



ON BOARD WITH IT: A wax figure of Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Terminator" character accompanies a yacht party, one of two fetes that were thrown for the action film. Photographs by GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

# Coming on strong for 'T3' at film festival

[Cannes, from Page E1] actually navigable, the Cannes Film Festival and Arnold Schwarzenegger need each other more than ever.

Although only a seven-minute trailer for his new movie, "Terminator 3: The Rise of the Machines," was shown at the festival, the Terminator himself has been a towering presence.

The Carlton Hotel's elegant façade has been transformed into a gigantic "T3" commercial, complete with robotic creatures and steel bars resembling a futuristic jungle gym.

There's been a "T3" party on a big yacht, and an even bigger "T3" party at a hilltop villa belonging to Pierre Cardin, where the guests included at least one faux priest and a bevy of older women with red lipstick, dark sunglasses and deep St. Tropez tans sipping Champagne with grungy-chic young men drinking Red Bull and vodka.

Yet for someone on such friendly turf, Schwarzenegger seems annoyed when we meet in the yacht corridor. His already taut muscular frame stiffens when he learns I'm from the Los Angeles Times. Since the ice-breaking small talk isn't going over too well, I cut to the chase.

"OK, then in regard to 'T3,' what about the criticism it's received that it's a movie 12 years too late and that perhaps your character is getting a bit old?" "So far we have seen tremendous enthusiasm for this film," he says, cigar in hand. Referring to his cyborg character, he proudly adds: "Molten steel is undefeated. There has been a continuous drive to bring the character back."

The festival has provided a welcome publicity platform for the film, which opens in the U.S. July 2 in the midst of a summer packed with action sequels. And since the consensus is that this year's festival is lacking a high enough turnout of major movie stars, Schwarzenegger walked right into the void.

### Celebrity quotient

HERE'S some glamour, of course: Nicole Kidman caused a stir in a red and gold flowing gown at the premiere of "Dogville," a three-hour Lars von Trier drama in which she stars. There also was a splashy premiere for "The Matrix Reloaded," which featured the film's cast, and Clint Eastwood, a perennial favorite at the festival, is in town.

But the celebrity quotient goes downhill from there.

"It's sad," said Sebastian Randé, a photographer for Saola Agency in France. "It's just Nicole and Arnold. But at least they know what to do — they smile."

George Pimentel, a freelance photographer for the U.S. photo service WireImage, added:

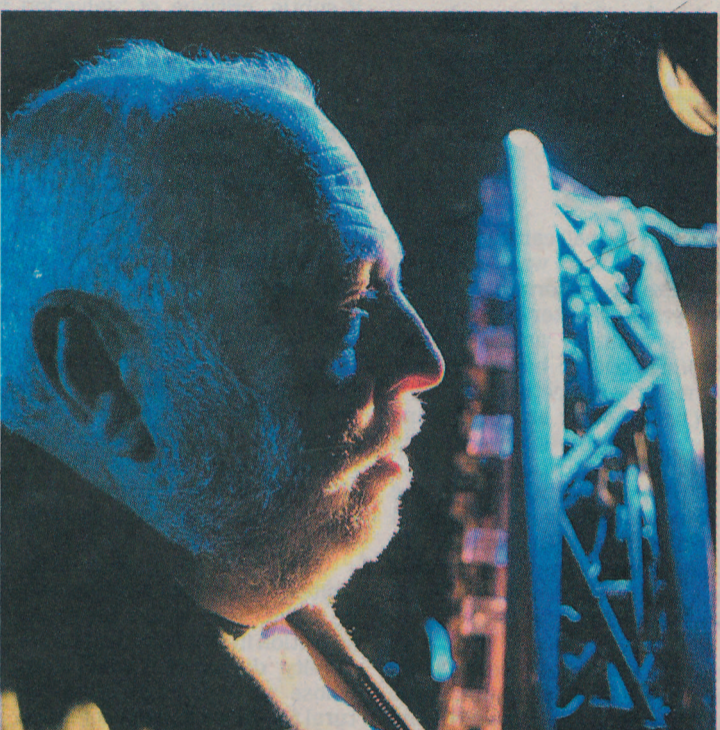
"When all we have is Arnold Schwarzenegger, well, what does that say?"

