

Lights, camera, action!

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Marbella will be buzzing with actors, directors, producers and other movers and shakers from the movie world as the Marbella International Film Festival get underway in October

Now in its 18th year, the Festival, which runs from October 5-8, will highlight more than 30 films, some of them world premieres, at the Red Dog Cinemas in Puerto Banus. This includes shorts, feature films and documentaries, and the films are screened in their original version with English and Spanish subtitles.

The Festival has expanded considerably since its launch in 2006, in collaboration with the Marbella Town Hall and Tourist Board, Marbella Film Office and the Andalucia Film Commission. The social aspect of the festival, based at the Hard Rock Hotel Marbella, includes several glamorous evening events – perfect for networking- and culminates in the Gala Awards Ceremony at the Melia Marbella Banus on October 8.

With a truly global reach, last year's Marbella International Film Festival screened films from countries including the United Kingdom, Spain, the United States, Ukraine, Brazil, Georgia, Honduras, China and South Korea, while actors including Kevin McNally, Nicole Faraday, Terry Stone and Emily Wyatt were present at the gala. Other famous actors at previous galas have included William Shatner, Steven Berkoff, Kris Marshall, Craig Fairbrass and Timothy Spall.

The festival is the brainchild of film producer Mac Chakaveh, who recognised the importance of Marbella hosting this

type of cultural event with an international image. Over the years, Mac has carefully curated the wide variety and genre of films from all over the world that has become the festival's trademark.

Underlining the international aspect of the awards, last year's Best Feature went to 'Secrets', the Brazilian drama directed and starring the talented Emiliano Ruschel. Kevin McNally was a deservedly popular winner as Best Actor for 'Musketeer' – the "Pirates of The Caribbean" star looking relaxed on his first visit to Marbella while Best Actress was Nicole Faraday for 'Not by The Book' – a British Comedy/Crime caper.

Highlights of this year's festival include hard-hitting documentaries such as 'The Wagner Group. Putin's Mercenaries' that uncovers the true face of the organisation that its late leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, boasted "will win over Ukraine, and later over NATO and the whole world".

"The Invisible - Modern Slavery in Europe" documents the plight of the 28 million people who live in working conditions that are considered modern slavery. The film tells the story of the 100,000 harvest workers in Huelva, Spain, who talk about their lives.

Feature films include "Brighton 4th" the story of Kakhi, a Georgian ex-wrestler who travels from Tbilisi to Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, to help his son Soso find a way out of a gambling debt and "I am Gitmo" set in Guantanamo Bay, shortly after 9/11.

On a lighter note, the Marbella International Film Festival also includes screenings of "Nessie". The British comedy has the villagers of Loch Ness trying to prove Nessie is real to receive \$50million bequeathed to them in a will. "Kindling" is a coming of age drama that sees a group of young men who return to their hometown in order to turn their friend's final days into a celebration of life and friendship.

Finally, the successful Rise of the Footsoldier franchise is back with the latest chapter in the saga. "Rise of the Footsoldier:Vengeance" sees anti-hero Tate embarking on a rampage to avenge a violent death. To track down the villain responsible, Tate ventures beyond his comfort zone of Essex and into the dark side of 90s Soho. As well as being one of the most popular features at the festival, the Footsoldier franchise has gained a reputation for having the liveliest showing and best after party in Marbella!