

The sweetness of **Acid Factory**

Sanjay Gupta, the well-known Indian director/producer of *Kaante*, *Zinda* and other Bollywood hits, was so impressed with Sahil Kapoor's photographic technique on two of his music videos that he recommended the cinematographer to director Suparn Varma. Kapoor's delight turned to joy when Varma asked him to be director of photography on *Acid Factory*, a dark, high-octane thriller for Gupta's White Feather Films.

Kapoor's debut feature was shot near Capetown in a huge isolated factory bordered by hundreds of square miles of mountains and yellow grass. An interior set, replicating the factory's green painted hues, was constructed by Nitish Roy at Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad. "After tests on various 35mm and 16mm stocks, KODAK VISION3 500T 7219 provided the answer to the look of *Acid Factory*," says Kapoor. "I was amazed how this small high-speed negative captured shadow detail with hardly any visible grain. I pushed the lighting contrast to 4:1 on night interiors and my highlights looked good - even at four+ stops." During the shoot, three ARRIFLEX SR3 HS cameras exposed 223 cans of 7219, as well as KODAK VISION2 50D 7201 and KODAK VISION2 250D 7205.

Kapoor recalls the difficulties in the days before Kodak Cinelabs and the KODAK IMAGECARE Program arrived in Mumbai. "When our processed negatives reached us with scratches and pinholes, the labs blamed the camera rental houses for lack of maintenance and vice versa. Yet my first 16mm negative processed by Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai in 2006 looked so good. The ongoing technical advice and

support I've received from general manager Solomon Silveira and his team gave me the confidence to shoot this big action thriller on 16mm. They helped me even before the start of production, and during the shoot Mr Silveira personally called me to run a camera check whenever they noticed pressure marks or a scratch on the negative. I was given feedback after each batch of film was processed, which helped smooth the flow of production. In fact, the lab became more a source of support than something to worry about, leaving me free to concentrate on the more creative aspects of cinematography."

"They run a very clean lab, from the processing to the mixing areas. I had to leave my shoes outside, walk across a sticky mat and pass through the air shower before I could enter the processing room. Diligent staff members look into each minute detail in the processing, from the start-up and shut-down processes, to can labelling and the use of gloves during the handling of the film in the clean room."

"For most cinematographers in Mumbai, Kodak's lab report has become the benchmark of a good camera and lens set-up," notes

Kapoor. "Directors and producers here, as well as cinematographers, notice the difference that Kodak Cinelabs makes to photographic images. The evidence is that, despite the many reputable labs now established in Hyderabad, White Feather Films insisted on flying our exposed cans for processing each week to Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai - more than 460 miles away."

DI colourist Rajiv Sundararaju at Pixion Studios scanned the images on a Spirit 2K and colour corrected them on a Quantel Pablo 2K. "Rajiv showed the scanned images to other technicians at Pixion and everybody thought they were seeing 35mm!" declares Kapoor.

"At the film premiere, respected technicians from the industry congratulated me on the look of *Acid Factory*. They commented that '16mm looks as good as 35mm'. In turn, I encourage my directors and producers to shoot on Super 16mm. I proudly tell them that it looks as good as 35mm! I'd like to add that I owe my success with 16mm to Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai."

"Sahil has done outstanding work on the film," says Gautam Kohli, marketing head of White Feather Films."



1 Cast from L to R: Danny Denzongpa, Aftab Shivdasani, Fardeen Khan, Dia Mirza, Dino Morea. (photo Jitu Savlani)