



Poland's Alvernia Studios

The world's hottest production facilities

Brazil, Germany and others woo filmmakers

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SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town Studios

Now nearing completion of its initial construction phase, Cape Town Studios is preparing to host local and foreign-financed productions in the hope of becoming a central player in South Africa's burgeoning film industry.

Set to open in the third quarter after five years of planning, fundraising and environmental tests, the new facility operates under the direction of CEO Nico Dekker (former head of Table Mountain Motion Picture Studios).

"The main motivation for building this facility was how fast (South Africa) was growing as a venue for international filming," Dekker says. "A proper studio space has been missing here. Cape Town Studios is the first successful effort to make such a facility viable economically."

Built at a cost of \$60 million, the studios will open with four soundstages providing more than 63,000 square feet of studio filming space, in addition to 50,400 square feet of workshops and 13,500 square feet of production offices. There is also acreage for supporting studio service companies and residential development.

"Rather than see this as just a collection of buildings, we want this to become a base for filmmaking in Africa for any production from anywhere in the world," Dekker adds. "We believe these studios will become a facilitator for bringing international resources in touch with our nation's rich talent pool and natural diversity."

Dekker sees the studio's opening as meshing well with preparations for the FIFA World Cup, which is pouring development capital into Cape Town's economy. The money spent to bring international soccer to the region has also meant improving the area's transportation, lodging, catering and other support services -- all resources that studio clients will be able to tap into.

"As one industry person said to me recently," Dekker says, "You're finally showing the rest of the world that South Africa is willing to invest in its own future." -- *John Scott Lewinski*

PHILIPPINES

Bigfoot Studios

Located on the tropical resort island of Mactan, just off Cebu island in the Philippines, Bigfoot Studios' production facilities are a 10-minute drive from a small international airport. The main facility contains two soundstages -- one 11,000 square feet -- along with a Dolby mix theater, ADR and voice-over stage, a Foley stage, four large edit and effects suites and 10 dedicated editing bays, all fully equipped with Final Cut Pro and fiber connectivity to a central storage, enabling real-time concurrent HD editing.

Bigfoot also has an "underwater" studio with a main shooting tank 16 feet deep.

Last year, Bigfoot expanded its operations to another property on the main island of Cebu City, which offers four additional shooting stages, each at 11,000 square feet, along with onsite fabrication and storage facilities. To keep in line with the industry's push for HD technology, Bigfoot has acquired three Sony Cine Alta HDW F900R cameras and three RED One cameras.

Bigfoot Entertainment CEO Kacy Andrews says the studio has several feature films in postproduction, as well as a solid pipeline of projects in the coming months.

"We shot a thriller called 'Girl With No Number' that wrapped last year, and we are also in the midst of planning a big-budget action film and a smaller drama, both to start shooting later this year," she says. -- *Sonia Kolesnikov-Jessop*



Malaysia's KRU Studios

POLAND

Alvernia Studios

Located a few miles west of the richly historic southern city of Krakow, Alvernia Studios was completed in 2009. It was founded by broadcasting executive Stanislaw Tyczynski, who established RMF FM, Poland's first commercial radio station.

The studio is housed in an ultra-modern, interconnected system of domes, with state-of-the-art facilities for every stage of the filmmaking process up to and including making a master copy, since the studio has its own lab. The production facilities include four soundstages in two sizes -- one 67,812 square feet and another 21,527 square feet. The 5,295-square-foot dubbing studio is Dolby Premier Studio-certified. The studio also has mobile facilities in a fleet of modern buses and 24 rooms of accommodations, with a spa and swimming pool that will be completed this year.

The facility recently hosted Filip Bajon's \$2.1 million release "Maiden's Vow," a 19th century period comedy that Alvernia is co-producing with the Kalejdoskop Film Studio. The filmmakers used Alvernia's camera equipment to shoot the movie last year and are working on postproduction at the studio.

"Alvernia wants to be perfect, and they have the best tools to do it," says the film's producer, Zbigniew Domagalski, co-owner of Kalejdoskop Film Studio. "The quality of production and postproduction -- of images and particularly sound -- is as good as you'll find anywhere in Europe." -- *Kirill Galetski*

SPAIN

Ciudad de la Luz

The big news at Spain's Ciudad de la Luz studio facility in Valencia is that its 13 million-liter water tank is operational and ready for action.

Just as cult director Alex de la Iglesia wraps his ninth feature film, "Balada Triste de la Trompeta," at la Luz, the studio could be hosting Juan Antonio Bayona's anticipated second feature, possibly slated to shoot here in the summer. Bayona's film, produced by Apaches Entertainment, Telecinco Cinema and his own production label, Spongeman, is based on a natural disaster that could put the tank to good use.



Spain's Ciudad de la Luz

Despite a recent slump in production, Ciudad has seen an increased international interest in the state-of-the-art location, thanks in part to Spanish subsidies. "The new financing in Spain has made it even more attractive to shoot here," says Colette Maynard, the studio's marketing manager.

Subsidies from the Culture Minister's Film Institute, which account for 33% of the Spanish producer's investment and 15%-20% of the Spanish boxoffice gross, capped at \$1.4 million, come on top of the Valencia region's subsidy -- a 16% return on local spending. Spanish tax law also allows an 18% tax deduction on film investments. -- *Pamela Rolfe*

UNITED KINGDOM

Pinewood Shepperton

The most ambitious expansion plans for Pinewood Shepperton since the studio was established in 1934 are hanging in the balance, after a local planning authority recently rejected its much-vaunted \$332 million proposal to add permanent film sets, offices and homes on 110 acres adjacent to its current site.

In October, South Bucks District Council said no thanks to Pinewood's extensive plans, which included permanent set re-creations of San Francisco, New York's Tribeca neighborhood, New Orleans and Venice's Grand Canal, as well as a Screen Craft Academy built in partnership with the National Film and Television School.

The rejection, though tough, was expected as the proposed building is on "greenbelt" land -- land that is considered a no go for development -- and was always going to need top level government agreement. Pinewood has appealed.

Pinewood Shepperton CEO Ivan Dunleavy says he remains confident the go-ahead will be secured. Having spearheaded global growth with deals to open and operate facilities in Germany, Canada and Malaysia, Dunleavy is convinced local growth can only be a good thing for the creative economies and the community at large.

"If we add other things to the Pinewood cluster, that helps everybody," he says. Now he just has to persuade the local councilors. -- *Stuart Kemp*