

Biutiful

By Tom Sims, Executive Director, Cape May Film Society

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There's a lot to compare and contrast in Biutiful, a film that was nominated for two Oscars this year. Characters are amazingly poignant yet sin-dipped in misery. Plot turns that are captivating yet somehow the story is sluggish. Images both artistic yet disturbing. Okay, one could conceivably argue that the last contrast isn't necessarily a contrast.

This film was nominated for best foreign film and one for lead actor Javier Bardem at this year's Oscars. Bardem won the best actor award at 2010 Cannes for his performance. Directed by Oscar-nominated Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (also nominated for the 2006 film Babel), the story is set in Barcelona, which just happens to be one of the few cities I've actually been to in Europe. When I travel to another country, I used to pride myself on taking the roads less travelled by tourists. Well, all the roads in this film were dark and lined with haunting shadows moving through impoverished lives. The bottom line: I really need to get out more when I travel.

Bardem is best known for his Oscar-winning performance as Anton Chigurh, the emotionless killing machine in the Coen Brothers' 2007 film No Country for Old Men. His is a truly remarkable performance as a man finding that the road to redemption is sometimes marred with good intentions. Most of the main character's time is spent in the underworld of the city, trying to make a living by advocating on behalf of the most disadvantaged among the poor—going between crime bosses and crooked cops, sinners and even worse sinners. All of the supporting actors in this film, including the main character's two children, are played beautifully (or maybe should I say biutifully?). The film is one of the most authentic I've seen in years—and that's probably why it was so upsetting.

Was anybody going to do anything honorable in this film? Sadly, the answer is no. And even though there were truly brilliant moments in the film—gripping and powerful turns that engage you—in the end you are left weary from the journey.

Try though I may, there really is no smooth segue to my next topic, namely the Cape May Summer Film Camp dates are set for this year! (Really, go back and see—no segue.) The dates are June 27 through July 1 with a screening of the films made by students on Friday night, July 1. Perfect for your middle or high school student who loves the movies or has ever thought of making one. And camp selections appear on our You Tube Channel, www.youtube.com/user/capemayfilm where we have more than 15,000 views! To learn more about the Film Camp, email capemayfilm@hotmail.com or call 609-884-6700.