



THE MOVIE / *At the end of April, Edoardo Winspeare began shooting in Salento on "In grazia di Dio", a low budget independent movie whose story also inspired the production formula: the invention of the barter-pack. A "kind" response to the crisis, for a movie that is mainly aimed at foreign markets*

LOOKING FOR HAPPINESS ON SET

● **Paolo Di Maira**

Making movies in times of crisis means making them in a different way. Proof of this is "In grazia di Dio", the picture that director **Edoardo Winspeare** began shooting last April in Salento, adding a good dose of entrepreneurial imagination to artistic creativity. The movie started with a very small budget, 500,000 Euros, which was put together without state support, with the participation of a local bank that took advantage of the external tax credit (**Banca Popolare Pugliese**, 250,000 Euros), a private individual (**Luigi de Vecchi**, 50,000 Euros), the contribution of the Apulia Film Commission (90,000 Euros), the **Agricultural Policies Department** of the Re-

gione Puglia (80,000 Euros) and other entities (30,000 Euros), which are generally called sponsors although, as we shall see, this turns out to be a rather narrow definition as the production story of this movie unfolds.

"With Edoardo, who has always been a "courteous" director", explains **Alessandro Contessa** who is producing the movie for **Saietta Film**, alongside **Gustavo Caputo** and Winspeare himself, "we thought of something that would create a good atmosphere on set. We invented a "barter-pack" for ourselves: a pack containing food products, from pasta to oil to wine, anything that a few local companies decided to give us". The producer is, however, keen to emphasize that all the crew and extras were

paid according to "union rates": "The bartering regarded other items, such as the locations and some other services which we could not pay for. It was a way of saying thank you, of leaving good memories for all those people who had helped us out".

The interesting fact is that this original production formula was inspired by the story of the movie: "It is about a family", says Edoardo Winspeare, "that reacts to the crisis by going back to working the land and, in the process, manages to rediscover happiness in values such as family, community, solidarity and the earth". The protagonists discover that they can do without money, and return to the ancient practice of bartering.

The idea for the movie is the result of the personal experiences of Winspeare himself who confesses that last year he went through a "difficult period". A transitional situation which he prefers to downplay, the sort of thing that can happen "even to the best families", he says ironically. The fact is that "for three months my family and I had to rely on the support of friends and relatives: I did things for them and they did things for me".

From that short experience of "temporary poverty", continues the director, "I understood the importance of solidarity. Here in Salento, we have something very positive, we have a sense of community".

So just like in "Pizzicata" and "Sangue vivo", Winspeare's previous movies, "In grazia di Dio" has strong links to the earth: "It is very important, especially in Italy, which is a country made up of local identities: the earth is our mother, she nourishes us. But this is not an antiquated form of nostalgia", warns the director, remembering how civilization evolved through agriculture.

Proof that this approach is completely in step with the times is confirmed by the fact that, as a result of the many references made to the genuineness of the products featured in the movie, the Regional Department of Agriculture carried out product placement using the **Prodotti di Qualità Puglia** (Quality products from Apulia) brand.

This is an approach that goes beyond the stereotypes of "feel good" messages. When the producer **Alessandro Contessa** says that the "barter-pack" is a way of "remembering that cinema needs to return to the cordiality and kindness that has been somewhat lacking recently", that "it is necessary to protect relationships between people", that "kindness pays



On the set of "In grazia di Dio": from left to right, director Edoardo Winspeare with the producer, Alessandro Contessa, and the actors during the early days of shooting.

In the photo at the bottom of the opposite page, the leading lady Celeste Casciaro (on the right) with some of the other actresses

more than arrogance", he is not being naive: "We have discovered that there are lots of companies who are potentially interested in entering the world of movies: often it is enough to talk to them, to explain, to get them involved", this is how the "barter-pack" becomes an effective marketing tool.

Filming on the movie, which stars non-professional actors (the leading lady is Celeste Casciaro, Winspeare's wife), began in Tricase and will continue for one month, in various other small towns in the Salento area.

"In grazia di Dio" is expected to be ready for next fall. It does not currently have a distributor but this does not worry the director and producers who, from the parish recreation center of Giuliano di Lecce where they have set up their offices, say they believe their movie - so "local" yet touching on such "universal" topics - "is certainly very suitable for the international market".

THE SPONSORS/

A series of brands contributed to the movie's budget for an overall amount of 30,000 Euros. Here is a list.

Micaletto a boutique in Salento, the historic seaside resort of Capo di Leuca; Le Maldive del Salento; Full Energy, a company specializing in the design and production of photovoltaic systems, wind power and mini-wind power plants, solar panels and thermal solar systems; Azienda Agricola Conte Giordano Emo Capodilista; Kikau, a leading company in the window shutters sector.

Alongside these companies, a number of businesses contributed to the movie by providing various services: the Hotel Terminal, Gruppo Martinucci bars, Ninfole cafés, Automobili Valmauto, Drink Up, Costume National.

Many companies also made a contribution by providing their own products for the "barter-packs": Cavalieri Pasta, Castel di Salve wines, Panificio Casciaro bread products, Foresta Forte oil, Carlsberg and Sib beers, Semi di ortaggi Piccolo Veggies for Pots vegetable seeds, Azienda Ortofrutticola Nuova Contadina (greengrocers), box manufacturer Supercartotecnica.