

# BELLE ON THE BALL

## Marion Cotillard's Rose-Tinted Future

BY MILES MARSHALL LEWIS & BRUNO DAYAN + PHOTOGRAPH BY ??????????

**If Marion Cotillard** has any jitters over a potential Oscar nod for her outstanding turn in the Edith Piaf biopic *La Vie en Rose*—a *New York Times* critic praised her tour-de-force embodiment of France's iconic singer as “the most astonishing immersion of one performer into the body and soul of another I've ever encountered in a film”—she's maintaining her outward cool. A concierge at the fashionable Hôtel Costes in Paris's first *arrondissement* directs me to an ornate purple-and-gold private room designed in Napoléon III-period style, where a lithe, unassuming Cotillard sits quietly sipping juice through a straw.

Hardly Piaf reincarnated, in person the 32-year-old actress brings to mind her more quotidian roles as the pregnant Joséphine Bloom in director Tim Burton's fantasy drama *Big Fish*, or café owner Fanny Chénal in the Ridley Scott romantic comedy *A Good Year*. A César winner in France for *A Very Long Engagement*, Cotillard may soon add to her trilogy of English-language films (which includes Abel Ferrara's *Mary*) by taking part in an upcoming adaptation of the Fellini-inspired musical *Nine*. Discussing international ambitions, Marion Cotillard allures even in straightforward conversation with her characteristically French coquettish charm.

**Before starring in *La Vie en Rose*, had you seen any of the other films made about Edith Piaf—for example, 1983's *Edith and Marcel*?**  
No, but I saw all the movies she did as an actress.

**Do you have a favorite among them?**  
Not especially. I have scenes that I really love. Especially when she's drunk actually; she plays it so well. [Laughs] The last movie she did [*Les Amants de Demain*], she was 44, so it was very close to the end. It was in '59 and it's very interesting, because she's beautiful. She plays a woman desperately in love with her boyfriend, who doesn't love her anymore. The boyfriend goes with other girls. She becomes crazy and tries to kill him. And the guy realizes that someone that is willing to kill you for love is the one you have to be with, but at the time, she is so fed up that she met another guy, and it's quite interesting. She's very good! I think she was a good actress.

**Why did you decide to do American films?**  
Oh, I didn't. It was not a conscious desire. But I think that in a way I wanted to have some American

experiences. When I started watching movies, my favorite movies were all American—*Singin' in the Rain*, *Annie*. I love Charlie Chaplin! Even when I was very young, I never saw a dubbed movie. My parents taught me to [read] subtitles, so it was not a problem to see an American movie. Except for *Singin' in the Rain* and *Joe's*.

**Joe's?!**  
Not *Joe's*... *Sharks*? What is the Spielberg movie?

**Oh, *Jaws*!**  
*Jaws*! I would watch that movie in French. But the directors who were a part of the creation of my dream to be an actress—to do all this—must have been American.

**How did the opportunity to do Tim Burton's *Big Fish* come about?**

Well, he was looking for a French girl, and I had the chance at that time to be in a very successful movie here [*Jeux d'Enfants*], which is called in English *Love Me If You Dare*. So I had the chance to be amongst the girls he would meet. And he was my idol, so talking about doing a movie with him was... The fact that I would meet him was huge for me.

**What is your favorite Burton film?**  
I love *Beetlejuice*. There's some movies [of his] I don't like, but when I love someone and he does something I love less, it's just a human thing, so I love him more.

**You're in talks to star in *Nine* with Sophia Loren, Penélope Cruz and Catherine Zeta-Jones, under Oscar-winning *Chicago* director Rob Marshall. What can you say about the possible project?**  
*Nine* is a very famous musical in the U.S., about a director who is surrounded by all these women. We're in talks, so that's the only thing I can say. But my dream is to do a musical. As I told you before, my favorite movies when I was young were *Singin' in the Rain* and *Annie*. And my dream is to do an American musical, because we don't have musicals here, it's not our culture—except for Jacques Demy, but [he made] a very specific kind of musical. I love Broadway.

**Is the voyeuristic celebrity culture of America strange to you? What do you think of the wall-to-wall coverage of Lindsay Lohan's and Britney Spears' private lives?**

It's sometimes funny. But when I see those girls in those papers, they don't seem to be very upset about all this. [Laughs] But no, I don't care. I care moving my ass on “Slave 4 U.” I really don't care about Paris Hilton, if that's your next question. One thing that shocked me was to learn that all these very well-known people don't have any rights in America or England. If some photographers take pictures of you with your boyfriend, you can't sue them. Here, we can do that. Each time I'm in those kinds of magazines and I really do not want to, we have laws here that you can go to the trial and you will always win. If Vanessa Paradis and Johnny Depp would live in England, they would go out of their house and have all of these bees with cameras everywhere. Fleas! For me, that's a little bit shocking.

**Would you like to balance your career between French and American films?**

The plan is: Tell good stories. That's it. I have an amazingly beautiful project in France at the end of 2008. It's a true story, it takes place in the desert and it's in the early '30s. She's a woman, she flies planes and she goes to Africa by herself because the love of her life has crashed in the desert. There is a French director from Tunisia [attached], Karim Dridi.

**You became a spokesperson for Greenpeace. Why?**

Because I think that my brain is functioning quite well. [Laughs] Really. Respecting people and things is something normal for me, that's normality. Spending money to earn money, spoiling the planet, is something I can't understand.

**What did you think of Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*?**

It's very easy to watch, because it's clear. Everyone can understand what's going on by watching the movie. But what I don't understand is, they did a book of that movie [and] it's not made with recycled paper! That I really don't understand! I had that book and watched everywhere, so maybe I'm wrong, but that paper doesn't look recycled at all. [Laughs] Man! Do all the things. It's a detail I would see because I'm so into it forever. But I really appreciated Al Gore from the beginning, and I think he has something in his hands which is very important. I think he's a very trustable guy. So I will support him, even if his book is not made with recycled paper. ■■■

