

Entourage Director of Photography and Camera Operator Todd Dos Reis

Going behind the scenes of America's most exciting television show

By: Steve Mathie

Staff Writer

FilmingLocations.com

Have you ever sat on your couch watching Entourage, wishing you could be part of Vince group of friends?

Did you ever wonder what it'd be like to have cameras all around you and beautiful women to your left and right and some of the coolest homes, hotels and businesses around?

Vincent Chase knows.

Ari knows. Drama knows. Turtle and Eric live the dream.

So does Todd Dos Reis. Only when you sit down on Sunday night to watch these guys take Hollywood and the rest of the globe by storm, you probably won't know who Todd is when the episode is finished.

Dos Reis is the Director of Photography (DP) on Entourage, the HBO series in the first week of its 6th successful season. Jeremy Piven is the heartbeat of the show, and Adrien Grenier and Kevin Dillon make sure there's never a dull moment. Then there is Dos Reis, who collaborates with the directors and producers to make sure that all of the shots you see make you feel like you are in the entourage itself.

"I don't know any other TV show like it," says Dos Reis. "The fun we have working on it is amazing."

Dos Reis and the crew shoot an episode in 7 days, a pace that is as frenetic as the lifestyle of the main characters in the show. The cinematography of Entourage is Dos Reis' forte, and as one of two DP's on the show, 14 hour days are not all that uncommon.

Whether he's getting together with the directors and producers to discuss shots, or prepping for two episodes in two weeks, Dos Reis is one of the driving forces in the production of Entourage. Or as he refers to it, he is one small part of the "Entourage Family".

"It's like a family, the whole cast and crew has been so warm to each other over the past six years its incredible," says Dos Reis. "We have a blast, it's like a lot of brothers and sisters on one set together."

Essentially, he is responsible for putting in a grueling work schedule with meticulous attention to detail, and is also having the time of his life while doing it. As DP he oversees the camera, lighting and grip departments – a responsibility that Dos Reis has found to be the most rewarding of his career thus far.

“Each episode is like a mini movie full of rich stories,” says Dos Reis. “Doug Ellen does such a great job of creating these characters. We have filmed just about everywhere you could imagine in the past six years.”

Dos Reis is referring to the Sundance Film Festival in Utah, Cannes Film Festival in France, Hawaii, New York, Las Vegas, The Joshua Tree and of course the backyard – Hollywood. All have served as filming locations of *Entourage* over the last six seasons.

“We filmed a lot of places for the newest season,” says Dos Reis. “We’ll shoot at three locations a day. We will be in two people’s houses in one day – that would be a normal Tuesday for us. We create this world in *Entourage* that works, people want to see real locations, and we can’t build those on a set. The locations department does an unbelievable job.”

Entourage follows young film star Vince Chase and his entourage from New York as they enjoy the sights and sounds that Los Angeles has to offer. To make sure the show is as realistic as possible, Dos Reis and the crew operate the camera in a way that has the viewer walking and talking with the guys.

“I’ll walk backwards for two blocks while the guys are walking and talking, but we have amazing grips that act as the eyes and ears so we don’t trip or run into anything,” says Dos Reis.

Walking through the streets of downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood while filming usually means shutting down roads and businesses, but not with *Entourage*. Even after the incredible following that the show has attracted.

“We never close off blocks, streets or intersections,” says Dos Reis. “When we are shooting there will be two dozen paparazzi out there shooting Adrien, Kevin and the guys. But it doesn’t matter because the paparazzi would be there anyway following stars like Vince and Drama. It makes sense. We are shooting amongst everything that is going on.”

As for this season of *Entourage*, which premiered July 12th, Dos Reis doesn’t want to give anything away, but says that there are numerous celebrity cameos and a couple of major sports stars making appearances. How could you not enjoy collaborating with already star-studded cast and crew when that is the case? The set of *Entourage* has been great to Dos Reis, but there was one period of time recently that he had to battle through.

“I’m from Massachusetts. I am a Boston Celtics fan, so last year when we won the NBA Championship it was great, but when the Lakers won it this year – that was rough – most of the guys on the set are Lakers fans,” laughs Dos Reis. “The guys in the Vince’s entourage are from New York so they are mostly Knicks fans.”

That’s about as much tension as you’ll find on the set. Dos Reis is part of a television family that works extremely hard and laughs even harder to make a final product that is satisfying to the crew and its viewers.

Getting to Know Todd Dos Reis

How did you get into the film industry?

I'd always hang out at the local movie theatre when I was a kid. I loved story telling and started taking pictures when I was 13. Then I took a photography class in high school. When I got into film school at USC I was young and naïve and knew absolutely nothing about the film industry. I didn't know if I wanted to direct or edit or what. Everyone in the class wanted to direct, so I asked myself what the next best thing was – and decided on cinematography.

What happened after film school?

Just before I graduated from USC I got an internship at Sho films. I started working as an office production assistant (PA), and then worked my way up to a Set PA, and eventually a Camera PA. I just started following the camera guys around. I would actually draw the lighting diagrams of the DP and study how he lit the set. Then some of the camera assistants would give me magazines when I went home and I would practice loading them. From there on it was camera assistant jobs.

Have you done anything other than feature film and television work?

I have worked as a camera operator and director of photography on a number of films, TV shows, commercials and music videos. I have done stuff with Smokey Robinson and Prince, which was very cool.

What is your favorite type of project to work on?

Entourage has been my favorite, but if I could make a living doing documentaries – I would. You are usually doing something that's going to teach somebody something.

As a DP, what is cinematography to you?

Cinematography is working with the director – taking the written word – and putting his vision on the screen and telling the story the way he wants it to be told.

What is the best part about working on the set of Entourage?

Really, everything. Having been together for 6 years, everyone knows each other. You can tell anyone anything and they can tell you anything. It's pretty unique. Like I said it's like a big family of brothers and sisters on the set.