



FILM: **DELICIOUS**

FDG RATING: 4.0 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Éric Besnard: *director/writer*
Gregory Gadebois: *actor, Pierre Manceron*
Isabelle Carre: *actress, Louise*

DATE: August 21, 2022

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **DELICIOUS**

After watching the 2021 French film, *Delicious*, we felt as if we had been treated to a sumptuous dinner at Michelin star restaurant. Writer/director Éric Besnard's historical comedy gives us a seat at the table of the magnificent meals that 18th century French nobility enjoyed while country folk subsisted on vegetable soup, bread and grains.

Gregory Gadebois is completely believable as, Manceron, the husky gifted chef to the snobby Duke of Chamfort. In 1789 France, just prior to the French Revolution, gastronomy is strictly the domain of the aristocrats and the prestige of a noble house is based on the exceptional quality of each dining experience. When Manceron decides to serve a special dish of his own creation (a tart made with potato and truffle), the Duke is incensed and promptly dismisses him. Manceron retreats with his son to a small, simple country inn that is rarely visited by travelers and resolves to never again pursue his culinary passion. He spends his days cleaning the stables while his son, Benjamin, makes tasteless soup to sell to travelers who stop by. But a mysterious young woman shows up and offers to pay him if she can be his apprentice. He is reluctant wondering if she is a prostitute, or a common country woman, and why would she want to learn culinary skills from a chef who cooked for the Duke? Louise is persistent so that Gadebois slowly warms to the idea especially after Louise proves to be an eager student and quick learner. She reignites his passion for culinary delights. It was interesting to note that Gadebois insisted on only homegrown flavors, not the exotic spices demanded by the Duke. Together, they start offering a much tastier fare for travelers, and as word spreads, the inn becomes more popular. We learn, however, that besides sharing a passion for gastronomy, they also share a desire for revenge on the Duke. This is when the story really gets interesting.

The acting is outstanding and the characters are completely believable, even the extreme outlandishness of the aristocrats. The aristocratic costumes are ostentatiously fabulous coinciding with similar extravagant makeup. Mouthwatering cinematography zeroes in on the tantalizing morsels Gadebois created for the Duke's extravagant dinners as well as the joyous tactile preparation of each dish. And as many discussion participants commented, many scenes looked like a Dutch painting, plus the gorgeous pastoral landscapes (filmed in the Cantal, one of the most beautiful regions in France) were a joy to watch.

The Duke, who hasn't enjoyed his regal meals since sending Manceron packing, hears about his talented chef serving delicious dishes at the rustic inn and decides he must see for himself. He has his servants meet with Gadebois to arrange a special elaborate banquet in his honor, but the tables are turned when Gadebois also invites the country folk to the banquet as well. We loved seeing the Duke humiliated. We also see the dark side of Louise manifest itself. And we witness the beginnings of France's first restaurant unfold. The story is a satisfying, triumph of artistic freedom, of servant over master, and of a new attitude so that good food is no longer a pleasure reserved only for the wealthy.

The baroque opulence was definitely over the top, a bit much for some but others thoroughly enjoyed it. One criticism was that the film was food porn but the foodies in our discussion group took that as a positive. A favorite fun scene was at the end when Gadebois and Louise are throwing flour at each other. The film *Delicious* served up a delectable 4 on our scale of 1 to 5. 5 is the best.



See you at the movies!

Adriane Dedic,
adedic@pacbell.net
www.filmdiscussiongroup.com