

Closed Cannes

 By [Jarred Cinman](#)

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A week of sojourning in the French summer has drawn to a close. Cannes 2018 was different for everyone, that much is clear...

“ If you won (anything) you feel invincible. If you won Gold you feel omnipotent. If you won Grand Prix you feel nothing because you're still wasted and possibly in hospital. ”

Beyond the winning and the losing, though, is the inspirational nature of the work. I get very jaded by the barrage of mediocre advertising and other marketing messages that permeate our world. Driving to work is an object lesson in how not to make billboards, how not to communicate on the radio, how not to effectively use podcasts, and so on.

So to come to a place where everything you encounter is crafted to perfection, clever, funny, touching and purposeful is to reaffirm that this industry actually is capable of greatness when the right people get together. Every one of us has reasons why we couldn't do it... Budgets (not enough). Clients (not brave). Brands (too boring). Categories (too restrictive). Time (too short). And there is some merit in every excuse just as there is a truckload of meritlessness.

“ The winners have one thing in common: They never gave into the excuses for why they couldn't do what they did. ”

And what did they do? Got a country to stamp people's passports with an environmental pledge. Lobbied for the 'plastic continent' in the Atlantic to be considered as its own country. Helped ALS sufferers get their own voices back. Struck hammer blows for gender equality, racial equality and sexual equality. And about a thousand other things.

Someone said **“make an act, not an ad”** and that summed up the week. A lot of this stuff is beyond anything we or the generations before us would have imagined as advertising.

“ The most amazing work manages to change the world for the better, but still go about its business of promoting a product or service. ”

The talks were hit and miss I found, culminating in a particularly bizarre and confrontational one by Martin Sorrell and Ken Auletta. I'm not really sure what Sorrell said that was new, but he said it in a way that seemed threatening.

The parties. Oh the parties. The yachts. The beaches. The champagne. The oysters. Yes, all true. But somehow less fun than it sounds even now as I set it to paper. People look good so it's an aesthetic feast. But bouncing around to thumping dance music while slowly becoming inebriated just isn't everyone's cup of expensive rosé. And speaking of expensive, a friend and I paid over €100 for two whiskies at some stage of the week – if that's not a hilarious punchline I'm not sure what is.



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The South Africa party presided over by DJ Marc Algranti (as always) was slick and fancy with some surprise live performances. Like all events at Cannes, it managed to be overcrowded and almost impossible to get into at the same time. But there are many reasons to be proud of our little country, which has a larger than life presence here, in part because of the many ex-South Africans that hold high positions in agencies around the world.

There isn't one neat takeaway from this week. It's messy. For anyone doing advertising or paying for advertising or even consuming advertising, it's worth spending some real time with the work that was entered and, in particular, won this year. While you can't come up with a formula for it, you can start to understand where greatness lies and develop a palette for it.

This experience definitely exceeded my expectations and I feel lucky to have had it. Merci!

ABOUT JARRED CINMAN

As the Joint CEO of VMLY&R South Africa, Jarred leads both the Johannesburg and Cape Town offices. He oversees the inner workings of the agency, managing all departments from a business, HR and operational point of view. Jarred is also the executive in charge of HR and IT. Before VMLY&R was established in 2018, Jarred served as co-chief operating officer of Y&R Africa Group, overseeing operations at Y&R South Africa and NATIVE VML.

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