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# La Cérémonie

A film by Claude Chabrol

Starring

Isabelle Huppert  
Sandrine Bonnaire  
Jacqueline Bisset  
Jean-Pierre Cassel  
Virginie Ledoyen

local contact:  
LARSEN ASSOCIATES  
Karen Larsen ph 415-957-1205  
Nancy Fishman/Tim Buckwalter

Press Contacts:  
Kahn & Jacobs Public Relations  
Susan Jacobs, Sharon Kahn, Hiromi Kawanishi  
126 Fifth Avenue, 9th floor  
New York, New York 10011  
Phone: (212) 647-1850  
Fax: (212) 647-1851

Fredell Pogodin & Associates  
Fredell Pogodin, Bradley Jones  
7223 Beverly Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90036  
Phone: (213) 931-7300  
Fax: (213) 931-7354

**A New Yorker Films Release**

**Dear Member of the Press:**

**We respectfully request that, in your coverage,  
you not divulge the surprise ending of the film.**

**Thank you.**

## CAST

Sophie ..... Sandrine Bonnaire  
Jeanne ..... Isabelle Huppert  
Catherine ..... Jacqueline Bisset  
Georges ..... Jean-Pierre Cassel  
Mélinda ..... Virginie Ledoyen  
Gilles ..... Valentin Merlet

## CREDITS

Director ..... Claude Chabrol  
Producer ..... Marin Karmitz  
Screenplay ..... Claude Chabrol  
..... Caroline Eliacheff  
..... Based on the novel, A Judgment in Stone by Ruth Rendell  
Production Manager ..... Yvon Crenn  
Director of Photography ..... Bernard Zitzermann  
Cameraman ..... Michel Thiriet  
Sound ..... Jean-Bernard Thomasson  
Costume Designer ..... Corinne Jorry  
Make-Up Artist ..... Thi Loan Nguyen  
Hairdresser ..... Cédric Chami  
Set Decorator ..... Daniel Mercier  
Editor ..... Monique Fardoulis  
Music ..... Mathieu Chabrol

A Co-production with

MK2 Productions S.A., France 3 Cinéma, Prokino Filmproduktion GMBH,

OLGA Film, Z.D.F.

with the participation of CANAL + and Centre National de la Cinématographie

## Synopsis

*La Cérémonie*, a gripping psychological thriller by Claude Chabrol, one of the French New Wave's most influential and prolific directors, who is considered France's Alfred Hitchcock, is adapted from the novel A Judgment in Stone, by British mystery writer Ruth Rendell. The film features an explosive pairing of screen dynamos **Isabelle Huppert** (*Amateur*) and **Sandrine Bonnaire** (*Under Satan's Sun*), and cool, elegant performances by **Jacqueline Bisset** (*The Deep*) and Jean-Pierre Cassel (*Pret-A-Porter*).

With over 50 films to his credit including *Madame Bovary* and *Story of Women*, Claude Chabrol is best known for creating emotionally charged, realistic thrillers laced with arch criticism of the French bourgeoisie. *La Cérémonie*, a title which refers to the ritual before an execution, is the director's most subversive film to date.

The Lelièvres are well-heeled, fashionable, and cultured -- a typical bourgeois family, steeped in the usual problems and intrigues of upper-middle class life. After many failed attempts to find a suitable housekeeper for their country *château*, Catherine Lelièvre (Jacqueline Bisset) retains Sophie (Sandrine Bonnaire), a prim young woman who cares for the family with a quiet, if unsettling efficiency. But then, against her employers' wishes, Sophie strikes up a friendship with the local postmistress, Jeanne (Isabelle Huppert), a sly, loose cannon seething with hatred for the upper class, and a malicious dislike for Catherine's husband Georges (Jean-Pierre Cassel). The friends quickly form an intimate and insidious bond, buoyed by dark secrets. Jeanne uses Sophie to provoke the Lelièvres, and Sophie, emboldened by Jeanne's destructive impulses, unleashes a sinister and rebellious underside.

*La Cérémonie* is classic Chabrol — subtle and provocative. He takes a simple story and gradually crafts layers of stinging social commentary atop a bed of smoldering sexual tension. Below the surface, cold irony drives the psychic stakes higher as Chabrol constructs a dazzling story that is intellectually challenging and viscerally shocking.

*La Cérémonie* received multiple César nominations in 1996, including Best Picture, Best Screenplay, and Best Director. Huppert won the Best Actress Award, after both she and Bonnaire were nominated, and Bisset and Cassel were nominated for Best Supporting Actor Awards. At the 1995 Venice Film Festival, Huppert and Bonnaire shared the Best Actress Award.



## A Conversation with Claude Chabrol

***Like many of your films before, La Cérémonie is a thriller. What attracts you to this genre?***

It's the most powerful human situation, and therefore the most interesting. A thriller or crime story deals with good and evil, with life and death. These are important issues. Also, people feel that thrillers have a direct relation to their own existence.

