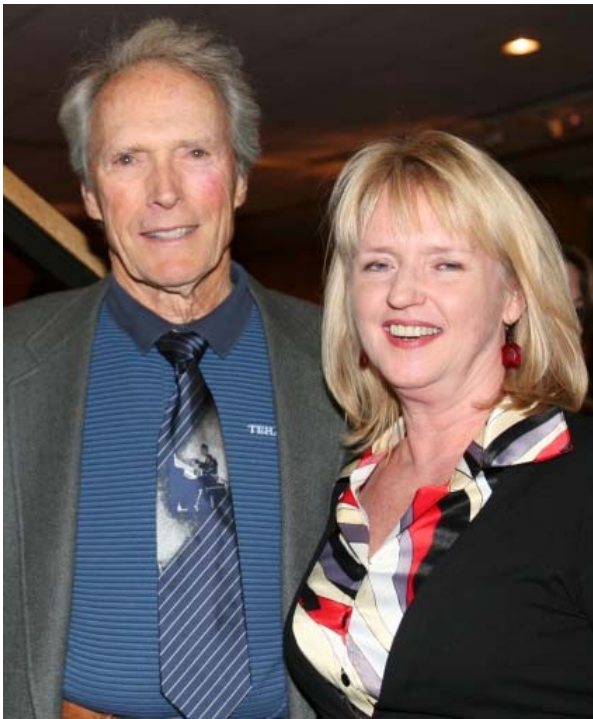




Spotlight Shines on St. Pete/Clearwater at Hollywood Premiere
Locally-Shot Film Draws Industry Raves, Oscar Buzz for Cusack

St. Petersburg/Clearwater, FL (December 3, 2007) – Officials from Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) joined movie-industry luminaries in Los Angeles earlier this week for the premiere of “Grace is Gone,” a feature film shot partially on location at Fort DeSoto Park in Pinellas County and other West Florida locations.



VSPC’s Film Commission partnered with the Weinstein Co., the film’s distributor, for the premiere, which was held at the Samuel Goldwyn Theater at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills Wednesday night.

“We rolled out everything we had to bring this production to our area, so to attend this premiere is the capstone of a great experience,” said VSPC Film Commissioner Jennifer Parramore after the celebrity-studded private screening.

The film’s star John Cusack was on hand for the event, as was reviewer Leonard Maltin and Hollywood veteran Clint Eastwood, who composed the film’s musical score. The soundtrack includes

contributions from composers Sheryl Crow, Carole Bayer-Sager and British crooner Jamie Cullum.

The heart-wrenching storyline features Cusack as a man whose wife is killed while serving in Iraq. In desperation, he takes his two daughters to their favorite Florida theme

park—Cypress Gardens, aka “Enchanted Gardens”—to break the tragic news. The movie’s defining scene takes place at sunset at Fort DeSoto Park in Pinellas County.

The film was written and directed by James C. Strouse. The original production was through Plum Pictures and New Crime Productions, and the Weinstein Company picked up distribution rights at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

The film, which will have a limited release starting Dec. 7, was awarded both Best Screenplay and the Audience Award at Sundance, and Oscar buzz has been swirling around Cusack’s low-key yet profound portrayal of a nearsighted, blue-collar widower in crisis.



“We’re building a film industry in St. Pete/Clearwater,” said Film Commissioner Parramore, “and partnering with top-notch producers like Plum Pictures and the Weinstein Company is as good as it gets,” she added.

PHOTOS: Top: *Clint Eastwood and VSPC Film Commissioner Jennifer Parramore.*
Bottom: *VSPC Executive Director DT Minich with the film’s star, John Cusack.*

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the official destination marketing organization for Pinellas County.

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