

An evening with the stars



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Other popular open-air cinemas in Athens include *Cine Thisio*, voted as one of the best cinemas in the world by CNN in 2012 (Ap. Pavlou 7, Thisio), *Cine Aegli* (Kipos Zappiou), *Cine Psirri* (Sarri 40-44) and *Cine Dexameni* (Platia Dexamenis, Kolonaki).

A new application for iPhones called *Athens' open-air cinemas* was recently published and is available through iTunes.

www.cineparis.gr
Ticket price: 8 EUR

Among the first cities in the world to embrace the outdoor cinema trend over a century ago, Athens is the proud home of *Cine Paris*. Built at the heart of the city's most picturesque neighborhood, Plaka, right at the foot of the Acropolis, this is a jewel of a cinema

Watching a movie on *Cine Paris'* open-air terrace is an unforgettable experience. From the building's roof garden, you are in the perfect spot to watch the sun set over the Acropolis. Then sit back and spend the next couple of hours in the company of your favorite movie stars.

Little is known about *Cine Paris'* glorious past, as historical traces seem to have been lost in the mists of time. According to legend, the cinema started as a plain, gravel-covered yard back in the 1920s. Bought by a Greek hairdresser who spent years

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living in Paris, it was named *Paris* after the owner's adopted city. Other sources, however, place the cinema's official opening in 1938 and cite the businessman K. Ioannides as its first real owner. It wasn't before the 1960s, the golden era of cinemas, that the second floor was built. This was a significant addition to the initial construction and gave *Cine Paris* a new identity. When cinemas in Greece underwent a crisis about ten years later, *Cine Paris* also closed for a while and reopened as a music club/pub. In 1986, it was acquired by the

Panos Family and has been operating as an open-air cinema again ever since.

Cine Paris projects films solely in English and subtitled in Greek. No wonder that 80 percent of its visitors are foreigners. From early May until mid-October, cinema goers are in for a treat, as the variety of films projected here can range from old classics right to the latest American blockbuster movie. If the bar with its rich choice of whiskies is not excuse enough to sip a drink in the shadow of the Parthenon, then there are a great many pubs and restaurants right at your feet, waiting to take you into the small hours.

Cine Paris hosts a quality poster shop with an interesting

variety of photo stills, providing a nostalgic trip down memory lane for true cinephiles. Right among the laminated posters and the vintage photo stills, you will also find a little piece of cinema history; a coal-fired *Cinemeccanica* movie projector from the 1940s. However, perhaps *Cine Paris'* real heart and soul is its young projectionist. A local from the Plaka district, the now 18-year old Giorgos Pastris is the Greek version of *Cinema Paradiso's* Toto. Trained by the current owner to project films at the tender age of 11, this young man seems to have jumped straight out of a Tornatore movie. **BO**