

Review #78 : *Le Gendarme de St Tropez* (1964)

Hilarious French Comedy mixing Slapstick and Wit

TRAILER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKc7mCUCDY4>

*Louis de Funès and
Geneviève Grad*



I saw this film when I was a teenager and never forgot how much it had made me laugh from the moment it began until it ended. I only recently had the opportunity to view it again and, again, it had the same effect on me. In similar **Peter Sellers** style, with added French flamboyance, **Louis de Funès** is a master at comedic expression ! This is one of the best in the series of *Gendarmes*, it's absolutely hilarious and the ideal choice for a splendid summer...

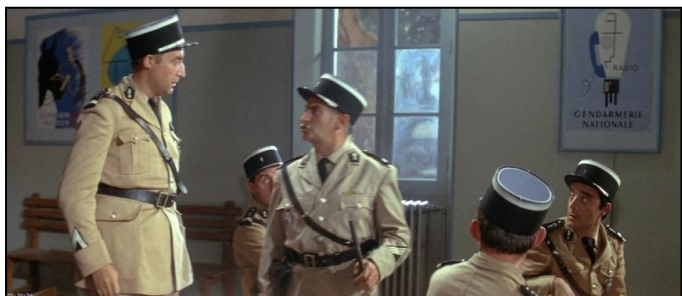


SYNOPSIS

Ludovic Cruchot (**Louis de Funès**), a gendarme in a small French village, has been re-assigned to the seaside commune of Saint-Tropez under the orders of Sergeant Major Gerber (**Michel Galabru**). Soon, the gendarmes find themselves confronted with a major problem : a group of persistent nudists. Cruchot manages to hatch a master plan and succeeds in getting the nude swimmers arrested. Later, Cruchot discovers that his daughter and her boyfriend have stolen and crashed an expensive **Mustang** sports car into a ditch. Unbeknownst to any of them, the car belongs to a gang of robbers who have stolen a **Rembrandt** painting, which is still in the trunk...

REVIEW

This is the movie that made of De Funès an international star and is considered the first of his great hits : it's **cheerful, lively, vivid and energetic**. It makes you smile and laugh sincerely. Louis de Funès is at his best again, acting perfectly as the conservative, strict and over-protective yet good-natured policeman face to his witty and mischievous but sweet daughter (**Genevieve Grad**), a typical representative of the young generation. Cruchot isn't quiet, nor **elegant, nor womanizing, nor polite** – as most *clichés* present French men : he walks around with his uniform even at home ; he is loud, rude, slaps and hits and beats his inferiors, but does not come in flirting contact with any other women. He uses politeness and respect strictly to get to his purpose.



Louis De Funès, as usual, steals the show with his (somewhat overacted and excessive) **grimaces and mimic gesticulation**. Genevieve Grad is wonderful as his festive daughter, and I particularly like her **dresses and hairstyles**. So French 60s !



Almost everything that made De Funès great in his later movies is present in this one. His typical 'brown-nosing the boss and small tyrant to his inferiors' character, his relationship with a daughter (or a son as in *Les Grandes Vacances*), the easy going French mentality of others around him that makes for most of the jokes, and the *feel good* sense of his movies. Add to all this the 60s scenery of **St Tropez** and you have an **unbeatable combination**. Along with good old **Disco songs**, the place is a fundamental piece here with its luminous blue sky, beautiful beaches, hot sand, millionaires' boats, summer mood and pleasant lifestyle, open-minded and relaxed youth, attractive girls. But of course, the central piece is De Funès himself and his comic genius ! +++



An absolute must to anyone who appreciates French humour and wants to taste the – in my opinion – **greatest funny man ever** ! He plays with talent on **gimmicks and funny situations**, which most of our comedies today lack *completely* – for the record, I'm not a great fan of Jim Carrey !