



The Girls: Melissa, Romana, Sandra & Nicole

The Date: May, 2003

The Destination: Costa Blanca, Spain

For my first production of the year, I chose the small town of Denia on Spain's Costa Blanca as the destination. I was already there as a guest at a production of my colleague, Lars Graf, for a week in August 2002. Lars knows one of the Germans who lives there and rents out two wonderfully-situated and very tasteful vacation villas, also making these available for photo and video shoots. I liked these houses so much that I really wanted to do my own production there this year. Besides that, I found a few very beautiful outdoor locations on the coast and inland in that area we could, for the first time, have the possibility to combine indoor and outdoor takes with each other!

What's also new is that, this time, I would be accompanied by a professional cameraman, Marek from Berlin. I have often been asked if I

would also be able to produce videos during my trips; but I had neither the equipment nor the know-how for it. Thus I was very glad when I received the offer from Marek a few months back, to do a video production parallel to my photo shoots.

Since we'll be in Denia for an entire week, I've hired four models at once: Sandra, Nicole, Melissa and Romana. But that's not all: seeing as Marek and I couldn't possibly keep all four girls busy at the same time and we have ample space in the two houses, I've invited four other photographers - amateurs and semiprofessionals - to come along on the trip. So, we'll turn up in Denia with a troop of eleven people; we've never had so many people at a shoot. Somehow my endeavors are getting larger from year to year...

Tuesday, May 13th, 2003: Day of arrival

11:00 a.m.: My make-up artist, Heike, and I must first take the train from Kassel to the Frankfurt airport. It's not so easy with just two people to heave all the many, heavy pieces of baggage onto the train, but at least the German Rail doesn't ask about the weight of it. Since we would also like to do interior shots at the houses, I've also brought along my flash attachment with four bulbs, tripods, soft boxes and miscellaneous accessories in addition to my photography equipment and abundant props.

1:00 p.m.: Marek has picked us up on the train platform and has contributed a second light case (which isn't exactly small) to our mountain of



Excess weight to no end: that's going to be expensive!

baggage. Together we push our heavily-laden trolley through the vast halls of the Frankfurt airport to the check-in counter, where we have to pay a cruel sum in excess baggage fees. Maybe we should have gone by car, after all...

3:30 p.m.: With a one-hour delay, our plane takes off in the direction of Alicante. The girls are flying with one of the guest photographers together from Vienna and must already be on their way; two further photographers flew out of Munich this morning.

6:30 p.m.: Upon arrival in Alicante, we find out that the flight from Vienna wasn't on time, either. Well, at least then nobody had to wait for us amid the unpleasant crowd. We quickly pick up our rental cars, for which I got a lovely discount from having rented a fleet of cars.

8:30 p.m.: After a one hour drive, we are finally in Denia. Our two houses are simply wonderful; but it's somehow already too late to enjoy the evening. We have a little briefing and go to bed early.

Wednesday, May 14th: **First day of work**

9:00 a.m.: After having breakfast together, we begin the day by testing out the video compatibility of our girls, as Marek is also trying out his new digital video camera. Nicole already cuts a very fine figure at the pool at house 1, but we all still need to practice a little!

11:00 a.m.: I've rustled up the help of many connections for further options for the utilization of three other houses and take a little tour myself. I find a tasteful, luxurious villa with a stunning view of the more southern-situated Altea to be most exciting, so I immediately make an appointment for tomorrow with the owners.

3:00 p.m.: The weather was actually good the whole day, but as soon as I get back, it begins to cloud up. Damn - that's exactly what I'd feared the most! One can only take good photos by sunlight, so we wait a while. After all, the others could be making better use of the time for their shots, even Marek now has his video camera under control.

5:30 p.m.: Finally, the clouds break up! The sun goes down really late here, so that we still have a lot of time to make use of the lovely light situations on house 2. Spontaneously and unplanned, we arrange a beautiful situation for photo and video and provide a nice diversion for the curious neighbors. Only, the masts and wires in the background bother us: obviously no one here has ever heard of ground wires.



