

Garden Bay attacked by man-eating Vipers



Pender Harbour was attacked by hordes of man-eating snakes last month and locals loved it.

Crews filming the Canadian indie flick *Vipers* literally transformed downtown Garden Bay into the picturesque island town of Eden Harbour.

VP Productions Inc. of North Vancouver brought 105 cast and crew to Pender Harbour for five days to film the \$3.2 million movie about genetically modified snakes that escape from an isolated research station and terrorize a small island resort town.

Fortunately for the extras, who often played the victims, the snakes will be computer generated and added to the scenes after filming ends.

The movie isn't intended for theatrical release but will be mostly funded by a core cable sale as well as a DVD release.

The economic impact was clearly felt throughout the community with the Pender Harbour Resort, Ruby Lake Resort, Sunshine Coast Resort and Rockwater Resort all housing the majority of the cast and crew plus a

number of other rental accommodations accepting the over-run.

Filming contracts were set up with owners of the Sundowner Inn, John Henry's Marina and Fisherman's Resort and LaVerne's Grill was rented to act as a makeshift production office.

Local boats like the Sea Otter and Beefeater as well as a sea plane from Tofino Air were contracted for backdrops to scenes.

Filming usually started early in the morning and often went well past 10 p.m.

Eighteen semi-trailer loads of equipment to be brought in. Interior filming will take place in studio, borrowing the set of the TV series *Hope Island*.

John Henry's Marina owner Lucy Archbold gushed with praise about how the production company treated the locals, especially the extras. "It's been great. They've been so accommodating," she said.

"They even timed filming scenes with make-up so the extras could keep it on for Halloween."

Archbold said that very few of her customers regarded the lack of parking near the store and post office as a nuisance and most were more interested in being able to watch the action.

Producer Mary Anne Waterhouse is a partner with Anagram Pictures and was contracted by Executive Producer Matthew Connors to put the whole project together.



OK. Look down at the ground and picture Hervé Villechaize in a speedo. Tara Reid and Jonathan Scarfe acting.

“I manage the operation. I start the hiring process and oversee the casting process with the director and oversee making sure that everything we need to make the movie is here and that it costs the amount of money it’s supposed to cost to get here,” she said in an on-set interview.

“And that we’re honouring the script and the material so that the people that agreed to buy the movie are getting delivered to them what they’re expecting.”

Waterhouse and director Bill Corcoran have worked here before on cable movie *Desolation Sound* and TV show *Ritter’s Cove* respectively.

“We both remembered having fabulous, beautiful looks in shooting here and also really, really great reception and a lot of support.”

More than 60 local extras were paid \$10 per hour to be on hand when needed for background action or corpse duty.

“It’s a matter of hurry up and wait,” a blood-covered Dave Howell said between shoots that required him to wait, sometimes all day, until he was needed again.

“It’s my favourite thing to do, watching other people work!”

Aside from the local talent pool, the film will also feature American Pie’s Tara Reid in the leading female role of Nicky Swift.

“She’s trying to protect everyone and just save a lot of lives and get everyone off the island,” Reid says between takes in the warming tent. “She has to stay strong for everyone else but I think she’s sensitive and there is fear inside of her but she tends to try to not show it too much.”

When asked if she’d had a chance to sample the Garden Bay nightlife, Reid, a notorious Hollywood party



Some of the local extras, pre-bloodbath.

animal said “No, I don’t go out on school nights. You know, you don’t go out when you work at six o’clock in the morning. It’s so cold you just want to go home.”

Working 14-15 hour days, Reid says she hasn’t been able to get out and see much of the area but her first impressions make her want to come

back again, preferably in the summer.

“It reminds me a lot of Cape Cod. It’s a beautiful place and it’s an amazing location and we’re really lucky to have found it. There’s something magical about this place.”

Other cast members include Vancouver’s Jonathan Scarfe who

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Vipers (cont.)

plays the male lead, Don Davis (better known as the general from Stargate SG-1) and Corbin Bernsen who has a cameo role.

Sechelt's Aaron Pearl plays Jack Martin, a self-centred local with a fragmented home life who, after killing a bunch of snakes, comes to realize the importance of family.

Pearl is a full-time actor who now lives in Vancouver and revealed he was just killed off CBC's *Intelligence*, a drama series set in Vancouver and one in which he'd worked on for the past year and a half.

His most recent project was a pilot for a new series called *Cowgirls* shot in Calgary.

Pearl is one of three professional actors from Sechelt who are all roughly the same age.

David Paetkau and Jennifer Copping also make their living in the industry and Pearl credits the artistic environment of the Sunshine Coast for producing this anomaly.

"I hope that other people up here, young or old or whatever, realize that there's a whole other industry that is available because, when I was young, nobody suggested you could go and do film," Pearl said.

"Nobody suggested you could be involved in any aspect of it which there's a multitude of jobs."



Sechelt's Aaron Pearl poses with the prop jeep that was on loan to the production company from Alan Stewart

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