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L'auberge espagnole (France/Spain, 2002)
An economics student's postgraduate year in Barcelona is the peg for Cédric Klapisch's slick ensemble comedy, which plays as a sitcom *Bildungsroman* about a not especially appealing young man. Klapisch, whose *When the Cat's Away* did a nice job of showing the network of neighbors that comprises life in a quarter of Paris, gives us a tourist's Barcelona — once we're past the first dull half-hour, as we wait for our protagonist to leave his girlfriend (*Amélie*'s Audrey Tautou) behind and get there. The movie hits every single beauty spot I recall from my own visit, but tells us nothing of the people of that city. The focus is on Xavier (Romain Duris, a Steve Guttenberg for our time) and his wacky fellow students in a grubby apartment building, each of them from a different Common Market country. (The movie is less French than "Euro-pudding," which is one slang meaning for its title.) Many of these players are quite entertaining, so much so that we lose interest in Xavier in favor of wanting to know more about the artistic English girl, her doofus brother, or the lesbian from Belgium. Ultimately, alas, we don't, **continued on page 45**

and we finish off stuck with the predictable conclusion of Xavier's semi-mental education. (Gregg Rickman)
Tuesday, April 29, 7 p.m., AMC Kabuki

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