

LaserPacific
Media Corporation

Customer Success Story

Autodesk® Lustre®
Autodesk® Smoke®
Autodesk® Wiretap™

We've set up an extremely efficient, self-contained pipeline to smoothly take us from film scanning to final delivery in the widest variety of formats. Autodesk's workflow solution for our high-concept, immediate-delivery trailer market helps us deliver the very best quality product in a fraction of the time it would normally take.

—Carl McKay
Smoke Artist
LaserPacific Media Corporation

No failure trailers.

The combination of Autodesk® Lustre® and Autodesk® Smoke® systems software helps LaserPacific deliver the films before the films.



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Project Summary

There's no doubt about it: we love the movies. More and more of us are bringing bigger and better screens into our homes and tricking them out with elaborate sound systems, in the hopes of replicating that inimitable feeling of settling into a theater chair with tub of overpriced popcorn and feeling your feet stick to the floor.

Whether you're in the theater or at home, however, ask yourself this: how do you pick the movies you want to see? For most people, a deciding factor is the quality of the movie trailer. It's the all-important "film before the film"—often appearing a year or more before the film is released—that drives viewers into theater seats to determine whether a motion picture is a hit or a miss. The importance of a cutting-edge trailer cannot be overestimated.

And when it comes to cutting edge, you just don't get any sharper than Hollywood's LaserPacific Media Corporation. The company has been pioneering technology and refining the production process for more than a quarter of a century, and has consistently revolutionized the way the industry works. Among other achievements, the company has picked up six Emmy Awards for Technical and Engineering Excellence over the course of 20 years.

These tributes are all about the brains behind the creation of cinematic beauty: the thinking behind the Electronic Laboratory™ and SuperComputer™ Assembly System, and their contributions to the development of 24P HDTV postproduction, among others.

Autodesk®

Enter Autodesk

So it is no small thing that the creative technology experts at LaserPacific (a wholly owned subsidiary of Kodak since 2003) have chosen a combination of Autodesk Smoke and Autodesk Lustre systems software to help provide a full finishing and digital intermediate (DI) service for the creation of feature film trailers for both television and theater viewing.

“Trailers are unique in that every single one is like a prototype,” says Robert Hyams, producer at LaserPacific. “The market has expanded to deliver a multitude of versions that are unique to the continent, or even the country, in which they are to be viewed. *World Trade Center* was a great example, which was versioned for both domestic and international markets.”

With that many versions of each trailer required for each film, time is always at a premium.

“We’ve set up an extremely efficient, self-contained pipeline to smoothly take us from film scanning to final delivery in the widest variety of formats,” says Carl McKay, a veteran Smoke artist at LaserPacific. “Autodesk’s workflow solution for our high-concept, immediate-delivery trailer market helps us deliver the very best quality product in a fraction of the time it would normally take.”

Considering that most trailers need to be ready before visual effects, final editing, and sometimes even principal shooting are complete, casual viewers could be forgiven for thinking that plenty of time is provided for creating such an important portion of the marketing push. Not so fast, casual viewer: LaserPacific rarely has more than two to three days to turn in a top-notch trailer.

With such tight turnarounds, LaserPacific president Leon Silverman is quick to praise the concurrent workflow possible between Smoke and Lustre as a vital part of the trailer-making process.

“We recently worked on a trailer for *El Cantante*, an upcoming release from PictureHouse, starring Jennifer Lopez and Mark Anthony,” says Silverman by way of example. “In a two-minute trailer, there were over 150 cuts. That’s more than one per second, with color looks and many effects to boot. The ability to move back and forth from Smoke and Lustre, tracking grading and editorial changes along the way, was absolutely crucial.”

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President
LaserPacific Media Corporation



© 2006 Nuyorican Productions and R-Caro Productions, *El Cantante*. All Rights Reserved. Photo credit Eric Liebowitz.

The Pipeline

LaserPacific's film trailer client list includes the industry's biggest names, including Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros. Studios, MGM, and Focus Features. Trailers are finished for both 35 mm film and digital cinema theatrical release, as well as for all video deliverables, including high- and standard-definition television, DVD, and the Internet. To date, the company has used the combination of Smoke and Lustre to complete film trailer packages for some 20 feature films, including *World Trade Center*, *Babel*, *For Your Consideration*, and *Blood and Chocolate*.

