

"*The Wind in the Willows* is a rendition of the magical children's story; it evokes a fabulous journey through the countryside so the main goal was to render nature as lush as possible," explains David Franco, Director of Photography for the BBC's lavish new interpretation of Kenneth Grahame's classic tale, of the look he wanted to achieve when he took on the project.

Then, having decided on exactly how he wanted to emulate the riverside world of Badger (played by Bob Hoskins), Rat (Mark Gattis) Toad (Matt Lucas) and chums, it was simply a matter of choosing the right equipment for the job. Knowing that much of the shoot would take place outside, Franco needed a product that could tackle a variety of situations. "I decided to use the KODAK VISION2 5218 500T film stock which has good saturation and contrast," he says. "I love the way the 5218 reacts in the high light, so I had no problems in using it for day exterior as well as interiors, where it gives me a good rich black."

Recreating a riverside world

"The other decision was to stick with this one stock to keep things simple! As far as equipment goes, we used a Steadicam and crane because we wanted to be rich and lush with our camera movements as well."

The Wind in the Willows was shot using 35mm film, an unusual choice for a small screen television project, perhaps, but Co-producer Charlotte Ashby asserts that there was simply no

other choice. "We wanted the idyllic English countryside to look as beautiful, lush and redolent of bygone times as possible," she explains. Franco is in complete agreement with the decision. "I think in this case the 35mm helped to keep nature as attractive and amazing as possible, and the smaller depth of field helped romanticize that depiction," he elaborates. But the DP, a veteran of movies like *The Whole Nine Yards* and TV shows including *Desperate Housewives* does admit that using big screen techniques for a small screen project threw up its own challenges. "One thing you have to think about is the size of the screen that the project ends up on," he elaborates. "So big, wide sweeping shots are harder to read [on a TV screen]. As far as contrast and tone values go, you have to step back a bit as it could be harder for an average TV to read the darker area of the image."

Throughout the project, the production team took full advantage of the processing facilities available at Kodak Cinelabs Romania, which offers a huge range of services using the latest

Kodak chemical developments. "It is a modern, well-run lab with committed and professional staff who responded to all the demands of our production," confirms producer Ashby. "In our case, we had the negative developed and telecined to beta and DVD, then had the negative shipped back to the UK at the end of the production." Franco also shares his producer's high regard for the facility. "Kodak Cinelabs Romania did a great job on the processing," he says, before revealing that they will also be involved in the film's post-production to further ensure exactly the right look comes across on screen. "The final transfer will happen later and some enhancement will be done at that point; adding a bit of colour, for example." ■

Below: Actor Bob Hoskins plays Badger in this delightful drama

Inset: DP David Franco (centre with sunglasses on top of head) lining up a shot

PHOTO: COS AELENEI