***What compelled you to do a screen adaptation of Ruth Rendell's novel, "A Judgment in Stone?"***

Although the film is, in fact, fairly different from the book, I like the book and the author a lot. What I specifically liked about this novel was that it tried to explain what appears to be monstrous. I don't really believe in monsters, so I like to try to make people understand that, although what these so-called monsters do cannot be justified or excused, it *can* be understood. It may be a complex combination of psychological and social elements, etc., but there is always an explanation.

***Although this is a psychological thriller, the underlying theme of the film is class conflict. Class problems are different in America than in France. What should the American audience know about French social structure to better understand this film?***

American society is conceived in a rather different way. Yes, there are those "descendants of the Mayflower," or the old Boston families that correspond somewhat to the aristocracy in Europe, but those people are completely separate from the rest of the American public. Everybody else is more or less in the same pot. American society is much more focused on money. Social relations in France are much more stratified, and social classes are much more distinct. The social ladder here is not based on money as much as it is on recognition by the rest of society. The givens are different, the points of reference are different.

Some of the differences between Ruth Rendell's book and the movie are exactly about this subject of class. I transposed the story from England to France, and there is a different relationship between the classes in these two countries. In England, there is still a real, recognized aristocracy. No one who is bourgeois or who made money through business can in any way dream of belonging to the upper class. They always come in second. In France, there is no longer an official nobility, so oddly enough, people who have succeeded financially can sometimes find themselves at the top of society.

***Where does the film take place?***

In Saint-Malo, in the North of Brittany. It's the region on the coast from which England was detached — on a map, if you place the bottom of England into the bay of Saint-Malo, it fits.

***Does that have any significance for the film?***

Yes, well there are two reasons I chose that location. The film was adapted from an English novel, so I placed it in the region closest to England. There must be some shared mentality — even if it's just because of similarities in climate, the proximity to the sea, etc. Mainly, though, I have friends who own a hotel and restaurant in that area. We were able to put up the crew there, which made filming much easier. It allowed us to shoot the whole film on location, without using a studio, in around 40 days.

***Still, is there a reason for this film to take place in the country, rather than in a city?***

I don't think that this kind of drama could have taken place in a city. It would take another form. In the city, you have delinquency, like when you see young people ganging together to mug people, or to kill them. It's a little different in the country. There, what you see are people who kill off everyone in a particular household. That happens much more frequently in the provinces, or in the countryside. But both are expressions of the same thing. It's the principle of suffocation. As soon as people feel suffocated, they have a tendency to revolt. It's the principle behind any minority rebellion, or things like that. There comes a moment where people can't abide their condition any more, so they break everything. It happens in the U.S., too.

***Is that the message of the film?***

People are naïve about the relations between the classes. You are probably not as sensitive to this in the U.S. as in Europe, but in Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall brought with it a great sigh of relief that Marxism is dead and that all of this Communist stuff is gone. Happily, it is true that Communism has more or less disappeared -- or at least what the Soviets called Communism. But you can't draw the conclusion that the fall of Communism put an end to what Marx called the class struggle. I think what I want to say in this film is "Be careful, it's not over." There are still some truths of nature. Even if Marx was wrong about everything else, which I believe he was, he was not wrong about the fact that social classes are in conflict.

***Are we condemned to live with this struggle forever?***

I don't think so, but it has to be the people at the bottom of the ladder who say that they'll stop the struggle.

***Your films have often dealt with freedom and the problems of the bourgeoisie. Have your ideas changed over time?***

Not really. Perhaps I express the ideas differently — I wouldn't know about that — but the ideas have stayed the same. They are simple. Freedom is a definitive good, and we must recognize liberty for everyone. The bourgeoisie's problem is that it is condemned if it doesn't take into account the fact that there are other social classes. Anyone who shuts himself off in his own universe is condemned to die.



***How do you explain that in the film?***

The most difficult thing to get from the people in the upper class is the consideration that people of inferior classes are not inferior. A lower social class is the class of people who work for others. And while those in the higher position may feel an obligation to act decently, decency is not enough. They have to understand that their socially superior position is not humanly superior. In other words, they are not in a superior state to the people who work for them. And that is horribly difficult.

That, finally, is what kills the Lelièvres. You can't really reproach the family for much, except that they don't understand that it's not enough not to be unpleasant. They limit the freedom of the people who work for them, and imagine to themselves that others are their inferiors. Let's say, simply, that they are condemned by a feeling of natural superiority.

***So, can you justify the actions of Huppert and Bonnaire's characters, Jeanne and Sophie?***

No. As I said, there is no justification. Where would we be if we could justify what they did? For me, the point of the film is not to justify but to understand them, not to dismiss them out of hand as two monsters. These are not two monsters.

***What, in your mind, is the relationship between Jeanne and Sophie?***

Psychiatrists talk about something called "folie à deux." In other words, you have people who would have remained inoffensive apart, but together have some sort of chemical reaction. They form an explosive entity. Bonnie and Clyde are an example. On their own, Bonnie and Clyde would have probably been two poor people living through the Depression, but together they got into some very serious business. Ridley Scott's wonderful film, "Thelma and Louise," also had this kind of "folie à deux." It's a similar thing with Jeanne and Sophie. Separately, they are two unhappy people, two victims. But together, they won't stand for being victims anymore. They become dangerous.

