



“Novaro eschews melodrama and instead weaves a gentle, though occasionally haphazard portrait of real domestic tensions and the lifestyles of hippified urban Mexicans.”

Robert Koehler - Variety - USA.

“The good herbs: A painful movie made to appreciate life”

La Jornada - Mexico.

“The big winner of Guadalajara Int’l Film Festival 2010”

El Universal - Mexico.

María Novaro

The most successful woman director of Mexican cinema studied Sociology and then Film at the National University of Mexico (UNAM). International attention was drawn to her with her first student film *An Island Surrounded By Water* (1984) a short that won several prizes and was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. After a series of winning short films (*Azul Celeste*, 1987 among others) she made her first feature *Lola* (1989) for which she won the OCIC (Catholic Critics) Award in the Berlin Film Festival. Her second feature, *Danzón* (1991), won international acclaim and worldwide distribution after screening at the Directors’ Fortnight in Cannes. It received the most enthusiastic reviews: “An enthralling film” (*Cahiers du cinema*); “A jewel” (*San Francisco Chronicle*); “A small wonder of luminous filmmaking” (*El Pais*, Spain). María Novaro shot her third feature on the Mexican-American border (*The Garden Of Eden* 1994, Venezia Film Festival) and an adventurous road movie (*Without A Trace* 2000, San Sebastián Film Festival) alongside with a number of shorts and documentaries (*Otoñal*, *La Morena*, *Traducción Simultánea*). *The Good Herbs* is her fifth full-length feature, and it won 8 awards at the Guadalajara Film Festival in Mexico.

The Good Herbs

Production Year: 2010

Country: Mexico

Running Time : 120 min

Director: María Novaro

Producers: Julio Bárcenas

María Novaro

Screenplay: María Novaro

Cinematography: Gerardo Barroso

Editing: María Novaro

Sebastián Garza

Sound: Pablo Tamez

Alfredo Loeza

Music: Santiago Chávez

Judith de León

Art Direction: Lorenza Manrique

Production Companies: Axolote Cine

ECHASA

IMCINE-FOPROCINE

CUEC

CCC

EFICINE 226

Cast: Úrsula Pruneda

Ofelia Medina

Ana Ofelia Murguía

Miriam Balderas

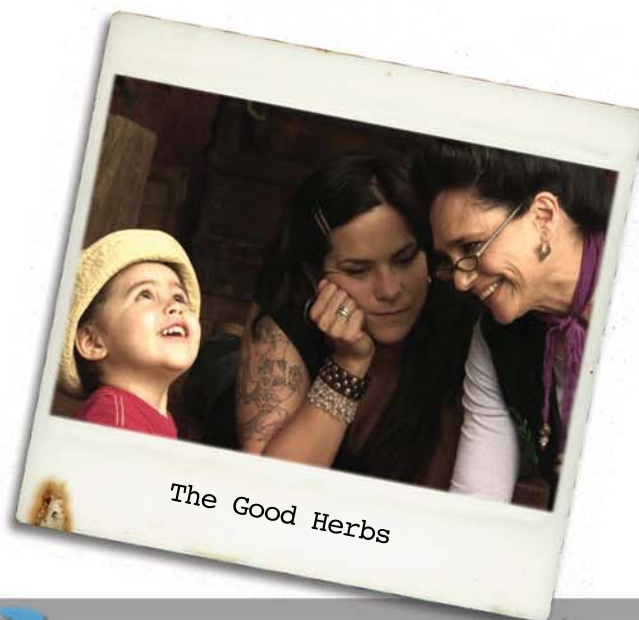
Cosmo González Muñoz

Gabino Rodríguez

Alberto Estrella

Rodrigo Solís

Luisa Pardo



World Sales:

Parque de las estrellas 2755, Jardines del Bosque, Guadalajara, Jal. México

+52 (33) 31232738 · 36473705 · www.latinofusion.com.mx · latinofusion@latinofusion.com.mx



Awards at Guadalajara International Film Festival 2010:

Best Screenplay:
María Novaro  **FICG25** Festival Internacional
de Cine en Guadalajara
Film Festival / México

Best Actress:
Úrsula Pruneda

Best Cinematography:
Gerardo Barroso

Young Jury Award to the Best Mexican Feature.

