

Virgin CEO lands Superman, Bond roles

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Virgin Atlantic's chairman, Sir Richard Branson (left), one of the leading ladies in the upcoming James Bond movie 'Casino Royale', Caterina Murino and hotelier Chris Blackwell, owner of Goldeneye, the home where Bond's creator Ian Fleming wrote his series, pose beside a blackjack table at the movie launch at Half Moon yesterday morning. - PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

WESTERN BUREAU:

THE MAN behind the Virgin empire, Sir Richard Branson, has landed cameo roles in two of the world's biggest films, Superman and a remake of the James Bond movie **Casino Royale**.

With no acting credit to his name, the billionaire gave members of the press a taste of the 21st James Bond encounter, scheduled for release in theatres on November 17, during a sneak preview at the Half Moon Hotel, Montego Bay, St. James yesterday morning.

But the marketing thrust by Sir Richard and his Virgin Atlantic team has been tagged 'James Bond Seeks Out Virgin Atlantic For Casino Royale Assignment', with the airline as a global partner and its Airbus A340-600s in an airport chase sequence.

AIRPORT SEQUENCE

Sir Richard, who was cagey about the small part he plays in the movie, will reportedly appear during a check-in series at Miami Airport, one of the airline's 27 destinations. The airport sequence also includes members of Virgin Atlantic's cabin crew.

"The producers didn't want a dated airline in the film," Sir Richard quipped while addressing the gathering.

Attired in a dapper cream jacket suit, matching pants, black tie and dark glasses, portraying the 007 look, Sir Richard led the way for one of the leading ladies in the movie, Italian star Caterina 'Solange' Murino, and music mogul and hotelier Chris Blackwell.

Mr. Blackwell currently owns Goldeneye, the home where creator of James Bond, Ian Fleming, penned his impressive repertoire of books. **Casino Royale**, which stars Daniel Craig, was Fleming's first book.

James Bond is one of the movie industry's most successful fictional characters. The last three Bond films have grossed over US\$1 billion at the box office.