

'Dating' at the Festival

Stefan Marc's new film, set in Newport Beach, premieres April 26.

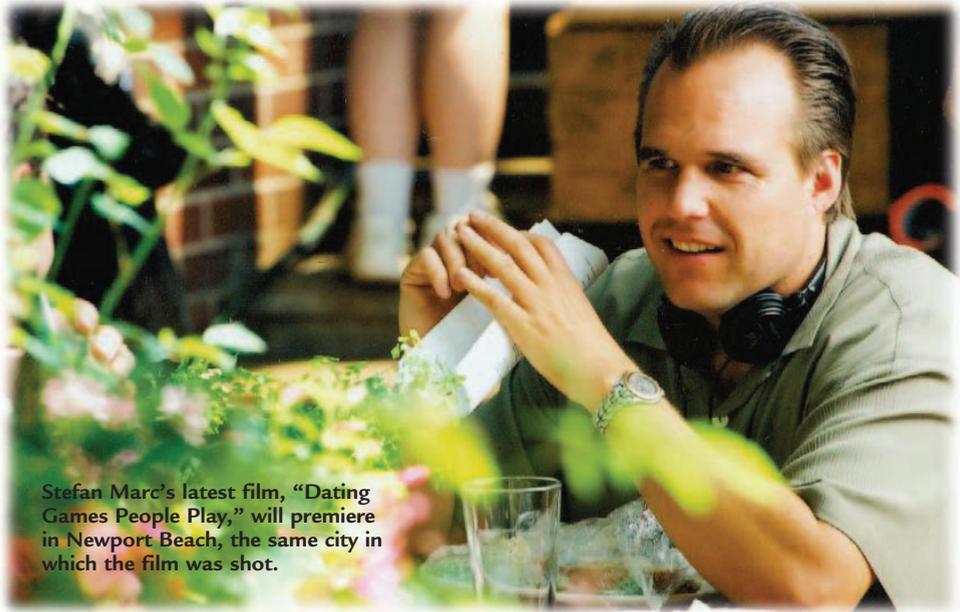
Newport Beach is a fun and glamorous city with a lively dating scene that is highlighted in "The OC," as well as in a hundred bars, restaurants and clubs with pricey menus and views of the water.

Now a feature-length film, "Dating Games People Play," takes up where the hit TV show leaves off, bringing the ways and wiles of coastal romance into big-screen focus. Stefan Marc, the film's writer, director and producer, says he "always kind of envisioned shooting it in Newport Beach," where he lived for 12 years. So it is a thrill for him that his movie will premiere at the Newport Beach Film Festival on April 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the beautiful Lido Theatre on Balboa Peninsula.

"Dating Games People Play" is a romantic comedy that pokes fun at the divergent perspectives that men and women have on dating and relationships. Nick Jenkins, played by Austin Peck ("Days of Our Lives"), finds himself single again as his relationship with his fiancée falls apart. With his roommate and best friend Jed Rollins, played by director/producer Marc, Nick jumps back into the dating world. Soon after he meets Mona, played by Leslie Rae Bega ("Sopranos"), his real troubles begin.

Nick is torn between building his business and becoming financially secure or committing to a relationship as Mona begins to put some far-from-subtle pressure on him in hopes they'll become exclusive. Nick seeks the advice of his parents and other friends who strongly recommend that he stay single.

With this backdrop in place, Jed and Nick set out on a mission to investigate marriage. Mona, Jed and Robin (Stephanie



Stefan Marc's latest film, "Dating Games People Play," will premiere in Newport Beach, the same city in which the film was shot.

Brown) tag along as they meander through the awkward situations they encounter during their dating escapades.

Marc says he loves all the aspects of making a film, but "directing is probably,

"Dating Games People Play"

Premieres Tuesday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lido Theatre, 3459 Via Lido, Newport Beach.

For tickets and information call 1-866-NBFF-TIX or log on to www.NewportBeachFilmFest.com
The film's website is www.datinggamespeopleplay.com

creatively, the most fulfilling. It was just kind of fun to take it from the page all the way to the end." At the same time, he says, "I knew I had to go out and produce and raise the money for it, otherwise I wouldn't

be able to write, direct or act in it."