***Is there a sexual relationship between them?***

We asked ourselves that question. Certainly, there is a sexual draw, a sexual element to their relationship. But that, as they say, is not the issue. It's not a question of hiding the sexual element, but the idea of the film was not at all to tell the story of two lesbians.

***How do you explain the crimes that these girls committed in their pasts?***

The actresses themselves came up with a good explanation. One day, we were all driving to the set to shoot the scene in Jeanne's car, in which the girls discuss this question. Isabelle was rehearsing the part in which she tells the story about kicking her little daughter against the furnace. She and Sandrine started talking about whether Jeanne killed the child by accident. Isabelle said, "I think it's true that it was an accident. She wasn't paying attention, she felt something on her leg, she shook it off — it's pretty normal." And she asked Sandrine, "Did you kill your father?" Sandrine answered, "Absolutely." Sophie killed her father because, in her mind, there was no reason *not* to



do it. I suppose that it was either him or her. On top of her own communication problems, the man was making her life impossible, so she eliminated him.

In Jeanne's case, it's the combined result of who she is and of how she lives. An accumulation of things lead her to the unfortunate action of brushing her kid away with her foot. That's not good either, but it's not a premeditated crime, whereas I think it evident that Sophie deliberately killed her father. She says that her father smelled of piss. It was unbearable for her. In fact, neither of these girls would have been dangerous except in the case of total suffocation.

***Why is Jeanne's character crazy?***

Life is a little too difficult for her, a little too complicated. She was surely a bit excitable before, but then the business with her child's death really knocked her off balance. She doesn't have any point of reference any more. .

***As is typical of your work, in La Cérémonie, it's hard to say who is a good guy and who is a bad guy.***

You never really know until the moment something happens. Agatha Christie said that everyone has a murderous impulse, but the difference between good and evil is that people without evil in them don't act on that impulse. I think that's pretty correct.

***And yet you say that you can explain how people become 'monsters?'***

We use the term monsters for beings we don't understand. It's not a question of excusing them, but when you understand them you stop thinking of them as monsters. You think of the forces that pushed them. You can see these forces, you can feel them in yourself and defend yourself against them.

***If external forces create monsters, we can all become monsters.***

Yes, that's understood. But, you have the possibility to become a monster, as well as the possibility not to, and what's important, of course, is not to. That said, it is also true that there are conditions that make it easier not to become a monster. In the case of *La Cérémonie*, it is easier for the Lelièvre family to live normally than it is for the two girls.

***By accepting that crime is explainable, do we have to rethink the notion of punishment?***

At root, one is punished not for the crime itself, but rather for having surrendered to the impulse to kill. That is why I am absolutely against capital punishment. It's absurd, and morally indefensible to punish one impulse to kill with another.

***But murder should be punished, shouldn't it?***

Of course. But punished in a different way, otherwise who will punish the punisher?

***So, at the end of the film, they are punished. Sophie is caught, and Jeanne is, in effect, killed by the church.***

First, of all, we don't know that Sophie is caught. I think that by the time they realize what's happened, she is already elsewhere.

***So, punishment is not inevitable...***

No, no. I don't think it's inevitable. But punishment comes mostly from society, or by chance. In Jeanne's case, it's an unfortunate happenstance. What's terrible is that, even if she had killed no one, even if she had simply watched television with Sophie and gotten into her car, she would have been punished in exactly the same way.

***Let's talk about the cast. How did you select the three leading ladies?***

I've known Isabelle for a long time and love working with her. We have a good time, and understand each other well. Once I finished the screenplay, I asked her to choose the role she wanted. She could have easily taken on the role of Sophie, but it's a kind of character she has already played. For my part, I also wanted her to take the role of the postal clerk.

***You've worked with her a lot. Did her work in this film surprise you?***

Oh, yes. Each time we work together, she manages to surprise me. The insanity that she put into this character really pleased me. You really get the impression that she's nuts.

***What about Sandrine Bonnaire and Jacqueline Bisset?***

I had wanted to work with Sandrine for some time, but it was also Isabelle's idea. She suggested that it would be interesting to cast Sandrine in this role. We had to delay production to wait for her, because she was finishing another film in Russia. When you are shooting in Russia, you never have any idea when you are going to come back. It always takes a long time. So, to be sure, I gave it a month, and finally was able to work with Sandrine for the first — but undoubtedly not the last — time. She was very impressive.

As for Jacqueline Bisset, I have to admit that I had not thought of her until my agent — who also represents her here — made the suggestion. At first, I was hesitant to approach her with what is, after all, a third lead, but our agent thought she would enjoy it, and that's how I got the opportunity to have Jackie in the film.



***Did you do anything to explain the roles?***

I gave Sandrine a lot of books about illiteracy and suggested to her that she play the character like a vegetable. She said "All right then, I'm going to be a leek." And she looks like a leek here, it's true, especially with that walk that she used. That peculiar way of walking on her heels is not her normal stride. As she can't read, I suppose it's to reassure herself that she's firmly connected to the ground.

