
The character of Marie in U*nder the Sand* drew on Charlotte Rampling's own character. With this film, the character needed inventing from scratch. The part is pure composition. Charlotte is not remotely similar to Sarah Morton in real life. But the part was written for her and we did not go into pre-production until she agreed to play it.

Pascaline Chavanne, the costume designer, and I looked at photographs of Patricia Highsmith, Ruth Rendell, Patricia Cornwell, PD James... There is something quite masculine about all these writers. They also give the impression that life stopped in the seventies. Charlotte agreed to cut her hair, to alter herself in that general direction. As the story progresses, her character's clothes and attitudes develop. she blossoms and becomes more feminine. She becomes luminous.
I regard Charlotte as an actress who expands on everyday gestures, there is nothing narcissistic about the way she sees herself.

Why make her a thriller writer?
Because I think there is a connection between thriller writers and screenwriters: style matters less than narrative, plot and mounting clues. These are what lead us to the murderer. Screenwriting is the same: an accumulation of elements designed to bring the shoot to life.
Since Agatha Christie, there has been a tradition of female thriller writing in England, writers who enjoy describing particularly unsettling or horrible characters and situations. I met with François Rivière, who is an expert on these novelists, and he was able to tell me about their psychology, the drinking and closet Lesbianism, the fascination for perversion.
Before shooting, I suggested to Ruth Rendell that she might like to come up with a story for Sarah to be writing in the film. I sent her my script and she answered by return, very frostily, assuming that I was asking her to novelize the screenplay: she told me she was perfectly capable of writing her own stories, thank you. Charlotte Rampling found this highly amusing. She said that Sarah Morton would have reacted exactly the same way.

Why the long exposition of Sarah's character?
There are in fact two expositions. The first happens in London, where Sarah is seen in her own environment, with her relationship with her publisher, the fact that she is an old maid who lives with her father, her fondness for drink… Then there's a second exposition showing the arrival in the Luberon, in Provence, and how she settles down to work. I feel that it is important to show all these things, even though it makes for a somewhat unusual pace because the action proper is delayed: one needs to enter into the character's behavior, the way she sits down to work, the practical business of writing in a specific context, the little details of habit. The pace of the creative process governs the film: things gradually come together and then quicken in the final half hour, which is full of surprises and emotional tension and extremely concentrated.

Right up to the end, you give us no hint that Julie might be a character invented by Sarah?

Speaking as a director, I wanted to show an imaginary world in as realistic a way as possible, flat, so that fantasy and reality are shown as equivalents. I feel that when one is inventing worlds, things soon get very mixed up: when you tell a story or make a film, you identify with the characters to such an extent that you end up sharing their thoughts and feelings, you feel the same emotions as they do. In other words, in the creative process, things are never simple: what is true, what is not true? What distinguishes reality from fantasy?

This theme brings us back to *Under the Sand* in which the character also confused fantasy and reality. But in this case, the fantasy is creative and therefore applied and channeled. It is not madness.

You pay careful attention to the way the writer's body is altered as she writes.

Yes. I wanted to use the cliché of an elderly English lady uneasy with her own body as a starting-point – even though one eventually learns that Sarah must have been quite at ease with herself when she was young. But I also wanted this ageing body to seem desirable. More desirable even than Julie's. At the same time, as the book is the product of Sarah's imagination, one could say that she is arranging these things in her mind… Anyway, the main point was that I wanted Sarah and Julie's bodies to affect one another. As the story progresses, Sarah casts off her clothes; her style of dress becomes more feminine; life in some way returns to her. Whereas Julie abandons artifice. She becomes more pure. She returns to childhood, having been a very aggressive, a very sexual young woman. There is a kind of "exchange of fluids" between the two women.

And the music?

Usually, I bring in a composer in the final stages of editing. This time, since the film was about the process of writing a book, I thought it might be interesting to give the composer the screenplay so that his music could suggest the content of the book. At first, the tune seems fragmented, barely a few notes. Only gradually do they work up into a finished theme. I also wanted this theme to be played on a variety of instruments throughout the film to suggest a passage from one genre to another: a sage, a thriller, a psychodrama, a portrait of a lady, a writer's biography…

What does the swimming pool stand for?

The swimming pool stands for whatever anyone wants to see in it. I have often filmed water, usually the ocean that is associated in my mind with shedding one's inhibitions, or with a certain sense of fear. In this instance, I was interested in the swimming pool as texture and also as water imprisoned. Swimming pools, unlike the ocean, are manageable and controlled.

The swimming pool is Julie's realm. It's like a movie-screen against which images are projected and into which a character penetrates. Sarah Morton takes time before entering the pool: she does not do so until Julie has become a source of inspiration – and until the swimming pool is at last clean.

How did François Ozon pitch *Swimming-Pool* to you?
Much the same way he pitched *Under the Sand*. We had a meeting and discussed the idea before François started work on the screenplay. He asked me what I thought, we talked it over, and then he went off to write, remaining in close touch. This process went on for four months. Then we shot the movie!

How close to you is Sarah Morton?
The character is utterly unlike me. English lady thriller writers live in a very specific world. I read a great deal of background and also some of the writing, some Agatha Christie, who is the most famous, and also some Patricia Highsmith and Ruth Rendell. These women really are very peculiar people. They seem slightly disdainful, often bad-tempered. They are fiercely solitary and they like a drink. They seem to lock themselves up in a highly uncomfortable world, a world of complete silence.

