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44 LA CHARME DISCRET DE LA BOURGEOISIE THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE



France, 1972

In French with English subtitles

Director: Luis Buñuel

Producer: Serge Silberman

Screenwriters: Luis Buñuel, Jean-Claude Carrière

Cinematographer: Edmond Richard

Editor: Helen Plemiannikov

Leading Players: Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Stephanie Audran,
Bulle Ogier, Michel Piccoli

Running Time: 100 minutes Source: 20th Century-Fox

Accurately titled, **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie** is Buñuel's funniest film since **El**. Buñuel reveals qualities as a farceur and the movie works as a comedy of manners. Unlike **Belle de Jour** or **Tristana**, **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie** does not focus on a single character or relationship. It's more in the line of **Exterminating Angel** and **The Milky Way**. It sustains an array of five engaging characters who meet for dinner but are always prevented from eating. The local bishop applies to one couple for a job as a gardener ("You've heard of worker-priests; well, I'm a worker-bishop".) Fernando Rey plays the Ambassador of Miranda, combatting revolutionaries and smuggling heroin. He attends a stuffy party where he disapproves of the marijuana that is passed around ("Mexican? No, Congolese.") and endures inane small-talk about his country. The protagonists are repeatedly waking up, revealing preceding scenes to have been dreams. Additional characters are introduced in order to relate dreams and flashbacks, and then they don't appear again. The movie is a tease, but Buñuel lets the audience in on the joke.

Since **Belle de Jour** Buñuel has threatened to make each film his last. He's now 72 and effortlessly making great films. Each movie is characteristically his own, yet still fresh and different. **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie** shows him to be at the height of his powers. — Robert Mundy

Short: **Yesterday's Shore, Tomorrow's Morning**,
Eva Lothar (USA, 1972) 13 min.