***Explain the family relationship of the Lelièvres.***

It's pretty simple. Mr. Lelièvre was married before and has a daughter, and Mrs. Lelièvre has her own son. But, at the same time, they are a family. I wanted to show that the family unit is not an issue of blood ties. It's made up by education, affinity, that type of thing. It's true that this is a family that gets along rather well. They are not at all an unlikable family, but at the same time, you have this urge to eliminate them...

***What about the relationship between the husband and wife?***

It is still very sensual, and they are still very much in love. But, at the same time, what Jeanne says about them — in her madness — is somewhat true. They have very separate lives during the day.

***And the dark secrets that Jeanne talks about?***

She invents them, but there's never smoke without fire. It is true that Mr. Lelièvre's first wife committed suicide, although we don't know why.

***Finally, what makes a successful suspense film?***

Hitchcock always said that if a man is walking down a long corridor and all of sudden, somebody hits him in the back, that's a surprise. But if you see a man with a revolver in that corridor, and you see another man walking toward him, that becomes suspense. In good suspense, the viewer should identify with the character. He can also know little bit more than the character, but in order to identify with the character, not too much more. That way, the viewer is afraid for himself, and it becomes very interesting. From the moment a viewer identifies with a character, and he knows that the character is in danger, it is he himself who is in danger. It's an interesting feeling.



About the Filmmaker  
Claude Chabrol  
(Director / Co-Screenwriter)

Claude Chabrol's career has encompassed nearly thirty years and over forty feature films. His style has remained as distinctive and his voice as unmistakable as they were in the heyday of the French New Wave.

Born in 1930 in Paris, Chabrol spent most of his childhood in a provincial village in the center of France. The son and grandson of pharmacists, he was expected to follow in the family profession, despite his total distaste for the subject. After flunking out of pharmacy school, he became a regular at the Cinemateque, and soon joined the staff of the fledgling magazine "Cahiers du Cinema." In 1957, Chabrol collaborated with Eric Rohmer on a celebrated monograph on Alfred Hitchcock, one that went a long way to establish Hitchcock as more than a highly-popular engineer of entertainment.

In 1958, an unexpected inheritance enabled Chabrol to direct his first feature film, the semi-autobiographical *Le Beau Serge*. The following year was the year of the New Wave in France, and though it boasted remarkable works by Truffaut, Goddard, and Malle, it was Chabrol who won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for his early masterwork, *The Cousins*. This film also began what was to be an ongoing debate over Chabrol's so-called "immorality" content as it included promiscuity, abortion, and homicide. Though it made Chabrol's reputation, it was also reviled by a number of key American critics.

The success of *The Cousins* enabled Chabrol to form his own production company and finance the first films of Eric Rohmer, Philippe De Broca, and Jacques Rivette. His own work during the 1960s, though deeply personal and increasingly accomplished, did not do well at the box office. Films during this period include *Les Bonnes Femmes* and *Landru*.

By the late 1960s, Chabrol returned to more serious themes with such films as *La Ligne De Demarcation* (1966) and *The Champagne Murders* (1967). However, it was the great success of *Les Biches* (1968), that marked a turning point in his career. Shortly thereafter, Chabrol also directed a series of films on which his general reputation is still based: *La Femme Infidele* and *This Man Must Die* (1969), *Le Boucher* and *La Rupture* (1970), and *Just Before Nightfall* (1971).

Apart from the fact that all of these films starred his then-wife Stephane Audran (who had been appearing in his films since *Les Cousins*), these works are also linked by a consistent set of themes and a highly cultivated world view. Like his mentor Hitchcock, Chabrol was raised a Catholic and as such, is a firm believer in the concept of original sin. Throughout his films, guilt and complicity are universal and evil is a commonplace occurrence. As with Hitchcock, the complacency of the bourgeois "hero" is constantly being punctured by the unexpected.

In 1972, Chabrol made his first English-language feature, *Dr. Popaul (Ten Days Wonder)*, starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and Mia Farrow. During the 70s, Chabrol made numerous films including *Wedding in Blood* (1973), *Une Partie de Plaisir* (1974), *Violette* (1978), *Nada* (1973), *Dirty Hands* (1974), *The Magicians* (1974), *The Twist* (1975), and *Alice* (1976)

Beginning in 1984 Chabrol formed a relationship with producer Marin Karmitz that led to a string of commercial and critical successes reminiscent of his latest '60s triumphs. *Poulet au Vinaigre* (1984) was such a hit that it spawned a sequel, *Inspector Lavardin*. While both *Masks* and *Le Cri du Hibou* were equally acclaimed as stylish thrillers in a light Hitchcockian vein, *Story of Women* was the first film since *Violette* to win prizes at major international film festivals and receive a commercial release in America.

In 1990, Chabrol completed production of an English-language adaptation of Henry Miller's *Quiet Days in Clichy*, starring Andrew McCarthy and Nigel Mavers. During the '90s, Chabrol directed five films, including remakes of *Dr. Mabuse (Club Extinction)* and *Madame Bovary*.

