

Film industry rides new wave

INTERVIEW WITH ANTONIO GENNARI

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LANTICA MEDIA



ANTONIO GENNARI attended the Political Science Faculty at the Università degli Studi di Firenze, followed by post-graduate studies at several academic institutions, including the Advanced Management Programme of the IESE Business School. He held senior executive positions and served as an investing partner in several investment banks and diversified holding companies before joining Lantica Media in 2009, where he served initially as Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer. He assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer in 2013, overseeing the corporate development of the current Lantica Media structure.

How did the creation of Pinewood Dominican Republic Studios come about? Why Pinewood, and not Hollywood?

At Lantica Media, we foster strategic partnerships with key industry players across all segments of our operations. When we decided to invest in our state-of-the-art studio facility, Pinewood Studios Group was the natural preferred choice. Pinewood is the global leader in the film and TV studio segment with a worldwide presence and an outstanding reputation within the media and entertainment industry. At Lantica, we felt it would be a perfect-fit partnership.

The Dominican Republic offers a solid infrastructure and a wide range of unique and diverse locations including classic architecture, modern metropolitan skylines, beautiful beaches, mountains and deserts – many options to satisfy location needs for Hollywood and other international productions.

What does the Lantica Media group of companies offer foreign film production companies that other studios can't?

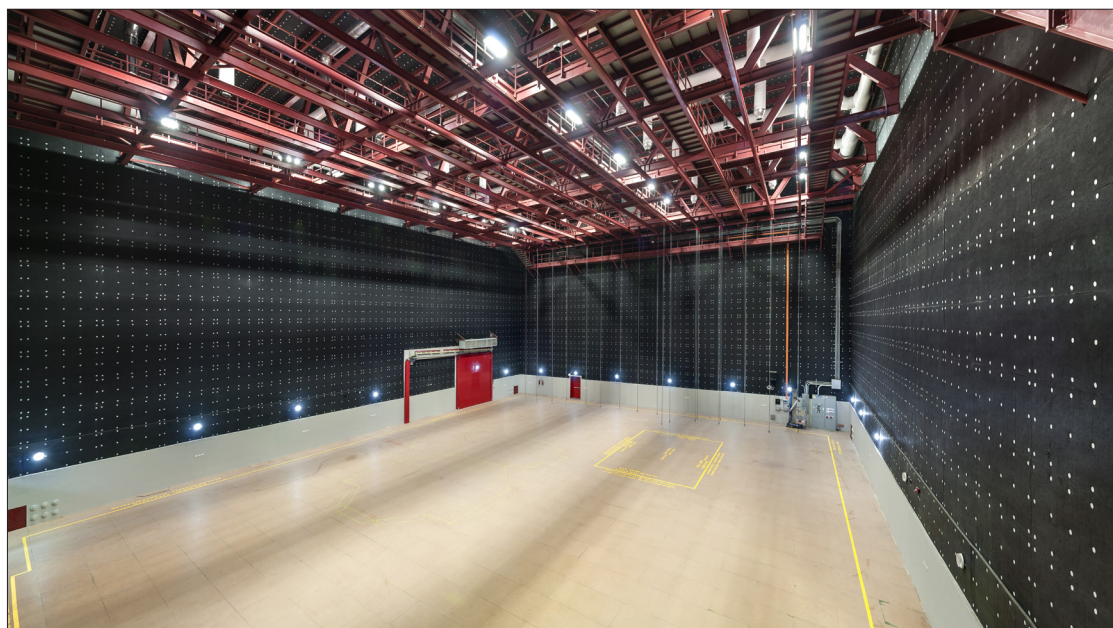
Lantica Media delivers cutting-edge, highly-creative production capabilities and sound financing models for film & TV production companies. We are a 'one-stop-shop' providing state-of-the-art studio

facilities – including our 60,500 square foot horizon water tank, incredible sound stages and world-class turnkey production services. In addition, we offer co-production/financing solutions in the form of equity, debt and gap. Through our strategic partnerships, we have access to US and LATAM distribution platforms and international sales capabilities.

