

HOLY COW

France (2024) 90 minutes

Director: Louise Courvoisier

Cast: Clément Favreau (Totone)
Maïwene Barthelemy (Marie-Lise)



Screening 5 November 2025 at Swindon Art Centre

Synopsis

In France's Jura region, a laddish 18-year-old becomes the family breadwinner when his father suddenly dies. While working on a local dairy farm, he devises a plan to win a cheesemaking competition with a cash prize of €30,000, learning important romantic and culinary lessons in the process.

Reviews



Courvoisier's storytelling approach is sensitive but resolutely unsentimental, despite the tragedy that underpins this coming-of-age story. Teenage deadbeat Totone (Clément Faveau) spends his summer drinking, fighting, chasing girls and tooling around on battered dirt bikes. Then his alcoholic, widowed father dies, leaving Totone responsible for a failing farm and his seven-year-old sister. Totone latches on to the cheese competition, with its generous prize money, as a quick-fix solution to his predicament. But to make cheese, he decides to steal milk from young farmer Marie-Lise (Maïwene Barthelemy). Ultimately, the comté is beside the point: the nourishment in this terrific, big-hearted drama comes from Courvoisier's satisfyingly full-blooded characters.

Wendy Hide, *The Guardian*

The disconnect between Totone's sincere feelings for Marie-Lise and the duplicity of his actions toward her family is a tension that powers the film. Courvoisier and co-writer Théo Abadie never map his behaviors to a delinquent archetype in a way that might suggest that he's innately incorrigible. Elio Balézeaux's camera often holds on a shot of Totone's face and tracks him through a thought process that culminates in a brash action. The film may not always condone his behavior, but there's never a moment spent with him that it doesn't understand deeply.

Marshall Shaffer, *Slant Magazine*

Film Facts

- 2024 Festival de Cannes Un Certain Regard Youth Prize winner
- Actors are non-professionals

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