



*With the onward march of digital shooting options today, including 24P, many cinematographers are electing to expand their horizons – with celluloid. Super 16 mm in particular has become a favorite for DPs in television who want to realize creative and cost-saving benefits while delivering shows to specs such as HD.*

# SWEET (SUPER) 16



Mark Doering-Powell

Jamie Barber and Mark Doering-Powell are among those to have embraced Super 16 as a shooting medium for current television projects. Each has filmed multiple episodic programs using this format, and each currently relies on an ARRIFLEX 16 SR3 camera package provided by Keslow Camera in Los Angeles, California. Barber's work includes lensing the Southern California-set hit *THE OC* for FOX, while Doering-Powell has been busy shooting *HEAD TO TOE*, a children's program for Nickelodeon.

"I can let things overexpose with Super 16 and then bring them back down again in post, which I could never do digitally," Barber says. "Using power windows in post, I can bring in additional detail very easily that simply would not be captured in a digital frame. On *THE OC* we spend a lot of time shooting outdoors, on the beach overexposing. A digital format might work well on a project that's shot at night or on a stage, but the flexibility of Super 16 is much better for this show."

"I've done several 24P projects, both TV & features, but on my recent shows we've gone with Super 16," comments Doering-Powell. "Film has always created possibilities, more possibilities with range and accuracy of color, more possibilities for getting coverage, more possibilities with a more

versatile camera package and being able to embrace, say, bold lighting, or shoot day/exteriors with high contrast."

Especially when attention is given to the right camera setup, lighting configuration and post-production transfer, Super 16 offers significant advantages, not the least of which is the smaller size and lighter weight of 16 mm camera packages – and their versatility and cost efficiency. 16 mm cameras are great for hand-held operation and for using Steadicam with zooms – and the cameras are power-efficient as well.

"We ran all day on just a couple of batteries, whereas on some 24P series, we've required 30 on-board batteries for two cameras," Doering-Powell remarks. "The dimensions of the 24P cameras were such that it was difficult to Steadicam through doorways, and with a 21x zoom, HD-SDI back and on-board battery, the digital cameras were heavy rigs as well. An ARRIFLEX 16 SR3 is a little over half as long and lighter, too."

Barber also waxes nostalgic for the agility of the ARRIFLEX 16 SR: "As a camera operator on *ROBBERY HOMICIDE* for CBS, I remember shooting on the subway where the digital camera with battery pack and the control unit was so huge it could barely fit in the

train and stuck out in the aisle. A 16mm camera like the ARRIFLEX 16 SR3 let's you go into smaller spaces. And it's rugged – it can take both extreme heat and cold.”

Efficiency and lower film and camera costs are other 16mm draws. Doering-Powell, who generally goes out with two ARRIFLEX 16 SR3s, Canon 8-64s, an 11-138mm, a set of T1.3 superspeeds, and sometimes a longer zoom such as an Optimo or a T3.5 Angenieux 25-250mm, depending on the director, notes that a great Super 16 package can be had for almost half the cost of a thorough 24P package. It also allows him to work more quickly on a show like HEAD TO TOE where time is of the essence

stock. On HEAD TO TOE he is using 7245 and 7218.

“This stock was a major factor in achieving the look we wanted on the first season of the show,” he says. “We had many sets to light – far more than the pilot that had provided the budget template for the series and our post facility was not set up to provide noise reduction in the final tape-to-tape color-correction. I was concerned with how this might add noise to the image had I used a 500 ISO stock, but when we tested the 7218, the results looked great.”

Both shows place heavy emphasis on the telecine process. Barber's material is trans-

thing has remained the same: I've been lucky to have the support of Keslow Camera. I consider them integral to my work. Not unlike the dailies and final colorists, they are unsung heroes to the look of a show and to providing the DP and director with what they need.”

Barber, Doering-Powell and many other DPs working in television, have discovered that Super 16 fits their needs like a glove. The digital-trained generation, who has never used this format, may need some convincing.: “Young filmmakers or students sometimes ask why we're on Super 16, if it's not grainy and difficult to shoot and light,” says Doering-Powell. “I tell them it is beautiful,



Camera Crew



Jamie Barber



On the set of PHIL OF THE FUTURE

with kids on set. A half-hour episode is shot in four 10-hour days.

Barber typically takes out two ARRIFLEX 16 SR3s, a set of Zeiss Prime lenses, Canon zooms and the occasional Steadicam. Again, he says the robustness of ARRI cameras have never let him down: “Believe me, when I was an assistant I put cameras through things that cameras definitely shouldn't go through,” says Barber, whose career harks back to being first assistant to Caleb Deshanel. “I've done handheld work out in the water; on a CRAFTSMAN TOOL commercial, we took an ARRIFLEX 35 III out into the Arctic in minus 80 degrees. For , I put an ARRIFLEX 35 IIC on the front of a ship that was crashing into another ship and the camera kept on shooting. You get an ARRIFLEX because you just know that it's going to make it through.”

For film stock, Barber uses 74, which gives him the least amount of grain and grit for capturing gorgeous Southern California places and people for THE OC. Doering-Powell frequently shoots 7245 for day/exterior, but has also tested Kodak's 7212 and 7217 as well. When he shot the first season of the Disney show PHIL OF THE FUTURE he used Kodak's Vision 2 7218 as his interior

ferred on a Spirit Datacine and he receives a DVD of the edited HD master before providing notes on final color.

“The one thing I always come back to as a major benefit of shooting on film is that there's so much you can do in post, especially transferring the negative to tape,” Barber explains. “Even if the assistant hits the stopbox, my meter is broken, something gets knocked and it's not exactly the way I wanted, with film, I know it can be manipulated.”

A final supporting factor in successfully shooting Super 16 Barber and Doering-Powell both swear by service from their rental company, Keslow Camera, which under the helm of Robert Keslow has focused on 16mm and other camera rental services for more than 15 years.

“Keslow Camera has equipped us for our past two seasons,” Barber states. “I know I can call Robert anytime, and get what I need – whether we're having the zooms renumbered or require some other assistance.”

Adds Doering-Powell, “My Super 16 packages have varied for each project, but one

mesmerizing, and I light it by eye. Yes, you must light and expose it well. Yes, you need decent glass on the camera. And yes, you should treat it in post with a decent telecine. Further, if you can record at a sampling rate of 4:4:4, the new gold standard, it opens up even more range and possibilities. Super 16 really shines when it's not squeezed into an undersampled/over-compressed tape format.”

Jamie Barber is currently lensing THE OC on Fox. His credits also include the television show ROSWELL as well as numerous films, ranging from MASTER & COMMANDER to TITANIC. Mark Doering-Powell shot three seasons of the Disney show EVEN STEVENS and the first season of PHIL OF THE FUTURE prior to his most recent project, Nickelodeon's HEAD TO TOE. Keslow Camera rents 35mm, 16mm, digital cameras and related equipment from its location in Culver City, Calif. In addition to THE OC and HEAD TO TOE, Keslow Camera is currently providing Super 16mm camera rental packages to Universal Studios' hit series MONK.

Kara Misenheimer and Karen Roz