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Inferno, Magnet spark \$250 mil fund

Pair poised to co-finance films

By TATIANA SIEGEL

Bill Johnson and Jim Seibel's Inferno Intl., the production and finance company behind the remake of "The Women," has inked a two-year joint-venture pact with Magnet Media Group to co-finance 10 films over the next two years.

As part of the deal, the two companies have created a \$250 million fund — a combination of private equity and debt financing — to finance the films.

Beverly Hills-based Magnet Media was launched in May by Maggie Monteith and Jeanette Buerling. Monteith was most recently a marketing and distribution exec for Lucasfilm. Buerling is a former executive director of Hollywood Intl. Finance, a film investment fund that acquired, financed and produced 38 movies with budgets of up to \$25 million per picture as well as a number of TV projects.

Domestic distribution rights to many of the pics made under the venture will likely be handled by Sony Pictures, which has a multipicture output deal with Inferno. International rights will be handled through Inferno's international sales operation, led by Pamela Pickering.

"Jeanette and Maggie have not only done an excellent job raising this fund, but their industry relationships and production experience brings extraordinary value," Johnson said. Los Angeles-based Inferno, which was formed in 2002 by partners Johnson and Seibel, has a slate that includes Lasse Hallstrom's "Hachiko: A Dog's Story," starring Richard Gere and Joan Allen and currently in post-production.

Deal was brokered by Endeavor Independent's Graham Taylor and Alexis Garcia.



Buerling



Monteith



Johnson

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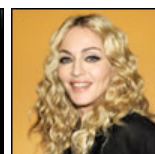
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