

THEATREWORLD

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Eden Theatre:
**World's
First Cinema**
Since 1889

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Eden Theatre:

World's First Cinema

Since
1889



The first motion picture theatre in the world where Lumière brothers screened *The Arrival of a Train* — the historic Eden Theatre continues to revive the memories of a bygone era ever since it's restoration in 2013. Raghavendra T, Editor-Publisher, *TheatreWorld* visited this cinematic glory to bring you an exclusive and first-hand rendezvous with the cultural heritage in the Southern French city of La Ciotat.



Eden Theatre is a historic landmark in La Ciotat, indeed! This is the very theatre where Lumière brothers screened one of their first moving pictures - *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station (L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat)* -at the close of the 19th century. In fact, legend has it that the audience were so terrified by the moving images of the steam locomotive that some of them leapt from their seats to flee the train.

The theatre is set in the picturesque town of La Ciotat that lays claim to being the birthplace of modern cinema before Hollywood became the worldwide symbol of the movie industry. La Ciotat is a commune in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region in southern France. With an artificial sand beach located downtown, the city has a picturesque location with Alps mountain regions on one side and the uphill commercial area on the other side. La Ciotat was the setting of one of the very first projected motion pictures by the Lumière brothers in 1895. Before its Paris premiere, the film was shown to invited audiences in several French cities, including La Ciotat, where it was screened at the Eden Theatre in September 1896.

Eden was built as a theatre and music hall in 1889. It played host to operas and music concerts, including legends such as Edith Piaf and Yves Montand until the screening of *The Arrival of a Train* at La Ciotat Station by Lumière brothers happened. This momentous screening set Eden on its illustrious cinematic journey.

However, the theatre closed in 1982 after its owner was killed by robbers. It continued to open for one



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"We are delighted to be a trusted partner of Eden Theatre, the World's oldest public cinema at La Ciotat. It's a fantastic combination of history and the latest technology from GDC. We hope Eden Theatre continues to enthrall their consumers, with a superior cinematic viewing experience, using GDC solutions."

- Dr. Man-Nang Chong, Founder, Chairman and CEO of GDC Technology

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week, once a year, to host small film festivals but closed in 1995 and was left abandoned for a decade. In the year 2013, the theatre was renovated and reopened. The rebuilt Eden was a result of the efforts of local supporters of the theatre, who fought for it to be given a facelift. But it was only when Marseille was named European capital of culture for 2013 that the money came in. Several luminaries of French cinema attended the inauguration of the

renovated Eden at which several of the Lumière brothers' films were screened.

More than a century on, the historic theatre has not only been refurbished to make a new beginning but has also restored the glory of some of the golden years of cinema. The dusty chairs have been replaced by velvet seats, and the grubby carpets by polished oak and black marble floors. The impressive



During the Renovation



Michel Cornille
President, Lumières de l'Eden

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The Cinema Lobby



TheatreWorld's Raghav Feeling Great...

facade, painted yellow ochre and with mosaics, had to be rebuilt over the former listed frontage, which the restorers were not allowed to touch.

The newly renovated Edén, which also claims to be the world's first and oldest surviving, public cinema, gives a glimpse of Edén of the bygone era. The theatre screens a mix of recent and old films. Frenchmen and women take great pride in their heritage so it's not surprising that releasing old movies in digital format is a much-loved cinema trend in France. "For renovating cinema we renovate movies," says Michel Cornille, President of Lumières de l'Edén (the association running this cinema). He is the man behind

the rebuilding of the glorious Edén Theatre. With a team of about 20 - 30 people, Cornille accomplished the Euro7 million refurbishment project.

The theatre fans see it as a French heritage and feel it should be a part of a larger cultural project that offers educational tours for school children, screens restored films and hosts film festivals.



Look close, the cow has a filmi theme



Statues of Lumière Brothers inside the auditorium



The Sea Facing Parking



The projection booth equipped with Christie Digital Projector, GDC Server, GDC IMB, Dolby Digital Processor and QSC Audio System