

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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New movie houses part of the family

By Dan Greenberg
special writer

"Our policy is that when we buy land and become part of a community, we don't sell it. It becomes part of the family." — Ira Korff

Family is the keynote of Ira Korff's approach to management. CEO of National Amusements in Dedham, Mass., he was in town recently to oversee the Dec. 8 opening of two major additions to his corporate family, the eight-screen Showcase Cinemas Westland and the 14-screen Showcase Cinemas Auburn Hills.

There are not a lot of large, family-owned, private companies left, but National Amusements, proprietor of 68 Showcase Cinemas screens in metropolitan Detroit, is one of them.

With more than 600 screens in 14 states in the eastern half of the United States and in Great Britain, National ranks in the top 10 of U.S. theater operators. Its average gross per screen (in dollars) has been close to the top of the charts in recent years.

In addition, National Amusements is the parent company of Viacom International, which owns nine radio and five television stations, 18 cable TV systems, MTV Networks and Showtime/The Movie Channel. More recently the company has been involved in shopping center development.

IT'S RATHER clear from the appearance and comfort of Showcase Cinemas that National Amusements puts service to the family in the forefront of its planning, execution and style. For the recent opening, it brought in a Kansas City management expert to train the Westland and Auburn Hills show staffs.

Korff said, "Pretty much anybody in the Detroit metropolitan area can



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With 22 new screens, eight in Westland and 14 in Auburn Hills, Showcase Cinemas is positioned to make good on that promise. Further, it is devoted to providing pleasurable surroundings.

"Our trademark is luxurious, gracious entertainment complexes with all the latest innovations. They've got our famous rocking chair seats. You sit here and you know you're in a Showcase Cinema," Korff remarked with obvious pride.

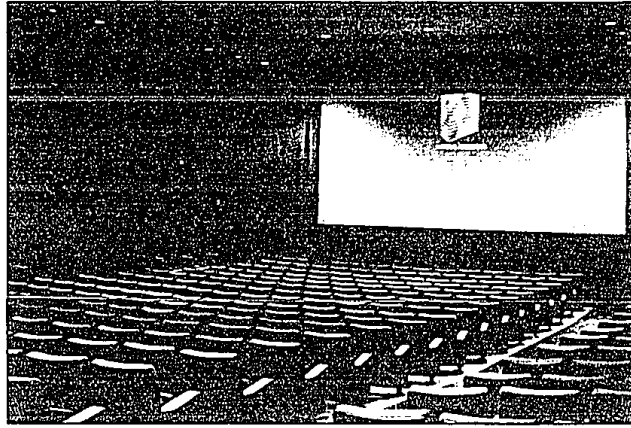
Westland has 2,100 rocking chair loungers, while Auburn Hills has 4,800. Those lounge chairs are not the usual fixed theater seats but reclining loungers that National developed as the hallmark of its family orientation, just like sitting in your own living room.

BESIDES WESTLAND and Auburn Hills, there are metropolitan Detroit Showcase Cinemas in Pontiac, Sterling Heights, Harper Woods and Dearborn, as well as Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and Flint where "Roger & Me" premiered Tuesday.

National Amusements' extensive holdings may not sound like a typical family business but it is privately held, with Korff representing the third generation of family management.

Korff's extensive list of credits and accomplishments belies his youthful appearance. A graduate of Columbia University, Brooklyn and Boston University Law Schools and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Harvard, he earned Ph.D. as well as M.A., B.A. and law degrees.

Before entering the family business, Korff worked as a diplomatic and legal consultant to private and government organizations, including the Norfolk County (Mass.) District Attorney's Office and as a special assistant attorney general in Massachusetts.



This auditorium is one of eight at the Showcase Cinemas Westland. Showcase Cinemas Auburn Hills, which also opened in early December, boasts 14 screens.

"The type of law that I was practicing was really very exciting. I did a lot of consulting for the UN and for the U.S. State Department," Korff said.

But the opportunity to join National Amusements, the family business, was even more enticing.

"NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS was founded by Michael Redstone in the '30s. He opened one of the largest chains of drive-in theaters in the country. He was also in the nightclub business," Korff said.

The Showcase Auburn Hills facility was built on the former site of the Blosky Drive-In. "We still have about 50 of those old drive-in sites, most not operating, but that land is part of the family," he said.

Korff's father was a close friend of Michael Redstone whose son, Sumner, is Korff's father-in-law. The Korffs have three children, ages 4, 6 and 8, and live in the Boston area. Korff has a thoughtful approach to

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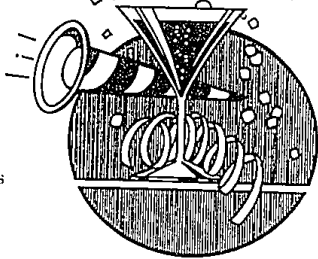
the business: "It's really nice to walk into these beautiful, luxury theaters and enjoy the movies as an escape from reality. But don't get carried away. If you start living the life you see in the movies, you're going to go down the tubes."

He also offers that advice to would-be filmmakers: "Keep your

feet on the ground. It's too easy to get caught up, but Hollywood is not the real world."

The family is. At least that's the conclusion drawn from National Amusements' track record, a company now managed by the family's third generation, Ira Korff, CEO.

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Seafood Fettuccini
Caesar Salad
Champagne Sorbet

Choice of:
Roast Prime Rib of Beef, Potato Dutchess
Dressed Salmon with Hollandaise, Rice Pilaf

Chef's Fresh Vegetable Medley
Chocolate Hazelnut Torte
Fresh Baked Rolls and Butter
Coffee, Tea, Decaffeinated Coffee

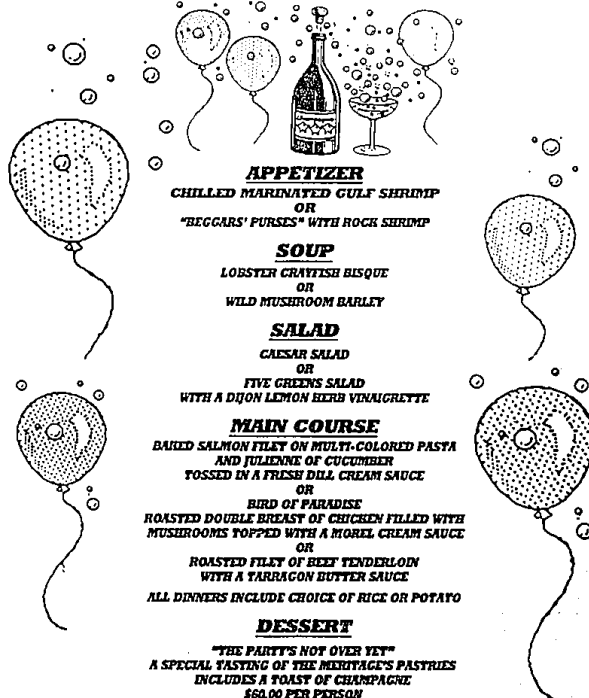
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