

Wolf Schneider from **American Film Magazin** also took his interviewing Armand Assante during the production of "**Mambo Kings**", his interview revealed in that magazines **January/February issue 1992**. *Wolf Schneider makes a great effort describing Armand Assante in many situations and one would wish, the way that man writes, he will some day become an author and write novels or manuscripts. It's not possible to write anything his way, but here's some of the most significant observations he made and a few quotes from Armand himself.*

The interviewer try to make a little research up front, and ask around about Armand.

Armands limodriver confides that Armand comes from **Brooklyn**. Antonio Banderas, his co-player in that very movie, says he grew up in **Bronx**. Someone on the West Coast suggest's he is **all american**, and on the East Coast where Armand stayed and worked most his life, a producer come to the conclusion that he's from **France**.

Finally he get's to the bottom of the truth and give us the information about Armands backgroun we all know so well !

A native born New York from Washington Heights !

He is an actor that is insatiably curios about artistic expression because he believes it illuminates the soul, his carrier has been liberating. Those who have worked with im says that his career always has been about choises, decisions that have lead to phenomal work in some small-buget, little-seen films and to television miniserries that have financed his 215-acre farm upstate New York, but stalled his momentum.

Michael McLean, his manager says Armand is a "boy of independence" and why he has become lodged at that particular spot, a way station of talent that includes Christopher Walken, Scott Glenn, Ray Liotta, Rutger Hauer, Peter Coyote and Joe Mantegna - but not the multimillion-dollar heavyweight's ?? It's not for lack of ability !

ICM's Lou Pitt, who represented Armand for six years and through many of his 14 feature movies , declares Armand loves acting: "He loves the process of it. The intelligens of it. He does'nt deal with it as a buisiness, and it's a great conflict for him.

Armand was lured away from Lou Pitt with promises about his presentation in the movie would be of great priority, it sadly did'nt happen. Now Assante is back with Pitt in his production of "Mambo Kings"

There's constantly a scism between what attract's Armand and what support his career.

Armands style of acting is here described as Montgomery Clift's...he unbues a charachter with layer upon layer of psychological subtext, adding his own brooding vulnerability. Like Robert de Niro, he devotes himself to the moment to the exclusion of every distraction, synthesizing machismo with humility.

Armand Assante acknowledge a reliance on both Method technique and the script-driven analysis of acting guru **Mira Rostova** (who taught Clift) Precise and demanding, Rostova advises.

Armand says: "Rather than to think, when did I have the same experiance ? I say, you never did. You were 'nt Napoleon, You were'nt Joan of Arc...What really matters is what they now talk about and what they now want to say. I never memorized lines. What I do is, I try to work out - discover - the behavior patters that's necessary for that scene and the lines either work or they don't. Most of my time they connect because because the lines are an indicator ."

Lumet says about Armand: "He works differently form any other acotr I've ever seen.

He has a very strong image of what he want's to do , and he never lets up. During rehearsal, when I'm not working with him, he's off in a corner and he's working with himself. Over and over, he never lets it alone."

The interviewer talks with Armand Assante between takes about the movie plot.

Armand says: It's about both the clusiveness and fallaciousness of the American dream...and it's about two very gifted men who by faith are continually interrupted in whatever attemps they make in life. One is driven by ambition to achieve something in his life, onthe other is liveng an idealized romance with his past.

(Armands charachter Cesar is the opportunist) He's like a man going up against a wawe. He refuses to be buffered by the wawe. Unll it knocks him down...It's about two men who are irrevocably joined at the hip and both living through each other. One can't really succeed without the other Cesar could not succeed over and *Truth of Dare fame*."

Antonio Banderas is Nestor, *it's Banderas first english-language movie.*

Armand states about the working with others doing a movie: " It has to do with the sensibilities of the people I want to be with. It's the caliber of intensity and intelligens. People who are passionately involved in what they are doing !"The interviewer stays around and watch scenes being shut for the "Mambo Kings". He pays attention to that Armand works very warmhearted with his co-players, after a scene he give a woman a hugh in appreciation !

Between takes they disgues what's **Armands favorites**, he says he loves music and literature and listens to: **Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Allman Brothers, B.B. King, gypsy instrumentals, Schubert, Shopin and his favorite painters are: Van Gogh, Goya, Picasso and his favorite writers are : D.H. Lawrence, Walker Percy, and Thomas Grath**

. "My habbits are very literary when I'm not working. I'm always looking for people who can articulate what I'm feeling !"

A few months later on a warm July day his wife Karen picks up the interviewer and drives him to the farm. They drive in the 13-year-old Porsche of Assante. It takes about an hour to go to the farm. They are met by the family, here small Alessandra's hair is blond and she looks like a small Raphael angel. Armand comes out from the red barn working hard as ever: he is here 41 years old in black jeans and cowboy-boots, a forest-green shirt, his brown hair long and falling in his eyes.

Staying at the farm Armand tells among other: "I have an obligation to farm or they'll tax me off it!"

The interviewer sees a lot of books in bookshelves all over Armand Assante's house, Armand talks again about acting: "I don't want to work unless I have a founded relationship with someone, unless I've spent time with them, because the work is too complicated and exposing. I want to be involved with the most creative projects I can get my hands on and work with the most creative people. That's where I think I thrive, it's where I want to be. It's where I get to live the most intensively. **And I think that's the reason I act, because it is essentially being given permission to live intensely.**"

Armand has spent his day working hard at the farm stacking hay, he has been horse-back riding. They drive around in the arrier and pass by a place named Sarah Wells Trail, a place with a history about a girl that was shipped off by her parents to live with native Indians, Armand suggests this story might make a really good film. They also pass a nearby hospital as Armand tells he was here for months after shooting "The Penitent" he caught hepatitis.

Armand says living where he lives, **he tends to isolate.** "Even my wife tells me that. Tells me? She screams at me every day that I do, but I do...I like getting on my horse and riding for 20 miles when I want to go off into the wilderness, which I do. That's part of my life-style. It leads me spiritually and I live a lot closer to the earth. I live very close to the earth when I'm home. I like working with the elements. I like cutting wood, building roads, working in the fields, doing fencework, working with animals, horses, riding, ...very tactile things."

Of himself Armand says: "Certainly the roles that I've done, few people would know anything about me. Could even detect anything about me. **And I don't care what an actor thinks of himself or his image, he is society's child.** And if he's not willing to be, then he's not an actor. He is the mirror for society, so he has to be a clown!" The interviewer and Assante sits at the porch until late, already at 8 it's getting dark. Armand gives him a jar of homemade honey and looks at the workers in the field: "If you hadn't been here I would have been out there with them!"...later he talks of work again: "I go through life with basically no expectations anyway.

I just try to do my work, you know, and see what comes of it. I've never put that thin over my head. Well, if I didn't succeed by the time I was 35, I was going to drop out of the business, I mean you eventually have to say, I love what I do and leave it at that."

After the interview, the interviewer talks a bit with writer-director Osmond who declares, Armand is really passionate with his performance but also in state of chaos an almost neurotic chaos!