

Exclusive: The Last Voyage of the Demeter Crew Built a Functioning 100-Ton 19th Century Ship

Production designer Edward Thomas gives fans an inside look at the doomed Demeter during an exclusive interview with MovieWeb. Universal Pictures went ...

- **Universal Pictures went all out in bringing *The Last Voyage of the Demeter* to life, with meticulous attention to detail in both the makeup and the production design.**
- **The production designer, Edward Thomas, decided to build the exterior ship in a tank in Malta, while interior sets were built on moving platforms in Berlin. Safety was a top priority in creating the massive 100-ton ship.**
- **Thomas ensured that the ship's design looked authentic and real, using traditional methods and working with nautical engineers and maritime experts. The goal was to make sure the ship didn't let the movie down and that it matched the high quality of the acting, costumes, makeup, and special effects.**

Director André Øvredal brings the classic vampire **Dracula** back to the big screen in *The Last Voyage of the Demeter*. Øvredal not only had the luxury of casting Javier Botet in the role of this version of Nosferatu, but he benefited by having the talented Edward Thomas designing the production. And it's the people involved in the creative venture's cast and crew that make all the difference.



Guillermo del Toro ✓
@RealGDT

I enjoyed Last Voyage of the Demeter so much: gorgeous, lavish and savage!!



Stephen King ✓
@StephenKing



I was doubtful about THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DEMETER, but it's a throat-ripping good time. It reminded me of the best of the Hammer movies from the 60s and 70s.



Luke Y. Thompson

Thu, August 10, 2023 at 5:00 PM GMT+1

The production design by Edward Thomas (the Escape Room movies), the score by Bear McCreary, and the casting by Nina Gold, Anna-Lena Slater, and Martin Ware are all impeccable – this is a great looking and sounding movie,

In a separate interview facilitated before the SAG-AFTRA strike took effect last month, cast member Liam Cunningham (Captain Eliot) affectionally characterized the builders behind the *Demeter* sets as "these wonderful shipping nerds who love these old boats."

"We needed it to feel like a labyrinth inside with all [the] nooks and crannies and dark spots and long hallways," Øvredal said, adding that he and production designer Edward Thomas (*Escape Room*, *Monster Hunter*) focused a lot of their efforts on the cargo hold, from which Dracula's rampage emanates. "That had to be graphic and impressive and kind of frightening as a place to be."

DEEP
FOCUS
REVIEW

Review by Brian Eggert | August 10, 2023

The Last Voyage of the Demeter is a B-movie masquerading as a stately period piece—an observation I make with earnest admiration. Based on a brief chapter from Bram Stoker's epistolary novel *Dracula*, the production boasts a convincing nineteenth-century *mise-en-scène* thanks to production designer Edward Thomas and costumer Carlo Poggioli. The



Published 17 hours ago on August 10, 2023

By **Meagan Navarro**

From the outset, Øvredal infuses *Demeter* with a sense of epic-sized adventure. **Edward Thomas'** impressive production design brings personality to the ship itself, introduced on the Carpathian docks as an awe-inspiring, larger-than-life schooner with a sense of lived-in history. The sprawling gothic ship is Captain Eliot's pride and joy, save for his beloved grandson, and he's looking to pass it to his second in command after he completes this final mission. Through the ornate practical sets and Cunningham's wise, gentle eyes, the *Demeter* becomes a character in itself.

The Weekend Warrior Newsletter



EDWARD DOUGLAS

10 AUG 2023

The thing is that *The Last Voyage of the Demeter* looks so good, from the production design in creating the ship, and all of the prosthetic makeup used to turn Javier Botet into the famed Nosferatu and the accompanying gore makeup, that it's a drag that it

The creature's design is also commendable, like a scary hybrid of Gollum and a bat, but there's little sense of the actor Javier Botet, credited with playing Dracula, underneath aside from the strange screeches he emits. The makeup work on the other characters is also impressive, as is the production design, which makes the ship feel very tangible. Tom Stern's cinematography makes the most of the close quarters of the ship, creating a claustrophobic environment in which the threat of Dracula feels ever-present.



