

S.A. production firm teams with a global media player

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Six months ago, Laszlo Rain, a full-service production company based in San Antonio, was opening its new five-acre complex on the city's Northwest Side.

Now its founder, Tom Nador, confirms that he has finalized a deal that teams Laszlo Rain with the internationally acclaimed Red Car Inc., which is based in Los Angeles.

As a result of the unique arrangement -- which Nador categorizes as more than a joint venture but not quite a merger -- San Antonio's star is expected to rise substantially in the highly competitive production industry. Nador says that's because with Laszlo Rain teaming up with Red Car, the latter adds San Antonio to the impressive list of cities where it has offices. That list includes Dallas, Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

Terms of the deal, which Nador says was first discussed in April 2003, have not been revealed. But Red Car officials categorize the partnership with Laszlo Rain as their "latest in a string of expansion efforts worldwide."

"We've selected to service their world-class projects," says Nador, explaining the magnitude of the deal and how it will affect his company and San Antonio. "We're going to provide the facilities and the market. They are going to provide a team of support, a highly identifiable name and a network."

The move comes on the heels of Red Car's recent entry into Buenos Aires, Argentina, where the company has set up a full-service editorial/post studio. It also means that the Laszlo Rain facilities will be closely affiliated with Red Car's Dallas operations.

Red Car Dallas' Managing Director Carrie Callaway will play a key role in the development of San Antonio. She is expected to bring to the Alamo City a stable of highly accomplished editors.

"I feel that the collaboration with Laszlo Rain will be mutually beneficial, allowing our editors to work on some of the great creative coming out of that market -- and giving our San Antonio clients access to world-class talent from throughout the country," says Callaway. "I look forward to the developing relationship."

Putting S.A. on the map

Six months ago, when Laszlo Rain was moving into its new digs, Nador told the Business Journal that he was determined to put San Antonio on the production industry map. He says

the deal with Red Car is a big step in that direction.

"This means I will now have a staff of 30 to 40 highly creative people at my disposal," explains Nador. "They are some of the best cutters (editors) in the world -- very unique pros with outstanding design standards."

By hanging the Red Car shingle, San Antonio's Laszlo Rain facilities will now be able to offer clients access to editors throughout the Red Car network -- both in the United States and internationally. And Red Car's tele-editing and teleconferencing systems, for example, will enable San Antonio clients to work with editors located in other markets from Laszlo Rain's Alamo City studios .

Red Car is perhaps most noted for its television commercial work. It touts global clients such as Nike. The company's client roster also includes ad agency power hitters like Leo Burnett and Young and Rubicam.

Red Car President and CEO Larry Bridges founded the AVA network, an Internet-based facility enabling creative talent from across the globe to collaborate without geographic boundaries. He began his career as a production assistant on Francis Coppola's "The Conversation" and in 1979 founded Red Car.

"We're one of their offices now," says Nador about Laszlo Rain and San Antonio. "My goal has been to get San Antonio recognized on the big map in this industry. For San Antonio to be included with Red Car cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York and Dallas -- that's huge for this city."

Nador adds, "Now we become the bar that the rest of the industry looks up to."

Sold on S.A.

So what does Red Car get?

Red Car officials say there were a number of factors that attracted them to the San Antonio market and to Laszlo Rain.

One was the Alamo City's strong Hispanic advertising reputation. Another was the proximity of Austin, which Red Car officials believe is a key market.

But Nador says Red Car would not have done the deal if they did not see a mass of opportunity in San Antonio.

"They would not have moved in here if they didn't see something big happening here," he contends.

Red Car also gets access to Laszlo Rain's spacious five-acre complex set along the edge of the Texas Hill Country. Those facilities include three post-design suites, a conference room, fabrication facilities, a full-service kitchen and a 1,200-square-foot canopied wooden deck.

Nador told the Business Journal in July that his new facilities were better defined as a post-production resort because the site offers numerous indoor and outdoor recreational areas. Those amenities include a swimming pool area, an Internet-ready client bar, a three-acre paintball war-games field and nature walk and bike trails. A studio apartment is also available for guests and late-night sessions at the complex, located near Melrose Canyon land and Mud Creek.

"We bought this property. We took all our savings and stocks and dumped it into this," says Nador, a native of Canada. "It was a serious investment but it was more than worth it."

Nador has built Laszlo Rain from a local and regional shop into one that was beginning to attract an increasing number of national and international clients before the deal was consummated with Red Car. One of the company's drawing cards has been its new complex, which Nador refers to as "Little House on the Prairie with the Matrix built in."

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