



LOG ON  GaydarGuy  GaydarGirl

Username  Register free  
Forgot Password

Password  **GO!**

SEARCH  GaydarNation  Interviews

**GO!**

Power Search  The Web

Home Radio Travel Entertainment Fun News Lifestyle Personals Forums Blogs

Daily Male  
Film & TV  
DVD Reviews  
Film Reviews  
Interviews  
Film Trailers  
Television  
Inside Hollywood  
Popcorn  
Nightlife  
Music  
Culture  
Books

My GaydarNation  
What's New  
Downloads  
Competitions  
E-Cards  
Contact

#### Related Links

Gay Dating  
Lesbian Dating  
Jukebox  
Freedoms  
True Vision  
Hard Cell  
DrugFucked

Terms & Conditions

Privacy Policy

Disclaimers

▶ **Get Away For A Weekend**

▶ **Book First Choice Holiday...**

Find great deals on holidays to Florida with ...

▶ **Florida Holiday Info...**

Get info on florida holiday from 12 engines i...

▶ **Florida Holidays...**

Looking for Florida Holidays? Review our comp...

▶ **Shopping**

▶ **Health**

▶ **Property**

## Entertainment : Film & TV : Interviews

### Jean-Marc Barr

12 Oct 2006

**If Jean-Marc Barr's films were dispensed on the NHS, recovery rates would rocket. Waiting lists might increase mind you, but some things are worth waiting for. So set the remote control to 'Pause' because you could have that pretty face in your living room right now (!), as enjoyable French comedy Cockles And Muscles has just been released on DVD.**

A long-standing champion of the gay cause and independent films, Jean-Marc has used his good looks and the success thrust upon him after starring in *The Big Blue* to carve out the career he wants. Still remarkably handsome at 46, he shows no signs of slowing down or covering up.

Rachael Scott chatted to Jean-Marc and discovered a movie-making rebel with an enlightened mind.

**I interviewed the directors of Cockles and Muscles (Jacques Martineau and Olivier Ducastel) earlier this year when the film came out.**

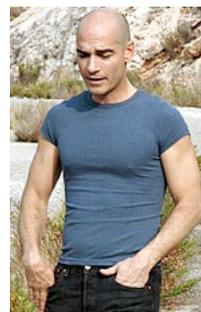
Yes, they belong to a generation of directors who are trying to survive in France, which is more and more difficult because their films don't come under 'the big league'. That they exist is very, very important.

**I thought what they were trying to do was very clever and I don't think everyone understood it.**

Yeah. It's not really politically correct right now. We're in a time of fear and people are holding on to safe values. It's a way of celebrating where we are in evolution and France still has that distance towards sexuality that's a bit more rational.

**So, what initially attracted you to the part of Didier?**

I loved the idea that homosexuality was being dealt with and I was in the position where I could defend the character just by playing a love story. Also it gave me the courage to try and present a different kind of character because sometimes stereotypes get played and there were a lot of people that were troubled by my portrayal.



#### Related Articles

Jean-Marc Barr, Part 2  
History Boys  
Devil Wears Prada  
DVD: Brother To Brother  
DVD: Cockles And Muscles  
Pratibha Parmar  
DVD: Destricted  
DVD: Confetti  
DVD: Chicken Tikka Masala  
DVD: Night Watch  
Edgardo Cozarinsky  
DVD: Adam And Steve  
Craig Chester  
DVD: C.R.A.Z.Y.  
DVD: Hellbent  
Jacques Martineau And Olivier Ducastel

#### Related Links

Cockles and Muscles  
Wikipedia: Jean-Marc Barr  
IMDB: Jean-Marc Barr  
Peccadillo Pictures

**"I tried to play him so that heteros had to ask themselves whether they were gay or not. I didn't play the obvious gay man."**

**Really?**

I tried to play him so that heteros had to ask themselves whether they were gay or not. I didn't play the obvious gay man. I played a man who was in love with another man and that made the love scenes credible.

**You don't seem to be nervous about nude scenes at all...**

Well, I come from California and the whole motto is, 'When you've got it, flaunt it'. [He laughs]

**He said modestly! Well the majority of GaydarNation's readers would agree with you I'm sure.**

Also, in my career I've been able to use it the right way, with a sense of humour, which is better than just showing it off! When I showed my ass to the camera it was through his lover's eyes. Being an actor you have to be really selfless and I'm lucky to be able to do roles like this.

