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iPic will roll out iPad in new deluxe Delray Beach theater

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By [Alexandra Clough](#) - Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

And the hottest real estate buy these days is...a church? A 22,000-square-foot church on five acres in suburban West Palm Beach was put up for sale recently, with a test-the-waters price of \$3.5 million. To the surprise of broker **Rebel Cook**, inquiries were strong “and the phone rang every single day.” “Churches do sell,” said Cook, of **Rebel Cook Real Estate** in Palm Beach Gardens.

The property, owned by the **Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ** of Belle Glade, was sold to **Trinity Church International West** for \$2.96 million and closed last month. The property is located at 16569 Southern Boulevard, east of Pratt Whitney Road. Interest in the church was wide and varied. One prospect said the property looked suitable for a Buddhist temple. Apostolic Church Senior Pastor **Joseph Feld** said he also fielded interest from equestrians and restaurants. **A reason for the interest: Churches are hard to come by, Cook said. They typically want a visible spot that can be acquired at a reasonable price. But densely populated areas sometimes balk because of the accompanying traffic after services. “It’s not easy to get a church zoned,” Cook said.**

Pastor Bryan Rosenbarger said the 250 or so members of Trinity Church had been meeting for eight years at **Wellington High School** and were ready for a permanent church home. But finding one was hard and he thought this church might be a bit too far away, until he realized it was an easy drive to the property on Southern Boulevard. The church’s prime spot on Southern Boulevard also was key. “The more we looked at it, the more we loved the visibility,” Rosenbarger said, especially since he knows the western portion of the county is poised for greater growth. “In 10 years, it will be right in the middle of town,” he said. The church, built in 2004, has space for a daycare center, which Rosenbarger said he hopes to get up and running soon to create an income stream for the church.

Meanwhile, Feld said the Apostolic Church will concentrate on its other churches, which are located in Arcadia, Lake Placid, Fort Myers and Belle Glade, the church headquarters. A new, 22,000-square-foot church is being built there and should be ready by the end of the year, he said.

iPic Entertainment, the luxury movie theater company, will build a theater in downtown Delray Beach, its second Palm Beach County location. When the complex opens in 2015, it will feature iPic’s latest upscale treat: An iPad to order drinking and dining options. iPic was recently selected by Delray Beach’s Community Redevelopment Agency as the unanimous winner for the city’s old library site on 4th and 5th Avenues. The 1.57-acre site is half a block south of sizzling Atlantic Avenue in the center of downtown.

Moviegoers can expect the same heady dose of luxury some already have experienced at iPic’s **Mizner Park** theater in Boca Raton. There, they can watch a movie in an oversized reclining seat, avail themselves of pillows and a blanket and order gourmet food and cocktails to their seat. They can also opt to eat in the **Tanzy Restaurant** located below the eight-auditorium theater. Ticket prices range from \$12 to \$24, depending on the style of seat and whether the buyer is an iPic member. Now, in its quest to keep current with technology trends, iPic plans to incorporate an iPad tablet computer into the armrest of about 2/3 of the seats in Delray Beach, said **Hamid Hashemi**, iPic president and chief executive. The iPad pops up from the newly designed armrest, then swivels to face the customer, allowing a guest to order drinks or create a custom cocktail (including the type of glass used), select appetizers, entrees or desserts, then swipe a credit card, if preferred, to pay the bill.

iPic spent 15 months designing the software in-house and also used outside designers to create the mechanism allowing the iPad to pop up and drop down at an angle for the customer, Hashemi said. The concept is being tested in the company’s Boca Raton theater and is expected to be rolled out across the company’s 67 theaters nationwide, including about half the seats in Boca Raton by January. The investment, Hashemi said, is in the “millions of dollars,” but he wouldn’t be specific. Hashemi said customers are so used to technology in every part of their lives that using an iPad at the iPic is a must to stay current with consumers. With technology, “people can do so much more and have a sense of empowerment. People like to do things for themselves, to go online to shop,” Hashemi said. Businesses that cater to these customers “are going to thrive in the coming decade. If you don’t innovate and be ahead of the curve, you’ll be old.” The \$36 million Delray Beach complex will feature 529 seats in eight auditoriums, plus 42,869 square feet of Class A office space, about 7,000 square feet of retail space and a parking garage. There won’t be a separate restaurant but there will be a kitchen serving **Tanzy Express** cuisine to guests at their seats.

In addition to the Delray Beach theater, the office space is especially coveted by city and business leaders who say downtown has no new office space to offer businesses wanting to be downtown. iPic will occupy 20,000 square feet of that space and shift its corporate headquarters to Delray Beach from Boca Raton. The move doubles the current office size and will allow employment to double as well, to

about 70 or 80 — making iPic a major downtown Delray Beach employer. The rest of the office space is going fast, too: Some 7,000 square feet already is claimed by Donor Community, a Sunrise-based company that will move its headquarters to Delray Beach, Hashemi said. Donor Community makes software used by non-profit organizations. In addition to plans for Delray Beach, iPic already is under construction for new theaters in Houston, Los Angeles, Bethesda, Md., Fort Lee, N.J., Philadelphia and soon in New York City, at an as-yet undisclosed location. Four sites are being eyed in Miami-Dade County, too, Hashemi said. Hashemi said he's not worried the Delray Beach iPic theater will cannibalize business from Boca Raton. The major complaint he hears is that the smaller Mizner Park theater, with 462 seats, frequently is sold out. Hashemi said iPic knows many of its customers come from points well north of Boca Raton, so having a Delray Beach location will meet that demand.

Burt & Max's is so successful at the **Delray Marketplace** that owner **Burt Rapoport** is planning to open another eatery at the suburban Delray Beach shopping center. Dubbed **Apeiro**, Italian for infinity, the new restaurant will be next door to Burt & Max's. The reason is simple. "We have a huge waiting list and turn so many people away I felt somebody will take the space next door," Rapoport said. "I did not want to give anybody our overflow. I wanted to take it myself."

Look for Apeiro to have a Mediterranean theme, with casual food, such as chicken and salads, plus fresh herbs and plenty of olive oil. An opening is slated for October 2014, on what is now a grassy area next to Burt & Max's, located next to the valet stand at Delray Marketplace. The success of this far-west destination has exceeded Rapoport's expectations, which is gratifying, considering how everyone told him "it was the worst idea," he said. But Rapoport thought it was an obvious choice. Traffic heading west on Clint Moore Road is jammed during rush hour and he knew the western part of southern Palm Beach County was underserved.

Since Burt & Max's opened in February, Rapoport said the eatery has made money each month, even during the summer, which he said is unusual in South Florida. When Lyons Road recently was completed through to Boynton Beach, sales at Burt & Max's rose 9 percent, meaning the center is attracting customers not only from communities in suburban Boca Raton and Delray Beach but also from the huge cluster of housing communities in Boynton Beach. Looking ahead to this coming winter season, Rapoport expects Burt & Max's will be very busy. In fact, if you plan to dine there this season, he offers this word of advice: Go on opentable.com or call to make a reservation.

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