Latinofusion Award to the Best Mexican Feature.

FIPRESCI Award to the Best Mexican Feature.

Audience Award.

Cinecolor Award to the Best Mexican Feature.

Golden Globes entry



Short Synopsis:

Dalia's life changes when she has to face the Alzheimer of her mother, Lala, an ethnobotanic scientist. This is a story of the chemistry of the brain, plants and of human emotions; about the invisible bonds that unite the living with their dead and nature, which belongs to us all and about the Mexican herbalist heritage that knows which plants can help cure the soul.

Strong and moving interpretations by Ursula Pruneda, Ana Ofelia Murguía and Mexican Diva Ofelia Medina.

A film that takes us to the wonders of Mexican "Herbolaria", and shows a vivid and lush Mexico City that seemed non existent until now.

With the wonderful Cinematography of Gerardo Barroso, The good herbs becomes a real visual introduction to the "Libellus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis", antique document that talks about prehispanic medicinal tradition.

Long Synopsis:



Dhalia works for an alternative radio station as she collects boyfriends and words, not yet knowing what to do with them. Lovingly, she raises Cosmo, her 2 year-old child. Lala is Dhalia's mother, an ethnobotanist in charge of the Botanical Gardens in Mexico's University, with an extensive body of work and field research. Blanquita is an older woman who lives next door from Dhalia. She occasionally babysits for Cosmo and she sometimes shares with Dhalia "those cigarettes that make you laugh". Blanquita has a secret life: her teenage granddaughter, dead a long time ago, lingers around in a variety of ways that only Blanquita can perceive. Lala experiences some disturbing moments and Dhalia realizes something is wrong with her mother. When Lala is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease she asks her daughter to help her out "before her brain gets completely disorganized". She gives Dhalia her latest researchs on plants and herbal remedies "that cure the human soul" according to the Mexican pre-columbian tradition. Dhalia is thus submerged in a compelling journey into her mother's mind and memories, as well as into her own identity. Her journey into the chemistry of the plants and the chemistry of the brain is embraced by herbs and flowers, infusions and rituals, cactuses, tree barks and ancient remedies, buzzing insects, roots, mushrooms, and the almost magical variety of forms in which nature manifests itself as a comfort for human emotions and the inevitability of death.

World Sales:

Parque de las estrellas 2755, Jardines del Bosque, Guadalajara, Jal. México
+52 (33) 31232738 · 36473705 · www.latinofusion.com.mx · latinofusion@latinofusion.com.mx



