

Theatre for movie lovers

Branson Meadows Cinema offers good sound and seats.

Shows and shopping come to mind first when you think of Branson, home of constant live entertainment and more malls per square mile than any town its size could normally support.

Add a wide range of dining options and the day-tripper or weekend visitor would seem to have little time for any other activity.

But if you're a movie lover, there is now on more reason to visit the Las Vegas of the Midwest. Actually, make that 11 reasons.

The Branson Meadows Cinema which opened in February, is one of the best places in the Ozarks to take in the latest films...

Part of the venue's novelty and appeal lies in its design. All the theatres share the same wider-than-deep dimensions, with a maximum of 13 rows divided horizontally into two sections, giving each viewer the impression of being right in the action. Screen sizes vary in accordance with the number of seats, so

that each theatre *feels* the same in spatial terms. Its like sitting in a luxurious screening room reserved for movie critics.

Complementing the cozy proportions are the impressive DTS speakers that surround the spectator with full, lifelike, but not ear-splitting sound. (Exception: "U-571," which was *designed* to rattle your teeth.)

Steven Spielberg, among others, favor DTS over THX and other systems. The difference was audible at a recent showing of "Fantasia 2000," with the rich sounds of the Chicago Symphony engulfing the audience without distortion in Beethoven's powerful "Symphony No.5," Gershwin's jazzy "Rhapsody in Blue" and Stravinsky's dynamic "Firebird Suite."

Equally impressive are the sound effects for the action pictures most people will want to see. Whether your gladiatorial hero is Russell Crowe, Samuel L. Jackson or Mel Gibson,

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DTS helps put you in the story, making you feel like a loyal sidekick who is along for the ride.

The ancient arenas of Rome, the urban jungles of New York City and the body-strewn battlefields of revolutionary America look and sound more alive than in cinemas that place most viewers at some distance from the screen. In addition, stadium seating makes it unlikely your view will be blocked. (Even the exit signs tend to be just beyond the range of your peripheral vision.)

I've seen up to three movies in a single day at Branson Meadows and was glad the seats are not the overly soft reclining variety, but comfortable and firm, with adequate lower support...

Unless you insist on live shows only when visiting Branson, consider combining a day of shopping and dining with one or more movies in a venue offering unique visual and aural pleasures. With 13 different films usually playing on 11 screens and up to 60 showings each day, it should be easy for most people to find a movie and a time to their liking.

Branson Meadows Cinema is at 4740 Gretna Road, about three miles west of U.S. 65 at Exit 248 or about 2 1/2 miles northwest of Missouri 76.

The theatre has a private party room for 13-15 youngsters. For information, call the movie hotline at 332-2884.

Larry T. Collins reviews the arts for the *News-Leader*. (Springfield, Missouri)