

Memphis Flyer



“Now Showing”

by Simone Wilson

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Two weeks ago, the Majestic Grille on South Main celebrated its second anniversary with the unveiling of an 18-foot movie screen in the main dining area. It's a fitting addition to the restaurant, which was the site of the Majestic No. 1 Theatre from 1913 to 1936. Also new is the Innovators Room for art exhibitions and special events.

"We wanted to get involved in the arts in Memphis and make our restaurant available to local artists and arts organizations. We just weren't sure when that would happen," says Deni Reilly, who owns the Majestic with her husband and the restaurant's chef, Patrick.

"What we are trying to do has three components: movies, performing arts, and visual arts," Reilly says.

According to Reilly, the screen is mounted in almost the exact place as the original Majestic's screen and could be the largest screen outside a movie theater in Memphis. Silent films currently are being shown, but the screen also can be used for presentations and televised events.

"Next year, when Memphis plays in the NCAA tournament and wins, our guests can watch the game here," Reilly says.

In addition, the restaurant has partnered with local organizations to promote their performances.

"If Ballet Memphis does *Carmen*, for example, we would have a special event at the restaurant during which some of the dancers could perform excerpts from the ballet," Reilly says. "We also want to have a regular jazz night, but I'm still working on putting together a calendar."

The Innovators Room includes an art gallery that will host six exhibitions per year. The room also can accommodate between 25 and 40 people for private functions.

"We are excited about creating another exhibition space in Memphis," Reilly says. "We don't ask for any commission, and audio or video equipment for business meetings is available free of charge, as well."

The current exhibition shows photographs by Gary Kessel, but Reilly encourages all artists to inquire about the space.

"This is really about promoting art, and we do want to show a variety of works by a variety of artists," she says.



Courtesy Deni Reilly
Warren Jordan and Majestic's Deni Reilly

The Majestic Grille, 145 S. Main (522-8555, arts@majesticgrille.com)