

Valley Film Festival Moves into Distribution Deals

CINEMA: Organizers to debut one-day movie market early next year.

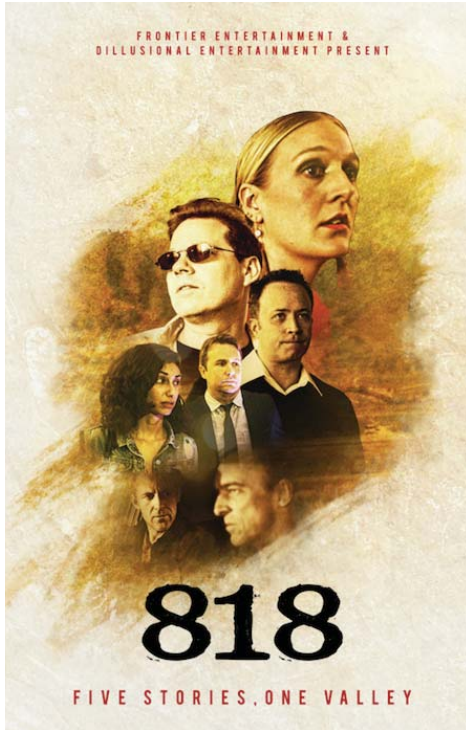
After putting on the **Valley Film Festival** for 10 years, **Tracey Adlai** wanted to stop but received emails from fans asking if the festival would continue. She then tried to wrap the festival up after its 15th year in 2015, but it was the sponsors who convinced her to keep going until at least 20 years.

“So, we are in it for at least another two years, if not longer,” said Adlai, who started the festival in 2000 as a way to promote filmmakers from the San Fernando Valley.

The 18th annual Valley Film Festival runs from Oct. 31 to Nov. 4 at the Laemmle NoHo 7 theaters in the North Hollywood arts district. The festival includes feature films and shorts in the comedy, drama, documentary, science fiction and music video categories.

The theme of this year’s festival is “United by Film,” which Adlai explained had been the internal tag line for the past few years as the festival began to program more films made outside the Valley. As a theme, it speaks to where people are these days and how everyone has a dysfunctional family and is looking for better opportunities, Adlai said.

“These things come out in the films. They are all very relatable, whether it was shot here or elsewhere,” she added. “This year we have



Poster: ‘818’ to open Valley film festival.

films from Russia and Luxembourg and a bunch of other places.”

The opening night film is a drama, “818,” that weaves together five stories set in the Valley. The festival will also host the Los Angeles premier of the director’s cut of “George Michael: Freedom,” a documentary on the singer.

The festival, however, is more than just about screening films. Over the past few years it has shifted more toward the business side and works now to connect the filmmakers with distributors, Adlai said.

“Ultimately, filmmakers want to sell their

film and use a festival as their showcase,” she added.

The festival developed relationships with distributors to the point that, in March, it is going to have its own film market. Staff is working on getting the details nailed down so that it can be announced during the festival, Adlai said, adding, “it will be a one-day event for local distributors and filmmakers that want to participate.”

Films that have screened at the festival are available via streaming from Netflix and Amazon Prime. A few have even gotten theatrical releases, Adlai said.

One example is “Pretty Ugly People,” the closing night film from the 2008 festival, that is available through Amazon Prime. The film was written and directed by **Tate Taylor**, whose 2011 film “The Help” was nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards.

The Valley Film Festival receives funding from **Community Partners**, a nonprofit charity, and in-kind donations from area businesses.

Payroll Promotion

Cast & Crew Entertainment Services LLC has promoted **Todd Dyer** to vice president of sales for its CAPS Payroll division. Dyer will



Dyer

handle employer-of-record payroll services for festival, venue and touring act clients.

Prior to joining CAPS in 2014, Dyer had been a founding partner of **Evolution 365 Services**, a consulting firm to the sports, entertainment and convention industries; general

manager of **Highlanders Sports Properties** at the **University of California – Riverside**; and

director of business development at **Aramark Corp.**, the food service, facilities and uniform service.

Frank DeVito, senior vice president of CAPS Payroll, said the company was pleased to recognize Dyer’s efforts in growing its profile with venues, music tours and live events producers.

“Most recently, Todd also has played an important role in successfully launching our new office in Nashville,” DeVito said in a statement. “We look forward to his ongoing contribution to the company.”

Spielberg’s Sound Win

The **Cinema Audio Society** is presenting director **Steven Spielberg** with its Filmmaker Award at its 55th annual CAS Awards in February.



Spielberg

The Burbank professional group with the mission of promoting the art of cinematic sound has previously recognized Spielberg with nominations for Outstanding Sound Mixing, including a win for “Saving Private Ryan.”

