

Refinery manages post-production on SAF3, new American TV series

Refinery has managed all post-production and deliveries on SAF3, a heroic new American TV series from Baywatch creator Gregory J Bonann, a first for the South African film industry.

Currently screening in the US, after shooting in Cape Town last year, the series stars Dolph Lundgren, Dancing with the Stars winner JR Martinez and Texas Battle from the Bold and the Beautiful. E.tv will screen the series later this year.



Dolph Lundgren and Texas Battle

Refinery set up a satellite post facility at Cotton Mill Studios in Epping, Cape Town to manage all post-production on the series, which it delivered to 23 countries around the world. It handled the dailies, editorial, VFX and sound editing at Cotton Mill Studios, with Area 5.1 handling the sound and Refinery the deliveries from Johannesburg.

Refinery is no stranger to working on international series. It has handled the dailies transfers on the Emmy-winning Generation Kill; the ADR for the Emmy-nominated No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency; the visual effects on two seasons of the Kidscreen winner Leonardo; the dailies on three seasons of the Emmy-nominated Strike Back; and the audio post production on the award-winning animated South African/Canadian co-production Magic Cellar. It also worked on over 3000 episodes of 7de Laan, winner of the South African Film and Television Award for Best Soap Opera in 2010, 2011 and 2013.

Michael Murphey from Kalahari Pictures, the South African production company on SAF3, says, "I'm proud that we were the first major international TV series to post entirely in South Africa and to make our international deliveries from here as well. Our international delivery items were first rate and saved the production a great deal compared to what it would have cost us in the US or Europe."

Rebate creates tipping point

He praised the dti's foreign film and television production scheme and post-production incentive, which now offers productions shot in South Africa an additional 2.5% rebate, if they spend over R1.5 million on post-production here and an additional 5% if they spend over R3 million on post-production here. SAF3 is the largest project to benefit from the post-production incentive so far.

"The dti post production rebate of an extra 5% helped seal the deal to bring SAF3 to South Africa," says Murphey. "Australia, New Zealand and the US just couldn't compete."

"The rebate was the tipping point," says Tracey Williams, Refinery's MD. "It always comes down to economics and when you add the weak rand, it just makes financial sense to keep your post-production in South Africa now."

Williams says the tight timeline also counted in Refinery's favour. "We had two weeks to ship everything in, get the equipment installed and be ready to start. Then we had three weeks to our first TX date. It would have been very difficult to turn the show around this quickly with an international facility."

She says setting up a temporary facility is "the way of the future; I'd do that again tomorrow."

Saving costs

From a time and cost efficiency perspective, they particularly benefited from having the ADR facilities right where the cast

was filming, as well as from having Cyril Schumann as a dedicated visual effects artists on Flame.

"Flame's not a typical TV tool, but we knew Cyril would turn around the effects really quickly on it. The VFX turned out to be one of the big savings on the series."

South Africa has been hosting a steady stream of international TV series, with Black Sails and Dominion currently filming in Cape Town.

Williams says this increase in international TV series is a unique opportunity for the South African post-production industry. "On SAF3, we had 14 people employed fulltime for six months. Features come and go, but a successful TV series like Black Sails will keep coming back every year. There's no reason why we shouldn't be keeping the post-production in South Africa for TV series like that, so it's a major growth opportunity for the sector."

Watch the SAF3 promo

For more information, go to [or www.saf3.tv](http://www.saf3.tv).

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