



# The Dukes

music for  
your eyes

#### Film stocks

KODAK VISION2 500T 7218 and 250D 7205

#### Cameras

Panavision Elaine and ARRI SR 2 (for occasional slow-motion and high-speed shots)

Sometimes dreams come true if you believe hard enough. That is a fair description of *The Dukes*. The independent feature film is part comedy and drama. It was produced and directed by veteran actor Robert Davi, who also co-authored the script with James Andronica. Davi, who has performed in more than 60 pictures, also stars in the film.

The story is about Danny and George, who were on top of the world during the late 1960s when they were part of a popular doo-wop group called The Dukes.

Fast forward nearly 40 years: The other members of the group have fallen on hard times, and Lou, their loyal manager, is struggling to find Danny and George gigs. Danny and George go to work in their aunt Vee's restaurant to make ends meet. They want to hire a popular cook to attract bigger crowds but can't afford to pay him.

When George makes an emergency visit to the dentist, he discovers a pile of gold used for filling teeth in a safe. Danny and George decide to steal the gold to get the money to hire the chef and fix up the restaurant.

Davi was determined to produce the film in order to maintain creative control. He wanted to shoot it in Los Angeles because the locations were right, and it also made it affordable to have a fairly large and talented cast. This is where Michael Goi, ASC entered the scene.

## Latitude

Goi had just finished shooting *Cloud 9*. Al Ruddy, the producer, recommended him to Davi. In their first discussions, Davi told Goi that there was a modest \$600,000 budget and an ambitious script.

Davi and Goi considered producing *The Dukes* in digital HD format but decided that would compromise the organic look they were determined to create.

"I had recently shot the TV film *Red Water* in Super 16 format with the (KODAK) VISION2 stocks," Goi says. "I knew they would give us the latitude needed to shoot in virtually any light without compromising the production values we envisioned."

Goi had also just seen a demonstration of the new inDI system developed by LaserPacific. He felt that the system would provide an affordable way to gain the flexibility of putting finishing touches on the look in a DI environment, and the timed DI file could be recorded directly onto 35mm internegative film.

They scouted locations ranging from a private home to street scenes in the San Fernando Valley and a tunnel on a road in Malibu Canyon. Goi assured the director that he could cover the action with a couple of Panavision Elaine cameras that were available for free as part of the company's first-time filmmaker program, since Davi was making his directing debut.

## Aesthetics

Goi also carried an ARRI SR 2 camera, which he used for occasional slow-motion and high-speed shots. He chose KODAK VISION2 500T 7218 and 250D 7205 films for the flexibility they gave him, and to take advantage of available light without compromising aesthetics.

"I knew that I could tell the DI colorist to tone down the sky in an exterior shot filmed on a sunny day to match footage that was filmed under cloud cover," he says.

LaserPacific scanned the exposed negative with a Spirit DataCine, and converted it to an uncompressed RGB 4:4:4 HD digital file.

Goi says that DI timing with colorist Tim Vincent took five days. They did the initial timing and color correction while viewing images on a HD monitor. The final trim pass was done in half a day in a cinema environment with images projected on a 33ft wide screen.

"We isolated and toned down the harsher daylight elements of a few shots, and smoothed out some skin tones," he says. "But it is important to say that DI isn't a substitute for good cinematography. You can't compromise while you are shooting. There is no substitute for a well-exposed, detailed negative."

The timed DI was recorded out to 35mm film for premieres at the Newport Beach Film Festival and the Palm Beach International Film Festival.