

# **smallformat** S8/16

- ▶ **Light:** Small suns in a suitcase  
**Sound:** Captured with a hard disk recorder  
**Commercials:** Shot on Super8



**Printed films:  
Inkjet Super 8**

# ● interview

# SUPER 8 COMMERCIALS

## DIRECTOR JEREMY SMITH LOVES THE ROMANTIC LOOK

TEXT: JÜRGEN LOSSAU PHOTOS: JEREMY SMITH

Smart Ass Productions recently completed a music video style commercial for Tecate Beer shot entirely on Fuji Pro8mm film. The two-minute commercial will be exhibited nationwide during Copa Tecate 2007, the USA's largest amateur Hispanic soccer tournament. After shooting several commercials for television on Super 16 mm, director Jeremy Smith and cinematographer Ian Farrington wanted to return to the "romantic look" of the 8 mm format. Using some DV camera rigs to take advantage of the Classic Pro8mm camera's small size and lens options, Smith and Farrington captured some amazing shots of some of Mexico's most famous world cup soccer players, and of course, the tantalizing Chicas Tecate. In an interview with smallformat, Smith reveals when and why he uses Super 8.

► "We chose to shoot Fuji stock because we wanted the image to have strikingly vivid and saturated colors. That needed to be balanced with our need for exposure latitude, in case our natural lighting changed. The Pro 8/63 Fuji Eterna 63 250D was amazing. We had some shadow issues and shifting sunlight in Dallas, and we still got rich, vivid images. I was thrilled. We also shot some Pro 8/73 Fuji Eterna 63 500T for a night concert. It looked great even though the concert stage was very poorly lit. The stage had daylight and tungsten lights mixed, but the Fuji film handled it really well," explains director Jeremy Smith.

Smith and Farrington are not new to working in the Pro 8mm format. They shot two spots for LG Phones that rocked the skateboarding world showcasing the vivid, super saturated colors possible with Pro8mm.

After graduating from college at USC, Jeremy shifted his focus to directing his own projects. He launched SmartAss Productions to focus on creating innovative and "smart" commercials, music videos, and films. "Since my first project for Motorola Phones in 2001, when I was just a sophomore in College, I have been testing the boundaries of 'music video' style in other genres. The SmartAss approach has been applied to spots ranging from an "extreme sports" LG Phones Music Video style commercial to an MPEG political commercial for a Los Angeles city councilman." Here is our full interview with Jeremy Smith.

---

„When I shoot Super 8,  
I want the imperfect look.“

### 🕒 Why and when do you use Super 8?

I have used Super 8 for three different projects. Each time, I chose the format because it allowed me to create an image and feel that is strikingly different from video and 16/35 mm film. Overall the images are more romantic. The grain allows the world to blend a bit, and the story and atmosphere dominate. Furthermore, all three projects were exhibited on Jumbo-Trons at stadium events and the Internet. Both venues are dominated by video, and Super 8's grainy and super saturated look jumps off the screen in contrast to a plethora of bland video.

One thing I have noticed on Super 8 forums/discussions is a general obsession with making Super 8 look like Super16. I purposely try to make sure it does not look like Super 16 or 35 mm. If I wanted that, I would shoot 16 mm. When I shoot Super 8, I want the imperfect

„I chose the format because it allowed me to create an image and feel that is strikingly different from video and 16/35 mm film.“



A skateboard event, filmed for LG with a Pro8mm Classic Beaulieu camera.

look. I love throwing in a roll-out (as seen in the transition from the 3rd shot to the 4th shot – see photo). Furthermore, I always play with the saturation of colors since Super 8 is already a romantic grainy image. In the 2004 LG Phones Music Video featuring the dog Tyson, we made the colors a bit washed out to propel the beach party atmosphere. In the 2006 Copa Tecate Music Video, the grainy images and super saturated colors highlight the raw excitement of this grassroots tournament.

🕒 **What are the main problems with this format?**

The biggest problem is the lack of a video tap. I am a huge fan of the Fig Rig. I have mostly utilized the Fig Rig with the A-Minima Super 16 camera with a great video tap. This is ideal. The Fig Rig is a great tool because it holds the cam-

era steady based on simple physics and its small size allows creativity. On a balanced rig such as a SteadiCam, one usually cannot turn the camera sideways. The Fig Rig allows you to explore the boundaries of camera angles.

