

Les Grignoux, Belgium

Art-house cinema installs Barco projectors – to secure a bright future



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Aldo Pagliarello, Technical Manager
at Cinema Sauvenière



While the transition to digital cinema is a logical step for multiplexes, art-house theaters often find it challenging to face the change. With the availability of 35mm copies shrinking, however, they are going digital as well, and will soon discover the opportunities the digital shift brings...

The ‘Les Grignoux’ art cinema, for example, which has been providing the inhabitants of Liège (Belgium) with an alternative film program for over 30 years now, recently abandoned its 35mm films. XDCinema/ FTT installed Barco digital cinema projectors in Les Grignoux’s eight theaters, which are spread over three cinemas.

BARCO

Visibly yours



Les Grignoux is nothing less than an institution in Liège and its environs. Founded in 1975 as an independent cultural center, the non-profit organization started focusing on movies at the start of the 1980s. Today, it manages three art-house cinemas in the center of Liège, featuring eight theaters in all. The most recent one, Cinema Sauvenière, opened amid huge public interest in May 2008. It allowed Les Grignoux to expand its diverse activities – film shows, exhibitions, concerts, festivities and education – and become a cultural hotbed in the city.

When building the Sauvenière cinema in 2007, Les Grignoux understood that digital was the future of cinema. It reserved space, in the original design, for digital projectors in the projection rooms. Three years later, they took the step. "It became increasingly difficult to find 35mm copies of bigger art-house movies. The recent 'The King's Speech', for example, is only available in the Digital Cinema format," explained Aldo Pagliarello, Technical Manager at Cinema Sauvenière. "I must admit that we were a bit reluctant to change, because of the sizeable investment, the new working method and the fear that some of the independent and foreign movies would not be available yet in digital format. Nevertheless, we knew we had to transition if we wanted to continue offering the art-house diversity as we had done in the past."

Market leader in digital cinema

Les Grignoux turned to XDCinema, the European leader in digital cinema. "We provide end-to-end solutions for cinemas, from financial offer to deployment (supply of DC equipment of all brands), along with maintenance, training, content and network services and alternative content," Philippe Grandclaudon, Project Manager at XDCinema explained. "As an industry expert, we had been in touch with Les Grignoux for many years already, joining forces on all kinds of initiatives. When they sought our assistance for the digital transition, we could offer both technical know-how and financial support. Having signed 'Virtual Print Fee' (VPF) contracts with the six major Hollywood studios, XDCinema can provide the VPF financing model. Thanks to the model, Les Grignoux only had to pay 25% of their investment."

A local world leader

"These were important arguments in favor of XDCinema, of course," Pagliarello admitted. "Yet the quality of the solutions and the support they offer, also played a key role. A few months before our decision, XDCinema had installed a Barco Kinoton DCP-30 projector at the Sauvenière Cinema, for us to test. We were very satisfied with its quality, as well as with the support services XDCinema delivered." It was Les Grignoux that insisted on installing Barco. Pagliarello: "Firstly because we were impressed with the quality of the projector we had tested. More than that, Barco is a reference beacon in the world of digital cinema. And it's Belgian! Les Grignoux tries to work with local suppliers as much as possible. So when a world-leading provider of cinema projectors is local, it's only logical to get him on board."

Consistent brightness

Between March and April 2011, XDCinema's integration partner FTI installed eight Barco projectors and eight servers at Les Grignoux' cinemas: Le Parc, Churchill and Sauvenière. The smaller theaters now feature DP2K-12C projectors, while FTI integrated one DP2K-20C and one DP2K-32B into the larger auditoria. All three types are powered by the pioneering DLP Cinema® technology from Texas Instruments, which guarantees perfect reproduction of movie content, with the highest picture brightness, contrast and vibrant colors.

Far better image quality on screen

XDCinema and FTI provided three types of training courses, for the staff of Les Grignoux: projectionists, hall superintendents and people in charge of the programming all received training tailored to their responsibilities. Today, a few months after the installation, everyone is satisfied with the shift to digital. "We are very pleased with the quality of Barco's cinema projectors and the support from the system integrators. We can now offer cinema-goers a far better image on screen, are able to show 3D movies and the digital projectors open the doors for alternative content, too. No longer, either, do we have to lug the films around and we can program all the content ahead of the show. Les Grignoux has been expanding significantly over the past few years. Thanks to this landmark investment in digital cinema projectors, we will be able to offer our customers alternative, innovative and diversified cinema programming for many years to come."