

Drinks &
Stories

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

NFP MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION* PRESENTS „SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS“

A THALI MEDIA PRODUCTION IN COOPERATION WITH BAYERISCHER RUNDFUNK AND STUDIO BABELSBERG WITH THE SUPPORT OF FILMFERNSEHFONDS BAYERN AND FILMFÖRDERUNGSANSTALT

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NIVABOOTALEBI PRODUCTION SOUND RAINER PETERSHAGEN SHIHO MIYAZAWA ARIEL NOVO ALEX RUBIN MICHAEL SOLOMON SOUND DESIGN SÖREN BLÜTHGEN RE-RECORDING MIXER EBERHARD WECKERLE

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PRODUCERS MARIEKE SCHROEDER CHRISTOPH FISSER HENNING MOLFENTER CHARLIE WOEBCKEN WRITER AND DIRECTOR MARIEKE SCHROEDER





NFP SUBMARINE DOKS

present

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

Writer & director
MARIEKE SCHROEDER

With
CHARLES SCHUMANN,
MAXIM BILLER,
ECKART WITZIGMANN AND MANY MORE

A production by
THALI MEDIA

In cooperation with
BAYERISCHER RUNDfunk, STUDIO BABELSBERG

Supported by
FILMFERNSEHFONDS BAYERN, FILMFÖRDERUNGSANSTALT

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SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

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SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

SYNOPSIS

In SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS, legendary barman Charles Schumann brings us to discover some of the world's most beautiful bars, among others in New York, Havana and Tokyo. The film explores the history of the bars, as well as the people that frequent them, which are brought to life anew each day.

SUMMARY

Charles Schumann. The man behind the institution that is Schumann's bar, author - his book "The American Bar" has long been a classic worldwide of bar literature - model, thinker and traveller. Having just turned 75 years old, you would have thought he has seen and done it all by now. The man from Lower Bavaria who started off in life in border management did his training at the German foreign office, then spent the rest of his formative years working in clubs and bars in Southern France until finally heading to Munich to do political studies; he opened Schumann's American Bar in 1982.

But 75 is still the right age to maintain a curiosity about life, people and the stories they tell. And so Charles Schumann embarked on SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS touring some of the most interesting bars in the world, taking the viewer to places of longing, throwing open the doors of, among others, New York's Dead Rabbit, Paris' Hemingway Bar, Havana's El Floridita and the High Five in Tokyo. He lets the bars tell their own stories, speaks to their patrons, letting them describe their lives lived during the blue hours. He meets bar flies, movers and shakers, and story-tellers, all the while rooting out the secrets of bar culture.

During these talks you begin to realize that each one of these bars is a universe of its own, each with their own drama that is brought to life anew each passing day. The cast varies depending on the time of day and day of the week but a regular crew of actors guarantee a show. And the expert knows what show is going to be put on.

That's why SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS is not only a voyage of discovery taking in the bars of the world, it also takes in the people that visit them and breathe life into them. It's a journey that takes the viewer through decades of history that the bars and the drinks they serve have been a party to and which Charles Schumann uses to get to know the people that frequent the bars all that much better.

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER MARIEKE SCHROEDER

In your film, Charles Schumann is not only a travel guide taking us through the history and culture of the international bar scene. He is also the film's protagonist. How did the concept of this film come about?

I got to know Charles years ago during a flight to New York when I was doing some research for my other film, "Aida's Brothers and Sisters". We often met afterwards in New York. And no matter where we went Charles was welcomed by everyone as an old comrade in arms. I knew of him because of his bar in Munich but the influence he has worldwide on bar culture was unknown to me at the time. His book "The American Bar" is not just a classic in terms of bar literature, it is a real style icon, full stop. This predestined him to be the protagonist of course. Of course, Charles has his own rough edges. Originally, I wanted the film to become something of an historical piece. But Charles is not someone who lives his life in the past. And that is how each film takes its own form. The film is characterised by the way Charles goes about his travels and how he approaches people... In a way, SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS is also an embodiment of his character.

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS is not a film about drinking but about enjoying oneself. What makes a bar special for you, personally?

Behind each bar always lies a certain attitude or demeanour. The film is not there to show you that you can hang out in a bar. There are certain people that go at a certain time to bar in order to enjoy themselves, drift away. I think that the film makes you want to be a part of that.

I think there are many people that long for a place like that, where you can find a different sort of sociability. A place where people can really talk to one another, away from social media. So this longing really applies to the smaller bars. They create the space where such pursuits are possible. That's not just because these meeting points have been around for centuries but because new bars are opening on every corner all the time.

Japan is not a country you would automatically connect with bar culture. To what extent are the bars we see examples or linked to the culture of the country?

