

Panavision
in depth

PANAVISION TAKES THE BAIT IN 3D



First locally supplied 3D feature film in Australia

BAIT, a 3D action thriller currently in production on Australia's Gold Coast, has been described as "taking the killer shark movie to the next level." According to John Virtue, Head of Sourcing and Operations at the movie's equipment supplier and systems integrator Panavision, it's easy to see why. Virtue said, "Before the movie got anywhere near shooting we did an enormous amount of testing and research with Producers Todd Fellman and Chris Brown and their crew. As a result, the film's production values are very high indeed."

Fellman and Brown have a long relationship with Panavision, who also recently supplied equipment for the duo's 2009 production Daybreakers.

Todd Fellman said, "We approached Panavision to work with us on BAIT because we needed a company with the technical knowledge and practical experience of working with 3D. Panavision understood the importance of extensive research and testing of the camera systems for any 3D project. They were invaluable partners in helping us facilitate this process as well as establishing our technical workflows. Panavision also has a great infrastructure and have always provided us with exceptional back up support so we were confident they'd be the right technology partner on this very ambitious movie."

In the early stages of the project Virtue and his team took Element Technica Qasar and Neutron 3D rigs, various cameras and 3D monitors to Queensland to give the producers and crew full demonstrations and determine how to best meet the movie's technical requirements.

Panavision MD Martin Cayzer explained, "On a 3D production of this size and scope you can't leave anything to chance. So, we gave full demos of what shooting in 3D actually involves, what it's



Ross Emery (DOP)

continued





capable of and how to properly output pictures. We also worked with the crew to determine how having so much water around would affect the production.”

The initial demo and testing process was enlightening in many ways and according to Fellman, it led to more detailed testing of various cameras and rig configurations in the environments and lighting conditions specific to the film. He added, “It was an exciting process which highlighted how Panavision’s expertise, resources and technical support would be essential to making our 3D production a reality.

Brown added, “Shooting in 3D is a complex and challenging undertaking. It’s amazing how many people talk about being able to do it, but Panavision actually knows how to make it happen. Seeing the Panavision demo was a real turning point for us.”

The demos and testing were then taken to the next level with cameras including Genesis, SI2K, Red and Red MX all being used in different environments with different levels of support to determine which would be used on the movie.

Martin Cayzer added, “Part of our role was also to help the production team maximise their budget, so we used all of our experience to come up with the equipment configuration that would give the best value for money. We also worked closely with Simon Christides, the production’s underwater DOP, to design and test underwater housings for the cameras and 3D rigs.”

Panavision then set about making sure the chosen equipment worked perfectly in all the movie’s many environments. As a first for a full-length Australian feature the new Panavision bespoke Primo 19-90mm zoom lens was also supplied and aligned with all cameras.

John Virtue continued, “We also systemised and built all the equipment to work with the cameras in 3D. There is a popular misconception that all cameras work easily in 3D. This is most definitely not the case. Most cameras can work in 3D but it takes a great deal of calibration and experience to get them right. In the end we supplied Qasar and Neutron 3D rigs, Red MX cameras, SI2K cameras and the processing power to make all the kit work. It was quite a kit list.”



Bait 3D DOP Ross Emery also appreciated the time and effort Panavision put in to help the production be the best it could. Emery said, “Honestly, it would have been very difficult to make this movie without Panavision. Their investment and commitment to 3D technologies is a huge advantage to filmmakers. Without a company the size and stature of Panavision behind these projects they would be very difficult to achieve. The main thing you need with 3D is backup, it is an evolving technology and issues need to be addressed on an ongoing basis. To rent equipment and then stand aside is not the way Panavision does things and I really appreciate the role they played in making my experience on BAIT 3D a successful one. Aside from supplying the equipment they also solved lens control issues, specifically upgraded the Preston lens control system to the next generation and generally gave us the kind of backup that I have come to expect from the larger projects I have worked on. Working with Panavision gives you a sense of security that you don’t get from a lot of other rental companies. The crew loved the rigs and support we got from Panavision. We are all new to the 3D world and having Panavision along with us on this new phase of filmmaking is very comforting, knowing that we will have a reliable and collaborative company with us. All the training and testing really paid off and we are delighted with the results.”

With the movie about to wrap shooting Chris Brown reflected on the successful partnership Panavision has enjoyed with the crew on BAIT and how this bodes well for the future of 3D production in Australia. He concluded, “The technical success behind BAIT involved Panavision using all of their skills and resources to ensure our 3D camera systems integrated seamlessly into the 3D workflow and were fully supported throughout the shoot. They did an incredible job to meet the expectations of both producers and crew in what was a very tight timeframe with a limited budget. In essence BAIT is a great example of a collective partnership that involves a talented crew, director, DOP and producers and an experienced systems integrator. I honestly believe that having this kind of partnership is the only way a successful 3D production can be achieved.”

BAIT is scheduled for release in late 2011.

For more information on Bait 3D go to: www.imdb.com/title/tt1438173