

Leomax leans on genre pix

By **DAVE McNARY**

German producer-investment banker Ingo Vollkammer and American producer Scott Einbinder have formed Leomax Entertainment to develop, finance, produce, acquire and market genre feature films and direct-to-video projects.

The Los Angeles-based banner's launching with a co-financing and distribution arrangement with John Malone's Starz Home Entertainment and a first-look deal with Malone's newly minted Overture Pictures.

Leomax is being bankrolled primarily by privately held Swiss hedge fund Leomax A.G., which has worldwide interests in real-estate development and energy-related assets, along with private equity investors in Germany.

In an announcement Thursday, Leomax said it will produce and acquire a total of four to six films per year, with at least two of those targeted for worldwide theatrical distribution. Pics will be budgeted be-

tween \$3 million and \$20 million.

Overture, headed by Chris McGurk, has first-look rights to all Leomax pics produced in conjunction with Starz for theatrical distribution. Leomax can also market and release its own productions and acquisitions in partnership with other studios and independent distribution companies.

Nicolas Chartier's Voltage Pictures will handle international sales for Leomax's slate.

Leomax also announced it's established Indigo Motion Pictures to market and brand genre pics for the domestic and international market-

place. It also plans to expand Indigo into a comicbook, videogame and music label.

Vollkammer said the business model is in line with the Dimension and Screen Gems prototype of what he dubbed "concept-driven filmed entertainments" in an identifiable commercial style. "We will pursue the highest production value by

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marrying domestically viable concepts with our European resources for a global audience," he added.

Einbinder said, "With our ability to fully finance our projects as well as guarantee distribution, we hope to attract talented filmmakers who want to explore elevating genre films for a crossover, worldwide audience."

Einbinder's a former partner at Sandstorm Films, which produced 10 pics in half a dozen years for Screen Gems, including "The Covenant."

Leomax's first pic under its Indigo label is "The Dealmaker," a thriller set on the Spanish island of Ibiza and scheduled to start lensing in June in Barcelona and Ibiza. Tim McCann ("Runway") is attached to direct.