

The Last Picture Show

Syufy acquires Gold Coast Twin

by Daniel W. Duffy

No more late-night bargain shows. No more popcorn-drink combos with a bag of Nibs for \$2. The college film lover's dream is over. The cinematic equivalent to the midnight breakfast in Las Vegas is no longer.

Syufy Enterprises of San Francisco has furthered its stranglehold of the Las Vegas movie market by snatching up the twin theaters at the Gold Coast Hotel.

"It's a pity. It was like an event going to the Gold Coast," said film studies professor Francisco Menendez. "Now it's not that feeling that you're getting away from it all, that you're kind of doing your own thing."

Film studies professor Jean DeCock said, "I'm shocked and frustrated at the same time."

The Gold Coast Twin, which featured independent and speciality films as well as mainstream product, was the sole remaining first-run theater left in Las Vegas not operated by Syufy.

"The entire capitalist system breaks down without competition," said David Whitten, co-owner of local distributing firm Greycat Films. "The city as a whole suffers. A good, healthy competition brings a larger variety of films and keeps the prices low. Marginal films won't come here."

Micheal Gaughan, owner of the Gold Coast was unavailable for comment but told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* the Gold Coast Twin will continue to get high-profile art-house films but will no longer carry fringe material.

"It's bad because we get stuck with only certain films that they (Syufy) think will make money," Menendez



"It's more comfortable to go to the Coast—the chairs are less beat up, the service is more efficient, the projection and sound system are superior—overall the experience has been more enjoyable. But now I'm unsure."

- Hollywood Rob, movie critic, *The Rebel Yell*

said. "The small films will be fewer and farther between."

"To me, if the Gold Coast can bring better product in the spring when it's pretty much dead on the Oscar front, then it will be a good thing," said Hollywood Rob, film critic for *The Rebel Yell*. "However, if they start getting more commercial films rather than prestige films, then it'll be just like any other movie house in town with less screens."

Whitten explained that the Gold Coast is moving toward bringing more mainstream movies to attract more business to the casino.

"If you're just thinking in terms of business, he (Gaughan) is correct," said Suzanne Whitten, the other half of the Greycat Films tandem. Syufy will now keep 100 percent of the box office take while the Gold Coast benefits from the prognosticated addition of clientele.

"I felt a change came when they grossed money with *Dances With Wolves*,"

DeCock said. "I think suddenly the management got a taste of money."

According to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, admission prices have gone up 75 cents to \$6.75 for adults for shows after 6 p.m. and 25 cents to \$3.75 for matinees to keep in line with other Syufy theaters in Las Vegas. Previously, the Gold

Coast offered matinee prices for shows after midnight. Concession stand prices have also gone up.

Students voiced concern with Syufy's takeover.

"Syufy tends to let their projection equipment run down and it shows," Hollywood Rob said. "It's more comfortable to go to the Coast—the chairs are less

beat up, the service is more efficient, the projection and sound system are superior—overall the experience has been more enjoyable. But now I'm unsure. I'm kind of bummed about not being able to go to an after-midnight matinee."

"The late-night bargain is something that I'm definitely going to miss. The low prices for the film and food was a good late-night alternative," said Sean Adam O'Hair, film studies major. "Under the new management, I hope the theater quality doesn't diminish and the overall experience doesn't become too impersonal."

Other than UNLV's International Film Series and some programming by Las Vegas Parks and Recreation, the Gold Coast was essentially the only outlet for cultural films in Las Vegas.

"The whole thing is so sad. The only thing you can do is go to Los Angeles and take in a few independent films there," DeCock said.

Menendez issued a similar sentiment: "The Gold Coast being here saved me gas money to go to L.A. That's no longer the case."

DeCock offered a definitive option, "It's time to get out of Las Vegas."

As for the future of the Gold Coast Twin, only time will tell.

"They claim that they're still going to go for quality programming and it's only going to be on holidays that we're going to see the mini-blockbusters placed at the Gold Coast," Menendez said. "But we have to watch. We have to really sit and watch and see if it's true. And if it's true, then it will not have been such a huge tragedy. There will still be a tragedy that the American Independent won't come to this town anymore."

THE HOTTEST GAMES ARE AT GAME SOURCE

RENT - BUY - SELL - NEW - USED

10% OFF ANY USED GAME

RENT ONE GET ONE FREE!

OFFER EXPIRES 12-3-92. LIMIT 1 PER REGISTRATION. MUST MEET RENTAL REQUIREMENTS.

NOW OPEN!

GAME SOURCE

6679 SMOKE RANCH RD.
LAS VEGAS, NV 89108

631-4226