

Kevin Lombard fashions

Chico's campaign

Elegant visuals that accurately represent their clothing

Kevin Lombard has made a career out of shooting documentaries, including **Reinventing Yourself** and **The Listening Chair**. He is also an Emmy®-award winner for his work on the acclaimed children's program **Reading Rainbow**.

The New York-based cinematographer recently applied that pared-down shooting style and natural lighting more typically found in non-fiction films to the creation of a commercial campaign for Chico's, a national chain of women's clothing stores.

"Chico's wanted to bring the catalogue to life," Lombard explains. "They wanted a very simple, elegant commercial. The main goal was to generate requests for the catalogues and boost Internet sales. So far, the commercials have been very successful."

Chico's previously produced their spots in a digital video format. The Super 16mm film commercials created by Lombard have paid immediate dividends.

"Originally they were concerned about how expensive it would be and what a slow process it was," he says. "I think they were amazed at how quickly I could work with film. I could shoot more and give them more choices during editing. Their new commercials on films stand out now. They are very luxurious-looking and stylish."

There has also been an impressive rise in sales.

Early on, Chico's commercial production took place during still photography product shots for the catalogue. "The still photography unit would finish with their set-up and then the shoot would be turned over to me. I would re-light and work as quickly as possible," Lombard explains. "We travel very light and have a small crew. We don't have the luxury of a lot of time and we're

also shooting in very remote locations. Because of my background shooting documentaries, I've learned to come up with solutions very quickly. You develop survival skills that get you through each job."

Lombard selected Kodak VISION2 100T 7212 film and Kodak VISION2 Expression 500T 7229 film to make sure his footage was properly rendered. "I trust the film to get what we need to get. I know if it looks good to my eye, then I know when I get into telecine with John Dowdell at Technicolor (New York) that everything's going to be there. I am totally blown away by the VISION2 films. The images look richer and the films see much more. Being in a lot of bright exteriors and not having a lot of equipment to combat that, the film really works for me," he says.

Lombard notes that Chico's wants elegant visuals that accurately represent their clothing.

"Their clothes have to look great, and the images must be true to what the clothes really are since that is what they are selling," he says. "At telecine, we have the actual clothes there to match the colors. With these films I know that I can be true to the clothes."

To enhance the refined style of the ads, almost every shot is captured at 75fps. "A lot of the footage is handheld, so the slower frame rate smoothes out those shots. When the model moves, it gives a magical quality to the images that can make a blink or smile much more dramatic. Shooting at 75fps gives the image a crisper look because each exposure is sharper."

With over 20 Chico's spots under his belt, the cinematographer is still eager to make every experience behind the camera fresh. "If I can learn something new on each job then I feel something good has happened that day," he says. ■



Above: Crew and cast on location preparing for a scene for a Chico's spot, shot by DP Kevin Lombard.

Top: Model Victoria Prouty in Chico's spot, shot by DP Kevin Lombard.

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