"First and foremost, we're able to attract clients through the pull of our talent," says Hyams. "Our team of producers, editors, and colorists has many years of postproduction experience between them, particularly for the marketing of feature films. Of course, great people benefit from great tools. With the increasing pace of change in technology, as well as the emphasis on the many different digital and video formats now required for a major studio marketing campaign, we're one of the few companies around to have all the different machines and tools today's trailers need."

A typical project—if there is such a thing—goes something like this: the LaserPacific team receives low-resolution offline cuts of the trailer, with temporary visual effects and titles as placeholders. They use Smoke to conform and assemble an entirely uncompressed timeline before performing final opticals and online finishing. This process can include transitions, graphics, titles, and various visual effects. The Smoke work is then transferred to Lustre for color grading using the Autodesk® Wiretap™ API (application programming interface).



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Connect It with Wiretap

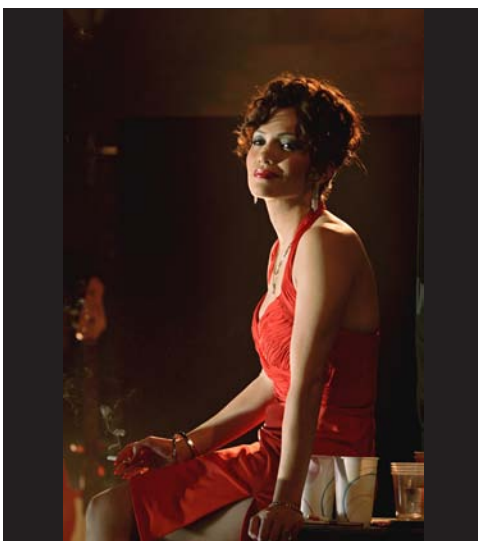
"The Wiretap connection is certainly a unique component in our work flow," says Chris Jacobson, an award-winning colorist at LaserPacific. "Wiretap allows us to easily share media between Smoke and Lustre with no time-consuming rendering in between. In essence, the editorial and DI color sessions can happen simultaneously, making our clients very happy. With a pipeline like this, you really can be in two places at once. It brings multitasking to a whole new level."

With Wiretap easily passing media and metadata between Smoke and Lustre, a completed color grade can be smoothly returned to Smoke for final editing or simply sent straight to the film recorder. McKay agrees with Jacobson, however, in that easy switching between Smoke and Lustre provides irresistible flexibility.

"Alterations are pretty much inevitable in our business, and smooth transfers from Smoke to Lustre and back again make our job a lot easier," says McKay. "Smoke allows us the flexibility to receive a new reference and efficiently slip and slide clips and effects on the new timeline, all in a 2K environment."

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Photo credit Eric Liebowitz.

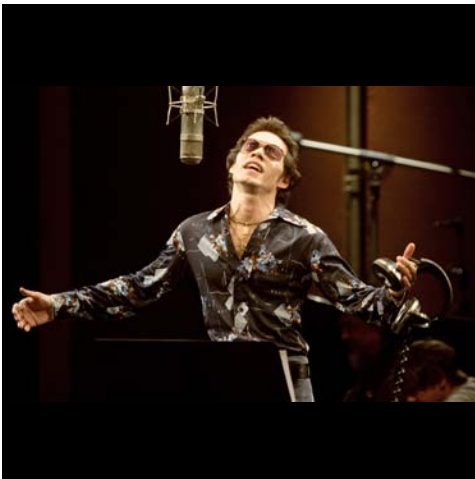
Trailing No One

It's true what they say: you never get a second chance to make a first impression. We have all experienced the approving nods—or detected the scoffing giggles—going on around us in a darkened theater as the trailers flicker on the big screen. Make no mistake: minds are being made up, maybe even yours, and a movie's success or failure may well hang in the balance. In this exacting and stressful business, LaserPacific leads the way—with a little help from Autodesk.

To learn more about Autodesk Lustre and Autodesk Smoke, visit www.autodesk.com/lustre or www.autodesk.com/smoke.



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