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS makes no claim to comprehensiveness. It's not about the hippest or most well-known bars, or which has the best barman. We do not want to fall into that trap. There are a few like the New York bars that have won international prizes but the film is based on an entirely different concept. Behind the bars featured in SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS there are people with their own ideas and concepts which allow the customers that visit their bars to get some sort of enjoyment. Each of the bars have something that is more than just the offer of a drink, giving their clientele a place to have a conversation. I always went to these places as well. It is something that Charles really does embody. Many come to his bar simply because he is there, because he invites you to be yourself.

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

We deliberately did not visit any of the big gastro pub chains, concentrating on those bars that are characterised by their owners and have remained true to themselves over the years. They show what bars in different countries can embody in terms of style and attitude.

You went to six different countries. What time period does the film actually cover?

Two years in total. Charles continued to work in his bar every day he was not filming. He is a real workaholic, he is really something.

Is there something that will stick with you from the production of this project?

Although Charles is somewhat of an extreme personality, he also has a great sense of humour. The shooting was at times insanely funny and Charles was always willing to throw himself into work. But how curious and attentive he is is what impressed me the most. For example, after a long flight, when I would have preferred to just relax a while at the hotel, Charles was already out and about exploring, chatting to people. That curiosity he brings with him in all that he does, it pushes him and he showed me how important it is to have that in all our lives.

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES SCHUMANN

Why did you choose to be involved with this film?

I am a curious person. If it had just been about the bars then I would not have travelled halfway around the world. I am interested in what other people do, so I decided I would be in the film. Indeed, it does not show you how to mix a drink. It shows instead how interesting people in Tokyo, New York or Paris bring bars to life with their style and creativeness. SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS is a journey taking in the bars of the world, a story about people who like to spend their time in bars and those that provide the space in the first place.

You have done a lot in your life. You have run the most well-known bar in Germany for 35 years, written a bestseller; what keeps you interested in this profession?

35 years behind a desk would definitely not have been as diverse as this. Schumann's is certainly distinguished by its longevity but I am driven by my curiosity. So although I was mostly in the same place, I have been able to meet the most different people. Sometimes I cannot believe myself all that has happened over the years. My life is the bar.

The film gives the impression that the international bar scene is like a family where people know each other and respect each other. What are the similarities and differences between the bars you visited?

There are not that many similarities, beyond cocktails of course. The difference between bars are quite clear. For example, New York bars have always been at the forefront of developing bar culture. That's why it was interesting for me to film there and see new trends and developments to take back to Schumann's. Japanese bar culture is completely different from Europe's or America's. It's impressive when you think that it was only kicked off by the Americans at the end of World War II.

How would you advise someone with dreams of being a barman?

Nowadays it's easier than it was years ago. When we opened Schumann's, it was one of the only bars in Munich that was not situated in a hotel lobby. It's different today. Anyone who wants to be a barman has to go learn how to in a good bar. And there are a lot of those nowadays. Barmen are also hosts, that should be the mindset. Without guests even the best bar is not going to work. Barmen are also in the limelight, they are the focus. The best way to go about it though is to find things out for yourself.

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

THE BARS AND THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS

Munich, Germany

Schumann's Bar

New York, USA

Employees Only, Dead Rabbit - World's Best Bar 2016, Blue Ribbon, Milk and Honey, King Cole Bar, Nomad Hotel Bar, Death and Company, Please don't tell, Clover Club in Brooklyn

Berlin, Germany

Victoria Bar, Würgeengel, Becketts Kopf, Schwarze Traube

Paris, France

Hemingway Bar

Havana, Cuba

Floridita

Tokyo, Japan

High Five Bar, Star Bar, Ben Fiddich, Tender Bar

Vienna, Austria

Loos American Bar

Protagonists

Charles Schumann, Maxim Biller (writer), Claudius Seidl (journalist), Stefan Gabányi (bar owner), Kosta Konstantinos (waiter), Steve Schneider (bar tender), Dev Johnson (barman), Makis Kirkos (waiter), Jack McGarry (bar owner), Ted Haigh (cocktail historian), Robert Simonson (journalist), Stefan Weber (bar owner), Dale Degroff (barman), Günther Mattei (graphic designer), Sasha Petraske (bar owner), Dave Wondrich (journalist), Julie Reiner (bar owner), Beate Hindermann (bar owner), Pep Guardiola (football manager), Colin Field (barman), Leonardo Padura (writer), Asbel Morales (rum maker), Alejandro Bolivar (barman), Jorge Perugorría (actor), Hidetsugu Ueno (bar owner), Hisashi Kishi (bar owner), Eckart Witzigmann (chef), Kazuo Uyeda (bar owner), Jörg Meyer (bar owner), Stan Vadrna (barman), Marianne Kohn (bar owner).

CREW

Marieke Schroeder (Director/producer)

After studying communication sciences, politics and law in Munich the director and producer graduated from New York University's Film Class and founded her own production company, Thali Media, after a long cooperation with Jan Schmidt-Garre.