The producing part of the process seems to be the most difficult aspect of the process because money is everything - it is needed for camera equipment, the grip and "...people obviously want to get paid." Luckily, his old neighbor, Newport Beach Film Commissioner Joseph Cleary, helped "get the film made and shot in Newport Beach." Like executive producer Jeff Colvin, who came in after Marc had been raising money for a year, Cleary brought in a lot of people to invest in the film.

Stefan Marc didn't just jump into the movie business. After receiving his B.A. in economics at USC, he and a business partner started a company called The Entertainment Channel, "which played exclusively in Orange County hotels," he says. "We wrote, directed and produced a travel log program that highlighted all the things to do in Orange County. That's how I started developing a passion for

BY BLAKE FRINO

doing the writing, directing and all that.”

Marc sold the company in the late '90s and began doing new business development and raising money for startup companies. In the midst of his work, he'd wrote four screenplays and decided that he wanted to make a small budget film. He quit his full time job in 2001 to pursue his goal, choosing "Dating Games People Play" as his first feature-length project. He says, "I specifically wrote it as a small budget feature ...making sure we didn't have too many locations, that we could shoot with a limited amount of money."

Filming mainly in Newport Beach, Marc chose locations not only because he liked them, but also because he "wanted to get places that would look really beautiful" on film. Locations include restaurants like Dolce, Joe's Crab Shack, the Bungalow, the Galley Café and the Cannery, as well as Dennis Rodman's Josh Slocum's, the Lido Marina, the Wedge, Christ Church By the Sea and Fry's Market and Liquor Store.

Moviegoers at the film's festival showing will enjoy seeing a shot of the Lido Theatre, the same theater where they will be sitting.

The film has promising qualities that could win it nationwide distribution. A student audience at UCI loved it, and it scored a world premiere at the World of Comedy International Film Festival in Toronto. Marc says, "I had a lot of filmmakers come up to me afterwards and tell me how funny they thought the film was. In addition, the film festival director said the laughter was so loud that she could hear it all the way in the back in the projection booth...She says that very rarely happens."

The comedy in the film covers a topic that is the epitome of many lives. Marc says, "I've had women and men go, 'Oh, my God, I've dated that person.' They can really relate to it." **OCM**

Hollywood South



The 6th annual Newport Beach Film Festival is arriving - bigger and better than ever - at theaters near you, April 21-30.

"We have been very proud of the growth and evolution of the Newport Beach Film Festival over the last six years," says Gregg Schwenk, CEO and executive director of the Festival. "2005 will be our strongest year yet. We are planning not only an incredible 10-day event, but we'll be expanding our film and entertainment offerings throughout the year."

This year's festival spotlights more than 300 films from over 30 countries, including features, shorts, documentaries and animation. The films will compete for a series of awards including Jury Awards and Audience Awards. In addition to film screenings, the Festival will host several premiere galas, yacht parties and question and answer sessions with filmmakers. Some 25,000 moviegoers and film industry insiders attended last year's event, and an even bigger crowd is expected this year.

Opening night will feature the U.S. premiere of "Crash," which stars Sandra Bullock, Don Cheadle and Matt Dillon, at Edwards Big Newport at 7:30 p.m. A gala

will follow at the Fashion Island Courtyard, with ticket prices at \$100.

"Layer Cake," directorial debut of "Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels" and "Snatch" producer Matthew Vaughn, will have its West Coast premiere April 22, followed by a post-party at Newport Beach restaurant Ozumo. Tickets are \$30.

On April 23, the Jim Henson Company will have its 50th anniversary celebration featuring a retrospective screening of "Labyrinth and The Dark Crystal" at Edwards Island 6; tickets are \$15.

Also on April 23, the already sold out "Ringers: Lord of the Fans" will have its West Coast Premiere, spotlighting the influence of Lord of the Rings on Western culture, at 7:30 p.m. at Lido Theater, with a celebration afterward at the Hard Rock Café.

The West Coast premiere of "Black and White," a South Australian film based on a true story of a courtroom battle over the murder of a 9-year-old girl, will be on April 24. The screening is at Lido Theater at 5 p.m. with a post party at Newport Harbor Nautical Museum featuring gourmet food by Australian chef Maggie Beer; tickets are \$40. **OCM**

For tickets to the Newport Beach Film Festival, call (866) NBFF-TIX or go to www.NewportBeachFilmFest.com.