

Beverly Hills Times

Volume 5 Issue 4 March 2006

By Bonnie Carroll

setting the scene



SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The 21st Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) opened at historic Arlington Theatre in Santa Barbara, where *Ask the Dust*, written by Robert Towne, premiered.

Towne and actress Salma Hayek, who starred in the film with Colin Farrell, lead the pack down the red carpet into the theatre to savor a great movie by a man involved in dozens of films for more than three decades, such as *Chinatown*, *Tequila Sunrise*, *The Firm* and the *Mission Impossible* series.

The film was followed by a gala at *Paseo Nuevo Mall*...transformed into "*Moulin Rouge*." Great food, music, and celebration for the world of filmmaking. More than 100 films, and over 75 short films were included this year.

Actor/writer/director George Clooney received the *Modern Master Award* by SBIFF, following a red carpet welcome to rival anything in Hollywood. The award honors those individuals who enrich our culture via accomplishments in the motion picture industry. This was perfect for Clooney who is devoted to quality film, and committed to the audience.

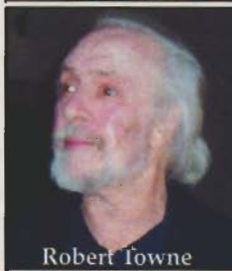
Film personality Leonard Maltin conducted an on-stage interview with Clooney that included a film montage of his work. Clooney, the consummate comedian, had a ball telling the audience about his childhood, and some of the movies he wishes he could forget.

"I'm hoping *Good Night and Good Luck*, and *Syriana* will make up for *Batman and Robin*," he said. "I thank the SBIFF for this honor, and for my past participation in the festival, which influenced my decision to keep pursuing filmmaking."

The schedule of SBIFF screenings and special events was expansive, and included screenings in most of the great old theaters in Santa Barbara, and represented a marvelous diversity of world cinema. Filmmakers and guests from around the globe were present to introduce and participate in the 11-day celebration of filmmaking. Salma Hayek, Robert Towne, Naomi



Sharon Stone



Robert Towne



Leonard Maltin



Irma Hay



George Clooney

Watts, James Cameron, Heath Ledger, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Felicity Huffman, James Mangold & Cathy Konrad, Maria Bello, Sharon Stone, Sean Penn, and Tab Hunter were a few honored by the industry, friends & associates.

Thank You For Smoking, a first feature film for the 28 year-old writer/director

Jason Reitman was

the closing film for the 2006 SBIFF event. The tongue-in-cheek story of a tobacco lobbyist starred Aaron Eckhart, Maria Bello, David Koechner, Sam Elliot, William H. Macy and Robert Duvall as a mint-julep sipping new age Hollywood movie agent. What a great choice as the festival's finale film!

The City of Santa Barbara is a gracious host each year for SBIFF visitors, celebrities and media; this year was no exception. It was a great event and the army of people who worked to make it a success deserve our thanks, especially Santa Barbara's own Mo McFadden, entertainment publicist, Roger Durling, and all of the generous sponsors including; Starz, SBNP, Variety, Kruz 97.5, Magic 106.3, Hotel Santa Barbara, Simpson House Inn, Fess Parker's Double Tree Resort, Matrix, Panavision, Cox Communications, Nordstrom, Wells Fargo Bank and many more.

For additional information:
www.SBIFF.com.
Bonnie Carroll: carrollbcpr@aol.com