



an initiative of the European Union
 MEDIA II Programme with the support
 of the Italian Government
 Via Soperga, 2 • 20127 Milano • Italy
 tel. +39.02.66984405
 fax +39.02.6691574
 e-mail: infocinema@mediasalles.it
 http://www.mediasalles.it

MEDIA

European Cinema JOURNAL

MEDIA SALLES

International Edition no.2 - June 1999

From 1991 to 1998, ticket sales in the 18 countries of Western Europe covered by the MEDIA Salles Yearbook have risen from around 625 million to around 850 million.

Modernisation and re-building of theatres is certainly one of the factors that has encouraged the increase in cinema-going in the nineties.

However, the rate at which theatres have undergone modifications and the ways in which this has happened vary from country to country. Quality of sound and image, comfort, safety and easy access to the theatre and its facilities, the opportunity to choose between several films in the same theatre, complementary services - these are the objectives most widely established by the modernisation process, for the benefit of the customer. At the same time, companies have aimed at scale economy and greater profitability. It is not easy to describe this complex phenomenon: certain elements that distinguish a cinema, such as screen size or the absence of architectural barriers do not lend themselves easily to statistical research. Generally speaking, there is a tendency to make the comparison between the number of multi-screen complexes, as opposed to traditional single-screen theatres, as the basis for evaluating the degree of modernisation of a country's cinemas. This is certainly an important marker but it cannot be considered the only one.

The MEDIA Salles survey has therefore been carried out on a number of levels. For years we have been providing precise surveys on the make-up of a country's cinema theatres, aiming to supply figures for each country regarding single-screen, multi-screen and multiplex cinemas.

This information is presented in summary form in the European Cinema Yearbook and included in the "Theatres" catalogue in the European Cinema On-Line Database on the Internet. In addition, there are the deeper studies, which aim to highlight the impact of structural modifications from both an economic and a social point of view. It should be remembered that MEDIA Salles decided to concentrate on the multiplex phenomenon from the very beginning of its activity, dedicating considerable space to it in the "White Book

MEDIA Salles for the promotion of European cinema

Focus on Europe
 Cinema Expo International
 Amsterdam
 21-24 June 1999

"the major convention and trade show for the European Motion Picture Theatre Industry"

Amsterdam RAI
 International Exhibition & Congress Centre

□ **MEDIA Salles Seminar**

Monday, June 21st, 11.15 a.m.
 Congress Centre - Room A
 "Focus on European Exhibition"
 Moderated by Karsten Grummitt, Dodona Research

The presentation of the MEDIA Salles' Newsletter will open the seminar.
 Buffet to follow - RAI Auditorium Lounge & Terrace.

□ **Big Screen Showings of European Films**

RAI Auditorium
 Todo Sobre Mi Madre (All About My Mother) by Pedro Almodóvar
 Den Eneste Ene (The One and Only) by Susanne Bier.

□ **MEDIA Salles' Stand at the Trade Show**

Holland Hall #11, Booths # 394-396-398
 To promote European films: trailers, publicity handouts, catalogues, and on-line information, <http://www.mediasalles.it>

of the European Exhibition Industry", and, in 1998, organising the Round Table, "The Impact of Multiplexes on the Exhibition Industry and on Urban Life", during Focus on Europe at the Cinema Expo International in Amsterdam.

We are continuing to take an interest in this phenomenon: the advance news on multiplexes that we are publishing in the 2nd issue of the European Cinema Journal offers companies and institutions up-to-date information, on which to base their decisions and their policies.

Mike Vickers
 Vice-President of MEDIA Salles

Multiplexes on the increase in Europe

As of 1 January 1999, there were 401 multiplexes operating in Europe, with a total of 4 230 screens that accounts for more than 15% of the overall figure for the continent. A comparison with how things stood on 30 June 1988 shows that during the intervening six months 57 new sites were opened (+16,6%), totalling 626 screens (+17,4%).

The average size of the complexes continues to be around 11 theatres per site.

One outstanding feature of the half-year just ended was the opening of 8 megaplexes. To put this impressive figure into its true perspective, it's worth remembering that in June 1998 there were still only 13 sites with 16 or more screens in the whole of Europe.

Of the 162 screens housed in the new mega-centres, no less than 67 are in Spain: at the Kinopolis in Madrid (25 screens), which with 9 094 seats takes over the top spot as Europe's highest-capacity complex, the AMC Parc Vallés (24 screens) in Barcelona and the UCC in Tenerife (18 screens).

Two new sites were opened in the United Kingdom by UCI and Virgin, in Manchester and Sheffield respectively, adding a further 40 screens (split 20-20) to the British total. These last two megaplexes were actually the first of their kind in the UK market, which more than anywhere else in Europe has been dominated by the multiplex formula. In mid-1998 there were still no complexes with more than 14 screens anywhere in the UK, despite the fact that more than 45% of all screens were in multiplex theatres.

To complete the round-up of new megaplexes we first turn to Berlin, where the Cinemaxx has opened for business in the city's new downtown district around the Potsdamer Platz. The Cinemaxx has 19 screens, including 9 theatres seating up to 50 and dedicated to niche titles and extended runs. The remaining two new complexes boast 18 screens each. They are UGC's Ciné Cité Bercy in Paris and the Warner Village Parco de' Medici, on the outskirts of Rome.

It would appear that the megaplex model is becoming established both in countries where remodernisation of theatres has been under way for longer and gone through a succession of phases, and in those where

(continues on page 2)