

PRIMAL SCREENS

Too many film festivals are more about celebrity hoopla than serious art. But New England's five best indie showcases let movie buffs preview edgy new pictures—and rub elbows with emerging stars—without wading through endless security lines (or feverish fans). **BY CHRIS NEWBOUND**



The Rhode Island International Film Festival attracts throngs.

for finding filmmakers on the fringe. Alums like John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, *Hairspray*) and Jim Jarmusch (*Stranger than Paradise*) won early accolades here. This year's darling, the Academy Award-winning Irish musical *Once*, also received a boost in P'town. Hordes of film-geek college kids and the vibrant local gay community help make up the annual crowd of 10,000. Only three venues are traditional movie theaters; the rest include art galleries, the town hall, even the Vixen Night Club.

6/18-6/22, PROVINCETOWN, MA, 508-487-3456, PTOWNFILMFEST.ORG.



News for the Church

RI Rhode Island International Film Festival Hosting the world premiere of the Farrelly brothers' hit *There's Something About Mary* in 1998 put the RIIFF on the map. Now, New England's biggest film fest—last year's event screened 320 movies in six days—attracts boldfacers like Minnie Driver, Harrison Ford, and Anne Heche. Past winners include Andrew McCarthy's short film *News for the Church* and Morgan J. Freeman's family drama *Just Like the Son*. Spread throughout Greater Providence and neighboring Newport, the late-summer festival has become an international event, with emphasis on French and French-Canadian films. Bonus: Slasher enthusiasts can come back for October's horror film fest.

8/5-8/10, PROVIDENCE AND NEWPORT, RI, 401-861-4445, FILM-FESTIVAL.ORG.



La Vie en Rose

MA Berkshire International Film Festival Under founder Kelley Vickery, the three-year old BIFF has grown up fast: Its 2007 bill featured 50 films, among them Oscar-winning *La Vie en Rose*. Past participants include directors Mike Nichols and Arthur Penn; this year's honoree is Kevin Bacon. And in Great Barrington, ven-

ues are all conveniently within walking distance of each other.

5/15-5/18, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA, 413-528-8030, BIFFMA.COM.



Once

MA Provincetown International Film Festival Now in its 10th year, the PIFF—oft-described as “the way Sundance used to be”—is known

CULTURE



MA Woods Hole Film Festival

Well-respected and well-attended, the eight-day Cape Cod event turns 17 this year, and with age comes mature local filmmaking. Last year, some 120 movies—including *Beyond Belief*, a documentary about suburban Boston 9/11 widows—were shown at unconventional spots like the Marine Biological Laboratory's Waterfront Park and the Old Woods Hole Fire Station.

7/26-8/2, WOODS HOLE, MA, 508-495-3456, WOODSHOLEFILMFESTIVAL.ORG.



MA Williamstown Film Festival

It may be best known for its first-rate college and summer theater, but Williamstown also hosts a lauded film festival. The WFF debuted 11 features and 30 shorts in 2007, including the romantic dramedy *The Good Night*, directed by Jake Paltrow and starring sister Gwyneth. Past winners include 2005's *West Bank Story*, which went on to snag an Oscar; visitors have included Paul Newman, Sigourney Weaver, and Alec Baldwin. Screenings take place at the town's Spring Street Images Cinema, Williams College's new '62 Center for Performing Arts, and nearby Mass MoCA.

10/17-10/26, WILLIAMSTOWN, MA, 413-458-9700, WILLIAMSTOWNFILMFEST.COM.
