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LISTS || BY S.T. VANAIIRSDALE || 09 07 2010 3:20 PM

Josh Duhamel's an Ass Man, and 7 Other Fun Facts I Learned From the Romantics Press Conference

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Quite the bundle of talent convened in New York this morning to discuss *The Romantics*, the ensemble dramedy about a group of college friends who gather roughly 10 years after graduation to celebrate a wedding among them. Or maybe not “celebrate” — Laura (Katie Holmes) has some lingering bitterness over bride-to-be Lila (Anna Paquin) stealing her boyfriend Tom (Josh Duhamel). The ensuing seaside snafu ensnares pals Malin Åkerman, Elijah Wood, Adam Brody, Rebecca Lawrence and Jeremy Strong, all of whom joined Holmes and Duhamel today to meet the press.

Åkerman and Brody spoke separately with Movieline; their interviews will run later this week and this month (respectively) as *The Romantics* moves forward in limited release. Meanwhile, there were plenty of other fun *Romantics* details disclosed by Holmes, Duhamel and filmmaker/novelist Galt Niederhoffer:

1. Duhamel originally didn't want to make the movie.

“I didn't like it at first,” the actor said candidly. “I didn't. Because when I first read the script, I said, ‘I don't like any of these characters.’ I really didn't. [...] I just thought it was a bunch of selfish people who were making much bigger deals of their problems than they really were. But then I read it again, and I liked it much better because it felt like it was really kind of a reflection of what people are anyway — what friends are like, what groups of friends and family are like. We're all dysfunctional. We're all messed up in some way.”

2. Katie Holmes earned her executive producer credit.

Asked what Holmes contributed as one of *The Romantics*' executive producers, Duhamel spoke up first: “Lots of cupcakes and coffee.”

“That was really the extent of it,” Holmes replied, hesitating when it came to further explanation: “I was really flattered when I was able to have this position. There were... I think, um... I just tried to kind of help when I could and sort of cheer people on, and that's really what I did. I actually used to time to learn even more from everyone — from the producers and from the director. It was really wonderful and I really appreciated that. [...] Just never give up. Making films is very challenging, and you just have to keep pushing.”

“Kate is being modest,” said co-producer Ron Stein. “She actually helped out quite a bit as an executive producer. Attending meeting [with] no one else with her, really participating in coming up with a marketing plan—”

“I'm a mother,” Holmes interjected. “You get used to sort of—”

“No,” Stein continued. “She was on the phone every week, late nights, coming up with a plan and doing the planning. So I think she's being modest here. One of the biggest things for me was that — quite different from most films, where stars who are the executive producer actually *don't* produce? She really *did*. She really rolled up her sleeves and was involved.”

3. Anna Paquin has better things to do.

Honeymooners! Sheesh! Alas, the film's second biggest star was a no-show.

4. Niederhoffer wanted a J. Crew partnership all along.

Of the film's **corresponding ad campaign** by way of J. Crew's fall collection, the writer/director said: “Because this is a story about young people and how they tend to express themselves through their clothing, with the costume designer Danielle Kays and the cinematographer Sam Levy and the production designer Tim Grimes, we did our best to think together about the color and palette that constituted the ingredients of the film. When we were finished, we were looking toward the distribution of the movie and looking for ways to be interactive, proactive and, as Katie says beautifully, to keep pushing. And so we thought, ‘What would be a good company — a partnership — that would help us do that? To allow this indie film to reach as many people as possible? People who'll like it?’ And we thought quickly about J. Crew, because it was a company whose clothes we could use in the film, and it has that spirit and identity and integrity that I admire. [...]”

“They make good clothes; they're good people. Anyway, it's been a very healthy partnership — an interesting marriage of art and commerce. What began as the idea to do a Web site together for the film turned into something that allowed us to reach a lot bigger audience than we would otherwise.”

5. The cast improvised and/or wrote most of their wedding toasts on the set.

The Romantics' big first-act centerpiece features a *Rachel Getting Married*-style toast sequence featuring all the friends paying their gregarious, funny, sweet, drunken and/or crushingly awkward respects to Lila and Tom at the rehearsal dinner. “It was magical,” Niederhoffer said of that shooting day. “It was *impressive*. [...] They were all performing for each other.”

6. Holmes is ready to make your movie musical. Or at least a movie musical.

“I love to sing and dance, so any time!”

7. Dumahel is an ass man.

Chiming into the answer to a question about how each actor's view of love and what they look for in a mate has changed over the years, the husband of Black Eyed Peas chanteuse Fergie said: “I just look for a really nice ass.” After the laughter on the dais subsided, he spoke like a true Romantic: “I'm just playing! Come on.” (NB: The moderator cut the question off before Holmes could respond.)

8. Tom Cruise is very romantic.

“My husband has red roses everywhere I go every time I travel,” Holmes said at one point. (“Tom was making us all look bad,” Duhamel replied.)

TAGGED: ADAM BRODY, ELIJAH WOOD, GALT NIEDERHOFFER, JOSH DUHAMEL, KATIE HOLMES, MALIN ACKERMAN, REBECCA LAWRENCE, THE ROMANTICS

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