Chabrol has appeared in two of his own films, as well as in several made by his friends. He also received credit as technical consultant on Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*. Chabrol has also written or collaborated on most of his own film scripts.

## Claude Chabrol Filmography

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 1958 | <i>Le Beau Serge</i><br><i>Les Cousins</i>       |
| 1959 | <i>Les Bonnes Femmes</i><br><i>A Double Tour</i> |
| 1960 | <i>Les Godelureaux</i>                           |
| 1961 | <i>Ophelia</i>                                   |

|      |  |
|------|--|
|      | <i>Seven Capital Sins (Les Sept Péchés Capitaux)</i>   |
| 1962 | <i>Bluebeard (Landru)</i>  |
| 1963 | <i>The Beautiful Swindlers (Les Plus Belles Escroqueries du Siècle)</i>  |
| 1964 | <i>The Tiger Likes Fresh Blood (Le Tigre Aime la Chair Fraîche)</i>  |
| 1965 | <i>An Orchid for the Tiger (Le Tigre Se Parfume à la Dynamite)</i><br><i>Marie Chantal Contre le Docteur K</i><br><i>Six in Paris (Paris Vu Par)</i> |
| 1966 | <i>Le Scandale</i><br><i>La Ligne de Démarcation</i>   |
| 1967 | <i>The Girlfriends (Les Biches)</i><br><i>La Route de Corinthe</i>   |
| 1968 | <i>La Femme Infidèle</i>   |
| 1969 | <i>Le Boucher</i><br><i>This Man Must Die (Que la bête Meure)</i>  |
| 1970 | <i>Just Before Nightfall (Juste Avant la Nuit)</i><br><i>The Breakup (La Rupture)</i>  |
| 1971 | <i>La Décade Prodigieuse (Ten Days Wonder)</i>   |
| 1972 | <i>Wedding in Blood (Les Noces Rouges)</i><br><i>Docteur Popaul</i>  |
| 1973 | <i>Nada</i>  |
| 1974 | <i>Une Partie de Plaisir</i><br><i>Dirty Hands (Les Innocents aux Mains Sales)</i>   |
| 1975 | <i>Folies Bourgeoises</i><br><i>Les Magiciens</i>  |
| 1976 | <i>Alice or the Last Escapade (Alice ou la Dernière Fugue)</i>   |
| 1977 | <i>Violette (Violette Nozière)</i><br><i>Les liens de Sang</i>   |
| 1980 | <i>The Horse of Pride (Le Cheval D'Orgueil)</i>  |



|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1982 | <i>Les Fantômes du Chapelier</i>  |
| 1983 | <i>The Blood of Others (Le Sang des Autres)</i>                                 |
| 1984 | <i>Cop Au Vin (Poulet au Vinaigre)</i>  |
| 1985 | <i>Inspecteur Lavardin</i>  |
| 1986 | <i>Masques</i>  |
| 1987 | <i>The Cry of the Owl (Le Cri du Hibou)</i>                                     |
| 1988 | <i>Story of Women (Une Affaire de Femmes)</i><br><i>Alouette Je Te Plumerai</i> |
| 1990 | <i>Docteur M</i><br><i>Quiet Days in Clichy (Jours Tranquilles à Clichy)</i>    |
| 1991 | <i>Madame Bovary</i>  |
| 1992 | <i>Betty</i>  |
| 1993 | <i>The Eye of Vichy (L'Oeil de Vichy)</i>                                       |
| 1994 | <i>L'Enfer</i>  |
| 1995 | <b><i>La Cérémonie</i></b>  |

In pre-production: *Rien Ne Va Plus*

## About the Cast Isabelle Huppert (Jeanne)

Born in 1955 in Paris, Isabelle Huppert was the youngest of five children. Her father was in the safe manufacturing business and her mother was an English teacher. Huppert majored in Russian literature, but eventually left school to study drama exclusively. She attended the Versailles Conservatory and the National Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Paris. In 1971, she made her film debut in a minor role in Nina Companeez' *Faustine et le Bel Été*.

Huppert was cast as Romy Schneider's younger sister in Claude Sautet's *Cesar and Rosalie* (1972). The following year she made an impressive appearance in *Going Places*, co-starring Gérard Depardieu. By 1975, Huppert was one of the busiest actresses in Europe, starring in *Sérieux Comme le Plaisir*, *The Rape of Innocence*, *No Time for Breakfast*, *The Judge and the Assassin*, and *The Lacemaker*.

During the late 1970s, Huppert was not only the most successful of all French actresses, she was also the most powerful. Her participation alone made it possible for a number of films by unfashionable or uncommercial filmmakers to be completed, and guaranteed the mainstream distribution that would otherwise have eluded them. Among the films of this period were *Loulou*, directed by Maurice Pialat; *La Truite*, directed by Joseph Losey; and Jean-Luc Godard's *Every Man for Himself* and *Passion*.

Huppert's work became more international at this point, taking her to Italy for *La Dame aux Camélias*, directed by Mauro Bolognini; to Hungary for *The Inheritance*, directed by Marta Meszaros, and to the United States for Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*.

