

## Italian Gem The Wonders Comes to the Big Screen

Natasha Lardera (October 21, 2015)



Alice Rohrwacher's award winning film *The Wonders* is coming to New York. Her magical coming-of-age drama set in the Tuscan countryside that won the Grand Prix at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival and that stars her sister, Alba Rohrwacher, will open in the city, at Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, on October 30th. A national release will follow.

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Alice is one of Italy's most promising young filmmakers. She has worked in music as a performing musician for theatre and in documentary filmmaking as editor and director.

Her first feature *Corpo Celeste* premiered in Cannes in 2011 and was then selected in Sundance, New York, London, Rio, Tokyo film festivals and released in the US, UK, France.

In addition to winning at Cannes, *The Wonders* was also presented at Toronto International Film



Festival 2014, New York Film Festival 2014 and AFI Fest 2014.

In a few words, the film, written and directed by Alice herself, is the story of a family of beekeepers living in isolation in the countryside of central Italy, most likely between the regions of Lazio e Umbria.

The dynamic of their overcrowded household, headed by Wolfgang, played by Sam Louwick, and Angelica, played by Alba Rohrwacher, is disrupted by the sudden arrival of a silently troubled teenaged boy, Martin (Luis Huilca Logroño) taken in as a farmhand, and a reality TV show hosted by Milly Catena, played by Monica Bellucci, intent on showcasing the family.

Wolfgang has tried hard to protect his family from the rest of the world, but these intrusions definitely have an effect on Gelsomina (Alexandra Lungu), the eldest daughter.

“The film is set in my hometown and among my countrymen,” Alice has said about the autobiographical aspects of the film, “My hometown is the countryside between the central regions of Umbria-Lazio and Tuscany and bees are the animals that I know best. I also know a lot about cross-cultural families, not just because of my own German-Italian family, but because there are many in my region.

Apart from these elements, the story and characters are not autobiographical, but certainly familiar to me. I wanted to speak of a firstborn daughter. Of course I was very inspired by my sister Alba, and how I viewed her during our childhood.”

Gelsomina is a restless teenager, easily charmed by the exotic world she can see beyond the confines of her farmhouse. She dreams about the “wonders” that seem to await her there. “What are they doing in the country?” Alice explains about the family, “The answer is almost embarrassing, but true: they want to protect the girls. From something they know that they have seen because everything is in disrepair, destruction, and corruption, and only the countryside can save you.

Only by staying together. Their intentions are sincere, even if sometimes they express themselves in rage.” But how do you explain it to Gelsomina, daddy’s little girl? She wants a simpler life, more serene, a family with less ideals and more wisdom like those of her friends. “The family in our story was not originally from the region. They are people that arrived in the country as a political choice because the cities had no more jobs and years of demonstrations had been stifled by violence and disillusionment.” But the outside cannot be kept afar for long.

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