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Rheem Theatre welcomes excited movie-goers back inside

By Vera Kochan



The Rheem Theatre greets patrons once again
Photo Vera Kochan

only to have COVID shut things down nationally a mere three months later in March.

The theatre's new general manager, Peter Bellomo, commuted from his home in Petaluma to open the place up on July 8 for "Black Widow" previews, with the official opening on July 9 commanding a sizable ticket pre-sale crowd of 100 people for the 6:30 p.m. showing. That's not even mentioning the walk-ins.

Assistant Manager Tiffanie Souza-Cone said, "I had a couple come in last night that wanted to come check out the remodeled theatre. My last customers were from Berkeley. They used to live in town and wanted to see the Rheem again."

"It's very different," stated patron Sara MacKay. "I haven't been here since they remodeled."

The Rheem appears to be attracting out-of-towners who appreciate the ambiance of one of Moraga's historic treasures. "I've never been here before," enthused Sam Bautista of Oakland. "I heard it was the best kept secret of movie theatres." She was joined by a friend from Dublin and another from as far away as Sacramento.

Fifteen minutes before show time, the lobby was packed with patrons lining up at the concessions stand, eager to enjoy their first visit to a movie theatre in over a year, while the parking lot outside was filling up with cars and people all heading in one direction. If you didn't know where the Rheem Theatre was located, all you had to do was follow the scent of buttered popcorn in the air.

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