Schroeder's documentaries have been shown in more than 24 countries and at film festivals in Berlin (the Berlinale), Munich, Leipzig, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Ohio and Monte Carlo and are also available on DVD.

Her achievements include a nomination for the German film prize for "A Woman and a Half - Hildegard Knef" at the Berlinale 2001, a nomination for the "Rose d'Or" at the Columbus film festival as well as a nomination for "Classique en images" at the Cannes film festival.

FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR (SELECTED)

2017	SCHUMANN'S BARGESPRÄCHE
2015	Kindheit in Bayern
2014	Richard Strauss-Skizze eines Lebens
2013	Country Roads – Der Herzschlag Amerikas
2011	Klatschen – Buhen – Schlafen, die Oper und ihr Publikum
2009	Schiller und die Musik
2008	Stage Light – Stage Fright
2006	Bella Figura – Müssen Sänger dick sein?
2005	Sophie Scholl – allen Gewalten zum Trotz
2005	Mozart in Wien
2004	Joseph Schmidt – Geschichte eines zu kurzen Lebens
2003	Legenden – Osho vormals Bhagwan
2000	Aida's Brothers & Sisters

FILMOGRAPHY AS PRODUCER (SELECTED)

2013	Country Roads – Der Herzschlag Amerikas (director: Marieke Schroeder)
2012	Der Atmende Gott – Reise zum Ursprung des modernen Yoga (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)
2011	Long Shot – Close Up – Andreas Gursky (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)
2008	Furtwänglers Liebe (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)
2008	Lampenfieber – vom Segen und Fluch der Bühne (director: Torben Schmidt)
2007	Bella Figura – Müssen Sänger dick sein? (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)
2007	Sofia – Biographie eines Violinkonzertes (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)

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- 2006-08 Legato – Pianoserie (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)
- 2004 Joseph Schmidt – Geschichte eines zu kurzen Lebens (director: Marieke Schroeder)
- 2003 Der Gefesselte (director: Jan Schmidt-Garre)
- 2001 A Woman and a half – Hildegard Knef (director: Clarissa Ruge)

CREW

Charles Schumann (bar owner, author)

Charles Schumann, born Karl Georg Schuhmann, is a bartender and bar owner of one of the most well-known bars in all of Germany, the eponymous Schumann's in Munich.

Schumann, who grew up on his parents' farm in the Palatinate, was always looking for a way to escape this seemingly idyllic rural setting. His parents wanted him to take over the farm or to become a priest but he was not interested. So after finishing middle school he eventually was given the chance to serve in the Foreign Office. When after two years he was not moved up to ambassador, he moved on to Italy. That is where he had his first real contact with gastronomy. For two seasons, he ran a beer garden in Ferrara. Schumann had taken a liking to the business at this point and spent the next three years in Montpellier and Perpignan, working at the different "Tiffany" clubs - a mix of restaurant and nightclub. At the time he was also a guest student at various French universities. Back in Munich aged 31 years, he finally got a high school diploma and studied political science and journalism. At the same time, Harry's New York Bar opened in 1974, where he was employed as a bartender.

After getting his Master degree, Schumann took over a local Munich bar, Die Kanne, and reopened it as Schumann's American Bar. The bar quickly became popular being a local haunt for artists and other personalities from around the world.

In 1991, his book "The American Bar" was illustrated from Günter Mattei and was also translated into a number of foreign languages becoming an instant classic of the international bar scene. Although Schumann prefers simpler, classic drinks, he has developed a number of his own cocktails including the famous 'Swimming pool', which can now be ordered at various bars around the world.

Schumann's curiosity has repeatedly led him to explore life away from just bartending. In addition to publishing several books, he has also worked as a model for the fashion label Baldessarini, as well as other promotional engagements with Hugo Boss and Campari. In 2001, Schumann expanded his business and opened another bar in Munich's Maffeistraße. Two years later, Schumann's moved to larger premises on Odeonsplatz where he currently serves his guests day-in day-out.

SCHUMANN'S BAR TALKS

CREDITS

Writer and director	Marieke Schroeder
Production	Thali Media
In cooperation with	Bayerischer Rundfunk and Studio Babelsberg
Producers	Marieke Schroeder (Thali Media), Christoph Fisser, Henning Molfenter, Charlie Wobcken (Studio Babelsberg)
Commissioning Editors	Carlos Gerstenhauer, Armin Kratzert, Matthias Leybrand (Bayerischer Rundfunk)
Director of Photography	Niv Abootalebi
Production Sound	Rainer Petershagen, Shiho Miyazawa, Ariel Novo, Alex Rubin, Michael Solomon
Sound design	Sören Blüthgen
Re-recording Mixer	Eberhard Weckerle
Music	Valentino Betz, Marvin Schuhmann
Editor	Gaby Kull-Neujahr

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Production	Germany, 2017
Picture format	1 : 2.39
Sound	5.1 Audio PCM
Running time	98 minutes