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Silverspot Goes Coconuts: Florida cinema-cuisine company launches second location in partnership with David Burke Group

Features

Cinemas Features



“We are excited to bring our concept and entertainment venue destination to South Florida with what we expect to be the best place in the area to see a movie,” declared Francisco “Pancho” Schlotterbeck, chief executive officer of [Silverspot Cinema](#), at the May 15 launch of eleven screens and

more at The Promenade in Coconut Creek. According to the media release, Silverspot is a “customer-centric company specializing in sophisticated cinemas offering an enhanced, hassle-free entertainment experience in a boutique environment catering to an upscale clientele.”

In Coconut Creek that very approach covers “stylish design and atmosphere,” both inside and out, and includes reserved seating for 1,457 “extra-large hand-stitched leather seats” with tray-supporting cupholders that both were custom-designed for Silverspot (by [Zienttea](#), a high-end furniture maker from Colombia). With “the latest sound and projection technology, as listed in our sidebar, Silverspot promises “the most diverse and compelling programming [with] independent films, award-winning foreign films and exclusive screenings of operas, ballets, concerts and theatre” alongside being a “supporter of local film festivals,” and hosting their “own ‘mini’ genre-centric fests.” Adds Schlotterbeck, “Of course, a movie theatre doesn’t work without blockbuster movies. We need those, but we also need to show upscale films, independent and foreign films.” Over 35,000 tickets sold in about a month and a half indicate that the mix is working.

In an ongoing, working partnership and consulting agreement, the food and beverage choices at Coconut Creek are created by the renowned David Burke Group. The fully integrated “Trilogy” restaurant and patio accommodates up to 120 guests in addition to a lobby lounge area and bar. (In next month’s issue, find out more about menu creation and cinema food concepts in our exclusive interview with Stephen Goglia, president of [David Burke Group](#).)

After Naples, Florida (exclusively featured in our November 2009 issue), this Broward County cinema-cum-cuisine may only be the second U.S. location of Silverspot Cinema, but Schlotterbeck and cinema owners the Ulivi Family combine many more years of experience in theatrical exhibition. While the Caracas, Venezuela-based Ulivi chain owns and operates 23 [Cines Unidos](#) with 117 screens there and has done so for more than 60 years, Schlotterbeck worked some 20-plus years for Hoyts across Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Operating their cinemas in Chile introduced Schlotterbeck to the Ulivis, who were a business partner with Hoyts. Two years ago, they asked him to take charge of Silverspot in the U.S. “I already knew the operation in Naples,” Schlotterbeck notes, adding how much he enjoyed the offering. “My passion is to grow companies and developing the Silverspot brand represents a great opportunity.”

Even in such a competitive market, which now includes many premium experiences and variations on “dinner *at* the movies”? “We have competition, of course, here in the States,” Schlotterbeck admits, “but I think our way of doing things is a bit different.” First off, although all food items and beverages are consumable during the film, “we do not have service inside the auditorium. We are taking care of our customers from the beginning to the end of the movie. So, of course, the experience of watching a film in our theatres is very important.”

As is the food. In Naples, Silverspot developed the restaurant component on its own. For Coconut Creek and going forward, the company decided to bring in David Burke Group to further develop a three-pronged approach. “We realized we needed professional people working in the restaurant area. Working in hospitality is a fast business and there’s so much competition,” Schlotterbeck knows. A case in point is [The Promenade](#), which offers everything from Fro-Yos and Cupcakes to a Japanese Steakhouse. “We knew that we wanted to create an important differentiation. From our travels, we knew David Burke for years,” as the operator of “nice, cool locations,” 14 altogether, such as David Burke Kitchen, fabrick, Fishtail, Spyglass and David Burke at Bloomingdale’s (all New York, New York). “We are really happy to be working together because we realize...we work for the same goal... That’s the reason we created a long-term partnership.”

The length of a visit defines the options that Silverspot and Burke Group are catering to. Sometimes, customers have four hours, Schlotterbeck says, but more often less time. “Especially seniors, they can spend two hours in the restaurant and then two hours enjoying their movie. If you have 45 minutes, you can experience our bar with your friends, have drinks and appetizers; and order right there to take our meals on trays inside. If there is too much to carry, our staff can help bring it inside for you. That’s fine,” he assures.

And those moviegoers that have little to no time are mightily finely served at the concession stand. In addition to traditional movie items, the expanded options—such as pizza, hamburgers, sliders and salads—are based on the full menu but created to be more readily prepared and served quickly. “It’s a five- to seven-minute wait,” at the most, as orders are cooked in a kitchen right behind the concession counter and delivered to a pick-up station.

“Our customers love having these options. We have learned that they make different choices at different times, but they certainly do not want too much interaction during the film. That is the feedback from our guests. And we think this is the concept that we want to develop here in the United States.”

On the table are plans for 87 screens under various stages of development, including new theatres in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (September 2015), which has been confirmed for a second Trilogy location, Beachwood, Ohio (winter 2016) and Downtown Miami, Florida (early 2017). While upscale developments, with income and demographics to match, are clearly key decision factors in selecting a location, Schlotterbeck explains how Silverspot looks at the “quality of the real estate first of all.” Not surprisingly, lifestyle centers represent a good opportunity, especially if they are leading the way in environmental responsibility. Following the Promenade’s example, Silverspot is “actively pursuing formal LEED certification” and on track to achieve this later in 2015 and to become the first so certified cinema in Florida—and one of less than ten cinemas nationwide with that LEEDership distinction.

Circuit owner Gonzalo Ulivi is showing equal leadership in creating the special fit-out and feel for Silverspot. “That’s the cool thing, our designer is one of the owners,” Schlotterbeck notes about the cool, modern yet comfortable European ambiance, as he describes it. “He is always finding something different when he travels in order to create a unique environment for each Silverspot Cinema.”

Looking at all that is offered at Coconut Creek, we have to ask Schlotterbeck about his favorite nook and nosh. Within the building, it is the configuration where the lounge is located, right as you walk up from the main entrance. “That’s really cool. You’re going to the movies and you have a bar right there. No box office, no line...just a great place to hang out.” While there are kiosks, 60 to 70 percent of all admissions come from the Internet, he has observed. Wait staff in the bar and restaurant will get tickets for guests as well.

For Schlotterbeck, it seems, the food-service team can deliver pretty much anything from the menu to please his palate. Enjoying tuna tartare, Carpaccio, or a great burger or a fine selection of fish is all part of creating the Silverspot-on experience, he assures in closing. “Fresh food of quality and speed of process. Fine films and a hassle-free experience. We are 100-percent customer-oriented. The Silverspot concept is about creating something cool for our theatres, something different and unique. Those are our main pillars of success today.”

Manufacturers and Suppliers

Seats by Zientte

Screens by Severston

Masking by Lesna

Barco projectors, Dolby servers

MasterImage 3D

QSC amplifiers

Klipsch speakers

Tempo lighting

Kelmar Systems

Installation projection and sound by Bardan

Decoration by Shulman

Lighting by Planet Lightning

Acoustic panels by Eomac

Custom carpeting by Mohawk

Custom wallpaper by 4 Walls

Gold Medal Products for concessions

Kitchen designed by Asper and David Burke Group

Vista software

Arts Alliance LMS

Environmental: Silverspot Cinema's energy-efficient features include a Bright White Energy Star-rated roof; civil-engineered trenches concealed in surrounding paving to minimize flooding and redirect runoff into area retention ponds; "low flow" plumbing fixtures throughout the bathrooms; high-efficiency florescent and LED lighting; a wind turbine and outdoor sculpture that absorbs heat and changes its shape to draw away from the building.