The Good Herbs

ROBERT KOEHLER / VARIETY



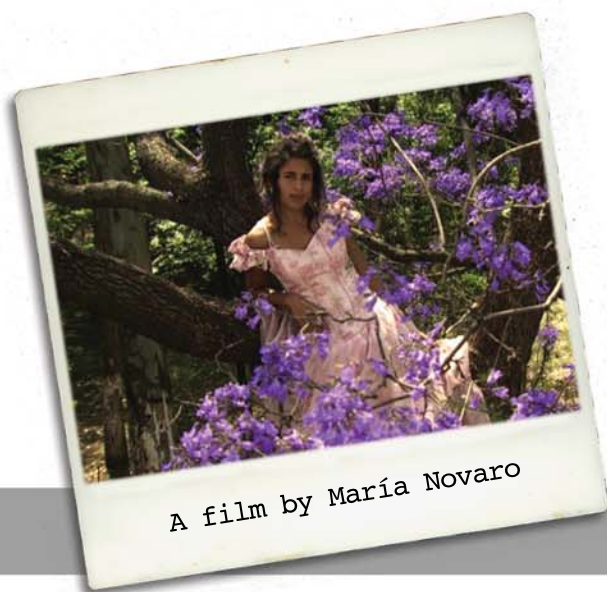
Writer-director María Novaro shifts into a refreshingly laid-back mood for "The Good Herbs," a family tragedy about a mother suffering from Alzheimer's disease and her grown daughter's attempts to cope. Returning to helming after a decade-long break, Novaro eschews melodrama and instead weaves a gentle, though occasionally haphazard portrait of real domestic tensions and the lifestyles of hippified urban Mexicans. Themes and approach will translate into broad fest play and select commercial theatrical and vid exposure in Spanish-lingo territories. One of Mexico's standout women directors, Novaro ("Lola," "Danzon") has delivered a film that plays like the result of much private reflection, and feels as warm as a handmade quilt. Well received at its Guadalajara fest premiere (where it won an award), pic can also be viewed as a critique of the national taste for high melodrama, favoring a more subdued approach to universal human issues. Working for the collectively run alternative station Radio Nopal, Dalia (Ursula Pruneda) scrapes by as a single mom raising toddler Cosmo (scene-stealer Cosmo Gonzalez Munoz). Her loving if eccentric mom, Lala (Ofelia Medina), is a respected herbalist whose life's work is sensually visible in every scene set in her folksy, ramshackle home. Her bevy of plants, flowers, potions, drawings and lab items, much like an artist's collection of canvasses, suggests a life rich in experience and dedication. Even while Lala is making a lotion to soothe a sickly Cosmo, she comments to Dalia that she's starting to forget things. It doesn't leave much of an impression until some time has passed, and Lala's memory loss becomes more extreme, coupled with signs of senility. Novaro and co-editor Sebastian Garza's graceful transitions lovingly ponder Lala's beloved rare plants, at one point shifting poignantly between botanical closeups and CAT-scan images. "The Good Herbs" plays on thematic variations of memory and recovering the past, within a network of a loosely assembled short sequences that are hit and miss, including a barely there romance between Dalia and Gabino (busy thesp Gabino Rodriguez), a dude she meets in a cinema. Separately, these pieces -- involving elderly family friend Blanquita (Ana Ofelia Murguía, in a lovely, charming performance) and the slightly goofy Radio Nopal crew, like a group out of a Robert Altman ensembler -- aren't much. But, like frequent music interludes by guitarist Santiago Chavez and percussionist Judith de Leon (who provide a beautifully soft underscore exactly in vibe with the film), they collectively form a picture of lives fading away and lives maturing. Dalia's final decisions, which some will find shocking, are viewed by Novaro without judgment. Actors Pruneda and Medina skillfully indicate how the earth-mama, eco-feminist style has been passed down from one generation to another, while Medina is given the most theatrical moments as her Lala mentally and physically falls apart. Easily Novaro's most visually accomplished film, "The Good Herbs" should boost the international reps of brilliant cinematographer Gerardo Barroso and production designer Lorenza Manrique, who enliven every location, from the cramped radio station to the cloud-shrouded southern Mexican highlands. A repeated motif of animated chapter cards illustrating various herbs and their properties reps a corny gesture. Camera (color), Gerardo Barroso; editors, Sebastian Garza, Novaro; music, Santiago Chavez, Judith de Leon; production designer, Lorenza Manrique; costume designer, Manrique; sound (Dolby Digital), Alejandro de Icaza; sound designer, De Icaza. Reviewed at Guadalajara Film Festival (competing), March 14, 2010. Running time: 118 MIN.

"Nature doesn't belong to us."

María Novaro

"Only a filmmaker with such knowledge of botanics can tell, so beautifully and painfully, a story about plants that heal the soul."

Carlos Jordán - Milenio - Mexico



World Sales:

Parque de las estrellas 2755, Jardines del Bosque, Guadalajara, Jal. México
+52 (33) 31232738 · 36473705 · www.latinofusion.com.mx · latinofusion@latinofusion.com.mx

