

FrenchFilm Festival? But, of course!

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The Alliance Française French Film Festival is making its grand return from 3 March to 15 April at Palace Cinemas in Byron Bay.

Get ready for an unforgettable cinematic journey featuring a spectacular selection of French films – from comedy, romance, and drama, to thrilling adventures.

The wonderful opening night film, *Colours of Time*, sees 30 people, in 2025, unexpectedly learn that they are linked by one shared ancestor, Adèle Meunier (**Suzanne Lindon**). The legacy awaiting them is unusual: a countryside home in Normandy, abandoned for decades and suspended in time.

Four of them, Seb (**Abraham Wapler**), Abdel (**Zinedine Soualem**, *Divertimento*), Céline (**Julia Piaton**, *Like a Prince*) and Guy (**Vincent Macaigne**, *Three Friends*), are sent to survey the estate. They enter the property expecting organisation, documentation and clear boundaries. The house replies with echoes.

As they uncover traces of Adèle's life, the story opens onto another era. In 1895, Adèle leaves Normandy at 20 and reappears in Paris, a city alive with invention, early photography and the rise of Impressionism. The film moves between 2025 and 1895, letting the past mirror the present. This dialogue across time gently challenges the relatives' certainties, inviting them to rethink identity, legacy and the future they carry without realising it.

Other highlights include: *The Richest Woman in the World* – few modern scandals have captivated France as the astonishing events surrounding Lilliane Bettencourt, the billionaire heiress to the L'Oréal fortune and doyenne of Parisian society. Now writer/director **Thierry Klifa** has freely adapted the incredible story into a captivating dark comedy, featuring a jaw-dropping, tailor-made role for one of France's most iconic stars; In *What is Love?* Marguerite (**Laure Calamy**, *How to Make a Killing*) sees no reason to refuse her ex-husband Fred (**Vincent Macaigne**, *Three Friends*) when he asks for an official Catholic Church annulment of their marriage. They share a child, she has since rebuilt her life with a new partner and a teen daughter, and she is even genuinely pleased to learn that Fred hopes to marry Chloé, the woman who now shares his life.

To satisfy the Church authorities, the former spouses must prove that their marriage was destined to fail from the beginning. What begins as a simple administrative formality slowly turns into an unexpected emotional journey. As Marguerite and Fred revisit old memories, moments of tenderness, and the cracks that once separated them, emotions they believe long-resolved, begin to resurface.

There are so many great films to see at this year's Alliance Française French Film Festival. Find out more at palacecinemas.com.au.