

Spring 2004

## ONFILMMAKING

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Actress Catalina Sandino Moreno in a scene from *Maria Full of Grace* shot by cinematographer Jim Denault. Photo by Christopher Corral Vega. ©HBO Films/Fine Line Features

**Maria Full of Grace - Explores Human Side Of A Dark World**

*Maria Full of Grace* is a window on a desperate world. The movie follows a 17-year-old girl whose work at a rose plantation provides the main source of income for her poor Colombian family. She loses her job after becoming pregnant. The father is a man she doesn't love. With her mother and sister depending on her, Maria feels compelled to earn money as a "mule" carrying hard drugs over the border to the United States.

*Maria Full of Grace*, an HBO Films project in association with Tucan Producciones Altercine, won an Audience Award at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. It was written and directed by Joshua Marston and photographed by Jim Denault, whose previous credits include *Nadja*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Real Women Have Curves*, *City of Ghosts*, and the pilot for *Push*, Nevada.



Actors Caitlin Rose and Bryan Marshall in the indie feature *Sinkhole*.

**Southern Comfort - Paul Schattel Guides Sinkhole Down a Filmic Path**

Writer-director Paul Schattel didn't allow a bare bones budget to keep him from shooting *Sinkhole* in 35 mm format. He recruited a professional cast and crew who dedicated their weekends to the project for four months, and made maximum use of available light. The feature film, which exposes the underworld of a rural town in the South, was produced at practical locations in Asheville, North Carolina. It features Bryan Marshall as Jason, an ex-school teacher whose reputation is marred by a questionable past. When he discovers the body of a dead girl, Jason becomes embroiled in a local drug ring.

"It's a modest story by design, so we kept it very simple," Schattel says. "We didn't want images that were too slick or overproduced. The story needed a gritty, raw approach. We had a small crew, who knew how to run-and-gun when necessary."

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