

Gulla captures paradise for Verizon campaign

An assignment in Tahiti might be many people's idea of a dream job, but cinematographer Peter Gulla says it's never easy to shoot in paradise. On a campaign for Verizon Wireless, Gulla had to tame such natural elements as wind, water and sand to capture the unique, rich colors that are characteristic of the island.

Temerlin McClain Advertising of Dallas created the three-spot campaign. The environment plays a major role. Gulla says he and director Michael Grasso of Omaha Pictures spent seven days scouting for the right location. One spot shows waves washing up on the beach, erasing the wireless carrier's former name and announcing it is now Verizon.

In a spot titled Business Man, a man is on the beach talking to his suppliers about a missing shipment. He is revealed to be a shaved ice vendor. In the background are a clear blue sky and an azure sea.

In Nail Salon, an opening shot of a hammock strung between palm



trees on the beach leads into the Paradise Nail Emporium, an open-air structure featuring women wearing bright colors on their fingers, a turquoise sea and clear sky.

To capture the vivid colors, Gulla eschewed the typical backlit scenario, which he says can get

back most of the time."

Gulla's main tools were a Panavision Millennium XL35 mm camera, a set of Primo primes and a Primo 24:275 zoom lens and five 4K PARs.

"If you just plop a hut like that on the beach, the lighting won't be very flattering to the actors," says Gulla. "We needed to get a lot of light inside the nail salon to hold the colors. Michael likes to use wide lenses, so we hid lights everywhere and had reflectors situated around the hut trying to edge people through windows."

Gulla said a Schneider polarizing filter was one of the key elements to capturing the splendor of the water and sky. "It removed the glare off the water so I could bite into the color," he explains.

In order to keep all the action in focus in the Nail Salon spot, the director wanted to shoot in the middle of the lens at a deeper stop. "He didn't want anything out of focus because it was all so beautiful," Gulla explains. "We tried to shoot deep stops at T-8. We needed a lot of fill in the hut because the shadows were so deep."

Gulla chose Kodak Vision 250D colour negative 5246 film to record the action. "You lose a little stop when you drop the polarizer in and start overcranking," he explains. "I knew the (Vision) 350 (D) could handle the light. The film captured the colors I saw with my eye."

The location is an important part of the message. "It was exciting to find just the right beach that was perfect for the angle of the sun we wanted to use," he says. "The palm trees added another element, and when combined with the water it was built-in production design outside the hut window. It lent itself wonderfully to everything we had in mind. Having all that come together truly made it paradise."

"We needed light on the things with colors-the ocean, the trees and the hut itself-and the sun was at our back most of the time."

monochromatic, "In that situation," he explains, "you may get a brilliant sky, but everything else goes silhouette. We wanted to make it more contemporary and focus on the colors tropical islands offer. We needed light on the things with colors-the ocean, the trees and the hut itself-and the sun was at our

