

Interview with dune director: Denis Villeneuve

words by Nate Jones

Denis Villeneuve Is Looking Forward to Working With Sandworms Again in the Future

Denis Villeneuve has been dreaming of Dune since he was a child. Growing up in Quebec, Villeneuve was obsessed with Frank Herbert's landmark sci-fi novel, and as the filmmaker has grown into one of Hollywood's giants of epic cinema, bringing the world of Dune to the screen became something of a dream project.

Never mind the fact that Dune had become a graveyard for cinematic ambition: Alejandro Jodorowsky's version never made it past preproduction, while David Lynch's was an infamous critical and commercial flop. (Though it has its defenders.) For a time, it seemed like Villeneuve's Dune might be equally cursed. Originally scheduled for the fall of 2020, the film was delayed multiple times because of, well, you know. But now his Dune is finally able to be seen, both in theaters and, to Villeneuve's slight chagrin, HBO Max. It's only the first half of the story, and if you want to see the second half some day, he encourages you to see it on the largest screen possible (so long as you feel safe, of course). *"It's a movie that has been designed to be as immersive as a cinematic experience as possible,"* he says. *"It has been made from the beginning as a love letter for the big screen."*

Before the film's release, Vulture spoke to the very patient director about knowing when the film was done, his hopes for **Dune: Part Two**, and whether "Duncan Idaho" is a cool name.

(Spoiler warning: This post discusses broad elements from future Dune novels.)

My first question is a tough one: What is your favorite spice?

Definitely coffee. Because without coffee, I don't speak English. First thing is the coffee in the morning to wake me up. It's probably my favorite moment of the day when I switch on the coffee machine. I love anything dark and strong.

You've said that this Dune is your attempt to bring to life the images in your head from when you first read the book as a kid. Which images from the movie made their way from your youthful imagination intact?

I would say the stillsuit, everything involving the Fremen culture. And the Bene Gesserit. I would try to channel the image I had in my mind when I imagined them: the Reverend Mother, the Gom Jabbar scene.

Including Charlotte Rampling's iconic veil?

It's something that creates a religious feeling, a distance. A veil creates a beautiful mystery. And I love the way we have glimpses into Charlotte Rampling's eyes. It makes her character even more powerful and frightening. Very Bene Gesserit-like.