




Dress by Sarli
Couture. Shoes
by Gianluca Soldi.
Ring by Van
Cleef & Arpels.

Cote de



On location in Malta,
Cote de Pablo looks
prime-time perfect
for *The Dovekeepers*

THE DOVEKEEPERS

airs at 9 p.m. ET/PT Tuesday, March 31,
and Wednesday, April 1, on CBS.

For eight seasons of *NCIS*, the world's most popular drama, fan favorite **Cote de Pablo** played Israeli agent Ziva David. In *The Dovekeepers*, her first TV role since leaving the show two years ago, the actress finds herself playing another character from the Holy Land—but she's also going back in time, portraying one of three extraordinary women whose lives intersect at the siege of Masada in 70 A.D.

Roma Downey, who is the executive producer along with her husband, **Mark Burnett** (*Survivor*), says de Pablo is the perfect star for the adaptation of **Alice Hoffman's** best-selling historical novel. "When you see Cote as Shirah, you just fall in love with her," says Downey. "She's how I always imagined Shirah would be—dark, exotic and free-spirited. She brings a passion and sensual earthiness to the role." De Pablo is equally smitten with the project, saying, "It's a remarkable story of survival, human spirit and love. It's not a religious story; it's about people fighting for what they believe in."

Grace

BY *Michele Shapiro*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Ian Derry

STYLING BY *Fabio Mercurio*

PHOTOGRAPHED AT
*Corinthia Palace Hotel and
Spa, San Anton, Malta*



The *Dovekeepers* marks a return to a limited series for CBS, which committed itself to getting it right no matter the possible complications. After considering several locations, Burnett and Downey decided to shoot in Malta, an island with an air of antiquity that makes it a favorite among filmmakers of period pieces. De Pablo was thrilled at the decision: “I love location shoots!” she says. “I love being able to say, ‘I’m going to Malta for 2½ months and shooting an epic story about love and passion.’ I’m a gypsy at heart, and anything that takes me abroad, I embrace.”

With a filming schedule of just 33 days, the cast and crew faced some epic challenges themselves, among them aiming for authenticity



Dress by Avaro Figlio. Vintage earrings by Chanel. Bracelets by Stella Jean. Shoes by Gianluca Soldi. Opposite page: Dress by Daizy Shely.



in everything from costumes, hair and makeup to sets and props while working with a crew that hailed from 19 countries. And then there was the day when, during a massive thunderstorm, director **Yves Simoneau** was indirectly struck by lightning. (Fortunately, Simoneau wasn't injured.)

"The production had a bit of fairy dust sprinkled on it," says de Pablo. "Things would fall apart and then magically come back together." Adds Downey, "There has been a series of wonderful 'coincidences' around the project. When I was meeting with screenwriters, I asked for a sign. I finally met **Ann Peacock** [who ultimately wrote the adaptation], and the very next day a white peacock ran through my garden. I have never seen a peacock in my garden before or since. It was a sign! Many of us have had extraordinary moments like that bringing this epic story alive for the screen."

The project's scope is one that CBS hopes to embrace again soon, says **Stacy Mandelberg**, the network's vice president of Limited Series & Event Programming. "Limited series can tackle different storylines and themes than [episodic television]," Mandelberg explains. "Whether based on a novel or real-life events, they are another form of storytelling." Limited series can also showcase series regulars—or, in de Pablo's case, alums—in different ways.

Another benefit, according to *TV Guide* senior television critic Matt Roush: "They can be marketed as special events—shows that must be watched *now* instead of later. This bucks the trend in our DVR/streaming universe." And since viewers are given a specific beginning and end date, "the time commitment isn't as extreme," which is likely behind the format's



Body suit by Amen. Skirt by Avaro Figlio. Ring by Dior. Bracelets by Chanel.



"I love being able to say, 'I'm going to Malta for 2½ months and shooting an epic story about love and passion.' I'm a gypsy at heart, and anything that takes me abroad, I embrace."





increasing popularity. “I’m glad to see these events returning to network television,” says Roush. “It makes TV itself feel more special.”

De Pablo says that the chance to make *The Dovekeepers* felt just as special to those behind the camera. “In the world we live in today, there’s a need to tap into faith,” she says of the biblical tale. “People want to be reminded there is such a thing as hope, and that love is ultimately forever.”

Adds Downey, “The story is timeless, it’s tragic, and yet so very inspirational. Best of all, to have it be written by women and for women, exploring their friendships and relationships with each other, is incredible. It’s deeply powerful and profoundly moving.” **U**



Top by Sarli Couture.
Skirt by Luigi
Borbone Couture.
Opposite page: Dress
by Amen Couture.
Leather bolero by
Valentino. Clutch by
Vivienne Westwood.
Shoes by Albino.

CREDITS

PHOTO ASSISTANTS
ANDREW SWANELL,
DOMINIC HAWGOOD
HAIR AND MAKEUP
BARBARA CICCIGNANI

