

Travel & Life

LIGHTS! CAMERA! LUXURY!

*A guide to navigating
the wave of upscale cinemas*

By **JOHNNY DIAZ** | Staff writer

Coming to a theater near you: more luxury options.

A few years ago, movie theaters began upgrading their offerings as a way to appeal to customers who increasingly have been drawn to at-home viewing options. Since then, theater companies continue upping the ante, attempting to pamper guests (that's what movie patrons are called these days) with oversized reclining seats, some in leather, a full bar, eclectic entrees and, in some cases, in-house restaurants.

What once was rare has now expanded throughout South Florida, with more such theaters planned in 2017.

What's the best way to experience this class of new high-end cinemas? Here's a little primer on what to look for beyond the big screen.

Landmark Theatres

The decor really stands out at the Landmark at Merrick Park in Coral Gables.

The main entrance has the look and feel of a posh high-end hotel lobby, with black-bricked walls, gray-tiled floors and a full bar. There is a concession stand with a marble countertop and bar tables with red leather seats. You may just want to hang out here after work, regardless of whether you're catching a flick. That upscale look can even be found in the restrooms.

The national luxury movie chain opened its seven-screen

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STAFF ILLUSTRATION



KENNETH SETZER/COURTESY

Mahogany mistletoe's leaves are thicker and smoother than its host's foliage.

FAIRCHILD'S TROPICAL GARDEN COLUMN

Kenneth Setzer

It's hard to find, but yes, mistletoe grows here

Classic European mistletoe — the species most commonly associated with Christmas, ancient Celts and kissing — does not grow in our region. However, there are mistletoe species in North America, and we actually have our very own native Florida species of mistletoe to kiss beneath.

Phoradendron rubrum, the mahogany mistletoe, is exceedingly rare. Its host, West Indian mahogany (Swietenia mahagoni), is commonly used in landscaping but is listed as threatened in the wild. Mahogany mistletoe is unlikely to be found on planted trees, only those that grow in the wild.

So perusing Fairchild Tropical Garden's plant list recently, I was pretty stunned to find mahogany mistletoe included. I had the impression it survived only in a few Florida Keys. Off I trudged into the wilds of the garden's lowlands and the Keys Coastal Habitat. Many visitors don't realize that they are welcome to explore our unpaved, less-manicured, lowlands trails, where there are a lot of treasures to discover.

I found mahoganies, and kept looking up and up, referring to a photo on my phone. I spotted translucent white berries among mahogany branches. This must be it! Wrong. Our conservation experts set me straight: It was snow-berry or milkberry, Chiococca alba. They then took me out to find the real thing.

I would never have spotted them on my own. But there they were, little sprigs of green. Part of mistletoe's intrigue may come from the fact that in winter, with its host tree bare, the mistletoe remains green. South Florida's mahoganies are at their northern limit here, and conse-

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IN TRAVEL

Adult beverages in the Magic Kingdom

Four more restaurants within Walt Disney World's former alcohol-free zone will be serving beer and wine. **Page 8.**

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