🕒 AUGUST 10, 2023 👤 SARAH MUSNICKY

When things start to go bump in the night, the audience knows what's coming. The expectation of everyone's demise has been built in. And this iteration of Dracula loves to play a game of cat and mouse. Making use of the turbulent sea and the natural defenseless the sailors face on deck, Øvredal sets up scares to keep us on our toes. Just because we know what's coming doesn't mean that we can't still be spooked. Enhancing all performances and scenic shots is the practical sets production designer Edward Thomas and his team built to aid in authenticity. That is an actual boat you see them operating on, which is pretty cool to see.



G. Allen Johnson

San Francisco Chronicle

★ TOP CRITIC



A game cast filled with familiar faces and an eye-popping production design by Edward Thomas keeps "The Last Voyage of the Demeter" afloat for much of its two-hour running time, but the movie is eventually scuttled by the screenplay...

[Full Review](#) | Original Score: 2/4 | Aug 10, 2023



Peter Sobczynski August 11, 2023

that is both eerily beautiful and just plain eerie. "The Last Voyage of the Demeter" is one of the better-looking horror films to come along in a while. The cat-and-mouse games between Dracula and the crew



By Brandon Miller • August 11, 2023

Right from the start, André Vredal makes “The Last Voyage of the Demeter” feel really impressive. The ship is really cool because Edward Thomas’s production design makes it feel special and impressive. When the Demeter leaves the Carpathian docks, it’s a really big piece of history that feels like it’s alive with heritage. Captain Eliot really loves this



By MICHAEL GINGOLD

Tom Stern take advantage of all the shadowy possibilities down in the ship’s cargo hold and other lower sections. Production designer Edward Thomas, whose credits range from 21st-century DOCTOR WHO to the elaborate settings of the ESCAPE ROOM duo, and his team turn the *Demeter* into a palpable environment full of fine period detail as well as potential danger.



By Jeff York Posted August 11, 2023

Thus, as the crew fights for their lives, they display courage which keeps us rooting for them. The sailors search the ship for the fiend and set up traps to try and catch him. The film becomes a taut game of cat-and-mouse in the second act and such machinations also allow for the exquisite production design to shine. It is one impressively detailed set with kudos going to head designer Edward Thomas. The costumes, makeup, score, and special effects are all top-drawer too with only a few shots easily tagged as CGI.



Hannah
Last updated: 2023/08/11 at 11:36 AM

It both isolates its victims on the open sea and continually reminds them they’re not alone as the doomed voyage continues on. Throughout the film, viewers are never allowed to forget that the Demeter’s end is not a joyous one, the sense of dread of what’s to come palpable and unrelenting. The vision of this visceral voyage constructed by production designer Edward Thomas is impressive and magnificently gothic, with enough detail to bring a personality to the ship, adding it to the list of the film’s characters as it truly takes on a life of its own and asks audiences to wonder what stories the wood has seen.



🕒 AUGUST 10, 2023 👤 ONE GUYS OPINION

ture length. They’ve added a long prologue about the boxes being transported to the dock and loaded aboard the ship (it’s in these opening scenes that Edward Thomas’ production design is at its most impressive, though the set of the Demeter isn’t too shabby, though the vessel certainly is). It’s here that we meet Captain Eliot

The Dracula of Øvredal's *Demeter* deliberately resembles Max Schreck in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, which is a shrewd aesthetic choice for a film partially conceived as *Alien* on a 19th Century sailing ship. The vampire makeup applied to Javier Botet is appropriately monstrous and creepy. A distinguished looking gent in a cape just wouldn't work in this context.



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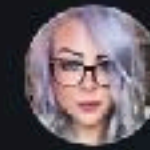
'The Last Voyage of the Demeter' Review Thread : r/boxoffice

2 days ago — A game cast filled with familiar faces and an eye-popping production design by Edward Thomas keeps "The Last Voyage of the Demeter" afloat ...



By Pixley Patricia | August 11, 2023

Director André Øvredal masterfully infuses the *Demeter* with a sense of grand adventure. The ship, brought to life by Edward Thomas' production design, is introduced as a larger-than-life schooner on the Carpathian docks. The attention to detail and lived-in history adds personality, making the *Demeter* a character in itself.



