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Up Front



How 'Sharknado' spawned a graphic novel.
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News & Analysis



Daren Ulmer's wall projections are not as '60s as you think.
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Adam Singer's doctors don't make house calls.
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MAIL TO:

ANY TAKERS?



Desolate: This desert village street scene at the Blue Cloud Movie Ranch is one of several such sets at the Santa Clarita Valley property, which is on the market for \$7.5 million.

PHOTO FROM BLUE CLOUD MOVIE RANCH FLICKR SITE

'Zero Dark Thirty' Movie Ranch Up For Sale

By **ELLIOT GOLAN** Staff Reporter

If you happen to be in the market for a property that has an Afghan village, blown-out buildings, helicopters and tanks, Saugus has just the spot for you. The Blue Cloud Movie Ranch, a nearly 100-acre property where such Hollywood blockbusters as "Zero Dark Thirty" and "Iron Man" were filmed, is on the market.

The property is listed at \$7.5 million, which appears to be quite the deal – and may reflect a lesser demand for its location services due to the

continuing flight of production to other states.

About a year ago, the property went on sale for \$15 million, according to real estate data firm CoStar Group Inc., which confirmed both figures with the listing broker.

"It's no secret that movies went out of town to other places around the country. But television was the bread-and-butter staple for these ranches and that's off, too," said **Rob Gibson**, a location manager currently working with MTV on a show called "Awkward."

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Project Roils City Residents

DEVELOPMENT: Critics say hotel doesn't rate for east Calabasas.

By **ELLIOT GOLAN** Staff Reporter

An Aliso Viejo builder is taking a second stab at large-scale development in Calabasas. But this time, the community appears not as gung-ho.

New Home Co. submitted an application last month for its Canyon Oaks project, a gated community of 141 single-family homes, nine low-income condos and a four-story hotel on 77 acres near Las Virgenes and Agoura roads.

Between the land acquisition cost, grading and other preparation work, and building the homes, the developer estimates the total cost to be near \$100 million.

"It's a very costly piece of dirt to develop," said **Rick Bianchi**, vice president and regional

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Salem Tilts Right With Web Buys

MEDIA: Religious broadcaster judges conservative site good fit.

By **JOEL RUSSELL** Staff Writer

When conservative pundit **Michelle Malkin** wanted to sell her website Twitchy.com, she found a buyer in **Salem Communications Corp.**

The Camarillo media company is in the midst of an acquisitions spree and a stock run-up that has more than tripled its value in the last two years.

And the company has a model for profitably developing media properties that serve its dual audience of Christians and political conservatives, even at a time when religious leaders are rethinking their political profile and the media sector continues to fragment.

Last month, Salem also bought Eagle Publishing, a conservative book publisher for

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Glendale Startup Gambles on Casual Gaming Industry

ENTERTAINMENT: Gamblit makes software for betting on mobile games.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

In the popular world of online and mobile social games, the stakes are about to get higher.

In fact, **Eric Meyerhofer** is betting on it. Meyerhofer is chief executive at **Gamblit Gaming**, a Glendale company that has developed software to add real-money wagering to casual games on laptops, tablets and smart phones. The company also is offering to handle the complex administrative backend to comply with regulations covering the players and the transactions.

"You need to make sure moving currency in and out

is clean, the players are legal age and not performing fraud or money laundering activities," Meyerhofer said.

Gamblit is getting in early on what could be a lucrative online gaming niche as more states legalize Internet wagering. In New Jersey, for instance, online gaming involving poker and other table games through Atlantic City casinos went live in mid-November. An estimated \$8.4 million was generated the first six weeks. Nevada and Delaware also have made it legal, while in California, there are efforts to legalize online poker.

Indeed, online poker is the most readily known version of online gambling, but Gamblit's proposition is going after the games on tablets and cell phones. And it could be huge.

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PHOTO BY THOMAS WASPER

Good Odds?: **Eric Meyerhofer** in Glendale.

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Leaving Bad Publicity At the Port

Princess launches \$20 million campaign amid industry mishaps.

