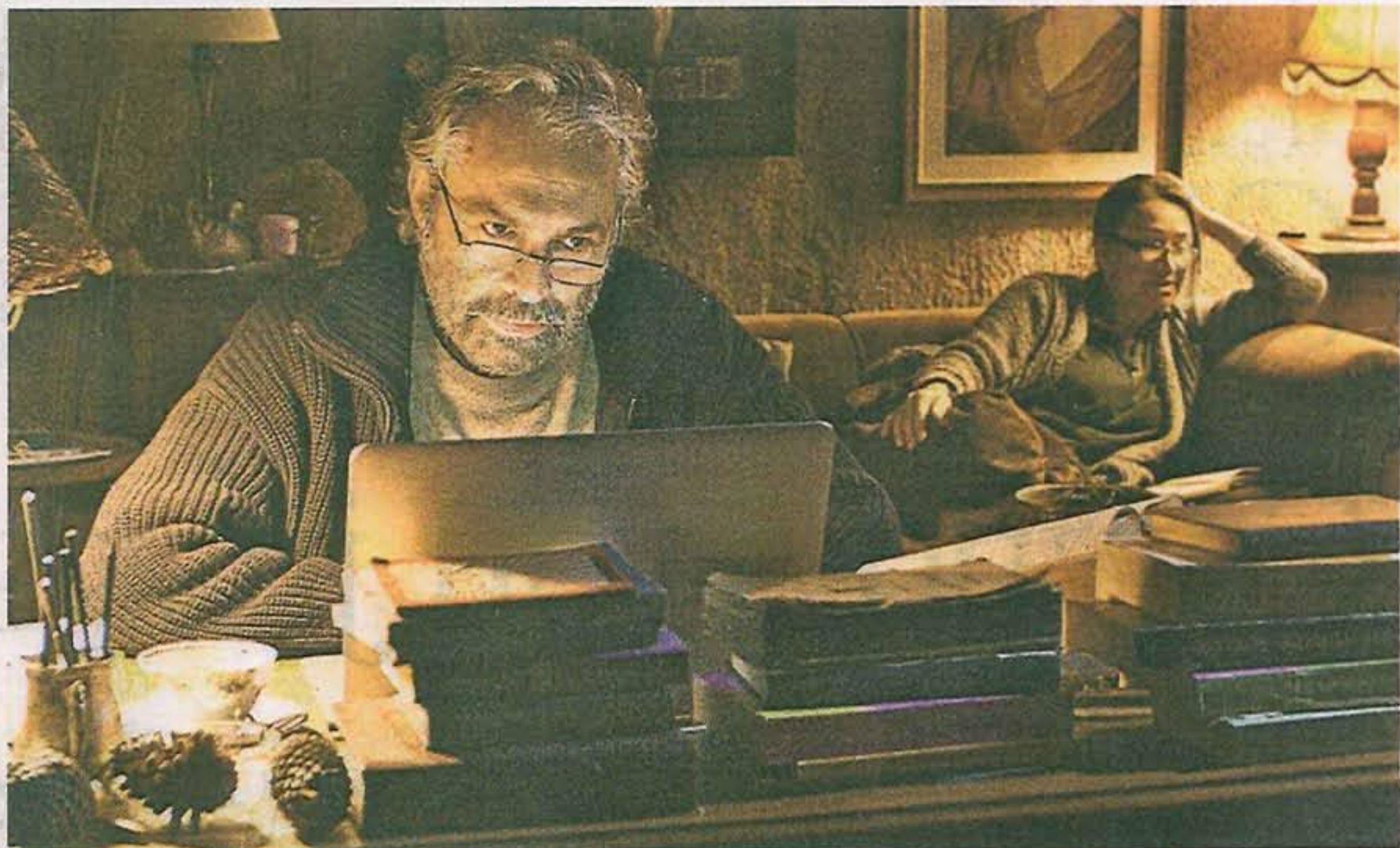


## film



Aydin (Haluk Bilginer) runs a hotel in the caves of Cappadocia with his sister Necla (Demet Akbag)

# It's a winter of deep content for film lovers

This tale of bitter divisions in a rural hotel is gripping but its barren setting is the real star, says **Kate Muir**

## Winter Sleep

15, 196min

★★★★★

**I**f you only have three olives you can place them on a plate or gobble them out of a plastic bag," lectures the protagonist of *Winter Sleep*, a landlord disgusted by the peasant life beneath him.

Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan won the Palme d'Or at Cannes for this exquisitely photographed work of real philosophical heft that tackles the divide between classes, men and women, believers and non-believers.

The setting is breathtaking, deep in Cappadocia on the Anatolian steppe, a strange moonscape of rock formations like giant stalagmites, riddled with caves. In a remote village, the intolerant, self-obsessed landlord and former actor Aydin (Haluk Bilginer) runs a hotel with cathedral ceilings hewn from the caves. On a trip, Aydin's car is hit by a rock thrown by a small boy. The boy's family are behind in their rent and the bailiffs have taken away their fridge and television. Aydin is surprised by their resentment and the local imam (Serhat Mustafa Kiliç) comes in to calm things, reeking of insincerity.

The scene is set for conflicts between the bearded, sixtyish Aydin and all those around him. He lives with his stropy sister (Demet Akbag) and his beautiful wife (Melisa Sözen), who is young enough to be his daughter. As winter grips, the cave dwellers in the hotel turn in on themselves with an intensity that opens up wounds and Chekhovian conversational battles. At more than three hours, longer than Ceylan's *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, *Winter Sleep* requires commitment, but rewards with deep satisfaction.