

# MASTERPIECE®



**\*\*EMBARGOED UNTIL 5:15PM ET ON MAY 21, 2025\*\***

## **MASTERPIECE on PBS Acquires Two Star-Studded Titles**

### **"The Great Escaper" and "The Count of Monte Cristo"**

#### **Coming in 2025 and 2026**

Atlanta, Georgia – May 21, 2025: MASTERPIECE Head of Scripted Content and Executive Producer Susanne Simpson announced at the PBS Annual Meeting today that the long-running British drama series has acquired two stellar programs for the 2025 and 2026 seasons.

"The Great Escaper" featuring Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson in their final acting roles will premiere this fall in its U.S. television debut and "The Count of Monte Cristo" starring Sam Claflin and Jeremy Irons will premiere in 2026.

Simpson notes, "I couldn't be happier to be bringing these special programs to our audience. British acting royalty and an adaptation of a classic piece of literature – "The Great Escaper" and "The Count of Monte Cristo" are both perfect MASTERPIECE fare." MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by GBH Boston.

"The Great Escaper" tells the true story of Bernard Jordan (Michael Caine) who made global headlines in the summer of 2014. He had staged a "great escape" from his care home to join fellow war veterans on a beach in Normandy, commemorating their fallen comrades at the D-Day Landings 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It was a story that captured the imagination of the world as Bernie embodied the defiant, "can-do" spirit of a generation that was fast disappearing. But of course, it wasn't the whole story. It was an inspirational but sanitized retelling of one man's need to come to terms with the lasting trauma of war.

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Bernie's adventure, spanning a mere 48 hours, also marked the culmination of his 60-year marriage to Rene (Glenda Jackson) – "The Great Escaper:" celebrates their enduring love but always with an eye to the lessons we might learn from the Greatest Generation.

Pathé and BBC Films present "The Great Escaper", an Ecosse Film production made in co-production with Film I Väst and Filmgate Films.

"The Count of Monte Cristo" is a lushly lensed adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' iconic masterpiece. In the epic series directed by two-time Palme d'Or and Oscar®-winner Bille August, Sam Claflin ("Daisy Jones and the Six") stars as Edmond Dantes, a nineteen-year-old sailor who was falsely accused of treason and is imprisoned without trial in the Château d'If, a grim island fortress off Marseille, France. After many years of captivity he finally escapes and discovers treasure, making him one of the richest men in the world. Under the identity of the Count of Monte Cristo, he plans to take revenge on those who wrongly accused him. Ana Girardot ("The Returned") and Jeremy Irons ("The Borgias") also star. "The Count of Monte Cristo" is produced by Palomar and DEMD Productions, two Mediawan companies, and distributed worldwide by MediawanRights in cooperation with CAA (for North America) and with the participation of Entourage Ventures.

## Press Contacts

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## About MASTERPIECE

Winner of 83 Primetime Emmys® and 20 Peabody Awards, MASTERPIECE has been essential Sunday night viewing for millions of fans for over 50 years. Susanne Simpson is the Executive Producer. Series funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking Cruises, Raymond James, The MASTERPIECE Trust, and public television viewers. Produced for PBS by GBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for hits such as *All Creatures Great and Small*, *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Wolf Hall*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*. For more information, please visit [pbs.org/masterpiece](https://pbs.org/masterpiece) and follow us on social media @masterpiecepbs.