

The Going Rate

Estimated prices for all rights to theatrical films in overseas markets

GREAT EXPECTATIONS usually accompany a new international film market. Not so this year.

As low- and medium-budget indie distributors unwrap their new lineups at the May 14-23 Marche du Film in Cannes, one is most likely to hear “pretty bleak” about their chances to license product to the international marketplace.

Foreign presales have practically vanished, and a new crop of sugar daddies — domestic and foreign private-equity investors — may be pulling back as fears of an international financial crisis continue to gain momentum.

Paradoxically, the entry of big-money barons has been a double-edged sword. While their contributions have helped stimulate production for the indie trade, it has also escalated a highly competitive market, with a glut of films frequently causing prices to tumble. As a result, too many films fail to achieve a single sale in the international market. It's gotten so bad, said one frustrated seller, that you can't give films away, with buyers even declining to take on sales for video and TV on a percentage basis.

It's a boom-or-bust situation, say the foreign sales experts, who maintain that good deals can be made for unique films with recognizable directors and stars backed by studio domestic releases. But the foreign market, they warn, cannot absorb the large number of films that are available.

The prices listed here have no backing from any industry organization and are only meant to serve as an estimated guide. Distribution consultant and former AFMA chairman William Shields, Global Cinema Group president Peter Elson and Compliance Consulting president Rob Aft assisted in analyzing the price structure.

— Hy Hollinger

PRODUCTION COSTS	\$750-\$1M	\$1M-\$3M	\$3M-\$6M	\$6M-\$12M
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EUROPE

France	\$25-\$50	\$50-\$80	\$80-\$175	\$175-\$500
Germany/Austria	25-60	60-100	100-250	250-750
Greece	5-10	10-30	30-50	50-80
Italy	25-50	50-100	100-250	250-400
Netherlands	10-25	25-50	50-100	100-150
Portugal	5-10	10-30	30-60	60-150
Scandinavia*	25-50	50-75	75-100	100-250
Spain	25-50	50-75	75-150	150-400
U.K.	35-75	70-125	125-250	250-600

FIGURES IN THOUSANDS

*REGIONAL SALES