

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Dans la ville blanche</b>
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1983 Mar 30
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Dans la ville blanche (In the white city), Tanner, Alain, 1983



**Dans La Ville Blanche**  
(In The White City)  
(SWISS-PORTUGUESE-COLOR)

*Variety* 3-30-83 Berlin, March 1.

A Metro Filme, (Lisbon), and Filmographie (Geneva). Coproduction; producers, Paulo Branco, Alain Tanner, Antonio Vaz da Silva. Stars Bruno Ganz. Written and directed by Alain Tanner. Camera (color), Acacio de Almeida; sets, Maria Jose Branco; music, Jean-Luc Barbier; editing, Laurent Uhler. Reviewed at Berlin Film Fest (Competition), Feb. 26, 1983. Running time: 108 MINS.

Paul .....	Bruno Ganz
Rosa .....	Teresa Madruga
Elisa .....	Julia Vonderlinn
Patron .....	Jose Carvalho
Thief with knife .....	Francisco Baião
Second thief .....	Jose Wallenstein
Barkeeper .....	Victor Costa
Barmaid .....	Lidia Franco
Friend in the tavern .....	Pedro Efe
Lady on the train .....	Joana Vicente

Among Alain Tanner's quite impressive string of tightly woven stories of outsiders and would-be outsiders his latest film, "In The White City," comes across as an improvised short story. Nevertheless, the film is a direct extension of everything else he's done and will be an immediate success to Tanner fans on the arthouse circuit, particularly if the Berlin Fest and other fest showcases give the pic the push it needs.

Tanner won a director's kudo at Cannes in 1981 for "Light Years Away," an odd tale of a youth leaving a barkeeping job in an Irish city to converse with a Russian-born, self-styled mystic holed up in a garage-shed far off the beaten path. There was a girl the young man had an affair with — now she's back as a barmaid in the port city of Lisbon having an affair with a ship's mechanic. The mechanic, played by Bruno Ganz, is another of Tanner's patented dropouts from society: for him, time has stood still — just like the clock running backwards in the bar-hotel he visits, and never quite leaves, for the duration of the film.

Pic is without a plot to speak of. The mechanic takes Super-8 shots of "the white city" and the girl he has shackled up with from the hotel bar; he sends the reels home to his wife in German-Switzerland, together with letters that don't make much sense at all. The loner is apparently about to go off his rocker. Meanwhile, he runs into a couple of thugs in a poolroom, who steal his money. Ganz pawns his gold Swiss watch, and keeps wandering around.

The barmaid loves him, but knows this all has to end somewhere. It just about ends on a slab in a morgue, for Ganz has a run-in again with one of the thieves, is seriously stabbed, but then recovers. He trades his camera for room-payment, buys a train ticket, and may be on his way home (or some unknown destination) at the end. Meanwhile, his girl has left him to seek employment in France.

"In The White City" has its imperfections. Somehow, in a Tanner film, they seem to be intentionally there to titillate the viewer. All the same, proper handling is a must for offshore spinoff. —*Holl.*