

Les Roseaux Sauvages

(original title unknown)

France : 1994 : dir. André Téchiné : IMA

: 110 min

prod: : scr: André Téchiné, Gilles Taurand & Olivier Massart : dir.ph.: Jean Lapoirie

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Gael Morel; Elodie Bouchez; Stephane Rideau; Frederic Gorney; Michele Moretti; Jacques Nolot; Eric Kreikenmayer

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
2001 review:

"Richly evocative film, set in 1962, about four young people in rural France (where the kids listen to American Top 40 songs!), coming of age¹ and exploring their sexuality. The ideological and emotional turbulence caused by the Algerian war is felt in a quiet boarding school with the arrival of a new French-Algerian student², whose radical politics throw things into disarray. A multi-layered story, masterfully directed. Winner of four César Awards, including Best Picture. ***1/2 "

Variety International Film Guide 1995 review:

"...The best of this realistic trend was to be found in a fruitful collaboration between cinema and television (Arte, the cultural channel): "**Tous les Garçons et les Filles de leur Âge**", a series of nine films spanning the last thirty years (three films per decade) and each evoking the adolescence of the various directors.

André Téchiné in his "**LES ROSEAUX SAUVAGES**" sets his story at the time of the Algerian war (early 1960's), Olivier Assayas ("**L'EAU FROIDE**") in the early 1970's, a time of open rebellion against the family, Patricia Mazuy ("**TRAVOLTA ET MOI**") in the mid-1970's and Cedric Kahn ("**TROP DE BONHEUR**") in the early 1980's. Five more are to come.

¹ cliché...

² or "pupil", as we say in English

They all share a sequence with the dance and music of the time and as expected all deal with amorous relationships. But it is fascinating to observe the variety of talents, the difference in atmosphere, the area where the action take place from the South of France to the suburbs of Paris."

The Movie Boy website review:

" "**WILD REEDS**", directed by Andre Techine, was the best film of 1994, and one of, if not my favourite, foreign-language film I have seen. This beautifully made French film is set in 1962, and revolves around four teenagers. At the centre of the story is François (Gael Morel), a rather shy, introverted young man who is staying at a boarding school. When a new student, Serge (Stephane Rideau), who is a much more rebellious person, comes to stay at the school, they become friends, and to François' shock, finds Serge in his bed late one night.

After this encounter, Serge strays farther away from him, and it is apparent that he is not interested in a relationship, but he leaves Francois utterly confused about his own sexuality. Also a large part of the story is Maite (Elodie Bouchez), Francois' long-time female best friend, who obviously has deep feeling for him, and the oldest student at the boarding school, Henri (Frederic Gorney), who is about to turn 21, and has purposefully failed each year because he is afraid to face the "real world."

Something I have noticed lately is that the characters in American films almost always act like immature children, and in most foreign films, the characters are infinitely more intelligent and interesting people. "**WILD REEDS**" proves this point to a T, even though these characters are still in high school. This motion picture is full of such truth and honesty that it is in another league with most films that are made nowadays.

Regardless of what the film is about, it is not a "gay" film, and the film is far too complex for it to be labelled such a thing. Instead, it is about the uncertainties and insecurities of growing up, and the picture understands and cares about the characters so much that the audience can't help but do the same thing. Also, all of the characters are written to be fully-developed, living and breathing human beings, and they are helped even more by the amazingly mature performances from its cast, particularly Morel and Bouchez, who have a large future in films. Incidentally, Bouchez was awarded the Best Actress prize at this year's Cannes Film Festival for a yet-to-be-released French film.

There are moments within the film that involves these characters that are full of such unblinking reality and intelligence that there is no way it could be a

"mainstream" American picture. Another highlight of "**WILD REEDS**" is its music, which is filled with several 60's hits, such as "Barbara Anne" and "Runaway." Although this may, at first, sound a bit strange, since this film is in subtitles, it only adds to the realism since in France in the 1960's American pop songs were no doubt popular, and they fit perfectly into the story.

The conclusion of "**WILD REEDS**" is splendid, as it brings together all of these characters and story threads, and all of the predicaments are dealt with. And yet... very little is solved, except that, I sense, the characters have grown quite a bit as people and have learned about themselves. In this sense, it is just like real life, because not everything is always resolved and wrapped up within two hours. Instead, "**WILD REEDS**" leaves you thinking and pondering about what lies ahead for these four people, even after the end credits. Judging from the film itself, their lives will not be a bed of roses, but they will make it through everything quite alright, I'm sure.

Rated: NR (equivalent of an R for sexual situations, profanity [*sic*], and nudity). Reviewed by Dustin Putman, September 1998."

No further information currently available. Not to be confused with "**LES FLEURS SAUVAGES**" ("Wild Flowers"). Little indication above as to the ages of the protagonists, but it's a rare school film indeed which pays any notice to pupils younger than 15, and more often than not the cast will be in their twenties. A bizarre vision of school life the cinema paints. "**LE SOUFFLE AU COEUR**" (which did not succumb to these faults) was set a decade earlier than this film, but a comparison will still be interesting. I believe the hero was collecting for the wounded of the Indochina war at the start of Malle's story.

Homosexual flings at boarding school are even more of a cliché than the rape scene in a prison film (by no means an idle analogy), but among the best remembered came in another French classic, "**LES AMITIÉS PARTICULIÈRES**". Reading between the lines of these reviews however, it seems clear the main amorous thrust (as it were) is heterosexual – always a safer bet where audience figures are concerned.

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