Finally getting started: Marek and Romy get down to business at the pool ...



..while Christian and Melissa, however, remain distant.

Thursday, May 15th: **Second day of work**

10:00 a.m.: Today we will use the villa in Altea as a location. Since the light there, according to information from the owner, should be good rather in the afternoon until evening, we have

decided not to take off so early, in order to spare the girls. We set off a convoy of four cars in motion and ambush the inhabitants with eleven people.



Seeking a playmate? A doggie helps out happily!

11:30 a.m.: Unpacking the equipment, make up, other preparations - once again, everything takes an eternity. Actually, the sun is already too high, as I set up Nicole on the balustrade in front of the stunning view, but the arrangement still makes a good impression.

1:00 p.m.: Unfortunately, not for long: clouds once again! We puzzle around us a bit by bad lighting, experimenting with brighteners and artificial lighting, but you just can't replace the sun. We continue to hope, that, as it did yesterday toward the evening, it will get better, and we while away the time by playing with the owners' cute dog. But today we have no luck; the cloud coverage is getting thicker and in the late afternoon, we admit defeat and retreat.



By this light, even the strongest spotlights don't help...



Waiting for better weather: one comes up with the dumbest ideas.



Friday, May 16th: Third day of work

8:00 a.m.: I am pleasantly surprised to see that we actually have sun this morning, so that Michael, Herbert, Thomas and I can set out as planned with Nicole and Melissa for an early shoot. I've sought out two inlets on the coast for it and in order to not get in each other's way, we've divided ourselves up so, that there's one

model for two photographers. We have to drive three-quarters of an hour, and unfortunately, we realize that we've once again left much too late: the sun is already pretty high, the soft morning light is gone and the locations prove to be unyielding. The result is bad for such a big effort; everyone is a bit disappointed.

11:00 a.m.: I have yet another house tour today in a multi-million-dollar luxury villa, that a photographer friend had found for me. The house is an absolute dream for its situation and architecture and would offer us the best of all possibilities; but unfortunately, the owner is not so enthusiastic about the fact that we do nude photos. What a pity!

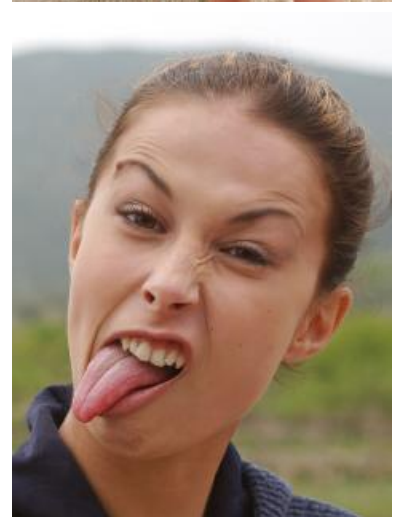
1:00 p.m.: I've been driving around for an hour now for nothing, while, with the best of weather, I could have been working a lot. Oh well, the day is still young! Since the weather today seems here to stay, we decide to drive together to an outdoor location: during my stay last year, I discovered an entire village in ruins. The overgrown walls and archways should offer us beautiful backgrounds and light situations, and because we are able to divide ourselves up easily across the vast grounds, we take off with the entire troop.

2:30 p.m.: As we are finally ready to work, the clouds gather. Damn it! The whole day, we had the most beautiful weather, but I had to go driving all over the place, and when I was finally able to work, the light went down the drain. We still try a little here and there, but we soon give up, frustrated, because the sloppy light just doesn't allow for good pictures.

6:00 p.m.: Since it once again looked the whole time as though it might still change, we waited a long while - after all, we didn't want the one-hour drive to be entirely for nothing. But it was no use, and finally, we break off the endeavor. I'm slowly beginning to worry: now it's already the third day down the tubes; there's only been sun for a few hours at a time, and somehow always then when

I wasn't quite prepared. Aside from a couple of shoots, I haven't really accomplished anything of significance yet.