Sarah Morton seems rather unpleasant at the start of the film. Was this a problem?
No, it wasn't a problem! What I like about a character is the way it develops, its journey. Just because a character functions in a certain way at the beginning of a film doesn't mean it will stay that way all the way through. Sarah Morton's journey enables her to develop in many ways.

What did you contribute to the character?
François and I built Sarah Morton together. We work well together. We are on the same wavelength, we're complementary. And we'd started working on Sarah long before we went into production. When the shoot began I knew her as well as François did. We worked together like two halves of the same individual.

What was it like meeting your young French partner, Ludivine Sagnier?
Ludivine is a very graceful actress; she's open and generous. We got on beautifully. Unlike many actresses, Ludivine does not create unnecessary problems for herself. She takes a very direct approach. She overcomes her fears and takes risks.

Was this your first time working with Charles Dance, a fellow-countryman?
Charles Dance is a fine actor. We did not know each other personally. François met a large number of English actors before casting this part, some of whom I knew. When he told me he wanted Charles Dance, I felt he was right for the part.

What do you make of the way François Ozon sees England and English people?
François is intrigued by English people, which is something I can understand, having connections in both countries. I see how open and frank English people seem, whilst hiding a great deal. François' attitude to Engliand is very healthy: he wanted to make a film there, with an English actress, filming London and using both languages. He wanted to use the Luberon, which English people adore.

Do you know what Sarah wrote whilst she was in France?
I decided I must know what Sarah is writing, even if the audience doesn't. Every actor needs to feed his or her imagination in order to develop a character and make it come to life. My need was to know what Sarah writes whilst she is in France.

In what way does Sarah Morton resemble François Ozon?
Directors choose characters in order to find out about them. They do this through their actors' work and by the decisions they makes as director. By the time a film is finished, the characters have enabled the director to express a part of himself. I think that's what happened with Sarah Morton.

Finally, do you have any regret that you did not participate in *8 Women*?
No, because I was delighted to be *1 Woman* in *Under the Sun*.

At what point did you become involved in the *Swimming Pool* project?
After *8 Women* was released, François Ozon and I were never really apart because we promoted the film together. I sensed he was thinking of a new project and he offered me the part fairly soon, after he'd cast Charlotte Rampling. It was the first time he'd cast me without asking for a screen test, which was very flattering.

Were you not worried about shooting most of the film in English?
I was very excited about having to perform in English. I'd done it before, but not with character present throughout a film.
The real challenge was physical, because I really had to compose a character from scratch. I had to come up with a kind of sexual aggressiveness and make it work, which meant quite heavy physical training and also building up one's sexual bravado.

How did you work on Julie's look?
Julie needed to be, in Sarah Morton's eyes and also in the audience's eyes, an obvious sex symbol. That meant working on my body to make myself more like a "cagole", a Provençal sex bomb.
I also worked with the costume designer, the make-up girl and the hairdresser to define a look that matched Julie's extrovert personality.

Was playing in the nude not a supplementary difficulty?
Playing in the nude was not really a problem. I'd done it before in another of François' films, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* so I felt comfortable with the crew. And the physical training gave me extra confidence, so I was able to handle being naked throughout the shoot. The hardest thing about playing Julie was dealing with the psychology of her fractured persona. I had to delve into slightly painful corners of my imagination to create the character.
Julie was invented with François' help. The character was built by two people. But since the character develops according to Sarah Morton's fantasies, I let her evolve naturally according to the situations François created for us.

***Swimming Pool* is your third François Ozon film. Has your work together evolved in any way?**
On our first film, *Water Drops…* I was 19 and knew very little about filmmaking. I was more naïve and also more risk-averse. It was not until he cast me as his doppelganger in *8 Women* that I realized we were artistically compatible.

On *Swimming Pool*, François did something I thought was very good: he let me get involved in the creative process of designing a film. He gave me more freedom and let me participate in each stage of the process. I saw it through writing to recess; we viewed dailies together. I was better able to understand the nature of his choices and so able to make my own more freely.

What did you learn from working with Charlotte Rampling?
We worked together quite naturally. I felt she was part of the family because she'd worked with François on *Under the Sand*. She was very encouraging. Charlotte is someone who is fairly relaxed about the process of making a film.
Our relationship was cemented by the English language. On set, everyone understood English but only Charlotte and I spoke it. It was like having our own dialect and it made us more intimate.
Also, she is an artist who can deal with her character's emotions quite lightheartedly, whereas I am much more naïve and willful in my work. I tend to be consumed by my character. Charlotte Rampling has learnt detachment, without losing the sense of pleasure.

How would you explain Julie's relationship with Sarah?
At the start, when my character appears by the pool, it seems Sarah and Julie have nothing in common. Then Sarah's peculiar attraction for Julie brings about change, which passes into fantasy. I have a sense that by bringing Charlotte and I together on *Swimming Pool*, François has brought two aspects of his work into one. I come from the artificial side, the theatrical and concept-led side of *Water Drops…* and *8 Women*, whereas Charlotte comes from *Under the Sand* which is much more intimate in tone. I feel that in *Swimming Pool*, these two currents collide electrically through Julie and Sarah's relationship. Julie is artificial, almost vulgar. Sarah is introverted and intellectual. In the film, these two people confront each other and become altered: Julie develops an inner life whilst Sarah blossoms physically.
I think *Swimming Pool* is François' attempt at telling a highly personal story, a story about a creative artist and his muse, that shows how fine the line between fiction and reality can be. How an author can be utterly overwhelmed by his muse and conversely how the muse can have all the blood sucked out of her by her author.