

Tendres Cousines

("Tender Cousins"; aka: "Cousins in Love")

France / W Germany : 1980 : dir. David Hamilton :

: 91 min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Thierry Tevini](#); [Valerie Dumas](#)

Anja Shute; Elise Cervier; Jean-Yves Chatelais; Macha Meril; Catherine Rouvel; Pierre Vernier; Laure Deschanel; Evelyne Dandry; Jean Rougerie; Pierre Chantepie; Anne Fontaine; Jean-Louis Fortuit; Hannes Kaetner; Gaella LeGrand; Fanny Meunier; Jean-Pierre Rambal; Silke Rein; Carmen Weber

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 € M ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Milk-tea pornography for the commercial mainstream – full of "CIDER WITH ROSIE" visuals, a deal of undressing, and very little sex. The joke of it all on the heterosexual and tragic is that the film's hero, Thierry Tevini, is prettier and more sensual than any of the bevy of maidens he's supposed to be enchanted by. And his name is a lot sexier to boot. Source: CVMC

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"In 1939 a fifteen-year old spends the summer holidays out of doors, far from the economic crisis and political tensions. He's in love with a cousin who prefers her elder sister's boyfriend, but he can't complain for want of attention from other girls and young women. Hamilton's picture postcard style, with young girls in various states of undress shot in "artistic" soft focus, was supported by a

marginally less vacant-headed script (by "**LA DENTELLIÈRE**" author Pascal Lain), and reasonable performances from the older generation, but they remain superfluous to a decorative coffee-table picture book. ** "

The Time Out Film Guide review:

"Feeble sexploiter set in the French countryside at the start of World War II. A male lead with

the build of a nine-year old (and a dubbed voice

like Dustin Hoffman circa

This scene was certainly absent from the print I saw. Time Out says the hero has "the build of a nine-year old" – they're perhaps more familiar with the build of nine-year olds than I am. He looks 13/14, and scrumptious.

Source: CVMC



"THE GRADUATE") beds an almost endless queue of palpitating teenage girls. The oily-lensed soft focus of "respectable" erotica merchant Hamilton more often looks like a badly processed Super-8 home movie, with playing and dialogue to match, and all the sexuality of a stale meringue."

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Okay soft-core sex comedy about the amorous adventures of two pubescent cousins. Directed by renowned photographer, David Hamilton. In French with English subtitles. ** "

CVMC video retail/rental website review:

"Fourteen year old Julien (Thierry Tevini) is in love with his cousin, Julia (Anja Shute). Soon to be sixteen, the girl isn't much interested in him, prefers the companionship of the man engaged to marry Julien's older sister; Julia's little sister, Puone (Valerie Dumas), roughly twelve, wouldn't mind dating her cousin, though, has a big crush on him. If this is starting to sound a bit complicated, make note that Julien's dad is hot for the young stable-hand (Pierre Chantepie), really likes seeing the older adolescent in a dress. Will our young hero ever manage to hook up with the right girl? A thoroughly charming erotic comedy directed by David Hamilton. The dubbing isn't bad.

Rated NR: adult themes [sic]; sexual scenes; moderate nudity; mild violence; frequent sexual themes

Language: French (with English subtitles)

Categories: Boy Films, Adolescent, Comedy, Coming-of-Age, First Love, Girl Films, Adolescent "

Movieboys website summary:

"Summer 1939 in the Provence, France: the 14 years old Julien has a crush on his cousin Julia, who lives together with his family in their small hotel. Unfortunately she ignores him, because she's several years older. Then the hotel guest Charles enters the competition, a slimy twenty-something who lusts for the girl, despite the fact that he's engaged."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Radio Times Guide to Films", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", or "The Virgin Film Guide"]



