

Las Vegas Magazine April 4, 2010



spotlight etcetera



Eager Minds

There are two things that won't happen at a **Hypnosis Unleashed** show: intimate body parts displayed sans clothing, and audience members flapping their arms while making chicken noises. The nudity thing is due to cabaret laws, as Michael Johns explains in his rapid-fire stage delivery. Encourage a guest to strip and you risk being shut down. No

one is asked to act like a chicken, on the other hand, because Johns and longtime partner Terry Stokes don't suck. They're raunchy and risqué, and they fulfill a time-honored Vegas function, like wedding chapels and, uh, other entertainment that people can't get back home. If there's one thing Johns and Stokes prove, it's that people want to be hypnotized in Vegas.

Or at least be part of the show. The crowds that *Hypnosis Unleashed* draws to the Tropicana are fired up and more than willing to suspend disbelief. After weeding out a few audience members from an initial group invited to sit onstage, Johns or Stokes lulls the rest into an apparent slumber, isolating them into a zone of suggestiveness. Then the games begin. The temperature of the room might change, an offensive odor can suddenly emanate from a neighbor, chairs can have sudden, pleasurable vibrating effects, and balloons become highly complex sex toys. No one will do what they don't want to do, comes the repeated warning, but luckily for them, there is very little audiences are unwilling to do. —Matt Kelemen

Tropicana, 9 p.m. daily, starting at \$40, 18+. 702.739.2411

Food and Family

Giada De Laurentiis, the pretty, petite powerhouse of Italian cooking, star of her own show on the Food Network and a best-selling author, is sharing her newest book, *Giada at Home: Family Recipes From Italy and California*, at a personal appearance and book-signing Monday, April 5 at 5 p.m. at Sur La Table inside Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood Resort. The book features Italian dishes from her favorite generations-old family recipes and more.

The chef explains that it gives people a look into how she cooks for those dearest to her. Readers receive fresh spins on old-world favorites such as bucatini all'Amatriciana with spicy smoked mozzarella meatballs, as well as newer recipes that combine the freshness of California cuisine with Italian flavors from her childhood like arugula salad with grilled fruit and panettone croutons.

At the signing, the author will discuss first-hand her recipes and how she creates them. To attend the event and participate in the meet and greet, fans must have a ticket, which can be obtained by purchasing a copy of the book at Sur La Table in Miracle Mile Shops. —Penny Levin

Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood Resort, 5 p.m. April 5, ticket with book purchase. 702.732.2706



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Dreaming of Dita

Dita Von Teese, appearing in **MGM Grand's Crazy Horse Paris** through April 7, wants you to know a bit about burlesque. First surging to popularity during the Victorian Era, burlesque was king for many a decade. Then, in the post-World War II era, something odd happened. The pendulum of prudishness swung back and once again Victorian-era mores took hold of our sexuality. This is not to suggest that sexuality disappeared in the mythical '50s, whose loss Glenn Beck so proudly wept over. It just went underground, hidden in basements, exclusive clubs and behind drawn curtains.

Then the sexual revolution swept America, and the sexuality long hidden was now exposed. In this oddly free climate, burlesque made a return because it was all about the tease.

Enter Dita Von Teese, the current queen of the tease. Born Heather Renee Sweet, Von Teese took a '50s movie star-style pseudonym and the rest, as they say, was history. Always an innovator, Von Teese was bored of the standard strip club dynamic and invented a character that would bring her fame, fortune and acclaim as a performer, writer, actress and ingénue. Her shows have become legendary for causing pulses to quicken in an era when open sexuality has become less taboo. —Chris Carney

MGM Grand, 8 & 10:30 p.m. Wed.-Mon., \$50.50, \$60.50 with full-color program, 18+. 702.891.7777

Dita Von Teese courtesy of CoIntrean
Hypnosis Unleashed photo by Leila Navidi