



Above: Virgil, Joxer's son, and his dad. Ted Raimi hasn't aged well, has he?

Below (top): Adrienne Wilkinson (or is it Liz Hurley??)

Below (bottom): Xena and Virgil. Caught on Candid Camera.

didn't want to talk to him, but finally we went up to him and asked if he had seen the dailies yet. He said that he hadn't, and he wouldn't see them for a couple of days. 'No worries,' he said. 'Everyone's nervous the first day'. He was so cool and collected, and we were just terrified. There had been firemen and stuntmen and all of this stuff that I had no remote clue about. I thought that I must have looked terrified rather than powerful."

They survived their first episodes, and were invited to return for Xena's battle against the gods of Olympus, which saw the end of the fifth season with many of them dead. By this stage, Livia had renounced evil, and taken back her birth name of Eve – but not before being responsible for the death of Joxer. With so many unresolved issues, Eve and Virgil's presence was required for the plotline's resolution at the start of the new season – which, it was announced early in production, would be the series' last.

"We probably both felt the same way," Wilkinson says about the start of that final season. "When we started, we were only going to be in a couple of episodes, and anything after that was an extra blessing. We didn't expect to keep going back for more. There was a great freeing effect – knowing that it was the end, the producers and writers could do whatever they wanted. The stories just went from one thing to another, which I thought was cool. They told us at the beginning of the year that the budget was going to be tight, and I heard one of the AD's say that it was going to be just Lucy, Renee, and a donkey in the woods. Instead of which, they went all out."

The focus of the show was inevitably Xena and Gabrielle, and neither Lee nor Wilkinson believed that the producers really had decided what they were going to do with their characters. "I remember that Greg and I would always compare notes about what was going on," Wilkinson recalls. "He was in 'The Abyss', and we had a phone conference afterwards. What was the weather like in

New Zealand? What are they doing now? We will what they were doing with our characters. It was amazing: I don't think that the producers had a clue what they wanted to do with either of us. We were asking each other – what have you heard? Greg said that he had the impression that both Virgil and Eve were too independent to be there, so they had to keep out reasons for them to be around."

Both are convinced that if they had stayed on the characters would have hooked up. "It was a bit of a shame that that didn't happen," Wilkinson adds. "We had incredible chemistry as friends. I think we'd have been in pain trying to figure out how to do anything else."

Xena was not one of the shows where the producers regarded the script as sacrosanct. If you had a better line to contribute – particularly if it was a better line – then in it went. To the American actors, this came as something of a surprise. "A lot of films, you can't change a thing," Lee says. "If it's written that way, it's got to be delivered that way. It was up on the set, and there were Ted, Lucy, Renee, and I were just going anywhere with the script."

"They'd make up a whole new scene," Wilkinson recalls with a smile.

"Don't worry,' they told me," Lee continues. "You learn quick! Holy cow! But you do learn quickly. You're allowed to change things, and that's a great thing to have on the set."

That freedom could occasionally have a downside. Lee discovered when filming the episode "Who's Your Slave?" in which Virgil masquerades as a slave in order to sell Xena into slavery so that she can free other slaves. The script indicated that Virgil would give an impassioned speech at one point – but the scene never arrived from the scriptwriters in Los Angeles.

"Michael Hurst, who played Iolaus on *Hercules*