Yet for all her screen work abroad, Huppert never abandoned French screens, alternating films by such French masters as Bertrand Tavernier (*Coup de Torchon / Clean Slate*), Michel Deville (*Eaux Profondes*), Diane Kurys (*Entre Nous*), and Bertrand Blier (*My Best Friend's Girl*) with her international projects. She continued to use her stardom to foster new and smaller works by such directors as Christine Pascal (*La Garce*), Josiane Balasko (*Sac de Nœuds*), and her own sister Caroline Huppert, who directed the comedy *Sincerely, Charlotte*.

The 1990 film, *Madame Bovary*, in which Huppert played the title role, reunited her with director Claude Chabrol, who previously guided her to the Best Actress Award at the Venice Film Festival for *Story of Women*. Huppert also received high praise for her performance in *Malina* (1990), directed by Werner Schroeter. For *La Cérémonie*, she shared the Best Actress Award with Sandrine Bonnaire at the Venice Film Festival (1995) and received the César for Best Actress (1996).

## Isabelle Huppert Filmography

- 1971 *Faustine et le Bel Été*, directed by Nina Companeez
- 1972 *Cesar and Rosalie (César et Rosalie)*, directed by Claude Sautet  
*Le Bar De La Fourche*, directed by Alain Levent
- 1973 *L'Ampélopède*, directed by Rachel Weinberg  
*Going Places (Les Valseuses)*, directed by Bertrand Blier
- 1974 *Rosebud*, directed by Otto Preminger  
*Aloise*, directed by Liliane de Kermadec
- 1975 *Le Grand Délire*, directed by Dennis Berry  
*Sérieux Comme le Plaisir*, directed by Robert Benayoun  
*Rape of Innocence (Dupont la Joie)*, directed by Yves Boisset  
*No Time for Breakfast (Docteur Françoise Gaillard)*, directed by Jean-Louis Bertucelli  
*Je Suis Pierre Rivière*, directed by Christine Lipinska  
*Le Petit Marcel*, directed by Jacques Fansten  
*The Judge and the Assassin (Le Juge et L'assassin)*, directed by Bertrand Tavernier
- 1976 *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière)*, directed by Claude Goretta
- 1977 *Far from India (Les Indiens Sont Encore Loin)*, directed by Patricia Moraz  
*Spoiled Children (Des Enfants Gâtés)*, directed by Bertrand Tavernier
- 1978 *Violette (Violette Nozière)*, directed by Claude Chabrol (César for Best Actress)  
*Le Retour de la Bien-Aimée*, directed by Jean-François Adam  
*Les Soeurs Brontë*, directed by André Téchiné
- 1979 *Loulou*, directed by Maurice Pialat  
*Every Man for Himself (Sauve Qui Peut la Vie)*, directed by Jean-Luc Godard
- 1980 *Heaven's Gate*, directed by Michael Cimino  
*Les Héritières*, directed by Marta Meszaros  
*Vera Storia Della Signora Delle Camelie*, directed by Mauro Bolognini  
*Wings of the Dove (Les Ailes de la Colombe)*, directed by Benoit Jacquot
- 1981 *Clean Slate (Coup de Torchon)*, directed by Bertrand Tavernier  
*Eaux Profondes*, directed by Michel Deville  
*Passion*, directed by Jean-Luc Godard
- 1982 *The Trout (La Truite)*, directed by Joseph Losey



- Entre Nous (Coup de Foudre)*, directed by Diane Kurys  
*The Story of Piera (Storia di Piera)*, directed by Marco Ferreri
- 1983      *My Best Friend's Girl (La Femme de Mon Pote)*, directed by Bertrand Blier  
            *La Garce*, directed by Christine Pascal
- 1984      *Sincerely, Charlotte (Signé Charlotte)*, directed by Caroline Huppert  
            *All Mixed Up (Sac de Noeuds)*, directed by Josiane Balasko
- 1985      *Cactus*, directed by Paul Cox
- 1986      *Faux Témoins*, directed by Curtis Hanson
- 1987      *The Possessed (Les Possédés)*, directed by Andrzej Wajda  
            *Milan Noir*, directed by Ronald Chammah  
            *Migrations*, directed by Alexandar Petrovic
- 1988      *Story of Women (Une Affaire de Femmes)*, directed by Claude Chabrol
- 1989      *A Woman's Revenge (La Vengeance d'une Femme)*, directed by Jacques Doillon
- 1990      *Malina*, directed by Werner Schroeter  
            *Madame Bovary*, directed by Claude Chabrol
- 1992      *Love After Love (Après L'Amour)*, directed by Diane Kurys
- 1993      *L'Inondation*, directed by Igor Minaëv  
            *Amateur*, directed by Hal Hartley
- 1994      *La Séparation*, directed by Christian Vincent
- 1995      *La Cérémonie*, directed by Claude Chabrol

## Sandrine Bonnaire (Sophie)

Born in 1967 in Clermont-Ferrand, Sandrine Bonnaire was discovered by director Maurice Pialat at age 15, when he was casting *A Nos Amours*. Pialat, who was looking for an unknown to play the lead in his film, took an ad out in the local newspaper; Bonnaire answered the ad and was cast as the young girl struggling to grow up. For her role in this film, Bonnaire won a César Award as France's most promising new actress.