Society President **Mark Ulano** said that the relationships Spielberg has with sound mixers is a strong indicator of his valuing the role of sound in his films.

“Steven has long embraced the creative importance of sound for his storytelling and all his projects beautifully reflect this commitment,” Ulano said in a statement.

The CAS Awards take place Feb. 16 at the Intercontinental Los Angeles Downtown hotel.

Staff Reporter Mark R. Madler can be reached at (818) 316-3126 or mmadler@sfbvj.com.

Shoppers Can Think Small at Boutique-Only Mall

REAL ESTATE: Eclectic mix of individual tenants at Valley Country Mart.

New stores are open for business at the recently redeveloped Valley Country Mart shopping center in Woodland Hills. The outdoor mall is currently home to 11 tenants and has signed six new deals with boutique merchants and eateries. They include clothing company **DSTLD** and housing goods store **Maude Woods**, which are now open, as well as cafes and coffee shops **Blue Bottle Coffee**, **Lodge Bread Co.** and **Valerie’s Confections** and toy store **Merci Milo**, which are set to open over the next few weeks.

The Country Mart replaced an older strip mall at 20929 Ventura Blvd. that was purchased two years ago by Los Angeles-based **Atlas Capital Group**.

The real estate company hired L.A. brokerage firm the **Runyon Group** to oversee an extensive remodel of the 70,830-square-foot property, which began in the spring of last year. Runyon Group has developed two other high-end shopping centers for Atlas Capital, Platform in Culver City and Row DTLA in downtown L.A.

Marc Riches, director of leasing with Atlas Capital, said the company aims to introduce a boutique shopping experience to the West Valley. Many of the mall’s new tenants have



Relaxed: Courtyard and stores at remodeled Valley Country Mart in Woodland Hills.

locations in retail hotspots such as Silver Lake and Pasadena.

“We’re staying away from corporate tenants and looking for individual retailers with an interesting story behind their business,” he said. “A little bit more cool trendy than old and stale.”

Atlas Capital plans to lease the remaining storefronts to a variety of fast-casual restaurants, local retailers and fitness centers to get people to shop more often. The mall has 36 total retail units and is currently in negotiations with 10 potential new tenants. It also has 7,000 square feet of commercial office space above the retail stores, which the firm plans to lease after refurbishing the office units.

The new center’s 1950s-style design aims to stand in contrast to the large indoor malls that are now waning in popularity. Riches said a common area at the mall will host local events and outdoor programs to entice shoppers.

“We want to create a destination experience

that’s not a mall in the West Valley,” he said.

Expedia CruiseShipCenters

Expedia has opened a travel office in Santa Clarita to help customers book cruise ship vacations.

The new **Expedia CruiseShipCenter** is located at 26512 Bouquet Canyon Road in the Bouquet Center Shopping Center at the corner of Newhall Ranch Road in Saugus.

While Expedia is known for its online travel booking site, it also has 250 physical CruiseShipCenter travel agencies in North America. In addition to cruise ship vacations, the centers help book airline tickets, hotels accommodations and rail tours. Customers can meet agents in the office or book over the phone.

“We look forward to working with the community to help them find the cruise or vacation that is a perfect fit for their needs,” said Santa Clarita franchise partner **Francis James** in a statement. “The internet can become over-

whelming when trying to plan a vacation. With so many options available, customers really want to speak to an expert. Our team of knowledgeable vacation consultants is passionately committed to helping our customers plan their next big adventure, and it’s this level of exceptional service that sets us apart.”

Santa Clarita is also home to **Princess Cruises**, which is owned by Miami-based **Carnival Corp. & plc**.

The Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce will hold a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony at the location on Oct. 30 at 5 p.m.

Dole ‘Refreshes’ Logo

Dole Food Co. has updated its logo as part of an effort to “refresh” its brand identity. The Westlake Village produce company said the new design reflects the company’s values around “freshness, transparency and responsibility.” In addition, Dole has introduced a new tagline, “Powering You.”

“We have grown and evolved over the years, and we have refreshed our brand to reflect who we are today and where we see ourselves heading in the future,” **Xavier Roussel**, vice president of marketing and sustainability, said in a statement. “This new look for us reinforces Dole’s brand position as the premium supplier of farm-fresh fruits and vegetables grown and delivered from around the world to your table at the peak of quality, freshness and taste.”

The company has started rolling out the new look on its fruit and vegetable packaging and plans to completely phase in the updated branding next year.

Staff Reporter Ethan Varian can be reached at (818) 316-3130 or evarian@sfbvj.com.



ENTERTAINMENT

Mark R. Madler



RETAIL & HOSPITALITY

Ethan Varian