

HOT SHOTS



Operator Duane Manwiller uses an innovative remote system to capture a difficult sequence

BY PAULINE ROGERS

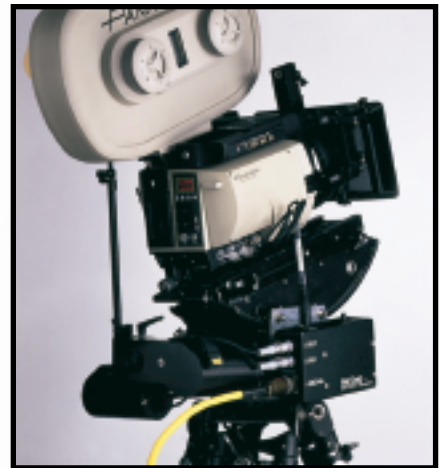
Some of Dante Spinotti's favorite shots in this picture were captured in the short four-day window, on board the *Seven Seas Navigator*. In one particular sequence that reminded Spinotti of Jean Luc Godard's *Alphaville*, Brosnan and Hayek come to see a jewel exhibition, without knowing that the other is there. They cross paths at the heart of the ship pretending not to see each other.

"Dante was really excited about doing this sequence," says operator Duane Manwiller. "He decided to shoot this sequence with a relatively new tool that operators are really embracing. It's the Hot Gears remote system. The first day he began using it, we used the equipment on six out of eight shots we were doing. We all love

Above: Operator Duane Manwiller loved using the Hot Gears remote system (Right) because, unlike other heads that can be a big deal to set up, the Hot Gears attaches to the camera quickly and is easy to manipulate without having to look through the camera.

using the Hot Gears because, unlike other heads, which can be a big deal to set up, the Hot Gears attaches to the camera quickly and is easy to manipulate without having to look through the camera. On this sequence, which involves several complicated moves, the equipment was perfect. I could be out of the way of the actors and assistant Mike Weldon as he pulled focus, but still manipulate the camera through a series of complicated moves."

"We started with the camera, which is positioned on a dolly (operated by Mark Meyers) on a platform at the stairway, tilting way up to see the three beautiful elevators," Spinotti explains. "As the elevator comes down, Pierce looks away. The cam-



era then tilts down and we see the back of Salma's head, as she faces toward the elevator. The camera then frames her as she turns toward the camera, walks across the lobby and up a set of stairs.

"We had the camera on a sheet of plywood so that we could dolly away from her quickly, beginning on the elevators and tilting down to a close-up on a 40mm lens. We see her hiding her face with her chin down, follow her up the stairs to a gem exhibition, and then her walk down the hallway."

"We started with the camera straight up, fully boomed, followed the center elevator straight down to Pierce and then to Salma, racking focus as she walks by the camera to a 180," Manwiller explains. "If I had been operating off a monitor or through an eyepiece, I would have had to jump over the dolly and around to the side of the camera. With the Hot Gears, the two motors take the place of the operator and I could be in a comfortable position out of the way."

"Of course, there is the good and bad attached to using the equipment," Manwiller adds, candidly. "In the reveal of Salma's face, we had to be super tight, which is hard on an assistant. But, we knew Mike Weldon, one of the best career first assistants in the business, could do the impossible. He nailed it, as expected!"

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