

## Austin area adding options for dinner and a movie

*Flix Brewhouse to open in Round Rock; Alamo Drafthouse plans Circle C location*

By [Brian Gaar](#)

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Two new dinner-and-a-movie theaters are coming to the Austin area.

In July, an Alamo Drafthouse-style theater will open at Hester's Crossing Road and Interstate 35 in Round Rock. The six-screen, 800-seat Flix Brewhouse theater will feature food and a brewpub, which patrons can visit without having to purchase a movie ticket.

And plans are in the works for the newest Alamo Drafthouse theater, part of the \$20 million Parkside Village retail development in Southwest Austin's Circle C Ranch development, at Slaughter Lane and MoPac Boulevard (Loop 1).

The two are the latest departures from the standard popcorn-and-candy theaters, joining the upscale Gold Class Cinemas theater at the Domain, which launched last year, and the upcoming Violet Crown Cinema, which is under construction on West Second Street downtown.

Both the Alamo and Gold Class chains were models for the Flix Brewhouse theater in Round Rock, said Alex Wright, a spokeswoman for property manager Aramcor Inc., which will manage the new theater's food and beverage operation. Los Angeles-based Galaxy Theatres will manage the movie operations.

Also, the Sky Ridge Plaza retail center, which Aramcor also manages, needed a new anchor after Hastings Entertainment closed last year, company officials said. The theater, which is under construction, will be located in the old Hastings shell and will feature stadium seating and first-run films.

Aramcor president Allan Reagan said the decision was made to transform the plaza "from a place where shoppers bought things off shelves and racks to what we call a community lifestyle center."

Reagan is the principal shareholder of Hospitality Investors Inc., which will own the new theater.

"If the initial Flix Brewhouse is the success that we anticipate, plans are to refine and expand the concept with our Galaxy partners into other beer-centric suburban locations both in Texas and other western states," he said in an e-mail to the American-Statesman.

The Round Rock City Council last month approved incentives that will pay the company \$21,000 over three years, tied to job-creation targets.

The Circle C addition to the Alamo Drafthouse's nine-theater chain will be its biggest theater yet, at eight screens and 1,000 seats.

Alamo Chief Operating Officer Mike Sherrill said "certainly within a year is reasonable," for a possible opening, but stressed that no schedule has been set.

Unlike other Alamos, which are remodels of existing buildings, the Circle C theater will be built from the ground up.

Beau Armstrong , CEO of Circle C developer Stratus Properties Inc., predicted that the theater will be welcomed in the area.

"To go to the movies takes 15 to 20 minutes in the car, so we felt like this was a perfect fit," Armstrong said.

The Alamo will anchor Parkside Village, along with the Austin Diagnostic Clinic — a project has been in the works since before the recession. When financing dried up, both tenants were "patient and recognized the value of the site, and rode it out," Armstrong said.

Though Circle C is an established community, Armstrong said it has been somewhat underserved from a retail perspective. When an H-E-B grocery store opened in a nearby shopping center, it was swamped, he said.

"I think the Alamo is going to be overwhelmed when they open up, just from the demand," Armstrong said.

[bgaar@statesman.com](mailto:bgaar@statesman.com); 912-5932

## **Coming attractions**

**Next month: Violet Crown Cinema is expected to open in the AMLI on 2nd apartment complex downtown. 434 W. Second St.**

**Arthouse theater will have four screens, with 200 seats. Full bar with food items that customers can eat in the theaters; no in-theater food service.**

**Under way: Changes at the Gold Class Cinema at the Domain, 3225 Amy Donovan Plaza**

**Eight screens, with 32 to 40 reclining seats per theater. Full bar and in-theater food.**

**New owners are adding lower priced \$15 seats to the mix; there will not be waiter service at those seats.**

**July: Flix Brewhouse, Round Rock, 2000 S. Interstate 35**

**6 screens, 800 seats, plus in-theater food service and a brewpub.**

**Future: Alamo Draffhouse Cinema Circle C, 5701 Slaughter Lane**

**8 screens, 1,000 seats, plus in-theater food service.**

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**