**You come from an unusually mixed background don't you?**

Yes. My mother's French, my father's American and they met in England after the war. I was living in England when Thatcher arrived and I could see how the country was transformed in 10 years and Americanised. I love America, but what's coming out of it is far away from the aspirations of what people want. And I think that films like Olivier and Jacques' are films that allow a window of tolerance in this formatted world we live in.

**I thought they had a very light-hearted way of putting across serious issues.**

Yes, inoffensive and done with humour, which allows tolerance. We can see its values and, hopefully, there are a lot of people who still believe in cinema. There's a resistance to these films and, of course, we don't have the promotion that Brad or Angelina might have, but these films still get seen.

**Through word of mouth.**

Yes, that I think is the resistance of the day. I've just released a film, *Chacun Sa Nuit*, that showed at the Toronto Film Festival and we managed to sell it to the Americans and I think the UK is thinking of buying it.

**Do gay men chat you up a lot?**

No. Not really.

**How about in the past?**



#### Today on GaydarNation

You are not logged in



▶ **Radio**  
Timmy Vegas  
Ava Leigh  
CD: The Fame



▶ **Travel**  
Europe's Secret Cities  
Miami Winter Party Festival  
Diary: February 2009



▶ **Entertainment**  
Laurie Colbert  
Christian Cooke  
Ask The DJ: Vicki Cooper



▶ **Fun** show

▶ **News** show

▶ **Lifestyle** show

#### Newest Blogs

When I was in my early 20s and I was innocent, yeah.

**In the UK everyone really remembers you for *The Big Blue* which seems crazy because it came out nearly 20 years ago.**

I know, I know. It gave me a chance to find my career. I've done some work with Lars von Trier and the whole star thing keeps me in a position where I can choose my roles. Once you start becoming a product you can no longer do really interesting films because you have to sustain your product buyability.

**"I loved the idea that homosexuality was being dealt with and I was in the position where I could defend the character just by playing a love story."**

**You trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London didn't you?**

Yes, I was in the same class as David Thewlis. I have a couple of very close colleagues in England and every time I go there I keep up with all the gossip and it feels like a home.

**In 1988 you were in *Orpheus Descending* with Vanessa Redgrave. So, would you consider going back on the London stage?**

Oh yeah. The problem is I've started making my own films and once you start directing it consumes a lot and people start stereotyping you and putting you in the director position.

**Do you find it harder to be perceived as an actor now that you direct then?**

The thrill of holding five reels of film in your arms like a baby and knowing that you've created it is such a satisfaction. You get so well paid today as an actor to do such ridiculous crap that I want to be in control and not be a slave of the situation, which is almost impossible.

**Tell me about your trilogy of films. What was the theme running through them?**

It was called the 'Free' trilogy. My partner, Pascal Arnold, and I, decided to do three films in three years and give ourselves total freedom in their creation. The first one was the first French Dogme film, *Lovers*, and that was about freedom to love who you want and where you want. Then we shot another in the US called *Too Much Flesh* that takes place in a small Illinois town where a guy discovers his sexuality at 38 and the townspeople's frustrations are revealed because of it. And finally *Being Light*, which was about freedom of thought and spirit and we shot that in India.



**Were they all Dogme films?**

No, just the first one. Dogme is a thing written by three Danes who got drunk one night. It was an exercise in eliminating artificiality in cinema. *Breaking the Waves* (directed by Lars von Trier) for me was a great film. To have participated in something like that is much more important than being in a blockbuster.

**I agree. I think von Trier is a genius. What's it like working with him? What's he like as a person?**

He's very organised and he concentrates on the humanity behind the camera. He's just someone I admire because *Breaking the Waves* showed balls and he provided credibility for people like me. In terms of what our epoch and our era's about, he's a man of the times.

**"It's very important to play positive role models that might not necessarily fit into the norm."**

**What do you look for in a role now, as opposed to 20 years ago?**

The way I read a script 20 years ago and today is different – the style, the intelligence of the writer... I try to stay true to my path and be honest with what I'm doing and myself. I try in my work, like with Didier the plumber, to communicate on a human level and provoke love, if I can. Playing a role like that brings beauty and diversity, but right now those films are politically incorrect.