The weather gets on our nerves! The mood still seems to be quite good, though.



Saturday, May 17th: **Fourth day of work**

8:00 a.m.: It looks as though we may finally have the prospect of consistently good weather. I wanted to at least once make use of the wonderful morning light at house 1 and I've reserved Sandra for an early shoot today. As usual, she gripes a little about getting up early; but she works well and professionally.

2:00 p.m.: Actually, we all wanted to drive together to an outdoor location this afternoon, a beautiful ravine near here. The light there must be good in the afternoon, but I'm not sure for how long and wanted to therefore hit the road in a timely fashion. But once again, our sheer mass creates a problem: we try and try, but just can't break away, and finally I pull the emergency brake and call off the excursion; if we're not gone by now, it no longer makes sense. I wonder if it

really was such a good idea to bring along so many people?



Concentrated work in the morning light.

3:00 p.m.: Instead we stay put at the houses, which the girls are not unhappy about; they don't especially like the excursions. At least the weather remains good and our two dream villas prove far more yielding than I'd previously thought. Melissa even splashes around voluntarily in the pool, while normally she whines that the water is too cold. Somehow, the unplanned shoots are always the best. I am amazed at how many of the neighbors own binoculars!

Fun in the pool: Melissa is in the mood to fax today.



Sunday, May 18th: Fifth day of work



Perfect color-matching: t-shirt and curlers in the national colors of Austria.

10:00 a.m.: I've had enough of failed excursions and have therefore just decided to stay at the two houses today; that's where the best results come out, anyway. The houses offer beautiful light situations, even under the high sun, that's why we don't have to get up so early today. With Melissa, I do a true 'powershoot': 215 pictures in 15 minutes, and nearly every shot is a keeper!

2:00 p.m.: To my great surprise and joy, I succeeded yesterday in convincing Melissa and Romy to do a shoot together, and they've promised to go really far. I wanted to set the show up in the living room at house 2, and today, we finally

have enough time for it. Those two haven't made a promise they couldn't keep! They brought along CDs and would like to listen to Eminem during the shoot - terrible, but what wouldn't one do for good photos.

5:00 p.m.: We have to do the scene twice; first for my photos, then for Marek's video camera, because we each need different lighting. I'd still like to do a follow-up scene on the roofed-over terrace, but the girls have had enough for today and strike. I'm quite upset, because the light is best at this time, and who knows what may happen by tomorrow. To break off work at five on a productive day with good weather doesn't really leave me with a good feeling!



Sandra will lay on this table, only after she has first cleaned it herself!

Monday, May 19th: Sixth day of work

6:00 a.m.: Christian and Herbert absolutely wanted to do another early shoot with Melissa, because they just find her sooo sweet, and so they've chased her out of bed at the crack of dawn. I choose not to take part, and let them drive to the beach alone.

9:00 a.m.: I would like to instead begin the day by doing a session with Romy in the wonderful bathtub at house 2. The room is so dark that I have to employ my flash equipment. Actually nonsense, with such weather, to do interior shots with artificial lighting, but I've already done all I can outside.

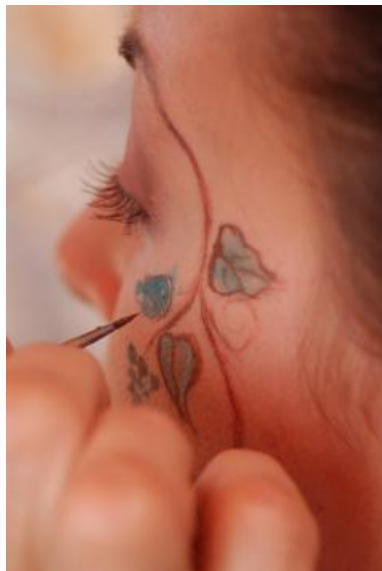


**Unusual:
model with
camera!**

11:00 a.m.: The team from the early shift has meanwhile returned very satisfied. Did I miss out on something? Regardless: Melissa and Romy still have a second double scene from yesterday to catch up on. But where shall we stage our show? After being in the living room yesterday, I'd like to go outside today. In order to make the best use of the involved work of them both, we will shoot simultaneously for photo and video, which is not so easy: we need a light situation suitable for both and a corner that offers the girls comfort and freedom of movement. We end up arranging a cosy little cuddling corner with pillows and blankets in a wall alcove and then recruiting one of the other photographers to act as tripod for the big reflector. We have no difficulty finding a helper!

