



the
untitled
CAMDEN
film

The Maine landscape has long been an inspiration for filmmakers and has provided a stunning backdrop for countless movies, including *The Cider House Rules*, *In the Bedroom* and *Message in a Bottle*. Actors and crews keep coming back to Maine, drawn not just to the scenery, but also to the welcoming nature of the locals. This summer, the charming coastal town of Camden set the stage for a yet-to-be-titled film chronicling a young woman's story of personal loss.

The plot follows 27-year-old journalist, Charlie, as she returns home to Camden, Maine, after the death of her best childhood friend, Katherine. Having been asked to craft a eulogy for the memorial, Charlie struggles with a fittingly artistic portrayal of her friend amidst an ever-evolving dramatic backdrop of

conflicting relationships and self-reflection. The story documents Charlie's first experience with tragedy, that first loss that makes us aware of our own mortality and turns us into adults. The screenplay was based on the personal experiences of the film's director/co-writer Caroline von Kuhn and lead actress/co-writer Caitlin Fitzgerald, both of whom suffered such a loss in their early 20s.

Caitlin Fitzgerald, an up-and-coming actress and Camden native, returned home for the summer to work on the film. "It had long been my dream to return to Maine to make movies, to tell Maine stories, to share the beauty and magic of Maine with the rest of the world, and to express my gratitude to the state that in my heart I still call home," she has said. An actress from the age of eight, Caitlin left Maine for New York after high school to study at the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. She got her first big break in 2009 with a starring role in the romantic comedy, *It's Complicated*, alongside Meryl Streep. More recently, she played the female lead in Ed Burns' latest film, *Newlyweds*, which closed the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival.

Director Caroline von Kuhn and I have been regular correspondents for some time now, and I can honestly say that she is a breath of fresh air. In addition to co-writing and directing, Caroline also plays the role of "Katherine," the childhood friend who passed away. She is a theater director, and somehow manages to work for the Tribeca Film Festival in her spare time! She clearly has an interest in all things film. We spoke at length about both Caitlin and actress/producer Emily Best, their experiences while filming in Maine, their desire to help bring more films to the state, and their high hope for a Maine Film Tax Credit. Caroline gushed about her unmatched Camden experience. She quickly fell in love with both the locals and local businesses, including Rockland's Rock City Roasters, who graciously donated enough coffee to keep the actors and crew in tip-top working order during their long and often overnight filming schedule. When asked, she shared that she often has a hard time summarizing the plot of the movie. She noted that while there is heartbreak in this woman's struggle to move forward after such an intense tragedy, the film is far from maudlin. The humor and masterfully staged group scenes balance out the quieter moments.

Though she's not a native, Emily Best's family does own a small cabin right here in Maine. Her background is impressive, ranging from jazz vocal studies at the Taller de Musics — a jazz conservatory in Barcelona, Spain — to the co-founding of the ABroad Stage Company (ABSCo) to collaborating on a business with her father. She also produced and narrated an animated children's short called *The Deep*, which most recently screened at the Cannes Short Film Corner. In the film, she plays the role of producer,

"I have to say with confidence that we would have to work to NOT get a gorgeous film in Maine."

and can also be seen on screen as "Grace." In short, she's incredibly accomplished for someone her age!

Behind these three extraordinarily talented women is a small crew with mighty credentials. Susan Main plays "Jen" and also acts as the vocal coach; Salomé M. Krell, another very talented actress, plays the role of "Lola"; Emily Alexander-Wilmeth serves as produc-



LORI TRAKOS

On the set with Caroline von Kuhn

tion manager; Eve M. Cohen is the director of photography; Liam Brady is the assistant director; and Allie Birney works the sound. Judging from the production blog that various members of the cast and crew maintained at camdenmainefilm.com, they had a fantastic time. Though the 24-day shoot gave them very little downtime and everyone was exhausted, they all truly pulled together as a team. Caroline mentioned how proud she was of the whole crew, and that she hoped that every set in the future could be just as wonderful, comprised of such an extraordinary group of people. I'm sure it didn't hurt to end each day or night surrounded by the rocky coast, rolling green hills and quaint village streets.

Maine is a gorgeous place — charming, splendid, bursting with life and talent. We have some of the best people and businesses around. As Caroline puts it, "I have to say with confidence that we would have to work to NOT get a gorgeous film in Maine. To be able to shoot in the natural splendor of Maine, in the summer, and at some of these locations, which take my breath away each time we get to set, is the most incredible gift." Because of the locations and the generosity of everyone they have met along the way, their film has

the highest production value. Here's hoping that Caroline will spread the word about her experience filming here in Maine. This untitled film may just open the door for other Hollywood projects in Maine!

—KRISTAL KENVILLE