

# *Delicious*



French Bruhetta and Onion Soup

<https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/pictures/250000/velka/bruschetta-amp-french-onion-soup-food.jpg>

*A review by Garry Victor Hill*

## *Cast*

Grégory Gadebois : Pierre Manceron

Isabelle Carré : Louise

Benjamin Lavernhe : Duc de Chamfort

Guillaume de Tonquédec : Hyacinthe

Lorenzo Lefèbvre : Benjamin Manceron

Christian Bouillette : Jacob

Marie-Julie Baup : Marquise de Saint-Genet

Jérémy Lopez : Marquis de Fourvière

Antoine Gouy : Marquis du Croisic

Manon Combes : Francine

Laurent Bateau : Dumortier

Gilles Privat : Évêque

Christophe Rossignon : laquais aux chandelles

\*

## *Credits*

Directed by Éric Besnard

Written by Éric Besnard et Nicolas Boukhrief

Produced by Phillip Boëffard and Christophe Rossignon

Production design: Bertrand Seitz

Editor: Yann Dedet:

Art Director: Bertrand Seitz

Cinematographer: Jean-Marie Dreujou

Costumer: Madeline Fontaine:

Music: Christophe Julien

Studios and Distribution: A Premier Film. Nord Quest Films. France  
3 Cinema.

Released; 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 Melbourne Australia.

Running Time: 110 minutes:

Rating M PG:

Notifications state that it is only available in cinemas.

Reviewer's rating: 85%

Dialogue in French with English subtitles.

## *Review*

The film starts with a written introduction telling us that in the 1780s France's bored aristocracy took up food as a preoccupation. The first scenes are set in the kitchens of a French chateau, where everyone works frantically, except Benjamin, the bewildered son (Lorenzo Lefèbvre ) of the tense, rather bossy master chef Pierre Manceron (Grégory Gadebois ). When the steward Hycanithe (Guillaume de Tonquèdoc) notices truffles being prepared, he becomes puzzled as these are not on the Duc's menu for the feast. Pierre defensively explains that they are his latest culinary invention and against Hycanith's advice Pierre insists that they be served.

Hycanith acts as an inspector, as one by one the dishes are brought before him before going into the dining room. At first they look entrancing with their elaborate glazes, icings, sauces garnishing and decorations, but then a feeling comes over that one might get from eating a third helping of marzipan or pavlova. One hungers for something plain, and with Manceron's truffles, it comes. Hycanith stares at them with disapproval and in warning, but lets them through.

When the feast finishes Manceron is called before the aristocratic diners for their judgment. Like the food, their costumes, the dining accoutrements and the room itself, their comments are overly elaborate. Manceron in his plain, obviously heavily used kitchen work clothes stands centre stage before them, like a prisoner awaiting a verdict, with his master, the duc, placed directly opposite and slightly above him. One by one they give their verdict on the meal, over praising him in obsequious tones. Manceron remains expressionless and it is easy to see why. Such high-flown talk usually precedes its opposite: flatterers are not only false, but treacherous and so it unfolds in this scene. The last assessing speaker a priest, brings up "the one false note" the truffles. When Manceron defends his new dish the priest's temper explodes and he insists that he and the other diners have been treated like pigs because truffles come from the ground and are eaten by pigs. He demands an apology as the other guests become contemptuous and start acting like pigs in mockery of Manceron. In this scene, by their mockery, it is the aristocratic guests who unknowingly reveal that they are like pigs and Manceron with his restraint, dignity and refusal to apologize, who appears noble. The Duc demands an apology or he will dismiss his chief: Manceron refuses and the next scene shows him walking the road away from the chateau with Benjamin.

In these first scenes the film makers' attitudes and the film's themes and conflicts have all been clearly revealed and set. The rest of the film develops both the conflicts, struggles and sometimes comedy within this extremely elitist society. Manceron and Benjamin struggle to get their dilapidated family farm viable, first as a farm and then as what we now call a restaurant. At this time this was a new idea. There were coffee houses, taverns and inns where strangers could sit at benches and order limited fixed meals, cooked without flair, but Manceron, always inventive, has separate tables, a range of meals on a menu and table service, all for anyone who wants to be a customer. He is aided in this by Louise (Isabelle Carré).who turns up desperately saying she wants to be his apprentice chef. She has her own invention: potato chips fried in oil. When he says they taste fine

but they will never take off, the whole audience at this early showing laughed.

Chips did take off in France at around this time, and Thomas Jefferson, while resident in France, became partial to the new dish. Returning to America, he spread the new culinary delight, what Americans now call french fries.

Unlike so much culture depicting France's aristocracy, the makers of *Delicious* depict this class as supercilious, exploitative, cruel, arrogant, pompous, lazy, and otiose. It is easy to see why ultimately, the guillotine or exile awaited them. Wisely, the filmmakers avoided the later stages of the French Revolution and focused on its exuberant first days, when ordinary people threw off their mental shackles and habits of subservience and joyously called for liberty fraternity and equality..

*Delicious* depicts those days with a believable joy and with gentle comedy. The aristos flee, gone like pests that need no more attention. The world of the farmers has its own homely charms and much more character, fitting into the astoundingly beautiful rural landscapes. In contrast the chateau looks overly imposing, high grey walls are everywhere.

Wisely, the filmmakers do not romanticise the common people. Mnceron is frequently surly, bossy and morose. Hycanith is a servile trimmer, while Louise has some hidden agenda.

Even so, this film can present an ultimately optimistic view of life.



Grégory Gadebois :

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Gr%C3%A9gory\\_Gadebois\\_2014.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Gr%C3%A9gory_Gadebois_2014.jpg) photograph by Georges Biard, CC BY-SA 3.0  
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



Isabelle Carré :

Georges Biard, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via  
Wikimedia Commons

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isabelle\\_Carr%C3%A9\\_janvier\\_2016.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isabelle_Carr%C3%A9_janvier_2016.jpg)



Benjamin Lavernhe :

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/Benjamin\\_Lavernhe\\_C%C3%A9r%C3%A9monie\\_R2018.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/Benjamin_Lavernhe_C%C3%A9r%C3%A9monie_R2018.jpg)





Éric Besnard:

Georges Biard, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

YanRB, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## Copyright ©

**Illustrations:** Many of the pictures are from Wikipedia/Wikimedia, Wiki derived sources and Creative Commons. Those that are not are allowable under Australian law through two rules. Permission is granted for using illustrations for review purposes. Teachers are also allowed to recreate and use images for study from websites, but are not allowed to print or distribute multiple copies. The author is a qualified, registered and active teacher. Similarly under American law 'Fair Use' allows images for non-profit, educational purposes and these apply here.

Those same laws indicate that attribution should be given. Where this is easy, as with a source such as Wikipedia or Creative Commons, attribution comes with the caption. Others have attribution problems. Ownership can change as companies buy up sources. Others give their names with images that may not originate with them. In both cases I recommend that readers find the original attribution by holding the cursor arrow over an image. This will give the first credit which may or may not be the original source. Frequently further links can be made by holding shift and a left click simultaneously. If any illustration used here appears against the owner's wishes the owner can either request acknowledgement under the caption in words of their choosing or ask for removal. Unless you are a reviewer working under Australian law or a qualified Australian teacher doing your own research, do not lift pictures from this work as you might be in legal trouble with the owners for copyright violations.

Under American law "fair use" is allowed for non-commercial, educational purposes with attribution.

**Text:** © The text is copyright. Fair dealings for purposes of study or criticism is allowed. For the whole book storage in electronic systems or bound printed out copies for library research is also allowed. Communication on this would be appreciated. Selling copies becomes another matter and is not allowed without permission.