12:00 p.m.: Again, the two put on an experienced show, Marek and I just have to keep up and concentrate entirely on the scene. I'm glad I was able to find olive oil in the kitchen: the two certainly would not have done the hot tongue-play with sun oil!

2:00 p.m.: Somewhat sweaty and very satisfied with the results, we turn ourselves toward new tasks: I absolutely still want to work at a yielding outdoor location and have decided to drive once more to the village in ruins, where had wanted to work at on Friday.



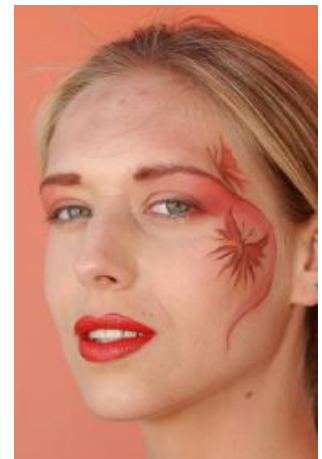
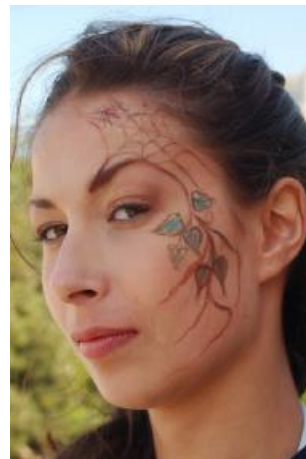
Actually, we could all use a break, but the time is short and after the experiences of the last few days, I press everyone on, so that we won't lose so much time again. Romy and Melissa are allowed to stay at the house and Sandra and Nicole are not so thrilled to have to drive out once again for an hour; but they let us persuade them in the end.

3:30 p.m.: Again on location at the ruins. The sun is already pretty low and provides us with a lovely warm light and the girls' fear that it will be too cool proves completely unfounded. At least this time, it was worth the trip.



Melissa sabotages the shoot with grimaces once again.

8:15 p.m.: We are finally back again and learn that the others have decided we'll go out to eat this evening. The restaurant has already been chosen, a table has been reserved for everyone. I had been looking forward to a peaceful evening and am therefore not so enthused at first; but I let myself be persuaded to come along after all. An hour later, everyone's all decked out; the girls



With a sharp brush: Heike conjures up small works of art.

will certainly become the attraction of the city in their formal dress.

10:00 p.m.: The evening actually begins to develop into a roaring party. The restaurant isn't exactly cheap, but is, however, truly excellent, and the waiters will be busy with a rollickingly noisy group until way past midnight. Fortunately, we're nearly alone in the hall!



The view is truly great! If only the stupid wires weren't there...

Tuesday, May 20th: **Day of departure**

8:00 a.m.: Actually, it's a pity that we already have to return home - just when things were starting to get fun! To my astonishment, everyone appears punctually and disciplined with their baggage at the cars at the arranged time. This had lead to me fix the departure a half hour earlier than necessary, so that we still have a cushion of time.

10:30 a.m.: At the airport in Alicante we find out that our flight will take off an hour later as

announced. Great, we could have slept later! And at an overburdened Spanish mini-airport, the waiting around isn't much fun.

4:00 p.m.: Marek, Heike and I are back in Frankfurt, the girls should have arrived in Vienna in the meantime. In spite of all the problems, we have packed up excellent results, and now, several weeks of follow up work to the shoot lie ahead of Marek and me.