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Author(s)	Deborah Young
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ITALY 1990

House of Smiles

La Casa del Sorriso

Director: Marco Ferreri

Leading Players: Ingrid Thulin, Dado Ruspoli,
Vincenzo Cannavale

Festivals: Berlin

Running Time: 98 mins

A hot love affair between 70-year-olds in a rest home turns into an offbeat comedy. Adelina, courageously portrayed with indomitable good humour by Swedish actress and director Ingrid Thulin, is an independent oldster. Her son (born out of wedlock) is dead, and her daughter-in-law has just got her hands on his inheritance, leaving Adelina a pauper. Still an attractive woman, she cedes to the genteel courtship of another resident, Andrea (played with irresistible charm by playboy-prince Dado Ruspoli). Lack of privacy in the home leads Adelina and Andrea to hold their (tastefully suggested) trysts in a brightly painted camper, the property of a community of black immigrant workers who live nearby. Both Ruspoli and Thulin are very human presences and reasonably attractive, a fact that considerably mutes the shock value of sex over 60. Much more scandalous is the indifference and cruelty of the bored doctors and attendants, who gang up on the happy couple.
Deborah Young

19 Tue 3.00 7.00 Odeon West End