

# 8 Takes on 2022's San Sebastián

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Packing its first full-on onsite edition since 2019, San Sebastián has never been busier. 10 Takes on a potentially vibrant edition:

## Playing Off Powerful Market Forces

Nine of Netflix's 20 Top 10 non-English-language films and TV series are sourced from Spain or Latin America. Platforms are battling to tie down talent. This year, eight movies from Spain and Latin America play in competition alone at San Sebastian, the most important film event in the Spanish-speaking world. The fest's main sidebar is its New Directors strand. San Sebastian's focus on the Spanish-speaking world and new talent now aligns with powerful market forces. That fact plays out over the 2022 edition.

## San Sebastian's New Creative Investors' Conference

CAA Media Finance, for instance, is teaming with San Sebastian to organize the festival's first Creative Investors' Conference, running Sept. 19-20. Attendees take in international film biz movers and shakers: CAA's own Roeg Sutherland, Wild Bunch's Vincent Marvel, and Patrick Wachsbarger, fresh off his Oscar win for *CODA*. Symptomatically, investors will be pitched higher-end Spanish movie projects but also meet with students at Spain's top film schools.

## Spain Reigns

"This year is the strongest Spanish movie presence at San Sebastian in my 11 years directing the festival," says San Sebastian director José Luis Rebordinos. That's par for 2022, the most important year for Spanish cinema that Rebordinos has known, he adds. Just Catalonia had more directors in competition at Berlin and Cannes – Berlin Golden Bear winner



*Suro*.

Carla Simón, Isaki Lacuesta and Albert Serra – than Italy (2), Germany (1) or the U.K. (none at all).

## Reasons for Spain's Renaissance

Why Spain is so strong is another question. San Sebastian may suggest one answer. Emerging from 2000, a generation of drama/crossover auteurs pack out its Official Selection. Jaime Rosales's *Wild Flowers* and Fernando Franco's *The Rite of Spring* play competition; Alberto Rodríguez opens San Sebastian with *Prison 77*. A second film generation making intimate, localised tales of universal resonance also vies in competition with Pilar Palomero's *La Maternal* and *Suro* from Mikel Gurrea's rural drama. This two generation whammy is galvanising Spanish filmmaking.

## Buzz Titles

There's great word on Swiss Carmen Jaquier's *Thunder*, a 1900-set tale of sex as religious faith shot in high style in high Alps. Buzz is building on *Runner*, from Brooklyn-based Marian Mathias, a hard-edged tale of two lost young souls in America's vast mid-West. Both are debuts, suggesting this year's San Sebastián could yield discoveries. Also attracting heat is Portuguese immigrant tale *Great Yarmouth*, from Marco Martins (*Alice*).

## Women to the Fore, Again

Both the debuts are by women. Female filmmakers dominated San Sebastian awards last year and in 2020. Add four more first features or shorts by young Spanish directoras – Rocío Mesa's *Tobacco Barns* in New Di-

rectors, Elena López Riera's Directors' Fortnight success *The Water*, Carlota Pereda's Sundance hit *Piggy* and Estibaliz Urresola's Cannes Critics' Week winner *Chords*, plus two potential New Directors' standouts – Laura Baumeister's *Daughter of Rage* and Dinara Drukarova's *Grand Marin* – and history might repeat itself in 2022.

## Basque Country Film-TV Scene Catches Fire

Competition contender *Suro*, from the Basque Country's Gurrea, is also carrying great word-of-mouth. The biggest title at the Creative Investors Conference is movie project *Whalemen*, from Baltasar Kormákur (*Everest*, *Beast*) set up at Eduardo Cárneros' Bilbao-based Euskadi Movie.

Another is Asier Altuna's *Karmele*, from San Sebastian's Txintxua Films whose series *Intimacy* shot to global No. 1 on Netflix non-English series charts this June. Basque series *Balenciaga* is Disney+'s biggest swing in Spain. With Basque province Bizkaia having secured E.U. approval for up-to-70% tax credits, the Basque film-TV scene is on fire.

## The San Sebastian TV Festival

So is Spanish TV, and San Sebastian is the go-to place for big series premieres, led by Movistar Plus+'s *Offworld*, directed by Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Raul Arévalo, Isa Campo, Alberto Rodríguez and Isaki Lacuesta in a head-turning combo as talent – courting and retaining it – becomes the name of the new film-TV game.

SADE PRÓXIMAMENTE EN NUESTRAS SALAS DE CINE



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