I was in South Africa doing a film and I was in the launderette doing my washing and this elegant guy came up to me and says, 'Hello, are you Jean-Marc Barr?' And I think, 'Oh, here it comes, more of *The Big Blue*', and I said 'Yeah', and he said, 'You did *Too Much Flesh* man and that changed my life', and that blew me away. A guy in South Africa saying that I changed his life. That for me is what it's all about.

It's very important to play positive role models that might not necessarily fit into the norm.

My character in the film starts by masturbating in a cornfield and to be able to start a film like that.....The audience has to identify!

**So what's one of your maddest fan experiences?**

When I was doing *Orpheus Descending* I was in my dressing room getting ready to go on stage and this girl kept calling expecting me to pick her up from the airport. Another time I was in France, about a year and a half after *The Big Blue* came out, and I was walking down the street and this woman orgasmed right in front of me!

**Don't be silly.**

Yes. She just started screaming and I was like a deer stuck with his eyes in the headlights, [laughs], and you can't believe what's happening and the more it happens the more intense its getting...she just started screaming.

**That's very funny. I suppose you know that you were voted one of the sexiest stars in film history by Empire readers in 1990? Has it gone to your head?**

You know, I, er, I knew I wasn't a sex symbol anymore when one of the girls I was taking out said, 'I can't go out with you tonight Jean-Marc', and I said 'Why?' and she said, 'Because I've got homework'. The sex symbol thing has been destroyed.....

.....because you're just too old. Are you past it?  
[Laughs] Yeah.



**I think there are a lot of people that would disagree with you there.**

Well, it's not just that, it's that someone said no, you know! [Laughs]

**Do you have any free time and what do you do to relax?**

Once I did *The Big Blue* I told myself I would do what I want to do and taught myself how to do nothing.

**That's very important. And difficult as well.**

It's very difficult and I'm still learning and the thing is I don't have a car, I no longer have a TV. When I'm not working I spend my time reading, watching movies and walking a lot. I try to do as little as I can during the day. I'm trying to reduce life to simple things because it's lovely just being sometimes.

**Which actors would you like to work with that you haven't worked with yet?**

There are so many lovely actors and actresses I mean.... it's hard to say. Anyone who has a soul. [Laughs]

**How can you tell?**

I can figure it out in the first 15 seconds. Out of all the huge actors, I think Finney is the God. In our generation, Ewan McGregor, but no one is like Clark Gable for me. We all started out as boys and they still want us to be boys. In the old days they were men and right now we're playing boys roles. We're trying to kill monsters and I

miss authenticity in some of the films. I just can't take it anymore.

**"My character in the film starts by masturbating in a cornfield and to be able to start a film like that.....The audience has to identify!"**

**What's your new film *Parc* about?**

It's an adaptation of John Cheever's *Bullet Park* and it's quite exceptional. It's about all the angst within the hysteria of being normal. It's when an aristocrat decides to become a terrorist to save the world. It's very rich and cultivated.

**Are you gay in it?**

No. I'm just a drunkard.

**Do you get your clothes off?**

No. Oh yes, I do! For fuck all money as well. [Laughs]

**It's your birthday on Wednesday (26 September) isn't it? How are you going to celebrate?**

I'm 46. Am I going to celebrate? I haven't celebrated the last ones because I think I'm getting better with age and I don't think I need to celebrate anything. [Laughs]

Find out more at [www.cocklesandmuscles.com](http://www.cocklesandmuscles.com).

Read our review of [Cockles And Muscles](#), our interview with directors [Jacques Martineau and Olivier Ducastel](#) and our reviews of their previous films [Ma Vie](#) and [The Adventures of Felix](#).

**Cockles And Muscles** [2005]

**Label:** Peccadillo Pictures

**Released:** 25 September 2006

**ASIN:** B000GL186S

Buy the DVD of [Cockles And Muscles](#) and save some money to put towards Martineau and Ducastel's [Ma Vie](#) and [Drole De Felix](#).

Author: Rachael Scott

[Read more by this author](#)

[SEND TO A FRIEND](#)

[PRINT](#)

[BOOKMARK](#)

## User reviews

[WRITE A REVIEW](#)

Be the first to review this item - click on [WRITE A REVIEW](#)