

three-quarters of the formal video rental market. The film distributor *Artecinema* is another major player through its *Videomax* outlets. Other chains include Blockbuster, *Multivideo* and *Cinexprés*.

The major chains distribute both Beta and VHS formats. The northern states tend to have higher proportions of VHS. According to *Videovisa*, outlets in Monterrey handle 75 percent VHS while the proportion is 50 percent in the Federal District. Outlets in the southern states generally handle only Beta.

## VIDEO PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Although *Cámara Nacional de la Industria Cinematográfica y del Videograma* (*Canacine*), National Chamber of the Film and Television Industry, registers companies separately as producers or distributors, the leading video producers also distribute. Nineteen companies are members of the *Asociación Nacional de Productores y Reproductores de Video* (*Anprovac*), National Video Producers Association. There is a separate video distributors' association called *Asociación Nacional de Comercializadores de Video* (*Ancovi*), National Association of Video Distributors. The leading companies include *Videovisa*, *Offer Video*, *Videomax*, *Mexcinema*, *Video Azteca*, *Comunicación en Video* and *Video Universal*.

According to industry observers, *Videovisa* is the leading distributor with almost 2,500 titles, followed by *Videomax* with about 2,000. These large firms benefit from the fact that they can handle distribution for film theatres and broadcast television as well as videocassette rental. This allows them to offer package deals to feature film producers.

The smaller video production companies are available for co-productions with Canadian producers. A number of Canadian television and video productions have taken advantage of opportunities for location shooting in Mexico. Mexico offers a wide range of locations and is usually chosen for its scenery and weather. This amounts to an import of Mexican scenery into Canada, but at the same time it widens the range of production styles available to Canadian producers. Technical staff who have worked in Mexico say that the equipment and skills of the Mexican companies are adequate for production under Canadian direction, but that post production and film-to-tape transfers are best done in Canada.

### CANADIAN COMPANIES IN MEXICO

#### RIP ROAR MUSIC

Rip Roar Music has operated an independent recording studio in Clayton, Ontario since 1988. In 1995, the company wanted to make music videos for five new artists that it had recorded. But the budget was fairly tight at about C \$15,000 each. It was decided that bundling the five productions together into one shoot would create economies of scale that would make this feasible.

Since it was winter, the company decided to do the location shooting outside of Canada. On the basis of previous experience there, contacts in the production industry in Canada suggested Mexico. A Canadian crew from the Ottawa area travelled to Mexico for shooting in and around Mazatlán over five days in January 1996. The original recording was on 30-millimetre film for transfer to videotape. Lab processing and videotape transfer were done immediately afterwards, in Mexico City. The videotape was returned to Canada for editing at General Assembly, a technical facility located in Ottawa.

The company had generally good experience with this production, although there were a few obstacles. There was a very short pre-production schedule, and permission for the work had to be obtained from the Government of Mexico. Production Manager Carole-Anne Pilon says that Mexican officials in Ottawa were instrumental in the process. "The Mexican Embassy was great, very helpful," she says. "They wrote a letter on our behalf to the Mexican government, and issued our visas and work permits in record time — two days." Equipment was rented in Mexico, which avoided importation problems. There were no jurisdictional problems with Mexican unions.

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