

# THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL  
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## Film Company in Sag Harbor

BY KATE MAIER

Beatrice Alda, a co-owner of Forever Films, said that running a film and commercial production company out of Sag Harbor isn't as impossible as it seems, despite the distance from Manhattan. Last week, she and her partner, Jennifer Brooke, shot their 13th commercial for their biggest client, 1.800.OKCable, at the Ross School.

After living on the East End for 10 years, they still go to the city, where Ms. Alda grew up and Ms. Brooke lived for many years, "for the culture and the food."

"Film is about illusion — you can really do it anywhere," said Ms. Alda, although it does get a little lonely.

"When we have an industry party, it's just us," joked Ms. Brooke. "Once a year we go out to dinner alone."

The two have been running Forever Films together out of a little blue house on a residential street in Sag Harbor for four years. The company is an outgrowth of Stop the Bleeding, a commercial production company that Ms. Alda, who has a film degree from New York University, started about 10 years ago. With the help of Ms. Brooke, who gave up a career in advertising when she moved to Sag Harbor, the company has expanded into "a hybrid of everything," Ms. Alda said.

"We're doing nonprofit spots, commercials, feature films, a series pilot, lifetime documentaries for people who aren't famous," and even home video transfer, she said.

"We're not above anything," said Ms. Alda, who has turned Super 8 films and photographs into mini-movie biographies. "Pieces like that we really have a thing for — because it's storytelling. We both like that aspect of filmmaking — we come to it with the same love of the process."

Whether it be a bar mitzvah documentary or a surprise for Grandma's 80th birthday, the team at Forever Films is up for the challenge despite an increasingly busy schedule. "We'll fit it in between bigger jobs," said Ms. Alda, who produces, writes, and directs with Ms. Brooke.

They contract with cinematographers, editors, and crew to produce their films. "We're so good, we know how good we're not," said Ms. Brooke, who explained that she'd rather hire a professional director of photography than shoot something poorly herself.

Most of the commercials that Ms. Alda and Ms. Brooke have produced for 1.800.OKCable are "music-driven," Ms. Alda said, promoting up-and-coming bands like the stars of the commercial that was shot on Feb. 7, the New York City-based Future86.



Jennifer Brooke and Beatrice Alda, co-owners of Sag Harbor's Forever Films, held it all together during a commercial shoot at the Ross School. *Morgan McGivern*

They also use East End talent, though. "It's actually shameful how many local people we use," Ms. Brooke said of her rotating cast of actors. "We've used pretty much everyone we know."

For clients like 1.800.OKCable, which Ms. Alda described as an "entirely metro-area company," maintaining the creative illusion is important. The two are not opposed to traveling for a shoot, but it's simple enough to get most of the work done nearby. It's all about "adding urban touches, picking up on the steel elements in the room. We've shot every brick wall, every loft space out here," Ms. Alda said.

The Second Nature health food stores, the Bay Street Theatre, and La Fondita are a few of the local clients that Ms. Alda and Ms. Brooke have worked for. "In restaurant work, the idea starts with a great track," Ms. Alda said. For La Fondita, a Mexican takeout restaurant in Amagansett, they used a "real mariachi band" to create a spot that was both low budget and comedic.

Some of their best work, they said, was a series of commercials shot for Save East Hampton Airport, a group advocating for the repair of a damaged runway at the town facility. According to Ms. Brooke, they were too effective. "We did such a good job, they shut the runway down," she said. "The group is now defunct."

Lately, Ms. Brooke and Ms. Alda have been working on a pilot for a television series,

although they were secretive about the details. And since October they have been shooting their first feature-length documentary, which Ms. Brooke estimated was about three-quarters done.

Called "Out Over 60," it tells the stories of gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals who came out of the closet late in life; for example, "an 83-year-old woman who came out three years ago," Ms. Alda said.

"I think a lot of senior citizens will be interested in this," Ms. Brooke said, adding, "We don't want it to be a niche film. It's about 'how old you have to be to find your true self.'"

"A lot of these people were not unhappy" in their former lifestyles, Ms. Alda said, "but it's inspiring — they feel enormously energized" after coming out.

Like most of their recent work, "Out Over 60" is being shot on high-end digital media. "A lot of our reel is film; we were very committed to film," Ms. Alda said. But technological advances have made it possible to shoot digitally, which is significantly less expensive. With the lenses she's using, she said, "you get that same depth" that can be achieved on film.

According to the testimonials on their Web site, [www.foreverfilmsinc.com](http://www.foreverfilmsinc.com), their customers are happy. The commercial for Second Nature, which features an elderly man swinging from a rope into a pond, is a good example. "They've been running it for four years," Ms. Brooke said. "They really should hire us again."