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For Immediate Release
March 2, 2007

Tempe awaiting Cine Capri sequel

Bill Muller
The Arizona Republic
March 2, 2007

Dan Harkins thinks the Cine Capri is so nice, he is building it twice.

The giant movie screen at the Harkins Scottsdale 101 will soon have a twin, at the new Tempe Marketplace at Loops 101 and 202. The Cine Capri theater will open June 29 and be part of a 16-screen Harkins multiplex.

Harkins was hesitant to add a second Valley Cine Capri screen, which takes its name from the original venerable theater that was razed in the Biltmore area in 1998. Though Harkins was unable to save the original, he opened an updated replica at his multiplex at Scottsdale Road and the 101 in 2003.

“Building a second Cine Capri feels like building a second Disneyland,” said Harkins, chief executive officer and owner of Harkins Theatres. “It’s a very special movie-going experience, a one-time resurrection of a legendary theater that ruled Phoenix for over 35 years.”

Despite some second thoughts, Harkins said, the success of the Scottsdale Cine Capri - it’s often his best-earning single screen - as well as phone calls and e-mails from moviegoers, gave him the impetus to proceed.

“I think it’s a good move, I really do,” said Brian Deveny, chairman of the Arizona Theater Owners Association. “It’s smart. There’s a lot of competition out there, and if you have an edge that’s worked, use it and go for it.”

Deveny said the Cine Capri in Scottsdale usually outdraws competition showing the same movie and raises the entire multiplex.



“It’s not exactly the (original) Cine Capri floor plan,” Deveny said, “but there is the reputation of the almost perfect presentation there almost 100 percent of the time.

“To build that (Tempe Marketplace) complex is millions of dollars. To add on a Cine Capri in that situation, he’ll get that money back so fast from that, just to have that little extra edge.”

Cine Capri screens also have flourished in Harkins’ other markets, including Oklahoma City, Denver and Dallas. Of course, in other parts of the country, the name Cine Capri doesn’t carry the same clout. But as an antidote to the boxcar multiplex theaters left over from the ‘90s, the huge Cine Capri screen (30 feet tall by 70 feet wide) brings in customers

Harkins has similar hopes for the Tempe Cine Capri, noting that 650,000 cars per day pass by the 101/202 intersection. Tempe Marketplace is on the southwestern corner.

“Geographically, it seems to be the epicenter of the entire Valley,” Harkins said. “You take the entire Valley and throw it up on the wall and draw an X through it, the intersection of that X is right around Tempe Marketplace.”

The second big screen gives East Valley residents access to the Cine Capri experience.

“This is our hometown,” said Mike Bowers, president and chief operating officer of Harkins Theatres. “We’re entertaining our friends and neighbors. That Cine Capri is just as much a selfish venture for us. We want to be able to experience that. We want our friends and neighbors to be able to experience that.”

Harkins said the new screen will allow the theater chain to play different blockbusters at each Cine Capri.

“The Monday-morning groaning and moaning about what to do with the Cine Capri will be more easily settled now,” Harkins said/ “We can say, ‘OK, hold over *Spider-Man* and put *Pirates of the Caribbean* in the other Cine Capri.”

Neither of those sequels will open the Cine Capri, but the theater will open with a sequel. Harkins is scheduled to christen the Cine Capri with *Live Free or Die Hard*, the fourth film in the series starring Bruce Willis as a resourceful cop who fights crooks and terrorists.

Other titles with a good chance to play the Cine Capri: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (July 13), *The Simpsons Movie* (July 27), *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Aug. 3) and *Rush Hour 3* (Aug. 10).

The Tempe Cine Capri, which adds \$550,000 to the multiplex price tag, will have the same size screen but a few more seats (620) than its Scottsdale counterpart. The \$150,000 sound system will run through 146 speakers, with Dolby Digital EX 10-channel processor.

“The Cine Capri, the advantage is for the big premier movie . . . *Spider-Man 3*, or maybe it’s *Dreamgirls*. It’s specific, or we ran *Pan’s Labyrinth*,” Bowers said. “Where it’s the big visual impact or the big sound impact in those types of movies, that’s where you want to see it.”