

James Ivory (1928-)

By Lee Juillerat

James Ivory, who received three Academy Award nominations for best director, grew up in Klamath Falls and graduated from the University of Oregon. He lives in New York but spends some of the summer months at the Lake of the Woods, about thirty miles northwest of Klamath Falls.

"It's a kind of reconnection with scenes and sounds and people I've known all my life that have helped to form and make me the person I am," Ivory said of pilgrimages to the rustic cabin his family bought in 1942.

Ivory was born on June 7, 1928, in Berkeley, California, the son of Edward Patrick Ivory, a sawmill operator, and Hallie Millicent DeLoney. His family moved to Klamath Falls in the 1930s, and he graduated from Klamath Union High in June 1946. Ivory earned a degree in architecture and fine arts from the University of Oregon in 1951 and an advanced degree from the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television in 1957. An extensive collection of his papers is in the archives at the University of Oregon.

Ivory's first film was *Venice: Theme and Variations*, a documentary that the *New York Times* named as one of the best nontheatrical films of 1957. He founded Merchant Ivory Productions with producer Ismail Merchant and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, the screenwriter for many of their productions. Their first theatrical release was *The Householder*, based on a novel by Jhabvala.

Among Ivory's best known films are *The Europeans*, *The Bostonians*, *Heat and Dust*, *Maurice*, *Shakespeare Wallah*, and three films that garnered Academy Award nominations, including a trio of best director nominations: *A Room with a View* (1985), *Howard's End* (1992), and *The Remains of the Day* (1993). His more recent films include *Jefferson in Paris* (1995), *Surviving Picasso* (1996), *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries* (1998), *The Golden Bowl* (2001), *Le Divorce* (2003), *The White Countess* (2005), and *The City of Your Final Destination* (2009).

In an interview with Robert Emmet Long, Ivory talked about the perils of growing up: "I was a good target for teenager terrorists: lanky and skinny, with a reputation for being a snob and know-it-all. After one bad episode my father put me in a gym program to build me up. To learn to run faster might have been more to the point."

While he has many favorite films, Ivory said that *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge*, with Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, is particularly cherished because aspects of the film remind him of his parents and growing up in Klamath Falls. "It's American small town life. That is my background. I may live in New York, but small town life, that's where I come from."

Sources

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