

Jordan Klein Jr.

follows in his father's footsteps

shooting on water



Above: Scenes from a Sea-Doo boat spot, shot by cinematographer Jordan Klein Jr.

Jordan (Jordy) Klein Jr. is following in his father's footsteps – underwater. Like his father, two-time Academy Award winner Jordan Klein, Sr., he specializes in aquatic cinematography both on and under the water. Klein has also mastered the art of aerial camerawork from helicopters. Like his father, who designed and manufactured Mako underwater camera housings, Klein has also designed camera housings and mounts.

When Bombardier Recreational Products Inc.™ (BRP) hired Klein to shoot its entire line of Sea-Doo boats and personal watercraft, he approached the assignment with relish. For several shots, he mounted a custom lightweight ARRIflex II camera body and 200-foot magazine on a 10-foot long aluminum pole. The camera was made of magnesium.

Klein climbed aboard one of his boat's 12-foot wings, which is designed specifically for aquatic cinematography, so that he could shoot down at a Sea-Doo watercraft passing beneath him. For added drama, he shot with a newly-acquired 3mm Russian-made lens, which captures a 210-degree field of view.

"It's amazing. You can hold the camera in front of you, looking straight forward, and see your own knees," he says.

Klein doesn't settle for static shots from a tripod with the boat locked into position. Instead, he tracks moving boats in the water, shooting from a crane with the camera on a Mako head and either a 135mm Zeiss Superspeed or Canon 300mm lens. That set-up allows him to travel at cruising speed and shoot tracking shots, zooming in from a wide angle to record such details as close-ups of gauges and other features.

"We could lock everything down and light it to bring the contrast down, and ensure everything is perfectly still in the frame," Klein says, "but then it would look just like what everybody else in the world is shooting. How cool is it that we can shoot a watercraft moving at 30 mph, and zoom in to see the instrument panel? People will actually watch that and not get bored."

His preferred film for that type of shot is KODAK VISION 200T 5274 film. "It has a lot of contrast and sees into the shadows very well," Klein says. "I need a film that lets me shoot a white boat, and even whiter spray in bright sunlight, and still lets me dig into the shadows to shoot gauges through

the glare shield. I need about six stops of latitude, and the 5274 emulsion delivers."

He used the same stock while shooting from a helicopter with a Continental mount. He filmed people wakeboarding (think of extreme skateboarding) – doing flips, sliding on a rail in the water, and other tricks as he leaned out the copter's door.

Klein appreciates the range of film options available to him. To complement the beauty shots of watercraft at work, he also shot a family sitting around the campfire on a beach. It was a dark night, with Sea-Doo watercrafts in the background. The setting was a small island, so it was all but impossible for him to get lighting and generators on-site. He shot

the entire scene with just the campfire light, using Kodak VISION2 500T 5218 film.

"I could never have shot that scene before the new films," he says. "We probably wouldn't have tried, but the new stock gives us the ability to shoot with almost no light."

Klein notes that in addition to the extraordinary latitude that today's emulsion technology offers, film cameras are much more mobile and durable.

"There is no way you can put a 35-pound HD camera on the end of a pole and expose it to salt in the water and air without frying it."

Klein generally has his film processed and color corrected at either CineWorks or Continental Labs in Florida. BRP's ad agency, Cramer-Krasselt, uses the images he captures for multiple purposes, including commercials, DVDs used at boat shows and by dealers, and as b-roll for dealers to produce local commercials.

"I shoot on film because my reputation means everything to me," he says. "My goal is to always be the guy who pushes the envelope. That's what people expect when they hire me. I always want to be the guy who's doing what no one else can match." ■