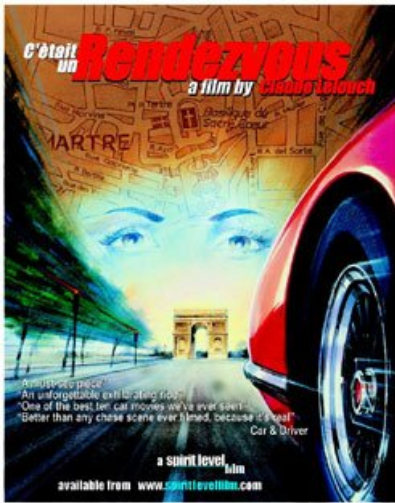


CLASSIC DRIVER

C'était un Rendezvous, legendary short film to be re-released in March 2003



For many years “C'était un Rendezvous” has been enjoyed as an almost Masonic secret among car enthusiasts. Whisper the words “Have you seen Rendezvous” and you’ll receive either a knowing, “No, but I’ve heard it’s unbelievable” or a smug, “It is un-be-lieve-able”.

Filed in 1976, the revered short film by seminal French director Claude Lelouch is regarded as the ultimate in chase scenes - the connoisseurs’ trump card in response to “Bullitt” or “The French Connection”.

Lack of availability (pirated poor quality VHS copies are being traded at \$50 on the internet) has only fuelled the myths surrounding the film. Was Lelouch really arrested when it was first shown? Was it Lelouch or a hired Formula One driver who drove the car and was it really a Ferrari 275 GTB?

What we do know is that there are no special effects or blocking off the streets. Lelouch simply mounted the camera on the front of the car and took us on an astonishing, death-defying drive through the streets of a beautifully

filmed 70s Paris with a brutal soundtrack courtesy of the engine, exhaust and tyres.

Richard Symons, a documentary film maker (The Cobra Ferrari Wars) with more than a passing interest in fast cars, came to hear of it by chance and managed to acquire a very poor 2nd generation VHS copy. He wasn’t disappointed...

“I’d never seen anything like it, nine minutes of adrenalin that simply leaves you with your jaw on the floor. Lelouch was supposedly arrested the first time he’d shown the film and then it simply dived underground. To cut a long story short, I tracked down the director, we dusted down the original 35mm negative, restored and re-mastered it for release - we’ve brought back all the details and colours and it looks stunning.”

Politically incorrect, anti-establishment and overflowing with a primitive passion - it is everything Ken Livingstone would hate. Which perhaps explains the cheers and whoops of delight at recent test screenings - contrasting strongly with the controversy it was met with at first release. “It makes Bullitt look like a cartoon,” says Jeremy Clarkson. “C'était un Rendezvous” is the road-users two fingers up to bureaucracy, a clarion call capturing the public’s resentment - particularly relevant as London introduces congestion charging.

“You can’t condone the driving, but it has struck a chord with audiences. It captures a freedom and spirit that seems a long way away from sitting impotent in traffic and hoping some local authority will figure it out,” says Symons.

C' était un Rendezvous will be shown for two weeks (before George Clooneys’ “Confessions of a Dangerous Mind”) at The Electric Cinema, Notting Hill, London from March 14-28.

DVD/VHS copies will be available on-line from March 14 at www.spiritlevelfilm.com priced at £14.99.

Text and photo: Spirit Level Film

Gallery

Hide gallery

Hide gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/c%E2%80%99C3%A9tait-un-rendezvous-legendary-short-film-be-re-released-march-2003>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.