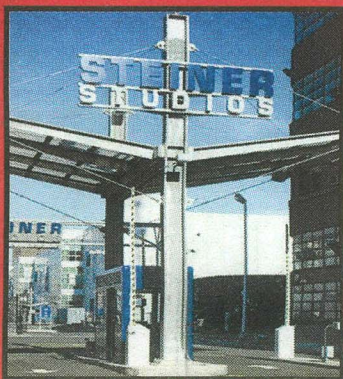


REGIONAL Film & Video

Channelling News For The Industry...

August 2008

Still Running.... The BIG Interview



Douglas C. Steiner, Chairman of Steiner Studios, a production facility in Brooklyn, New York, is the subject of the latest of our BIG Issue interviews, looking at a recent tax break programme for movies created by the state of New York.

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Still Running...

Regional Film & Video's US Correspondent, Heather-Annie McCalden talks to Douglas C. Steiner, Chairman of Steiner Studios, a production facility in Brooklyn, New York, in regards to a recent tax break programme created by the state of New York. The programme is a combination of credits issued both from New York City and New York State that provides a fully refundable tax credit equal to 35% of production expenditures to qualifying productions of both feature film and television. The new legislation was signed on April 23rd of this year, the opening day of the Tribeca Film Festival; the signing of the legislation was appropriate considering the festival itself was created as a different type of incentive, one to revitalize downtown Manhattan as well as film production in the city after 9/11.

Taxing Time

Q: Could you talk about your studio's involvement in the tax break development?

A: Our studio spearheaded the programme. The tax break was designed in part by Steiner Studios and structured with the city in mind. It was specifically put together for New York City, drawing on its strengths and the way it operates.

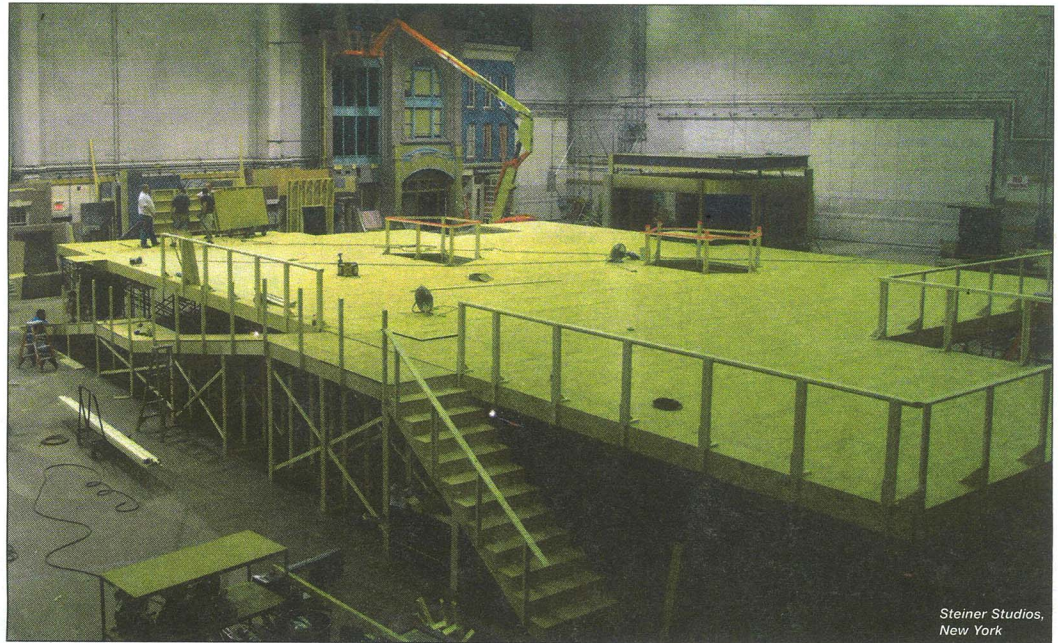
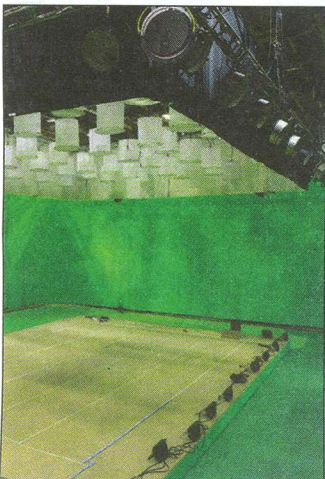
Q: Would you mind relaying your general views on shooting in New York City versus Los Angeles and other international locations?

A: People love all New York City has to offer, it's a 24-hour city. Originally there was no infrastructure in place for large television or film productions, but the tax incentive and places like our facility have changed that. People are coming here for the tax incentive, and with the dollar so cheap we are expecting more international clients.

Q: Is it surprising to you that California fails to offer tax breaks to the film industry, and do you see this as a reflection of how film culture is actually valued on the West coast?

A: No, it's related to the politics and government of California. The state can't really afford a tax credit programme at the moment. Other states have tax incentive programmes, but most of these are more feel-good for the state than actually viable for the industry because they're designed to bring in the novelty of production and not built to support something like a long term television series.

Q: Do you believe advancements in technology in addition to tax incentives are responsible for the gradual shift away from Hollywood we are now experiencing?



Steiner Studios,
New York

A: No, most of the industry is still in Hollywood, but it is a primarily nomadic industry, and it will travel to where things are cheap to do. Cost plays a larger role than technology. We mostly get the projects that had the potential to be exported to Canada, Eastern Europe, Mexico, or New Zealand.

Q: Has the tax advent changed your responsibilities significantly or widened them to include a more global sense of production?

A: Film is the only industry in the world with a complete positive balance of payments.

I think it's a global business, and we do have to compete to try to make production cost effective without costing the city.

New York's advantage is that we're doing just that in a place people want to be.

We have the best crew base in the world, and most of the talent lives here. We've got a different vibe than LA.

Q: What are some of the differences you've noted between the industry in LA and NY?

A: New York culture is more in your face, and there's more passion for the work - especially for below-the-line. Production, shooting, is a real way of life here, not a 9 to 5, and people work really hard. Los Angeles is more laid back and static. The intensity of New York not only drives the city, but makes it an attractive place for people to shoot here. It's dense with lots of stimulus.

Shipbuilding Heritage Shared

Just like the increasingly popular NI Screen facility in Harland & Wolff's former Paint Hall, attracting the likes of the soon-to-be-released blockbuster, *City of Ember*, Steiner Studio - which opened in November, 2004 - is on a 15-acre site at the historic Brooklyn Navy Yard, offering a 305,000- square-foot facility which provides New York City with its first Hollywood-style (and scale) production and support facility.

Designed to the specifications of producers and facility operators in Los Angeles, and supported by top New York artistic talent, Steiner Studios is a full-service, state-of-the-art "production factory," equipped for start-to-finish production of major motion pictures, independent films, television, broadcast commercials and music videos.

As the largest and most sophisticated studio complex outside of Hollywood, Steiner Studios offers five soundstages - including the largest (27,000 square feet) on the East Coast - ample office and support space, and parking for 1,000 vehicles. Addressing the ongoing, unmet demand for film and television production facilities in New York, Steiner Studios has helped to boost NYC's position as a world-class entertainment production center.

