

Brew and View debut is Friday

By Sean Leary, Entertainment editor

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ROCK ISLAND -- Devin Hansen is walking through a disheveled building of exposed wood, shuffling dust and see-through walls, smiling as he points out details that are present only in his imagination.

A barren, gray cubicle houses a light projector. A space tattered with tools and fallen beams is teeming with pleasant patrons enjoying a night out. And a mammoth wooden skeleton currently framing the back portion of the building is a silver screen dancing with images reflected in the eyes of almost 100 people staring up at it.

What Mr. Hansen is seeing isn't the building blocks before him -- it's the vision of a finished film palace that will mark the culmination of months of planning and hard work. What he is displaying will be the Quad-Cities Brew and View.

Since the independent film explosion in the early to mid '90s and the consolidation and closure of area multiplexes shortly after, Quad-Cities cinema fans have been hungering for an alternative film theater that could cater to eclectic tastes.

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As it turns out, the dish that may sate those cravings also will potentially slake their thirst as well.

The Quad-Cities Brew and View opens its doors to the public for the first time Friday, offering patrons the opportunity to watch flicks, have a beer and grab a pizza and snacks all under one roof -- at 1611 2nd Ave., Rock Island.

“That was really our objective, and the idea behind the Brew and Views in general,” Mr. Hansen said, referring to the concept which has succeeded in several larger cities, including Chicago, “to have a place where you can go and have both dinner and a movie, where you can take a date or go with your friends and have a good time. Get dinner, get a beer and see a movie, all in one spot.

“If you remember the scene from ‘Pulp Fiction’ where John Travolta tells Samuel L. Jackson, ‘Well, in Amsterdam you can buy beer in a movie theater.’ -- that’s us.”

The Brew and View’s debut will be the first tangible manifestation of an idea that has been bandied about by several potential owners for a handful of possible locales in the area -- most notably the District’s still-vacant Capri Theater.

Mr. Hansen began pursuing bringing the idea to reality earlier this year. In April he started making calls and doing research. He scouted a number of other venues -- including the Capri -- before settling on the current digs, in the former Glass Impact building across from Hyman’s furniture.

“Every time I thought we hit a road block we somehow jumped over it,” he said, adding that he was particularly pleased to land in a downtown Rock Island locale. “I can’t think of a better place for the Brew and View. We’re located in what I call the arts section of The District. People can have dinner and a movie at our place, then head to RIBCO for a live concert. Or, they can first enjoy some of the art galleries and then come in for a late movie and cocktails. It adds another dimension to the entertainment for all age groups of adults, from Boomers to Gen X. We’re also planning family matinees and teen nights where alcohol won’t be served, so we’ll really be hitting all age groups.”

The venue will have a capacity of roughly 90 people, and will include 54 movie seats and various couches, barstools and chairs from which patrons can view the films.

Cocktail tables between the movie seats and cupholders on the armrests will allow for convenient setting of snacks during the show.

A curtain will separate the bar from the theater area, keeping chatter from seeping between the two spots.

While the B-and-V does include a bar, there is a twist: The entire venue is a non-smoking building.

“It would be kind of difficult if you had smoking because it could block the screen and it might make some people uncomfortable,” Mr. Hansen said. “I know some people might not be happy with that decision, but you can't smoke in a regular movie theater either, so I don't foresee it being a problem.”

A slate of independent films, classic movies and short flicks is planned for the venue, Mr. Hansen said, adding that it would also show sports such as NASCAR races, football, baseball playoffs and more on the big screen.

“We'll also have some other pop cultural event type shows on display, like the ‘Survivor’ finale and the Oscars,” Mr. Hansen said, smiling and adding, “we'll probably have a big Oscars party.”

“‘Brotherhood of the Wolf’ and ‘Undercover Brother’ are the tentative films set for the opening weekend. Tickets are \$5.

Other things on the sketchpad include a Halloween showing of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” and a “horror classics” presentation in late October, including theme nights for vampires, evil dead and other ghoulies.

However, for Mr. Hansen, the greatest chill forthcoming is one of anticipation.

``I was worried about it working out, and as the opening date grows closer it's getting nerve-wracking, but it seems like everything is going to come together," he said, standing outside in front of the marquee. ``I wasn't nervous at first, but now as we're getting closer to opening I'm wondering if it's going to go over well or not.

``Still," he said, walking back into the building and gazing over his domain, ``it's neat to see everything I've imagined come to reality."

For more information, log on to **www.qcbrewview.com** or call 788-View for a listing of films currently showing.