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Noyo Theatre in Willits opens 21-and-over club



The Noyo Theatre is now serving local beer, wine and cider in the 21 and over club. (Photos by Jaclyn Luna)

By **JACLYN LUNA** | The Willits News

PUBLISHED: June 7, 2022 at 1:28 p.m. | UPDATED: June 7, 2022 at 1:29 p.m.

The Noyo Theatre has taken the movie viewing experience to the next level for patrons of drinking age with the opening of a 21-and-older club.

Noyo owners Jeff and Lois Hoover have transformed one of their three screening rooms into a lounge where beer, wine and cider are available for purchase. Lois said, “We are excited about this.”

Patrons can kick their feet up in the recently installed state-of-the-art antigravity chairs while they watch a movie and enjoy adult libations. The Hoovers received a liquor license about a year ago and created a designated bar area near one theater.

Alcohol is not allowed in the lobby and only those old enough to drink are allowed in the bar area and attached theater. Locally brewed and bottled beer from down the street at Northspur Brewery is available, as well as a selection of wines and Ace Hard Cider.

With the new larger seats and wider spacing of seats, seating is limited to 33 patrons. The fully reclinable seats even have a USB outlet built in.

There are a couple special seats to accommodate a wheelchair being placed adjacent to them. The room also has new speakers and a laser projector.

While the theatre does not have a full kitchen, the Hoovers are planning to expand the snack menu to include cheese and cracker plates, which happen to go quite nicely with a glass of wine. They currently sell standard movie theatre fare, such as popcorn, candy and nachos.



Lois and Jeff Hoover upgraded the seats in the 21-and-over club for ultimate viewer comfort.

Since the onset of the pandemic over two years ago, Hollywood has not been putting out huge movies as they once did, which affects movie theaters everywhere. Jeff explained they used to run movies for two or three weeks pre-pandemic and these days movies are running for four or five weeks.

Fortunately, and somewhat unusual for a theater of their size, the Noyo is a first-run movie house – meaning they get movies the day they are released. There is currently a big movie playing, “Top Gun: Maverick,” and another, “Jurassic World 3: Dominion,” coming to the theater June 10.

Jeff explained the motivation behind the 21 and over club. He stated, “We saw where the industry was going and we said ‘listen, when we come back (from shutdowns) we have to somehow boost our profits.’ We thought, a lot of people want to have a drink while they are watching the movie. We thought ‘great,’ and we said ‘wait a minute, let’s sweeten the deal.’ Now we have the drinks and the seats. And, the seats are fantastic.”

Like many small businesses, the Noyo struggled to stay afloat during Covid lockdowns when the Hoovers were forced to shut the theater doors for over a year. In small town spirit, the town came together to help the Willits institution, a Go Fund Me was created and many donated.

Lois explained they were able to recover from Covid, “because of the support of the community. It was just incredible; we were able to reopen and improve...the support of the community has been tremendous.”

The Noyo Theatre is located at 57 E. Commercial St. in Willits. Call (707) 459-NOYO for more information.



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**Jaclyn
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