



PHOTOS BY: ROSS EMERY, ASC

Close
collaboration
on

The Cave

Above left: Ross Emery, ACS, light reading with actor Marcel Iures.

Above right: Grip work in methane cave.

Main picture: Col Hauser doing stunt in methane cave.

"Shooting **The Cave** in Romania was like walking a tightrope between seeing enough and going too dark. When light had little justification, we had a saying that it would be lit by the audience's imagination," recalls Australian Director of Photography Ross Emery, ACS, selected by Bruce Hunt for his directorial debut after their successful collaboration on **The Matrix**, **The Matrix Revolutions** and **Dark City**.

"90% of the film is set in underground caves, thus opportunities for justifiable light sources were limited and the cast had to co-operate by using prop torches and lanterns to reveal the environment to the viewers. It was exciting doing something that was so free; starting with total darkness let me shape shots and sets and use light as a character in the film," says Emery.

After testing several stocks, he decided on Kodak Vision 500T 5279, which he pushed one stop to increase the grain on the prologue sequence, and Kodak VISION2 500T 5218 to give some

desaturation to the main part of the film. "I was very impressed with 5218's grain structure, which I rated at 400ASA. It gave me the assurance that there was always a bit more when I needed it and I printed in the low forties, which was perfect."


With the need to shoot handheld and place cameras in inaccessible places, Emery opted for interchangeable ARRI LTs, Zeiss Ultra Primes and ARRI's Lens Data System, "a huge asset in the dark, as I was able to see camera settings on the video assist." He bounced Kino Flos and flashlights onto card on smaller sets and Aurasofts and Fresnels through grid cloth on larger sets and hung a 6kW Skypan from the rafters of the huge 280 foot by 100 foot set for base level illumination, shaping with Maxi Brutes and Jumbo Sixes.

"When a team of explorers became trapped in the caves, I loosened my camera style, introduced plenty of handheld shots to heighten the fear factor and switched to longer lenses to amplify the frenetic feel in the framing. As they moved through the caves, I reduced light sources and switched

to flares and fires," explains Emery. Employing speed and shutter ramping in addition to a timing shift box when a parasite changes an explorer's physiology, he shot with swing shift lenses to communicate the character's discomfort. "Creating the effect in camera was a lot more organic and fused to the actor's performance than doing a post effect," he states.

Kodak Cinelabs Romania supplied stock and provided negative processing, telecine services and a dedicated Colourist, Alex Ciocan. Kodak's support of **The Cave** extended to the acquisition of a High Definition capability for Kodak Cinelabs Romania, expanding the company's capabilities and ability to support similar sophisticated productions in the future. With on-site support from LaserPacific, executives at Lakeshore Entertainment were able to view dailies via the internet within hours of completion of each day's shoot.

"Kodak's recent acquisition of LaserPacific in Hollywood proved a major factor in helping create a state-of-the-art Hollywood-style dailies operation



at Kodak Cinelabs Romania," remarks Leon Silverman, LaserPacific Executive Vice-President. "We are excited about our ability to offer an all Kodak solution to help our Hollywood-based customers in Romania – they can rely on us from the first images to previews and digital intermediate."

James McQuaide, Visual Effects Supervisor and Co-Producer of **The Cave** commented. "Kodak Cinelabs Romania was an absolute godsend for us. We had a very specific manner in which we wanted to work and, with the help of LaserPacific, Cornelia Popa, Manager Kodak Cinelabs Romania, and her staff were able to adopt and implement this pipeline almost overnight and then run it with remarkable dedication and efficiency during the course of a gruelling six-day/week shooting schedule. It got to the point where the film we were shooting on Monday was being processed, telecined to HD, synched, down-converted, encoded, posted to an FTP site, downloaded by my coordinator in Los Angeles who would, in turn, burn a half dozen DVDs and arrange for their delivery to executives, all of which would be completed on the very same Monday. Even though we were obviously being greatly aided by the time difference, I cannot imagine another facility anywhere in the world who could accomplish this day-in-and day-out. The shooting of **The Cave** was so successful that we are presently preparing to shoot another picture in Romania. There is no underestimating the part Kodak has played in this decision."

Manager Cornelia Popa and her team at Kodak Cinelabs Romania welcomed the innovative HD implementation. "It was satisfying to have been involved from the original concept to the acquisition of a telecine infrastructure that is totally new in Europe," she says. "We celebrated the amazing link between two continents and reflected on the high quality results." Emery enthuses "I would like to take Kodak Cinelabs Romania with me wherever I shoot; their dedication and desire to keep us happy was amazing."

"We now have one of the most complete facilities in Europe for film to HD transfer at Kodak Cinelabs Romania and we believe it will be welcomed by the growing number of productions preferring to take the route of High Definition dailies," states Peter Boyce, Kodak General Manager for Emerging Markets. ■