

# A sense of BELONGING

*Behind the scenes of Diners Club International's new advertising campaign*

**IT'S NOT ABOUT STATUS, BANK BALANCES** or obvious, flashy wealth. It's about experience, learning and exploration. It's about belonging.

This is the new message from the Diners Club advertising campaign as it sweeps you up into an evocative world of exciting and incredibly beautiful countries, people and music.

'We wanted to show the world that Diners Club is much more than just a card to make payments,' said Janice Alfini, senior vice president of Diners Club International's Global Brand and Marketing. 'It is a club that empowers those who appreciate the deeper meaning of wealth to enrich lives through access to superior services and exclusive privileges. It's for people who value money for what it helps them do, rather than for what it helps them buy.'

The 'belong' campaign, developed by Draftfcb, launched with its feature television advertisement, Map of the Land. The ad is a montage of life experiences, both grand and intimate,

that pays tribute to the essence of the club and its members.

'We wanted to capture that special characteristic that unites our members. They are citizens of the world who never lose their hunger for life,' said John Claxton, Draftfcb executive VP/group creative director and creator of the television advertisement.

'They don't view their success as having arrived,' added Kurt Fries, Draftfcb senior VP/creative director and co-creator. 'That suggests an end point. Instead, Diners Club members are always exploring, always expanding, "always arriving".'

From inception to completion, the commercial was a year-long labour of love. The team began by developing the strategic platform from which the 'belong' concept ultimately sprang.

'The wireframe globe graphic that you see at the end of the spot was one of the first creative elements to come to life,' said Fries. 'It works on two levels: inspired by the globe, it represents the worldwide nature of the Diners Club community, and it also



symbolises the universal embrace of all those who belong.' [See this on page 34.]

This metaphoric cocoon proved inspirational for the television ad as a whole.

'The script was written to get us to that moment of connection,' explained Claxton. 'I wrote it over one weekend in my writing cabin in the woods. I don't have many distractions there. No television. No radio. So I found a song on my laptop that fitted the mood and tone

that I wanted to express. And I loved it, so I wrote the script to it.'

The song, 'God Yu Tekem Laef Blong Mi', from the soundtrack of *The Thin Red Line*, was written by composer Hans Zimmer and performed by a children's choir. Claxton described it as 'a celebration of life' and it remains the musical score of the final advert.

The ad's imagery, shot over a month in five different cities, worked to encompass that appetite for life. From Prague to Tokyo to Copenhagen to Morocco and, finally, to Rio de Janeiro, the crew travelled, taking 20 flights over 28 days, to capture the energy of each culture.

According to Draftfcb VP/senior producer Greg Lederer, 'It was the most unique shoot I have ever been on. We had a core team of eight people, and we each carried our own cameras so we could

shoot anything, anywhere that inspired us. It was tiring and a ton of work, but it was so energising. I woke up every day psyched to go do it again.'

The shoot resulted in 30 hours of video footage (far more than the few hours collected on an average project), more than 70% of which took the form of captured, real-life moments.


'We had rough ideas of scenarios that we wanted to film. But because our director, Jeff Darling, really understood what the brand was about and had a clear point of view, we were able to act spontaneously and capture real people in their real-life moments,' said Claxton. 'And I think that honesty, which cannot be replicated, comes across.'

Upon their return home, the crew spent nearly two and a half weeks in editing to compile the first 60-second

commercial, and then worked it down into the 30- and 15-second cuts. After a couple more weeks of minor tweaks and revisions, the ads were finalised into the global versions running today.

But the project was not yet complete. With the global spots in hand, four unique versions of each were created to bring tailored appeal to different markets.

'We wanted to adapt each one for cultural relevance,' Fries explained. 'But it was important to us to still maintain that global aspect, because that is what Diners Club is all about. It is in the DNA of both the club and its members, and we wanted to honour that internationalism.'

As Janice Alfini said, 'Wherever they go, wherever they see our new advertising campaign, our card members will know we believe they truly belong to Diners Club.' 

## ON PAPER

The print campaign that accompanies the television ad was shot by Andy Anderson over three weeks in three cities: Prague, Singapore and Rio. Kurt Fries selected the cities because they were large and sophisticated, yet welcoming and warm. Fries sent Anderson to do the shoot because 'while we could have done it with stock imagery, it would have gone against what we were trying to create, which is something unique to Diners Club.' What was important to Fries was that Anderson help define a look for the brand that was relevant but not trendy. 'Andy has the heart and soul of an artist and that is what makes his work timeless,' says Fries. 'I can look at his photos and I'm not overwhelmed with technique, but by the story.'