Bonnaire's career quickly took off, and she was cast in four films in 1984 -- Marc Angelo's *Tir à Vue*, Renaud Victor's *Le Meilleur de la Vie*, Jacques Renaud's *Blanche et Marie*, and a second collaboration with Pialat, *Police*.

It was Bonnaire's work in Agnès Varda's *Vagabond* (1985), though, that firmly cemented her reputation as one of France's finest young actresses. Playing a rebellious teenage drifter roaming the countryside in the South of France, Bonnaire won her second César, this time as Best Actress.

Bonnaire followed *Vagabond* with Jacques Doillon's *La Puritaine* (1986), Oliver Langlois' *Jaune Révolver* (1987), André Téchiné's *Les Innocents* (1987), and a third collaboration with Maurice Pialat, *Under Satan's Sun* (1987), opposite Gérard Depardieu.

Bonnaire also starred in Claude Sautet's *A Few Days with Me*, opposite Daniel Auteuil, and Patricia Mazuy's *Peaux de Vaches* with Jean-François Stevenin and Jacques Spiesser. Other films include *Monsieur Hire* (1989), *La Révolution Française* (1989), *La captive du désert / Captive of the Desert* (1990), and *Verso Sera* (1990). For *La Cérémonie*, Bonnaire shared the Best Actress Award with Isabelle Huppert, at the Venice Film Festival (1995).

## Sandrine Bonnaire Filmography

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1984 | <i>A Nos Amours</i> , directed by Maurice Pialat<br><i>Le Meilleur de la Vie</i> , directed by Renaud Victor<br><i>Tir à Vue</i> , directed by Marc Angelo<br><i>Police</i> , directed by Maurice Pialat |
| 1985 | <i>Blanche et Marie</i> , directed by Jacques Renard<br><i>Vagabond (Sans Toit Ni Loi)</i> , directed by Agnès Varda   |

- 1986        *La Puritaine*, directed by Jacques Doillon
- 1987        *Jaune Révolver*, directed by Olivier Langlois  
*Les Innocents*, directed by André Téchiné  
*Under Satan's Sun (Sous le Soleil de Satan)*, directed by Maurice Pialat
- 1988        *A Few Days With Me (Quelques Jours Avec Moi)*, directed by Claude Sautet  
*Peaux de Vaches*, directed by Patricia Mazuy
- 1989        *La Révolution Française*, directed by Robert Enrico  
*Monsieur Hire*, directed by Patrice Leconte
- 1990        *La Captive du Désert*, directed by Raymond Depardon  
*Verso Sera*, directed by Francesca Archibugi
- 1991        *The Plague*, directed by Luis Puenzo  
*Prague*, directed by Ian Sellar
- 1992        *The Sky Above Paris (Le Ciel de Paris)*, directed by Michel Bena
- 1994        *Jeanne la Pucelle*, directed by Jacques Rivette
- 1995        *Confidence à un Inconnu*, directed by Georges Barawil  
*La Cérémonie*, directed by Claude Chabrol
- 1996        *Neverever*, directed by Charles Finch

## Jacqueline Bisset (Catherine)

Jacqueline Bisset was born in Weybridge, England. Her father was a Scottish doctor and her mother was a lawyer of French and English descent. She was a photographers' model at 18, and began appearing in British films in the mid-1960s, in films such as Richard Lester's *The Knack and How to Get it* (1965), *Arrividerci Baby* starring Tony Curtis (1966), and Roman Polanski's *Cul-de-sac* (1966). She then went on to Hollywood, where she was groomed as a starlet. By 1970, Bisset was playing leading roles in international productions. By the end of the decade, she was an established, bankable star.



It was the 1967 James Bond spoof, *Casino Royal*, which won Bisset a long-term contract at 20th Century Fox. An impressive list of films followed in short order, including Stanley Donen's *Two for the Road*, *The Sweet Ride*, *The Detective*, opposite Frank Sinatra, and *Bullit*.

In 1970, Bisset was one of the stars of *Airport*, Universal Studio's highest-grossing film at the time, and that same year, she also starred in *The Grasshopper*. In 1973, François Truffaut cast Bisset as an unstable Hollywood actress recovering from a nervous breakdown in *Day for Night*. The film won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. Other foreign productions in which she appeared include *Le Magnifique* with Jean-Paul Belmondo and *Sunday Woman*, with Marcello Mastroianni and Jean-Louis Trintignant.

Other roles which added to her international stardom included *The Thief Who Came to Dinner*; John Huston's *The Life And Times of Judge Roy Bean*; *The Greek Tycoon*, where she teamed up with Anthony Quinn; Sidney Lumet's *Murder on The Orient Express*, and *Who Is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?* Bisset starred with Nick Nolte and Robert Shaw in one of the all-time box office hits, *The Deep*. Her emergence as an international film star landed her the covers of Newsweek and People in the same week.