Additionally, by filming in the Dominican Republic, foreign producers are entitled to very competitive production incentives, as well a stable and mature economy (the largest in the region) and an unsurpassed complimentary infrastructure in terms of tourism, offering more than 70,000 hotel rooms and multiple daily flights to and from the US and Europe, transport infrastructure, telecommunications, etc.

How does Lantica Media's film production and financing model differ from those of its competitors?

Lantica Media applies risk-balanced strategies to its investments. The goal is to seek maximum return, long-term sustainability and meaningful social impact in our investments. We get involved in as many aspects of the production as is needed and leverage our key partnerships to help each project succeed.



Room with a view: One of Pinewood Dominican Republic's state-of-the-art soundstages

What has been the impact of the 2010 Cinema Law on the local film industry? How will it benefit smaller, independent filmmakers in particular?

Prior to the inception of the Cinema Law, the yearly average number of films produced in the Dominican Republic was four. As a result of the incentives provided by the Cinema Law, an outstanding expansion of the local film industry has occurred. Since 2011, 71 films have been produced in the country, representing a never-before-seen growth in the region.

Furthermore, 3,000 highly specialised jobs have been created in a fully transparent legal and fiscal framework, which contributes significantly to the local economy as well as the overall competitiveness and sustainability of the industry.

The Dominican Republic now offers the best infrastructure and equipment inventory in the region, as well as a fast-growing creative, professional and technical talent base.

What incentives does the Dominican Government offer to persuade overseas production companies to make films in the DR?

With the approval of the Dominican Film Law, a competitive, modern and strong framework for the film and TV industry has been introduced in the country.

The law introduced several production incentives with the aim of developing local industry by attracting more local and foreign investments in production-related activities and infrastructure. In summary, the incentives introduced are the following:

For producers, a 25 per cent, freely transferable tax credit ("FTTC") on all above and below the line eligible expenditures, for both domestic and/or foreign film and TV productions, as well as VAT and customs duties exemption on eligible production related expenditures.

Even more attractive production incentives are reserved for producers of Dominican Films (predominantly Spanish Speaking).

For investors in industry related infrastructures and providers of technical services, incentives provide up to 15 years 100 per cent income tax exemption and VAT and custom duties exemptions on imports of functional goods, as well as incentives for newly-built movie theatres.

How satisfied are you with Lantica Media's first year of operations? What are your objectives for the next three to five years?

We are extremely happy with the progress we've made over this past year. We've announced several projects that will begin filming in 2015 and formed several strategic global partnerships to help us consistently reach our goals. We've booked productions throughout 2015 and are currently looking to our slate for 2016.

What is Lantica Media doing to help develop home-grown creative and technical talent, and how would you assess the current level of skills available to film production companies in the DR?

At Lantica Media, we look at the long-term sustainability of our investments, implementing strategies with relevant social impact. The development and growth of the Dominican film industry is a cornerstone of our success aspirations and we firmly believe in the local creative, technical and professional talents' ability to deliver high-quality filmmaking and globally appealing content.

We have created two sustainability programmes, which aim to integrate a skilled and knowledgeable workforce into the local industry value chain. We promoted and funded an NGO named Entrenamientos Cinematográficos del Caribe (ECC-RD) which offers 'just-in-time' technical and professional training courses, in partnership with accredited international academic/vocational institutions. Since the beginning of its operations, ECC-RD has trained 164 technicians and professionals including Film Accountants, Line Producers, 1st Assistant Directors, Gaffers, Grips and Electricians, and DITs, among others. The second initiative is a short film contest, currently in its third year, which supports young Dominican filmmakers in developing their creative and production skills.

We are also implementing, with our partner, Relativity Media, an educational programme to help train even more local talent to work on productions.

Currently, the Dominican Republic offers a skilled and well-trained crew base, capable of supporting up to six simultaneous world-class productions; and in case of any shortfall, there are several proxy markets in the region where Lantica Media can conveniently recruit any and all the required resources.

The DR now offers the best infrastructure and equipment inventory in the region, as well as a fast-growing creative, professional and technical talent base

Out of the blue:
Lantica's 60,500 square foot horizon water tank

