

The French Doors

Melbourne International Film Festival 2001
In Competition Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival 2002



Presskit



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Production Notes

Writer/Director Steve Ayson
Producer Elizabeth Garneau
Production Company Lake Xavier Pictures

Colour 12 minutes 35 mm 1:1.85 Dolby Digital

Log Line

A secondhand set of french doors. Light isn't all they let in.

Synopsis

A home renovator fits a set of second-hand french doors in a back room of his house. However, he soon discovers that light isn't all they let in.

Director's Notes

Watching *The French Doors* for the first time with an audience was quite possibly the most exhilarating and frightening experience in recent years. Although I was very proud of what we had made, I sat in the Lido theatre, frozen with fear as the film started.

Never before have I put myself (a piece of work) out there in front of people in such a way. A projected film is so big and raw and open that I couldn't get low enough in my seat.

Director's Notes continued

However the greatest reward came from watching a group of 8-12 year old kids (well known for a low attention span) sit riveted to the screen as our film played. To hear people react, get frightened and even yell, and watching those kids sit glued to the screen was the biggest rush I've ever had. If you could bottle that rush it would have a very high street value.

When I set out to make *The French Doors* my mission was to frighten the audience in 12 minutes. I wanted to slowly build tension within this time frame resulting in a fright and leaving people slightly bewildered. My partner overheard a woman leaving the theatre exclaiming to her friend "*I was freaking out, I was so scared*" so I decided I had achieved my goal, if at least with these two women. Having an audience respond or think or react to a story or a message or quit simply an idea is what interests me about film.

I am currently writing another two short films along with directing commercials/music clips with Curious Films in Auckland, New Zealand. I'm interested in creating ideas/scripts as much as I am in directing.

Director/Writer

Steve Ayson

Steve grew up in the anti-metropolis of Hamilton, middle-of-the-road, middle-of-the-North Island, New Zealand.

At age 17, directly after his 7th form art teacher said 'you'll never make it in graphic design in Auckland', he applied to study graphic design in Auckland, then moved to Auckland the following year to study graphic design.

Following Steve's three year training he joined the dark-side; taking up a career as a writer/art director in advertising. This led to an interest in writing/directing films, which stayed as just an interest for five years, until he directed a self-written ad in 1999.

Following this Steve wrote, funded and directed his own four-minute short as a 'foot-in-the-door' project for a career change as a director.

The French Doors is Steve's first short film funded with the assistance of the New Zealand Film Commission.

Steve currently enjoys craft, long walks on the beach with partner Jane and staring into the fire for long periods of time.

Producer

Liz Garneau

I finished my BA in Communication Studies at the Concordia University in Montreal, and then went on to produce several short films, that will now undoubtedly be uncovered to embarrass me when we finally hit the "big time".

I worked for the CBC in Toronto, and travelled to New Zealand on a whim in 1987, and have been lucky to stay. I love the landscape, the light, the water, the food, the people and the opportunities to carve new niches.

Since then I've clocked up many years of experience as a producer of advertising, had a baby, and now a short film! I felt privileged to get to work on such a great script with Steve, and was inspired by the skill, creativity and genius of the crew and craftspeople who all conspire to make such good films here.

I'm very proud of *The French Doors* and I look forward to the next one!

Credits

Cast

Home Renovator	Brett Stewart
Demolition Man	Andrew Kovacevich
Apprentice	Barnie Duncan
Dark Figure	Neill Duncan

Crew

Writer/Director	Steve Ayson
Producer	Liz Garneau
Executive Producer	Paul Swadel & LEEANNE SAUNDERS: Swad/Saunders Consortium
Director of Photography	Nigel Bluck
Editor	Sam Brunette
Music & Sound Design	Jon Cooper
Visual Effects	Barnaby Curnow
Title Design	Lindsey Redding

Sales

If you would like any further information about *The French Doors* please contact the International Sales Agent: The New Zealand Film Commission, attention Sandy Gildea, PO Box 11 546, Wellington New Zealand. Tel: +64 4 382 7686, Fax: +64 4 384 9719, marketing@nzfilm.co.nz, www.nzfilm.co.nz.