

HAL
GUSTAKUNAH
(TASTE TEST)



E-mail: masagibson@gmail.com

Teaser: vimeo.com/masagibson/tastetestteaser

Facebook: facebook.com/TasteTestTheFilm

PLOT SYNOPSES

Logline:

Two gustatory savants meet off-hours in a restaurant to engage in the latest of a series of battles to decide, once and for all, who is the master taster.

Short synopsis:

Somewhere in Europe—the Mediterranean?—a man and a woman meet off-hours in a restaurant to face off in a master-level tasting contest. He has prepared a single chocolate truffle for her; she has concocted a one-of-a-kind soup for him. For each taster, the flavours trigger a succession of synaesthetic images of the ingredients—each more obscure and outrageous than the last. There is seemingly no ingredient that can elude their superhuman taste buds... Or is there?

Long synopsis:

Somewhere in Europe—the Mediterranean?—an inscrutable Man and an enigmatic Woman meet off-hours in a restaurant to face off in a master-level tasting contest. They have played this game before, and the prize, currently held by the Man, is contained in a mysterious box placed on the table at the start of the game. Whatever is in the box, the Woman wants it; she has come to win.

He has prepared a single chocolate truffle for her; she has concocted a one-of-a-kind soup for him. For each gustatory savant, the flavours emanating from the dish trigger a succession of synaesthetic images of the ingredients, and the tasters bring their uber-heightened senses as well as their worldly knowledge and training to bear on the identification of those ingredients. (These cosmopolites are no doubt fluent in multiple languages, but here, in each other's company, they converse solely in their native Romance dialect.) Each successive ingredient is more obscure and outrageous than the last; there is seemingly no ingredient that can elude their superhuman taste buds... Or is there?





MAIN CAST AND CREW BIOS

Masa Gibson (writer/director/actor)



Gibson holds BAs in Music and Linguistics from Rutgers University as well as a PhD in Linguistics from Cornell University. He is a classically trained singer and a Meisner-trained actor, having completed the two-year program at the Actor's Workshop of Ithaca, where he stayed on to teach for several years. He also graduated from the UCB Improv Training program in NYC. As an actor, Gibson holds a number of film, television, and web series credits. *Taste Test* is his third writing/directing project and his second time out directing and starring simultaneously.

David Kossack (director/cinematographer)



Kossack graduated from Ithaca College's Park School of Communications with a degree in Cinema Production. He currently works as an editor and videographer at PhotoSynthesis Productions in Ithaca, NY, where he edited the award-winning documentary "They Call it Myanmar: Lifting the Curtain". Kossack is also actively involved with The Actor's Workshop of Ithaca where he teaches acting and has directed several stage productions for the Workshop's theater company.

Adrienne Huffman (actor)



Huffman graduated from the two-year Meisner training program at the Actor's Workshop of Ithaca in Ithaca, NY. She has appeared on screen in a number of independent short films as well as on several Ithaca stages.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Star and DP as co-directors

The film was co-directed by Masa Gibson, who wrote and starred in it, and David Kossack, who was also the director of photography. Gibson knew that he would want an outside eye on scenes in which he was acting, and he trusted Kossack, an accomplished director and actor himself, to fill that role. The pair had previously worked together on a number of projects, including on Gibson's short film directorial debut.

What language are the characters speaking?

All dialogue in the film is in a fictional Romance language called *Favlian* constructed by writer/director Masa Gibson, who has a Ph.D. in linguistics. Gibson wanted the film to possess a romantic European flair without being placed in any specified locale. The vocabulary of the language was largely influenced by that of Italian, Portuguese, French, and Spanish, but Gibson also borrowed aspects of Icelandic, Mandarin, Japanese, Russian, German, and Armenian in constructing the language. In weeks leading up to the production, co-star Adrienne Huffman was subjected to Favlian language "boot camp" sessions, in which the fundamentals of pronunciation and grammar were covered (her knowledge of French and Czech proved advantageous during this process). The two actors became fluent enough in the language that they could run the dialogue of the entire film as a single scene.

A drink for every occasion

For the Woman's kitchen B-roll shots, Kossack and Gibson came up with the idea of giving the Woman a different drink in every shot, and for the choice of the drink to be coordinated with or influenced by the ingredient she was adding to the soup in that shot. For example, when she is pouring the sickeningly bright orange Fanta into the pot, she is holding a very artificial-blue-colored tropical drink, and when she is dumping "escape tunnel" into the pot from her boot (apparently having just escaped from prison), she sips celebratory champagne. Very astute viewers will notice that, when she is holding a daikon to a grater, the glass on the counter contains white wine, but when the daikon changes into something a bit more unexpected (with some gruesome implications), the wine changes to red.

FULL CREDITS

Produced and Directed by

Masa Gibson
David Kossack

Written by

Masa Gibson

Cast

Masa Gibson (Man)
Adrienne Huffman (Woman)
Michael Donato (Janfleidu the Waiter)
Paige Anderson (Mother-in-Law)

Cinematography by

David Kossack

Edited by

Daniel V. Masciari

Costume Design by

Katie Spallone

Makeup by

Ariel Arbisser
Rebecca Hersey
Dorothea Hinman

Props by

Daniel A.P. Taylor

Sound Department

Bob Chambrone (boom operator / sound mixer)
Rachel Ferro (boom operator / sound mixer)
Norm Scott (sound editor)

Digital Effects by

Ben R. Johnson
Masa Gibson

Camera and Electrical Department

Bob Chambrone (grip)
Rachel Ferro (grip)
Jeff Hodges (assistant camera / B-cam operator)
Ben R. Johnson (assistant camera / grip)
David Kossack (gaffer / key grip)
Alec Simmons (grip)
Mark Whitmore (grip)
Domenick Zerilli (grip)

Music

“Skinwalker” and “Playful Little Demons”

Composed by Andreas Kapsalis

Performed by Andreas Kapsalis Trio

“Tango del Malo Chico”

(Hérisson / SACEM, Luxembourg-France)

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Warm-Up

Performed by Orquesta Eriço

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Language Consultants

Briana Bender Daniel V. Masciari

Mandy Esch Margrét Pálsdóttir

Amanda Hickey Peggy Renwick

Renata Hickey Mariam Sogorian

Thanks to

Paige Anderson

Peter Carroll

Fred Cederstrom

Michael Donato

Sue Hertz

Kate Klein

Mary Loehr

Saskya Van Nouhuys

Amina Omari

Deborah Simon

Abby J. Smith

Katie Spallone

Chris Teitelbaum

Eliza VanCort

Agava Restaurant

Avanti Boutique

Evolution 102

Johnson Museum of Art

Madeline’s Restaurant

Photosynthesis Productions