Actually, in Cannes, it says plenty.

Cannes, early '90s: The money flows, middle-aged men drive Rolls-Royces bursting with young, supple blonds along the city's main artery. Schwarzenegger is king — a bona fide star breaking box-office records around the globe. And his "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" producers, Andy Vajna and Mario Kassar — known by some as the glitter boys — are wowing Cannes with their largesse: giant yachts and private jets for stars they install at the Hotel Du Cap, Cannes' most exclusive accommodation.

But those days are gone.

Kassar and Vajna's company went under in 1995. Last year, Kassar agreed to pay \$45 million to the IRS to settle tax disputes



RETURN TRIP: Producer Andy Vajna — who's known more glittery days at Cannes — at a "T3" bash at Pierre Cardin's villa.



SMILING AGAIN: "T3" co-producer Mario Kassar.

going as far back as 14 years. "T3" itself was caught in a legal quagmire over rights to the film that took nearly a decade to sort out. When Kassar and Vajna won the rights to produce it, director James Cameron refused to participate. Jonathan Mostow ("U-571") is doing the honors.

As for Schwarzenegger, his last mega-hit came in 1996 with "Eraser," which made \$101.3 million domestically. His last movie, "Collateral Damage," only made \$40 million in the U.S. and Canada.

On Saturday, in front of the Carlton, there's an attempt to recreate a bit of the good old days.

Schwarzenegger waves and smiles at the fans and paparazzi who throng the street in front of the hotel. The crowd chants, "Arnold, Arnold, Arnold." He tells them he promised he "would be back" — and here he is.

Later that day, he and his wife, Maria Shriver, make their way to the big MTV "Terminator 3" party at Cardin's villa. The event is stocked with young and beautiful party revelers — a way to boost the movie's hipness factor.

At the entrance there are sheets of white netting framed alongside the steps, giving the effect of snow-capped mountains.

Euro techno music blares from different dance floors as lithe, twentysomething models — said to have been hired especially for the event — make their way through a cavelike labyrinth of white stucco walls.

The white has a futuristic '70s look — full of oval-shaped, glass-less windows — vaguely calling to mind Woody Allen's egg-shaped, white orgasmatron

from the movie "Sleeper." The floor is a cool copper-colored marble.

In back is the water attraction: circular swimming pools and a 30-person-capacity hot tub.

"You know this party will turn into the 'Real Cancun' by 2 a.m.," says one guest.

A man from Scandinavia in pink sunglasses and a pink suit gushes, "Pink is my color, it is my brand, it is my life." At least one transvestite with a Jean Harlow silver coif and tight, white pants wanders about.

### 'Slumming'

SO, it is the place to be seen — or not.

"When I told the Telluride Film Festival people I was coming here they were appalled," says producer Ed Pressman to his friend Tom Bernard of Sony Pictures Classics.

ICM agent Ken Kamins, who had only arrived a day before, is asked what he is doing here.

"Slumming," he confesses.

Paramount's chief operating officer, Rob Friedman, stands at a corner table, smoking a cigar, wearing a leather jacket and shaking his shoulders to the music. Sony's head of distribution, Jeff Blake, wanders around wiping sweat off his brow while his top marketing guy, Geoff Ammer, drinks Budweiser at the bar. (Their studio is distributing "T3" internationally this summer; its domestic distributor is Warner Bros.)

And then the Terminator arrives.

Like a crushing river, he and his entourage of bodyguards, wearing neon-blue spandex tops (Shriver is squashed in the middle) sweeps through the rooms. He shakes hands, he smiles at his fans. He gives a thumbs up. He keeps moving.

But then he sees a priest.

A devout Catholic, Schwarzenegger stops.

"We need a priest here. This is a good sign!" beams the world's most famous bodybuilder.

"Arnold, I bless this movie," says the priest. "We want you back!" And with that, the Terminator entourage continues its tour of Cardin's massive party den. Schwarzenegger is in and out of the party within an hour.

But was that really a priest? Actually, it was a self-described, British B-movie producer named Tim O'Sullivan, wearing a black Nehru jacket and a white T-shirt under the collar.

"Hey, I look like an Irish priest," he says. And as he walks away he says, "Catch you later, baby."