It's been a miserable few years for the cruise industry, which is enduring a seemingly never-ending streak of bad luck.

Last month, a Royal Caribbean ship returned to port after nearly 700 people came down with a virus. Last year, the Carnival Triumph was stuck at sea for days without power or functioning plumbing – what came to be known as the poop cruise.

And of course, two years ago, the Costa Concordia ran aground off the coast of Italy with the loss of 32 lives.

So what is a cruise line to do?

Princess Cruises has launched its biggest advertising campaign ever to show the better side of ocean tourism.

The Valencia company, a unit of **Carnival Corp. & plc** in London, launched the campaign Jan. 15. It has a budget of \$20 million and marks the brand's return to TV and radio advertising for the first time in a decade. It also includes magazine and digital advertising.

The campaign was created by **Goodby Silverstein &**



Idyllic: Images from ad campaign.



'They want to enrich their lives, explore and visit new places, experience culture, and use vacations to reconnect with family.'

GORDON HO,
Princess Cruises

Partners in San Francisco – the same agency responsible for the "Got Milk?" ads. But this campaign takes an entirely different tactic.

The TV ads, which run through the end of March,

show people contemplating their lives and relationships on ship.

Gordon Ho, senior vice president of marketing at Princess, said research shows the fastest-growing segment

of cruise passengers are what he called "the meaningful traveler."

"They want to enrich their lives, explore and visit new places, experience culture, and use vacations to reconnect with family," he said. "The spots reflect those transformative moments on Princess Cruises."

A Harris Interactive poll that was released last summer found that the public trust of the industry had fallen 12 percent with more than half saying they were less likely to book a cruise than a year earlier.

However, **Stacy Lewis**, senior vice president at **Murphy O'Brien Public Relations**, a West Los Angeles firm specialized in tourism clients, said despite the negative publicity, the Princess campaign targets the people who cruise.

She noted that other research shows people with money, who are most likely to buy cruise tickets, are looking for self-enrichment, including quality time with loved ones, relaxed environments and rewards for hard work – all depicted in the ads.

"This campaign is pitch perfect," she said. "There has been a lot of sensational coverage, but people still continue to cruise. The industry has seen enormous growth in the last 10 to 15 years. The growth is a response to consumer interest."

– Joel Russell

Movie Chain Broadens Appeal

Filmgoers can spread elbows, lean back and relax in freedom.

If only airlines – constantly figuring out ways to squeeze more travelers into planes – would get the hint.

Since taking over the multiplex at the Fallbrook Center, **AMC Entertainment Inc.** has quietly converted it to an upscale theater as part of the chain's national upgrade program.

The theater at 6731 Fallbrook Ave. in West Hills formerly belonged to **Laemmle Theaters** and showed foreign and art films before closing in February of last year.

Now called the **AMC Fallbrook 7**, the theater boasts huge recliner seating with large arm rests. The chain said capacity at the multiplex had to be reduced by 50 percent to 70 percent per screen to make the seats fit.

"We're appealing to as many of our guests as possible," said **Ryan Noonan**, director of public relations for the Leewood, Kan.-based chain. "We are identifying some of the older theaters that haven't

been upgraded in a while. We want our movies to be a phenomenal experience."

The 339-theater chain – which was acquired for \$2.6 billion in 2012 by Wang Jialin, China's richest man – also upgraded the snack bar with healthier selections such as pretzels with hummus. As a courtesy, cashiers will even deliver the fare to seats if it takes a while to prepare.

Yet ticket prices run about the same as a regular cinema even though all seats are reserved. Tickets are \$8 before 4 p.m. and \$11 after 4 p.m. For 3-D movies, add \$4 a ticket.

AMC's remodeling program is adding luxury seats, premium concessions and digital box offices. Thirty renovations have been completed nationwide including 11 that are even more upscale with full meal delivery to seats.

Marty Shindler, an entertainment technology consultant at **Shindler Perspective** in Encino, said competition from high-tech home entertainment is compelling the upgrades.

"Theaters need to have more arrangements because they are rivaled by the comforts of the home experience and HD television," he said.

– John Saringo-Rodriguez



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