Review by Helen ★★★★★

I truly enjoyed this film - from start to finish it was dripping with gothic atmosphere. Rolling fog, cobwebs, dark shadows are all on display within the cramped, isolated interiors of the *Demeter*.

The production value is absolutely the star and something to be admired.

The sets are hauntingly gorgeous, the score is eerie - it's a slow burn immersive horror with solid performances all around and some great practical fx work.



G. Allen Johnson
San Francisco Chronicle
★ TOP CRITIC



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[Full Review](#) | Original Score: 2/4 | Aug 10, 2023



Aaron White
Feelin' Film Podcast



Exquisite atmosphere and production design highlight a lean & mean imagining of this chapter in Bram Stoker's classic novel. Dracula is not sexy and sinister, but a monstrous supernatural evil vampire. Truly terrifying for a crew trying to survive at sea.

[Full Review](#) | Original Score: 4/5 | Aug 10, 2023



From the very first frame, *The Last Voyage of the Demeter* draws audiences into its world of maritime mystery. The intricate set design meticulously captures the essence of a 19th-century sailing vessel, evoking a sense of historical authenticity that immerses viewers in the time period. The claustrophobic corridors and dimly lit cabins of The Demeter serve as a perfect backdrop for the impending horror, as the ship's confined spaces become a breeding ground for fear and paranoia.



San Francisco Chronicle

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Review: When Dracula books passage, all hell breaks loose in 'The Last Voyage of ...

3 days ago — ... a game cast filled with familiar faces and an eye-popping production design by Edward Thomas keeps “The Last Voyage of th...



by Joe Friar
August 12, 2023 10:53 am

“The Last Voyage of the Demeter” features a dreadful atmosphere, terrific cast, and chilling visuals that make this a voyage worth taking.

The titular ship is breathtaking to behold. Production Designer Edward Thomas and his team built the cargo vessel at Malta Film Studios using old material and then weathered it down to resemble a 50-year-old schooner. The attention to detail (including real working sails) is remarkable. The interior shots were filmed at the famed Studio Babelsberg in Germany which is the same studio where F. W. Murnau began production on “Nosferatu” almost a century ago. It’s also the film house that hosted Fritz Lang’s sci-fi classic “Metropolis.”

Costume design by **Carlo Poggioli** and production design by **Edward Thomas** are stand outs as well. The leaky hulking **Demeter** almost becoming a character in the film all on its own for the time we spend with it.



Pop culture obsessives writing for the pop culture obsessed.

By **Matthew Jackson**

Published Thursday 12:00PM | Comments (76)

But the satisfaction in good horror films does not always stem from a sense of unpredictability. There's fun to be had with formulas, particularly when they're steeped in as much impressive production design and creature effects as *Demeter*. The fun isn't in figuring out the ending, but in figuring out how



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AUGUST 14, 2023

STEPHEN K.

one of *The Vampire's* thralls bursts into flames. Add this to some pretty strong acting for a horror film, and some impressive set design, and it rivals many "serious" period dramas.

ATOMIC FANGIRL

Posted on [August 11, 2023](#) by [Denise](#)

Well'p, I enjoyed the hell out of *Demeter*, thanks to the attention to detail the creators gave to every bit of this film. The set design is outstanding, with the feel of being on a nineteenth century ship. There's upper and lower decks, with various amounts of dust, dirt, and grit. The sails, rigging, and general lay of the ship's "land" is wonderful to look at. In fact, non-horror lovers with a hankering for gorgeous tall ship visuals? Look no further. Edward Thomas' production design – and all his crews who put in the work – deserve recognition come awards time. And as an art direction/set design nerd? I don't say that lightly. The CGI is well done, mostly expertly hidden by the shadows and dimness of the late nights that Dracula calls his work hours. Cinematographer Roman Ostin and Tom Stern give a slight sepia tone to the daytime action, lending a classical look to the goings-on, while amping up the lights in nighttime scenes with blue filters obfuscating added lights. Things feel unsettling and downright treacherous at night, and comfortingly safe during the day, thanks to the work of so many talented individuals behind the scenes.