



PICTURE 1: Shooting in the South China Sea
 PICTURE 2: Beauty shot
 PICTURE 3: Lighting around water
 MAIN PICTURE: Espresso shoot in Rome



• The accidental cinematographer

Described as 'one of the hottest new DPs in the industry,' Alessandra Scherillo admits that she got into cinematography more by accident than design.

"I come originally from a very small town in Italy," she says "and I was actually training to be a professional skier. But I always had a passion for cinema. We had an after-college club where films were screened and I used to attend almost every cinema screening. After school, I went to Venice to do a degree in languages. I studied English, Spanish and German. To help improve my English, I came to England.....and never went back."

"I signed up for a postgraduate course at Croydon College of Art. At this stage, I wanted to go into editing but my tutor said he didn't feel that editing was right for me and that I'd be much more suited to cinematography so that's really how I started."

"I began as a runner. One day on a Bananarama shoot, their loader was sick and the production said we need someone who can load so I stepped up and off I went. After this, I went into anthropological documentaries with the BBC, which was great. They were all on film and we got to travel the world. About this time, I started focus pulling and operating second camera on dramas and big feature films. After a few years, I applied to film school to become a Director of Photography. This was the National Film and Television School, from which I graduated in 2000, top of the class. With teachers such as Billy Williams and John Carpenter we were really put through our paces technically in terms of lighting, use of black-and-white and colour, inside, outside, night. It was great"

"I was already shooting commercials whilst I was at film school and our Stella Artois commercial won the Best Creative Team award at

the National Film School and was even shortlisted for an Oscar short. Commercials are my specialization. I love traveling and I love to be on a tight wire and I like the creative input you can have in commercials. I get to work with some fantastic and highly-skilled directors in what is a very competitive field."

"Where do I stand in the digital versus film debate? Each has to be used for the right reasons. I'm not in love with digital, no cinematographer who has used film really is, there's a romantic attachment to film but I think you can learn to use digital for the right reasons. Many people use it for cost reasons but quite a lot of the time, that's misinformed, especially on the post-production side."

"Film, to me, is my first love. You never forget it. Film has got a past, a present and a future whereas digital has just got now. It's not a matter of comparison because there is

no comparison. You can get feelings and memories onto film. But you must remember that my background is Visconti, Antonioni and all the Italian neo-realists as well as Pressburger. I much prefer film but I will use digital when the situation demands and feel very comfortable with it."

"Digital is an interesting creative challenge that as cinematographers we have to welcome. Curiosity and an open mind in our industry are essential requirements. We have to experiment and learn all the time."

Alessandra has just finished shooting a big-budget commercial for Lotus. This was a 35 day shoot using Kodak Vision 2 stocks 5212, 5217 and 5229 as well as lots of helicopters and gadgets. She is currently prepping her first film *No one wants to love us ordinary people* based on a letter by Chekov which will be shot in Beijing.