For Copa Tecate 2006, I wanted to use the Fig Rig again. Unfortunately, the lack of a video tap forced me to learn how to shoot without looking through the lens. My cinematographer, Ian Farrington, and I spent hours learning the boundaries of the different lenses. We accomplished this by mimicking the lenses of the Super 8 camera with my DV camera, and then practicing without using the video screen or viewfinder. It was quite a task. I would love a decent video tap.

The second major problem with Super 8 is the lack of consistency from roll to roll. I cannot speak for all cameras, but the Classic Pro from

Pro8mm varies a bit from roll to roll. This makes the color correction process more time consuming.

🕒 **How about the wide-angle shots? What kind of lenses do you use?**

All of the lenses used for the 2006 Copa Tecate Music Video were C-Mount Super 16 lenses mounted on two Pro8mm classic cameras. The lenses were great. Many of the older ones are much larger than their modern counterparts, but they produced excellent images. I rented them from Alan Gordon. Their technician calibrated each lens for the Pro8mm camera. Most were set up for a Bolex.

For the Fig Rig shots, I used wide-angle lenses without a focus ring. Since I could not look through the viewfinder, I could not focus. I mostly used a 5.7 mm Century lens. I also had a



3.5 mm Elgeet and a 3.5 mm Century. All three had their pluses and minuses. Overall, the 5.7 mm was the best for image quality and ease of filter use, especially when I used a rotating polarizer.

For tripod shots, we used a 12 mm – 120 mm Angenieux lens. It produced excellent images. We even used the Angenieux a bit handheld with the DV Rig Pro setup. The DV Rig Pro is a shoulder mount that allows one to better brace the camera and easily look through the viewfinder.

**Q What film stocks are you using?**

The 2006 Copa Tecate Music Video was entirely shot on Pro 8/63 Fuji Eterna 63 250D. It was great. We had some shadow issues and shifting sunlight in Dallas, and we still got rich, vivid images. I was thrilled.

We also shot some Pro 8/73 Fuji Eterna 63 500T for a night concert. It looked great even though the concert stage was very poorly lit. The stage had daylight and tungsten lights mixed, but the Fuji film handled it really well. I was quite nervous during the shoot, and was very pleasantly surprised with the results. Unfortunately, the concert footage did not make it into the final cut.

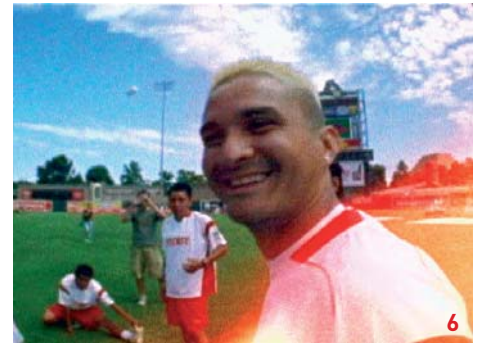
---

„It was great. We had some shadow issues and shifting sunlight in Dallas, and we still got rich, vivid images. I was thrilled.“

**Q How about the quality of service at Pro8mm?**

Pro8mm is great. They are a professional operation with a small company's "can do" attitude. Their rental cameras are always in tip-top shape and the lab is good. While there are certainly better options in LA for each individual step, such as processing at Fotokem, and Telecine at one of LA's many great post production houses, it is very hard to beat the quality for price provided by the Pro8mm packages. Finally, Phil Vigeant is an awesome resource for advice, tips and general guidance in using the 8 mm format. ■





1. The DoggiCam in use at the LG Event: with the Pro 8mm Classic Beaulieu camera.

2. & 3. The Fig Rig employed on the 2006 Copa Tecate Project.

4. Handheld shots for the 2006 Copa Tecate Project: Jeremy Smith with a Pro 8mm Classic Beaulieu camera.

5. Jeremy Smith using a Beaulieu camera with Angenieux lens, which actually comes from a 16mm camera and was adapted to C-mount.

6. Special effect: Roll-out transition.

7. Dog Tyson in a scene with a washed out look.

8. Cinematographer Ian Farrington, SmartAss Productions, using an Aaton A-Minima mounted on a Manfrotto Fig Rig.



[www.smartassprod.com](http://www.smartassprod.com)

Here is a film example shot on Super 8:  
The 2006 Copa Tecate music video

Advertisement

**FILMSHOOTING | COM**  
[www.filmshooting.com](http://www.filmshooting.com)