

Lights, Camera...and Malta!

In the recent past, Malta has been the shooting site for great, award-winning movies. Most movies are filmed in Hollywood with extensive props to give a realistic feel to the lives of the characters. More and more filmmakers are searching for real-world settings for their movies.

Troy, 2004's blockbuster hit starring Brad Pitt and Orlando Bloom, introduced the world to Malta. Most of Troy was filmed at Fort Ricasoli. The massive fort was built by the Knights of Malta sometime between 1670 and 1693. Many people around the world would have never had the opportunity to see Fort Ricasoli if producers had decided to use props in a studio.

A Different Loyalty, starring Sharon Stone, was shot in Fort St. Elmo in Valletta, Malta in 2004. Fort Saint Elmo divides Marsamxett Harbor and Grand Harbour and provides a grand entrance to both harbours. The fort doubled for the city of Beirut in the movie. The Golden Sands Beach was also chosen as a setting for parts of the movie.

Alexander, starring Colin Farrell, Anthony Hopkins and Angelina Jolie and directed by Oliver Stone included shots from Valletta's Grand Harbour. Grand Harbour is a natural harbour that has been used at least since the Roman times. The harbour doubled as part of the ancient port city of Alexandria in the movie.

The 1995 pirate movie, Cutthroat Island, with Geena Davis and Matthew Modine, was filmed primarily in Vittoriosa. The Maritime Museum is seen multiple times in the film. Mdina, Fort St. Elmo and the Dingli Cliffs were also settings for scenes in the movie. Water tanks were provided by The Mediterranean Film Studio for use in the sea scenes.

A nighttime scene from Gladiator with Russell Crowe was filmed at Cuvre Port just outside Vittoriosa. The remainder of the film was primarily shot at a replica of the Roman Coliseum. The replica was built at Fort Ricasoli on Malta.

The 1980 production of Popeye, starring Robin Williams and Shelley Duvall, was filmed near Mellieha. After building the set and filming the movie there, they left it all in place. Now known as Popeye Village, the set is a popular family attraction and includes a film about the making of the movie.

The 2002 movie The Count of Monte Cristo was actually filmed in Valletta and Vittoriosa instead of Marseille. The rocky area below Fort Saint Elmo served as the setting for a few scenes, as well as St. Paul's Cathedral in Mdina. St. Mary's Tower on Comino Island doubled as the Chateau d'If.

Madonna and Guy Ritchie chose Malta to shoot their 2002 film, Swept Away. Different scenes used various sites in Comino and Malta. The Italian port in the movie was actually filmed in Vittoriosa. The snorkelling scene was filmed in the Blue Lagoon on Comino Island, between [Malta](#) and Gozo.

Other movies and TV shows that have been filmed in Malta include Midnight Express, Pinocchio, Raise the Titanic, U-571, Orca: Killer Whale, The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, White Squall and Helen of Troy. With such an impressive mix of movies, one has to ponder what comes next.

Many of the movies previously mentioned in this article have included specific parts of Malta for successful scenes. Most recently, Oscar-winning director Alejandro Amenabar has been working with Max Minghella and Rachel Weisz filming Agora. The ancient Egyptian epic is being filmed on Malta and includes at least three Maltese actors in leading roles. Maltese workers comprise much of the crew. Agora is the first film to be shot entirely on Malta, and the Maltese government sees this as yet another opportunity for growth and exposure for the island.

About the Author

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