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 'A Certain Look' Section
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Les Petites Fugues
 (Little Escapes)
 (SWISS-FRENCH-COLOR)

Cannes, May 14.

Cactus Film. MKA Diffusion release of Film Et Video Collectif. Filmkollektiv Zuerich-Television SSR Geneve-Television FR3 Paris-Les Films 2001 production. Features entire cast. Directed by Yves Yersin. Screenplay, Yersin. Claude Muret: camera (Eastmancolor). Robert Alazraki: editor. Yersin: music. Leon Francioli. Reviewed at Cannes Film Fest (Non-competing), May 13, '79. Running time: 140 MINS.

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| Pipe | Michel Robin |
| Josiane | Fabienne Barraud |
| Luigi | Dore De Rosa |
| John | Fred Personne |
| Rose | Mista Prehac |
| Alain | Laurent Sandoz |
| Marianne | Nicole Vatieur |
| Stephane | Leo Maillard |

A bucolic film about a crusty, lovable old farmhand that soars over its seemingly familiar theme in making it a tale of the spiritual realization and freedom of an old man. The sleeper of the festival which graced the official non-competing A Certain Look auxiliary section.

Film is a bit long and could use some tightening. But this is incidental for under the seemingly minute observation of farm life, patronizing bosses and changing ways lies the universal theme of human autonomy. Michel Robin, as a crusty 66-year-old farm laborer, on the same farm for 40 years, etches an unusual character whose fanciful late life rebelliousness influences people around him.

With his old age pension he buys a motorbike. There are hilarious scenes of his learning to drive it, helped by an Italian itinerant laborer on the farm. But then Robin is off discovering the land and people around him for the first time.

After mastering the bike he one day is going down a lane when the camera, subjectively from his viewpoint, seems to soar up over the land. He has always hankered to see the Alps, too, and seems to have a spiritual trip when he follows a glider on his bike.

The daughter of his boss has an illegitimate child and Robin's attempt to free himself from the semi-slavery he has always lived in affects her. She decides to have an affair with the Italian worker and go off on her own. The farmer's son is ready to try to convert the farm to modern ways.

Robin's simplistic, stubborn growth of independence is extremely well worked out as he becomes involved in all sorts of adventures on his bike forays. He even wins a Polaroid camera. But people are not too generous and he gets into scrapes, drinks too much and finally loses his bike after a drunken accident.

But the camera allows him to study things around him. A helicopter trip around his adored Alps shows him they are just rocks after all and he has to find a way to blend his new sense of freedom with ordinary earth-bound life.

Director Yves Yersin has made only documentaries before this first fiction film. His background serves him well in observing the land and its ways. He also shows a sure-footed feel for natural human comedy sans excess and a poetic elan that might make this tale of freedom a film that could emerge a commercial as well as film fest sleeper.

Yersin can take his place with such other Swiss filmmakers known outside their borders as Alain Tanner, Claude Goretta, Daniel Schmid, and others. An intensely Swiss film with the sharp human insights and avoidance of sentimentality that could make it palatable anywhere. —Mosk.