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## Stylishly remodeled Rheem Theatre is open for business

By Vera Kochan



Updated lobby with the new concession stand on Thursday night. Photo Andy Scheck

In keeping with the décor of the circa 1957 era when The Rheem Theatre was born, the new owners have maintained the ambiance with a multitude of upgrades. The Dec. 19 grand reopening was a huge success.

The reopening was a joyful scene, according to Lamorinda Weekly publisher Wendy Scheck, who attended the festivities with husband, Andy. "Michelle Heckle, who was one of the local residents who volunteered selling tickets at the theater for a year when the Moraga Community Foundation was leasing the venue, was there with her mother and friend as well as many other Rheem Theatre supporters and MCF board members." The main theater was sold out and a second showing of "Star Wars" played upstairs as well. "The remodeled bathrooms were a particular hit with many people commenting on them - even Dave Trotter," said Scheck with a chuckle, adding, "The seats were super comfortable. The trays and cup holders accommodating and lots of room between the rows for people to walk in or out if needed even if you are in full recline, and the sound system and vibrations were intense."

Much activity has taken place at the 350 Park Street location in Moraga to spruce up the theatre since the April 2019 purchase by Cinema West partners Dave Corkill and Kyle Conner. Yet to come is the addition of two more screens at the back of the building.

From the marquee to the box office itself, the welcoming gleam of new life to the old gem in Rheem's Shopping Center is evident.

Once inside, the lobby boasts brand new carpeting with the polished, original chandeliers and tile-work behind the concession stand. Self-serve kiosks allow patrons to purchase reserved seats if they are not inclined to do so with theater personnel. Corkill boasted, "We've already sold 1,500 advance tickets for 'Star Wars' alone."

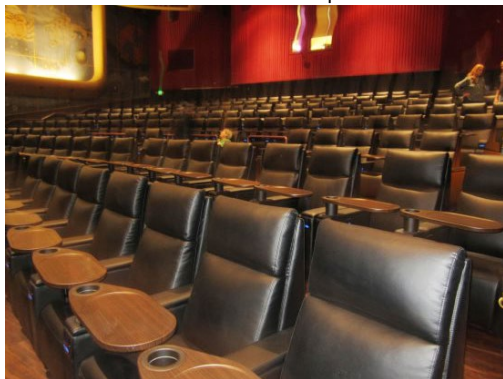
Rheem Theatre General Manager Cameron Sullivan was enthusiastic about the many additions to concession stand offerings. "Besides beer and wine, in a month we'll be serving cocktails such as Jack & Coke, Strawberry Daiquiris and Margaritas. All I.D.s will be checked."

As well as the typical menu of popcorn, soda and assorted candies additional items include iced tea, juice, flavored Icees, large pretzels, pizza slices, hot dogs, fries and nachos.

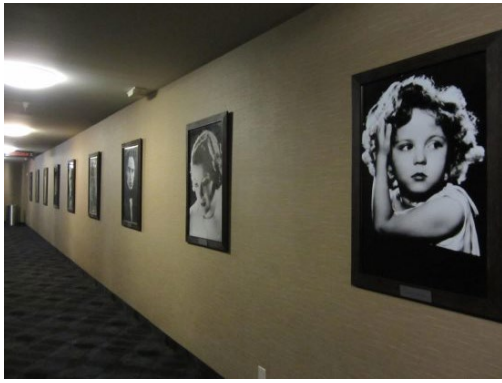
Each patron purchases a reserved seat from a seating map, thus avoiding the hunt for a perfect seat while juggling refreshments once inside the screening room. All that's left is to settle into a plush, faux-leather reclining chair, place the refreshments on a swiveling tray, put the drink in the provided cup holder and adjust the seat to the desired reclining position for maximum viewing enjoyment and comfort. USB ports are available for recharging phones, but patrons must bring their own cable.

Cinema West gives a nod to Hollywood's Golden Age with poster-sized headshots of movie stars in the hallways. Fans of the historic theater murals will not be disappointed. They have been restored and are joined by the newest technology in theater-going experience with Dolby Atmos Sound Speakers.

The Rheem Theatre now offers a Rewards Card whereby patrons can earn points toward free items. For additional information or to purchase a reserved seat visit [www.CinemaWest.com](http://www.CinemaWest.com).



Reclining seats with tray tables Photo Vera Kochan



Hallway decor Photo Vera Kochan

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