

Interview Talk

Before they dumped the original score for **Interview With the Vampire**, before writer Anne Rice lavishly praised the movie in a dramatic turnabout from her earlier combative stance, director Neil Jordan seemed genuinely at ease. While editing the movie, he was eager to discuss the challenges of *Vampire*. "When this book came up, I thought, This is perfect," says Jordan. "I wanted—I *needed*—to go in the direction of the grotesque." Though most of the controversy had swirled around the casting of Tom Cruise, Jordan felt audiences would probably be more shocked by child actress Kirsten Dunst as Claudia, a vampire who remains 9 years old in appearance but has the maturity and desires of a woman. Claudia also has to kill and kill again with



Brad Pitt as one of the damned.

pleasure. "I wanted somebody who had acted before," says Jordan, "because the demands of the part could be so disturbing. Kirsten understood the whole thing...being trapped in a child's body; the sensuality; killing people like she's eating sweets, really, always wanting more. She enjoyed it. It's tremendous fun to play a vampire, especially if you're a little girl."

MICHAEL GILTZ