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"Hearst Castle: Building the Dream"

To increase a visitor's enjoyment to Hearst Castle - that fantastic monument to that fantastic egotist, William Randolph Hearst, a 420-seat giant screen theater was built. Once an hour it shows a 40-minute film on its 80ft x 60ft screen, providing a careful, thoughtful exposition of the history behind Hearst.

The film was produced by Destination Cinema (producers of Niagara Falls, Grand Canyon, etc.) and Vineyard Productions with Bruce Neibaur as Writer/Director, Matthew Williams as Director of Photography, and Scott Swofford and Richard James as Producers.

To quote Matthew: "We felt that the large format world is changing; that increasingly sophisticated audiences would prefer a hybrid - large format with a story line and real actors. All credit to Bruce for writing a story to make that possible.

We took risks and tried not to frame by keeping the center of interest in the bottom two-thirds of the frame way but to follow feature film techniques where the story dictates both composition and camera movement. You just have to know what you can get away with. But never forget that the screen is six stories high and the viewer's senses can't handle as much cutting and interplay as you'd use in a regular film."

The film was photographed with IWERKS 8 perf 65mm cameras (1.34:1 ratio) outfitted with Hasselblad lenses plus a Hot Head that was converted to handle the heavier camera. The film was entirely shot on Eastman EXR 500T film 5298. Matthew takes up the story again: "We started out carrying the new IWERKS lightweight body as back-up but it became our body of choice, being smaller, lighter and easier to use when framing and moving as though for a 35mm shoot. "I chose 5298 for very specific reasons. I knew we were going to be in radically and rapidly differing locations such as dark interiors of castles, and didn't know if I would have enough lighting equipment. Moreover, audiences viewing these films want to see something visually strong and dramatic - I had to be able to make images 'stand out'. Sometimes outdoors I would use four and five filters at one time to enhance the image. With 5298 I could do that without losing depth of field or stop."

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