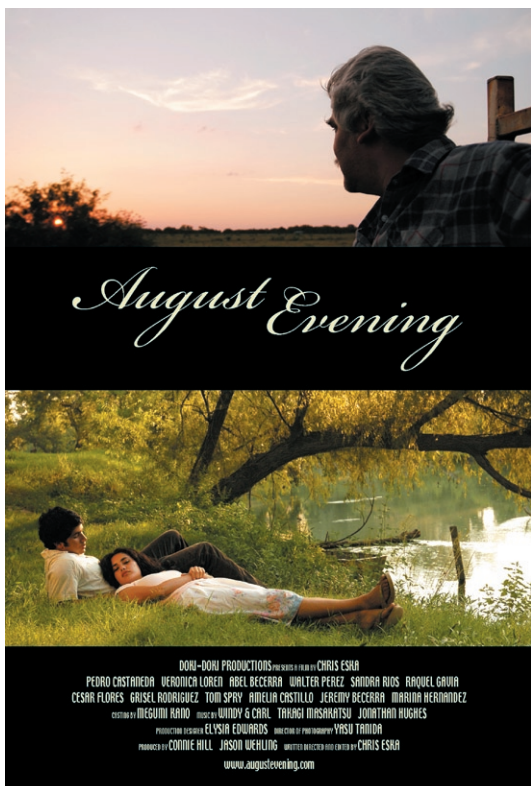


August Evening

Dream come true

Independent filmmakers finish award-winning feature film using Adobe® Creative Suite® 3 Production Premium software



When independent filmmaker Chris Eska graduated from UCLA’s film directing program in 2003, he scarcely dreamed that just four years later, he would win the crowning honor—the Target Award for Best Feature—from the Los Angeles Film Festival. But in summer 2007, his film, *August Evening*, not only won the Target Award but also garnered recognition for Best Acting Ensemble. *August Evening* has since also won the Maverick Award for Best Film at the Woodstock Film Festival and has won a Spirit Award: the John Cassavetes Award for best film with a budget under \$500,000. Creation of the film involved a big dose of talent as well as industry-leading editing and postproduction software—Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium, including Adobe Premiere® Pro CS3 software.

“I started out in film school editing projects using Adobe Premiere,” says Eska. “Today, I continue to use Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium because it offers affordability, a ton of creative options, and an integrated workflow.”



August Evening features rich, vibrant HD footage assembled using Adobe Premiere Pro software.



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Chris Eska, writer/director/editor, *August Evening*

An award-winning project

Like most independent filmmakers, Eska had to find a way to make his film on a shoestring budget. At the same time, to get noticed and garner a distribution deal, the film would have to be exceptional in every way. Eska attended the 2005 Sundance Film Festival with a friend, and was inspired to embark on his first feature film project. "After seeing several award-winning films at Sundance, I thought to myself, 'I can make a film like this,'" he says. Right away, he began gathering friends with filmmaking backgrounds to start on the project. They rented houses, slept on air mattresses, cooked together, scouted for acting talent, and ultimately shot and produced the film in Eska's tiny hometown of Gonzales, Texas.

Although Eska says he felt pressured to make a controversial, glamorous feature film, he decided to focus on topics close to his heart: family, community, and the bittersweet nature of life in a Latino community in South Texas. What emerged is *August Evening*, a film that follows aging, undocumented farm worker Jaime and his young, widowed daughter-in-law Lupe, as they journey across Texas and their lives are thrown into upheaval. The film is deeply rooted in nature, featuring humming cicadas, ethereal music, chicken farms, meaningful glances, and rustling leaves. Both heartbreaking and heartwarming, *August Evening* depicts the struggles Mexican-American immigrants face, while effectively illuminating the Japanese idea of "mono no aware"—finding peace with life's imperfections.

A digital intermediate workflow

Eska and crew originally shot the film on high-definition HDCAM video. They then down-converted the footage and edited it offline as DVCAM files using Adobe Premiere Pro software. This initial cut—an epic 2 hours and 20 minutes in length—was accepted to the Los Angeles Film Festival. Meanwhile, top Latino film distributor Maya Pictures bought the distribution rights for the film and scheduled a tentative theatrical release for May 2008.



There is no substitute for quality when it comes to filmmaking. Eska and his team used Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium to complete the online edit and conform the film.



