

CELEBRITY TRAVEL

Grazzini's dream film location in Thailand

By Jae-Ha Kim
TRIBUNE CONTENT
AGENCY

Marco Grazzini says filming "Virgin River" near his home in Vancouver is a treat.

"I was born and raised in Toronto, so it always feels special when I shoot there (and Vancouver)," he said. "I've filmed a couple scenes at the University of Toronto — my alma mater — and also the street where I grew up on. Pretty cool! Montreal can feel like a quick trip to Europe. The food, nightlife and people are my favorite in Canada. Ottawa and Victoria are both government towns, but have amazing food scenes. Both offer an immense variety of outdoor activities."

Audiences might know Marco as Mike from the hit Netflix show "Virgin River." Beyond his acting career — which spans 20 years — he is also an avid photographer, chef in another life and is fluent in 4 ½ languages. He enjoys stand-up comedy, basketball and chasing his 3-year-old daughter.

This interview with Grazzini has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Do you have a preference working on location versus on a set?

A: Creatively speaking, I most definitely prefer working on location. There's something intrinsically unique to each and every place. There's a different light, air, energy that I believe impacts the performance and the aesthetic captured. No matter how authentically transformed and replicated, a set will always feel somewhat sterile and artificial. However, time is money, so



For "Virgin River" actor Marco Grazzini, Thailand can't be beat for the food or the beaches. **SARA MONTALBANO**

the controlled environment of a set offers you more reliability, creature comforts and about 75% less weird noises.

Q: If you could pick a location to film a project, where would it be?

A: Railay Beach in Thailand! It's a stunning car-free peninsula in the Krabi region in the south of Thailand. Turquoise water, white sand, towering limestone cliffs — it's the usual breathtaking landscape that Thai beaches have to offer, and that would drop jaws on film. I've been in and around Thailand numerous times over the past 20 years and Railay really stuck out to me for the serenity that it has.

Q: Do you have any upcoming trips planned?

A: Yes! A small trip to Los Angeles in June, which will stand out from the usual work-related trips spent in LA over my career. This time, I'll be there for a World Cup game. Being a lifelong soccer fan and player, it is a wonderful bucket list item to check off. I'm looking forward to soaking in the atmosphere of people from different cultures across the globe in one spot to watch some footy and have some fun.

Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?

A: Thailand is my absolute favorite spot, be it for vacation or eventual retire-

ment. The warm weather is an obvious no-brainer, while the culture, food and people have ensured that Thailand remains in my heart as a place that feels like home. Yes, I just mentioned food, but wow the food! It's an extremely food-focused culture. The fact that I can step onto a main road anywhere in Thailand and find a food vendor hawking some scrumptious delicacies, that's a win.

Q: Have you ever been asked to audition/read for a role while you were away on a vacation?

A: Yes. Always. It's some actor-version of Murphy's Law. I've taped audition scenes in airport waiting lounges. I'm very familiar with MacGyver-ing a tripod out of an ironing board and books in my hotel room. Nothing takes the air out of a vacation balloon like, "Hey, babe, I got a nine-page audition due tomorrow morning, so we're gonna have to push the basket-weaving thing you booked."

Q: What's the most important thing you've learned from your travels?

A: People are the same everywhere. We just want to be around our friends and family, share a meal and feel like we're doing well with our lives.

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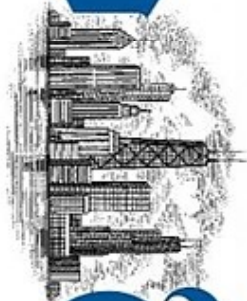
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