

Villains Snags Philippe Andre, Guard Brothers

By Christine Champagne

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.— French director Philippe Andre and the British directing duo Guard Brothers (Tom and Charles) have signed with bi-coastal Villains for spot and music video work in North America. The deal marks the first time that either Andre or Guard Brothers has had formal representation in the U.S., although Andre has worked stateside before, shooting Miller Lite and New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) spots for the U.S. market through his past affiliation with now defunct Harry Nash.



Philippe Andre

Villains owner/president Robin Benson said she sees bright prospects in the U.S. for both Andre and Guard Brothers.

In fact, according to Benson, Andre just won his first stateside job through Villains—a Sharp commercial out of Wieden+Kennedy (W+K), New York, that will go into production in July. “The script is amazing,” Andre remarked, “and the creatives are fantastic. Wieden+Kennedy is such a good agency.”

Working with top agencies such as W+K is a priority for Andre, who said that he will be selective about the assignments

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he takes in the U.S.—even if it means doing less work. “It is better to do a couple of great jobs than to do ten that are average,” maintained the director, who will continue to shoot spots in France via Wanda Productions, Saint Denis la Plaine, France, and in Europe through Bikini Films, London.

As for the type of fare that he aims to garner through Villains, Andre said that he enjoys effects-driven work that allows for the infusion of emotion. “The combination is a bit difficult to find,” Andre mused, “but I think the best scripts call for you to have a very good knowledge of post and camera techniques and on top of that [the ability] to add humanity.”

Andre’s proclivity for combining effects and emotion is particularly evident in a spot he directed for Peugeot titled “Metamorphosis,” in which a run-down wreck of a car attempts to transform itself into a gorgeous Peugeot 206 to gain the love and admiration of those who walk by it on the street.

Not all of Andre’s work is effects-intensive, though. A simple spot for the candy company Kinder titled “Big Kids” depicts adults reverting to childlike behavior, and was shot with a hand-held camera. “Big Kids” is actually one of Benson’s favorite Andre-directed spots. “It was so lovely and charming and yet so innovative,” Benson said. “I got really engaged and involved in it very quickly.”

In addition to spots, Andre has helmed music videos for artists including All Saints, Roger Sanchez, Morcheeba and Emilie Simon. The director noted that he has a particular passion for the music video form and music in general. At one point in his life, Andre studied music at the Paris Conservatory and thought he would one day become a conductor. But his focus shifted, and he earned a degree in film from ESRA, Paris.

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