For screening at the Los Angeles Film Festival, Eska needed an HDCAM tape. In preparation for theatrical distribution, he needed a 35-millimeter film print. After meeting filmmaker and teacher Jacob Rosenberg at a class sponsored by the Austin Film Society, Eska and Rosenberg worked together to first create an HD online edit for the festival and ultimately a film print from the HD online edit. "After seeing *August Evening*, I was impressed. I told Chris I would help him complete the online edit and conform the film," says Rosenberg. "At our new shop, Bandito Brothers, we had the resources to help. We digitized and mastered the film in HD from the original source material and got a beautiful film print as well."

Using a custom Boxx HD [pro] editing workstation and Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium software, the *August Evening* team started an online edit of the HD masters in preparation for film out. They boiled the footage down from 10 reels to a manageable 7 and created a DV guide track referencing each reel. With the guide tracks as a reference, they then re-digitized and assembled the reels in HD. Capturing in the CineForm Prospect HD format enabled them to edit more than five hours of raw HD footage

off of the internal hard drives on a desktop workstation. The entire project was assembled in HD using Adobe Premiere Pro CS3 software. "We conformed the entire film using Adobe Premiere Pro with CineForm and then brought the files into an IRIDAS SpeedGrade system for color correction," explains Eska.

Maya Pictures asked for two deliverables: a textless 35mm digital negative with composited sub-titles as well as an HDCAM SR textless master file and a D5 texted file. Once the film was color-corrected, the *August Evening* team created two sets of DPX files and sent them to eFilm to create a film negative and HDCAM SR master.

Adobe Photoshop® CS3 Extended software was used to create templates for the film titles and Adobe After Effects® CS3 helped the team produce the final credit roll. "Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium provides a single HD solution where we can do everything we need to—from editing to titles—all on our own," says Eska. "Because of the smooth integration among Adobe tools, we don't have to worry about complex file format translations or conversions."

Company

Chris Eska/*August Evening*

Gonzales, Texas

www.augustevening.com

www.chriseska.com

Challenges

- Complete an award-winning, self-financed feature film on a shoestring budget
- Edit the film from start to finish in HD resolution and go directly out to 35mm film
- Experiment creatively

Solution

Take advantage of Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium for HD editing as well as creation of titles and credits

Benefits

- Won Target Award at Los Angeles Film Festival
- Garnered distribution agreement with Maya Pictures
- Produced film of exceptional quality
- Integration among Adobe applications streamlined postproduction
- Minimized costs by using desktop tools and digital intermediate workflow
- Obtained more creative freedom when compared with renting editing bays or using proprietary systems

Toolkit

• Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium. Components used include:

- Adobe After Effects CS3
- Adobe Photoshop CS3 Extended
- Adobe Premiere Pro CS3
- Boxx HD [pro] editing workstation running Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- Apple Power Macintosh G4 computers



To cater to English- and Spanish-speaking audiences, Eska and his team created high-quality HD master files both with and without subtitles.



“The great thing about desktop software and Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium in particular is that it offers all the features found in high-end systems, at a fraction of the cost and with unequalled creative freedom.”

Chris Eska, writer/director/editor, *August Evening*

Low costs, creative options

The Adobe HD workflow enabled Eska to create a self-financed film for what he says was “a ridiculously small amount of \$40,000.” Instead of spending hundreds of dollars per hour in an HD editing bay or using expensive proprietary systems, Eska and team wielded affordable hardware and Adobe software to realize their creative vision on a small budget. In addition, Eska says the Adobe HD workflow is freeing from a creative standpoint because everyone has the time and tools they need to experiment without the pressure of knowing that costs are mounting. “Creating a digital intermediate

using Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium and going out to film was a lot easier than I thought it was going to be,” says Eska. “Plus, the film looks beautiful—the quality is exceptional.”

A major accomplishment

The *August Evening* team can be proud of what they have achieved: an online edit of a film in HD on the desktop. By using the online edit as a digital intermediate and printing it directly to film, they saved hundreds of thousands of dollars that would otherwise be spent renting high-end overpriced editing systems, optically printing every effect, title, and transition, and spending many hours in a commercial digital intermediate color bay.

“As a young independent filmmaker, desktop software is virtually all I have ever known,” says Eska. “The great thing about desktop software and Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium in particular is that it offers all the features found in high-end systems, at a fraction of the cost, and with unequalled creative freedom. It is fair to say that Adobe software helped me realize my dream.”



Adobe

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