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The Economics of a Festival

By Sophie Braccini



Moragans raised their hands when prompted on opening night Photo Doug Kohen

from the community."

"During our opening and closing nights, 75% of the people who came were local," said Behan, "and all our events were sold out." It seems that when it is time to party, residents are willing and able. The other showings attracted moviegoers from across the Bay Area, according to the CAIFF management. Ticket sales represented 55% of the total income of the Festival.

The local business community played a large role in supporting the Festival. For opening night all the food was donated by local restaurants, Amoroma, Chef Chow, China Moon, and Terzetto Cuisine. Captain Vineyards sold the wine at wholesale prices, and so did Pennini's on Closing Night. The return on their investment varied depending on where they were located. "The restaurants close to the Theater had some of their busiest times," said Chamber of Commerce President Edy Schwartz. On the other side of Town however, in the Moraga Center, Terzetto's Roos Pal reported a very disappointing outcome. "I will continue to back the Festival in the name of community support," said the business owner, "but it was not a boost for my business."

Additional income came from generous donors. One of them is The New Rheem Theater.

"The CAIFF Association is a non-profit and is the operator of the New Rheem Theater," explains Behan. "The Association is a venue sponsor for the Festival." In the past the non-profit had to pay the venue, the projectionist, the projector and all those are very costly. Behan explains that one of the motivations of the Board to become the operator of the theater was that cost factor.

Behan believes that the Festival benefits the Theater as well. "Some of the proceeds from the Festival are going into the improvements of the New Rheem, such as the sofas and the new projector," says Behan, "now we can put more into the renovation of the theater, like upgrading the sound system, and finishing the upgrade of the projection system."

CAIFF Board members, along with most of the volunteers, pledged to do it again in Moraga next year. "What is important is that we were involved in the Festival, that the theater shows some life, and that people know that we are here," said Haag.

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