



STAFF PHOTO / KARA PHELPS

Theresa Campbell, center back, was in Siesta Key recently directing a film. With her are actors Erin Raftery and Max Hlubik.

SIESTA KEY

Siesta Key on celluloid in 'Springdale'

BY KARA PHELPS

The house on Siesta Key looked ordinary from the outside. Inside, however, it was filled with lights, cameras and action.

This house was the site of a movie set for three days last month. Tentatively titled "June in Springdale," it is directed and produced by Theresa Campbell and stars Erin Raftery, Danny Araujo and Max Hlubik. For two weeks, Campbell's New York-based company, Saguaro Productions, used locations in Siesta Key, St. Armands Circle and downtown Sarasota to create the fictional Springdale.

The shooting began every day at 7 in the morning. "It's exhausting," Campbell said, but the experience has been a good one.

"Everything is funny," she said. The crew and actors shared many laughs, even at the inevitable mistakes and mishaps as they played back the day's work each evening.

As usual in the movie business, they didn't shoot scenes in the order they appear. "We did the pool scenes yesterday," Campbell said June 29. "Today, we're doing the kitchen scenes."

The kitchen was set up to resemble the kitchen of a real home, with a wine bottle and other small items cluttering the counters. Unlike most homes, though, the way into the kitchen was blocked with light stands and reflectors.

The movie is a romantic comedy, with the plot centering on a love triangle involving the three main characters. Raftery's character, June, is a young woman attending college in the Northeast.

"The week before graduation, she meets the man of her dreams," Campbell explained. "It's love at first sight."

This man, David, is dashing and worldly, but things get more complicated when she follows him back to his home in Springdale, which is in Florida, and takes a job as a dog-sitter. She doesn't know that the house is also home to another man, Steven.

"Each thought the other was a prowler," said Campbell. Hijinks ensue, but soon June seems to find herself falling for the sweet Steven.

"June in Springdale" is Campbell's first feature-length film. Her previous work includes recording the functions of

New York City Downtown Boathouse, a nonprofit kayaking organization.

The main actors each bring unique experiences to the production. Raftery recently completed work on a History Channel film called "The Mayflower," due to air around Thanksgiving. Araujo has a day job as a financial adviser but has been in several independent films and is a founder of No Limit Productions. Hlubik starred in the 2005 action thriller "Court Jesters."

Campbell decided to bring her movie to the area because she felt it was friendly to the film industry, with events like the Sarasota Film Festival and organizations like the Sarasota County Film Commission. She also just enjoyed the feel of the place. "I've been here a few times and I love it," she said.

Local talent is involved in the production, too. Campbell hired 15 extras from Southwest Florida. "They've been wonderful," she said.

Vern Johnson, a volunteer with the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, plays the bike-riding police officer who comes to investigate the house after getting calls about a prowler. Campbell offered Johnson the part after he helped familiarize her with the area. "It was fun," Johnson said. "It was done in four or five takes ... We even had a little rain."

"June in Springdale" is scheduled to be released in January.

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