

Chupin's best trips always to Asian sites

By Jae-Ha Kim
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For Croatian American filmmaker and actor Neb Chupin, shooting "Storm Rider: Legend of Hammerhead," now in theaters, was a labor of love that took him back to his roots.

"The original script featured a story between grandfather and grandson on one island in Croatia where figs were harvested," said Chupin, who was born in Zagreb. "Through years of development, the script transformed into the sci-fi fantasy ... that is centered on resilience and transformation. I wanted to create something visually epic, but still keep the original elements of strong family values, tradition and integrity."

Chupin is also an entrepreneur, having co-founded Dalmatia Fig Spread with his business partner, Maia Magee. After living in the U.S. for more than 30 years, Chupin moved back to Croatia, though he returns to Los Angeles monthly.

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

Q: What can you share about your Croatian upbringing?

A: I grew up on the Croatian coast helping my grandfather harvest crops such as figs, almonds, grapes and sour cherries.

Q: Where did you film in Croatia?

A: We covered almost all of the Croatian coast, including Brac, Pag, Hvar and Kornati Islands ... Split, Dubrovnik and Vodice. Even during the summertime, storms on our coast are known to be brutal. So



Filmmaker Neb Chupin visits Bali almost every year and enjoys going back to Miami Beach. **NEB CHUPIN**

the second day of filming the boat race, the winds were going at 100 miles per hour. So only our sci-fi boats could go out. All other boat traffic was forbidden.

Q: Have you visited places for work that were so nice that you went back there for a vacation?

A: I went to Bali to see where my fig spread was selling. I was fascinated. Ever since then, I visit Bali almost every year.

Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?

A: Even though I lived in Miami Beach for over 10 years back in the 1990s, I am always so excited to go back there and feel that sticky hot and humid air.

Q: What was a trip you took as a child that stands out?

A: My first trip was when I was still living in Croatia and my parents sent me to England to learn English for one month. I was only 12 years old. I remember waiting two hours and more every day to come back home to my host family. I would come (back) late at night hours. That was torture. I must have not known the bus schedule well, I guess. That one-month trip was not a good experience. I was robbed by my classmates as well. At the end, I am ashamed that I didn't make a good impression on my host family. I did not behave as

well as I could. So if they ever read this and recognize me, I am sending my apologies.

Q: Where are your favorite weekend getaways?

A: During some weekends I drive from Zagreb to my grandfather's house. The town is called Vodice, and I converted his original house into an Airbnb called Dida Boza House, (which) has a cafe and a gift shop.

Q: What are your five favorite cities?

A: Boston, Miami, LA, Hong Kong, Jakarta.

Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?

A: Iceland and Faroe Islands.

Q: What is your best and/or worst vacation memory?

A: My worst trip was when I had a layover in Istanbul and we stayed in one hotel as part of the layover package. Even though the receptionist told us not to talk to strangers, I engaged in conversation with some guy who later robbed me with his buddies. It was awful. For a long time, I hated Turkey, but now I am over it. My best trips were always trips to Asia — Hong Kong, Jakarta and Bali. There was never a single trip to Asian countries that was less than excellent.

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