



Cider Rigs Rule

Part of the mega euro-company Scottish & Newcastle, Hartwall is a major beverage-maker in Finland, and filming two commercials in three days for their ciders became a rigging nightmare

The agency pitch was girls flying through the trees picking the apples – the drink is called UpCider... Get it? Great idea people – so just choose the right studio where you can fly the actors in a totally controllable environment. Not, however, if you are award-winning Finnish cinematographer Jarkko T. Laine, FSC and his director Markus Virpiö. Where do Hartwall's cider apples come from? South Africa. "OK," they said, "let's do it there!"

"Early on, we decided to do it all on location, even the pack shots, and all the wire riggings," says Laine. "These decisions caused some challenges of course. We simply needed perfect weather all the time," he adds with some understatement.

The location was in Oak Valley near Cape Town and it was mid-January when the average daily sun clocks up 11 hours. "Against all expectations it began to get really cloudy on day two," recalls Laine. "So we flew in a bunch of 18Ks, and obviously the sun came back as soon as the package was up and running!"

The whole question of the quality of light worried Laine before he arrived on location. "I'd never shot with African light before, and I expected it to be harsh. But the pleasant surprise was that since it came from so high up, I had an enormous amount of ground effect," he explains. "The light filled itself very nicely by bouncing back from the light brown gravel." As the original concept was to shoot with as much natural light as possible Laine based his whole lighting plan on just two large reflectors.

One of the DP's biggest challenges was the flying apple-pickers. Apart from too little time for rehearsals on set, the action was filmed with the wire rigs suspended between two cranes above the orchard. The camera then followed the action on a Supertechnocrane; "I couldn't fetch any fill light up there where they were flying, so I just relied on the latitude of my stocks," smiles Laine.

His stock of choice for this airborne challenge was KODAK VISION2 100T 5212. "I rated it normally, only using an LLD filter on the camera - I never need to compensate for the LLD." Laine goes on to explain that he selected the 100T because of its versatility; "We needed to shoot from harsh mid day light until the very last drop in the evening, and 100T could handle that very nicely with or without the LLD. Plus I wanted the least grainy stock, without going to the 500, which I don't like so much," he adds.

With budget restrictions the action had to be caught on a single camera and Laine chose the ARRI 435 with a set of Ultra Prime lenses. He and his director referenced *Days of Heaven* and *Cider House Rules*, in their use of light in the orchard locations. "There is also one shot in the early part of the UpCider Natural spot, where we strongly referred to the classic *Grapes of Wrath*," Laine recalls. More unexpectedly he used some moves from martial arts movies; "Slo-mo tracking shots, with both the Supertechnocrane camera and actors moving in opposite directions."

Jarkko Laine was very happy with his African flying adventure; "That light is one of the most beautiful I've ever experienced and compares with late summer nights up here in the far North." Not surprisingly his favourite beauty shot of the two commercials features the African sun. "The girls were flying over the orchards and the sun was just about to go down. We just managed to get it in the last possible second, with the sun disappearing while the camera was running."

1 Cinematographer Jarkko T. Laine, FSC in Africa shooting the commercial.