The Tour de France

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Wherever Felix goes, the sun shines. HIV does not keep Felix (played with raffish charm by the handsome French–North African actor Sami Bouajila) from singing the sun out from behind the clouds, singing while he packs his meds for a road trip, singing as he hikes through lush French pastures.

Adventures of Felix (in French, with subtitles) is a road movie—a very American genre—but just as France is about the size of Texas, *Adventures* is a tour on a different scale, charting comic mishaps and intimate encounters rather than national monuments or gaga shoot-'em-ups. Laid off from his job in an industrial northern port, Felix bids his boyfriend adieu for five days and hitchhikes south to Marseille. There, he's convinced he can, and should, reunite with his father, whom he has never met. Not one night on the road, he stumbles into a couple of thugs trying to dump a body off a bridge—the first of many moments of dark hilarity.

But mostly, Felix's journey—which he decides in advance will include no big cities, no trains and no towns where the extreme right is in office—puts him in the path of a series of colorful characters. Together, they make up not just a surrogate family for Felix, but a portrait of a France in vibrant, multicultural, alternative-family flux.

Adventures of Felix
(Winstar Cinema)

Adventures is the second film of directorial (and life) partners Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau. Like recent films of André Téchiné (*Wild Reeds*) and François Ozon (*Under the Sand*), *Adventures* takes abundant cues from the films of Eric Rohmer—a nostalgia for summer and sexual discovery, idyllic, sun-dappled settings in which characters talk themselves into a certain order of the universe and then walk right into its unraveling. But there are no deep psychoses chez Felix, just unapologetic sexiness, laugh-out-loud humor, moments of surprising poignancy and tenderness—and almost no false notes. Like good medicine, *Adventures of Felix* goes down easy. It's a bright, shining capsule of happiness.

Playing in major cities this month; check www.winstarcinema.com for listings.

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