John Huston's adaptation of the modern classic Malcolm Lowry novel Under the Volcano, which teamed her with Albert Finney, brought Bisset a Golden Globe Best Dramatic Actress nomination.

Additional film credits include *Rossini, Rossini*; *Wild Orchid* with Mickey Rourke; *The Maid*, opposite Martin Sheen; *Scenes From a Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*; *High Season*; and George Cukor's *Rich And Famous*.

Bisset will soon appear in the Warner Bros. Release *Venice* (aka *The Honest Courtesan*) in Italy. She also recently starred opposite Theresa Russell in the CBS-TV film "Once You Meet a Stranger." Television films include "End of Summer" starring Julian Sands and Peter Weller, and "September," starring Michael York and Edward Fox, both for Showtime.

Bisset's television debut came with "Anna Karenina," where she starred opposite Paul Scofield in the three-hour version film by Rastar Productions for CBS-TV. For her role in the television film "Forbidden," Bisset received a Best Actress nomination in the A.C.E. balloting.

Based in Los Angeles, Bisset divides her time between America and Europe.

## Jacqueline Bisset Filmography

- 1965      *The Knack and How to Get It*, directed by Richard Lester
- 1966      *Cul-De-Sac*, directed by Roman Polanski  
            *Arrividerci Baby*
- 1967      *The Capetown Affair*, directed by Robert D. Webb  
            *Casino Royale*, directed by John Huston, Ken Hughes, Robert Parrish, Val Guest, Joseph McGrath  
            *Two for the Road*, directed by Stanley Donen  
            *The Grasshopper*
- 1968      *Bullitt*, directed by Peter Yates  
            *The Sweet Ride*, directed by Harvey Hart
- 1969      *The First Time*, directed by James Nielson
- 1970      *Airport*, directed by George Seaton  
            *Passing of Evil*, directed by Jerry Paris
- 1971      *Believe in Me*, directed by Stuart Hagmann  
            *The Mephisto Waltz*, directed by Paul Wendkos
- 1972      *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean*, directed by John Huston  
            *Stand Up and Be Counted*, directed by Jackie Cooper
- 1973      *Day for Night (La Nuit Américaine)*, directed by François Truffaut  
            *The Thief Who Came to Dinner*, directed by Bud Yorkin
- 1974      *Le Magnifique*, directed by Philippe de Broca  
            *Murder on the Orient Express*, directed by Sydney Lumet
- 1976      *End of the Game*, directed by Maximilian Schell  
            *The Sunday Woman (Donna della Domenica)*, directed by Luigi Comencini
- 1977      *The Deep*, directed by Peter Yates
- 1978      *The Greek Tycoon*, directed by Jack Lee Thompson  
            *Who Is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?* directed by Ted Kotcheff
- 1980      *When Time Ran Out*, directed by James Goldstone
- 1981      *Rich and Famous*, directed by George Cukor

- 1983            *Class*, directed by Lewis John Carlino
- 1984            *Under the Volcano*, directed by John Huston
- 1987            *High Season*, directed by James Fox and Irène Papas
- 1988            *La Maison de Jade*, directed by Nadine Trintignant
- 1989            *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*, directed by Paul Bartel
- 1990            *Wild Orchid*, directed by Zalman King
- 1991            *The Maid*, directed by Ian Toynton  
                   *Rossini, Rossini*, directed by Mario Monicelli
- 1994            *Crime Broker*, directed by Ian Barry  
                   *Les Marmottes*, directed by Elie Chouraqui
- 1995            *Hoffman's Hunger*, directed by Leon de Winter  
                   *La Cérémonie*, directed by Claude Chabrol
- 1996            *Venice* (previously titled *The Honest Courtesan*), directed by Marshall HersHKovitz

## Virginie Ledoyen (Melinda)

Virginie Ledoyen is, at nineteen, the new star of French cinema. She first appeared on stage at the age of four, in her first film at nine, and in her first real play at eleven. She won critical acclaim at the New York Film Festival in Olivier Assayas's *Cold Water* at sixteen, and once again last year in *A Single Girl*. *A Single Girl* recently opened in New York to rave reviews.

Most recently, Ledoyen shot a three-hour costume epic for French television based on Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne*. She also appears in Edward Yang's *Mah Jong* (which was shown in this year's New York Film Festival).



# Virginie Ledoyen

## Filmography

1990

*Mima*, directed by Philomène Esposito

*Le Voleur D'enfants*, directed by Christian de Chalonge

1992

*Mouche*, directed by Marcel Carné

1993

*Les Marmottes*, directed by Elie Chouraqui

*Cold Water (L'Eau Froide)*, directed by Olivier Assayas

1994

*La Vie de Marianne*, directed by Benoit Jacquot

1995

*A Single Girl (La Fille Seule)*, directed by Benoit Jacquot

*Shake and Bake (Mah Jong)*, directed by Edward Yang

*La Cérémonie*, directed by Claude Chabrol