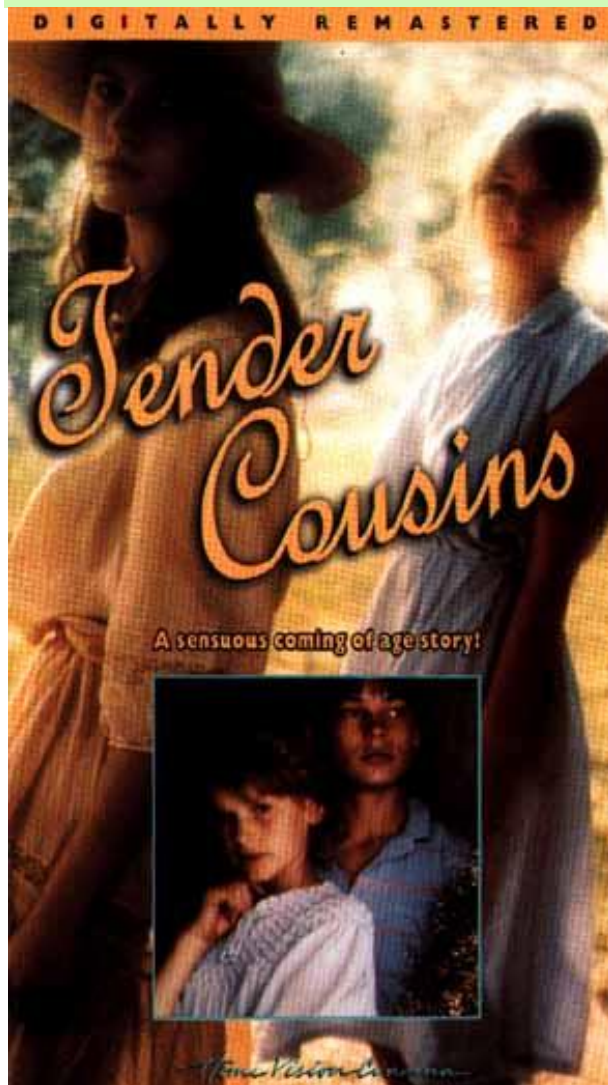
The final shot of the film. She slaps his face and he sits up, astonished, to elicit the sympathy of the camera. Is it art? Hardly, but judiciously-modest clumps of grass keep it on the safe side of obscenity laws anyhow. Hamilton tried to make rustic sexual indulgence a Sunsilk commercial with its togs off, but he wasn't fooling anyone. Source unknown

Ignored by the majority of mainstream film guides, not because it's continental, or because it's a bad film, but because convention says that pornography – even as limp as this – has no place in “legitimate” cinema, unless the director happens to have the *caché* of a Fellini, Pasolini or Bertolucci. The excellent *Speelfilm Encyclopedie* is the only film source I've encountered to date which reviews pornographic titles by the same criteria as everything else. The majority are a waste of celluloid, and it says so, but takes no moral position on the subject matter.

Erotica remains a valid distinction from bald-faced pornography of course, but since censorship constraints in the UK meant that such commercial pornography as did appear on general release in the 1970s was scarcely more explicit, the distinction became meaningless. Hamilton's pretensions of making an art-house movie, after the fashion of "**EMMANUELLE**" (73), have in any case the same hollow ring as Victorian photographers producing “artistic” studies of female nudes.

In its UK release cut, this film would scarcely excite even the most sex-starved adolescent. It is about as explicit as a "**CARRY ON**" film, and the plotting about as doltish. What makes it a bit of a hoot, however, is that the very young protagonist, Thierry Tevini, happens to be far prettier than any of the supposedly delectable country maids he romps in the barn with. He has the anxious air of a boy who wandered in off the set of "**OLIVER!**", or something similar, and finds himself up to his luxuriant eyelashes in women's lingerie. Even the musical sound of his name lends the film a poetry it scarcely deserves. The 1930s setting is entirely spurious, and chiefly an excuse to drape the female cast in period underwear. The dubbing, one need hardly add, is atrocious.

Under present UK law, of course, most of the boy's partners would be packed off directly to jail for “abusing” him, and he would be marked down for some severe “counselling”, so that – crass and opportunist though it may be – this film now looks a deal healthier, saner, and more relaxed about the exploits of puberty than the raging torrent of sex-negative “abuse” dramas



"A sensuous coming of age story" it claims. Pull the other one, we reply.
Source: CVMC website

from the 1990s and beyond. The message "sex is just good fun" is infinitely preferable to the message "sex will cause you irreparable harm". Nothing else is known of Thierry Tevini or Valerie Dumas.

See subject index under **PASTORALS / HOLIDAYS IN THE COUNTRY** and [SEX & SEXUALITY](#).