



# SILVERDRAFT DEMON PUTS IN A CHAMPION PERFORMANCE AT LOCAL HERO POST

Based in Santa Monica, CA, Local Hero Post has emerged as Hollywood's premiere DI and finishing boutique for prestige independent films, TV and VR. Local Hero delivers true end-to-end post services including dailies, DI, VFX and mastering. Their brand new facility in Santa Monica boasts one of the largest DI and color grading suites in the world, with a 25 ft screen, full Dolby 7.1 sound, and seating for 30. Founded, co-owned and operated by colorists since 2006, the company is noted for the creative prowess of its color-grading team and the speed and efficiency with which studio-quality results are delivered.

Recent independent feature productions to receive the finessing touch include "Captain Fantastic" (dir. Matt Ross), a 2016 Sundance Film Festival favorite which also scooped the prestigious Un Certain Regard prize at Cannes, Rob Reiner's biopic of US President Lyndon Johnson, "LBJ", along with a host of narrative dramas for OTT entertainment companies such as Netflix and HBO.

Remaining at the forefront of a fiercely competitive market means maximizing the potential of the very latest technologies, as well as being ready for new trends such as Virtual Reality (VR) and HDR post. The task of turning the latest in technology into the magic of art for some of Hollywood's best movies falls to Leandro Marini.

"At any given time we might have up to fifteen productions simultaneously in the DI pipeline," says Marini. "It's crucial for our team to keep things running as efficiently as possible to ensure our artists have the resources they need to deliver the quality that's demanded by a-list directors, producers and DP's. The Silverdraft Demon, as the platform for our hero DI grading theater, delivered the competitive performance advantages we need, at a price that makes sense for a boutique."

"Our Demon is the heartbeat of our facility and the engine of most of our revenue. It's THE indispensable component of our pipeline."

Leandro Marini, Founder and Supervising Colorist, Local Hero Post.

### What was the challenge with your previous installation?

**Marini:** We get through a lot of DI grades, day-in day-out, week-in week-out, and are driven to provide clients with a creative, fast and reliable service. To stay at the top of your game, you need to grow your technology constantly, but computer workstations can prove to be doorstops. We were running our hero DI suite on an ageing HP Z820 workstation, yet with the exponential growth of work in 4K, 60p, and stereo VR, the expectations of performance and the throughput demands of our pipeline are always stretched to the max. We needed a system that was going to easily handle today's toughest workflows, with room to grow because things like HDR and 8K are closer than you think.

### When did you first discover Silverdraft Demon supercomputing?

**Marini:** My first encounter with Silverdraft was at NAB 2014, just as they were making the transition from mobile super-computing in a semi to offering their first desk-side/machine-room workstation products. I was hugely impressed by the insane power of their Devil and Demons, and made a mental note to give their technology a try when the next suitable opportunity came up.

### How did you go about testing and evaluating the Demon?

**Marini:** We looked at the MacPro HP Z840 workstations, solutions from Supermicro, Silverdraft's Demon, and even considered building a system ourselves. When it came down to assessing balanced performance, reliability, expandability, warranty and the all-important price, Silverdraft's Demon was the best choice.

In our testing we took a variety of true-4K sequences and applied heavy grades to these, adding layer-upon-layer-upon-layer of image processing adjustments to see how far we could push the computer before it fell over. The compute power of the Demon, using just a single GPU, out-performed all of the others and our old multi-GPU systems by a wide margin. It was very impressive for the price compared to other systems too.

### So what did you buy and how is it configured?

**Marini:** We bought the really beefy, liquid-cooled Demon – which comes with 64Gb RAM, a 4.5GHz Intel i7 processor – and installed it in our central machine room. The Demon is the platform for our hero DI grading suite, replacing an HP Z820 series workstation. Silverdraft's



professional over-clocking, BIOS tuning and in-depth knowledge of media and entertainment applications, the Demon outperforms anything else we've ever seen.

### What software are you running on your Demon?

**Marini:** We primarily use the Demon to run Baselight (our hero grading system), Resolve (our micro-indie system) and SCRATCH VR (our VR system). In all cases the software performs really, really well on the Demon. But the Demon is a very utilitarian box, and we run Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop and Avid Media Composer on it as well. Whatever the software, they all scream on the Demon.

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### What's been the impact of the Demon on your DI artists?

**Marini:** We've had the Demon now for almost a year, and it has quickly become the main heavy-lifting machine for our DI grades. So far we have completed four movies with it, including "LBJ" and "Killing Hasselhoff". We really feel a big difference in speed and performance of the Demon above our older system. We're fast colorists, and we do a lot of VFX in the color bay. So, we need our workstation to be able to keep up with the way we work. The Demon works at our speed and there's no more hanging around waiting for renders to process. It's been very stable too. The performance is so fast and reliable that we're actively trying to schedule as many jobs as possible on it, because other creative artists are falling over themselves to use it too.

### What do you consider the best features of the Demon?

**Marini:** First and foremost, the system is optimized for the applications we need to run. It's not a lowest common denominator system that's designed to run Microsoft Office. We also love the fact that Silverdraft pre-installed all our software and burned it in the machine. So, we were able to simply plug it in, turn it on and go. We also really needed the future-proofing that the Demon's expansion gave us. Once we start getting regular HDR and even 8K projects, there's a cost-effective upgrade and expansion path for the system.

I also really like the fact that Silverdraft focus on direct-access customer support. In the rare event that I have needed technical support, it's great that I can speak to their CTO, rather than going through the time-consuming process of going through a sales agent, completing a web form and ticketing.

### What would you say to anyone considering a Demon themselves?

**Marini:** Do not hesitate! If you are looking for a really fast, powerful and reliable system, Silverdraft is the best option for the entertainment industry. Period. Straight-out-of-the-box you get totally rock-solid performance, but with none of the weird proprietary aspects of other platforms. Our Demon is the heartbeat of our facility and the engine of most of our revenue. It's THE indispensable component of our pipeline.



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