

The Trip

reviewed by [Steve A. Vineberg](#) in the [August 23, 2011](#) issue

In *The Trip*, culled from a British TV miniseries, comedian Steve Coogan, ostensibly playing himself, is sent by a newspaper to tour England's finest restaurants, accompanied by his friend and fellow comic Rob Brydon. The two stars improvise inventively over one meal after another; the high point is their competition to produce the most accurate impersonation of actor Michael Caine. The movie is both highly enjoyable and very sweet.

It's also, surprisingly, quite touching. Steve and his girlfriend Mischa (Margo Stilley) are taking a break; she's in America, and their cellphone exchanges are awkward and unsatisfying, as is his conversation with his teenage son, who's careful not to show his feelings. Rob has a wife and a baby he can't wait to return to; Steve still thinks of himself as a free spirit but is aware that he's getting too old for the part. His loneliness is palpable, especially when the director, Michael Winterbottom, frames him against the vast English countryside. The film is alternately uproarious and melancholy.