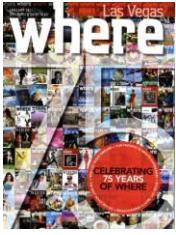


Where January 2011



» SHOW STOPPERS

Tiger's Tale

In "Vegas! The Show," director, choreographer and costumer extraordinaire Tiger Martina brings to life the Vegas of old by allowing audiences to live the experience. A Vegas veteran himself, the world-renown Martina, who has worked in film, television and on and off Broadway, shares his process in visualizing the show, his influences, and just how many of those now-imploded casinos he worked at. "Vegas! The Show" performs at the Saxe Theater, inside the Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood, M-Sa at 7 & 9 pm. 260-7200.

Where January 2011

Tiger Martina was influenced by Las Vegas at the age of eight without even knowing it.

"I had a long history with Vegas even before I got here," said Martina. "I moved here when I was 21 and discovered that the same people I grew up taking lessons from in New York City were influenced by choreographers in Las Vegas. So, even at the age of eight, I was already being introduced to the same Las Vegas choreographers as I would end up paying homage to in 'Vegas! The Show.'"

That production, at the Saxe Theater, inside the Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood, is Martina's newest triumph—albeit with the most classic material. Set in a neon boneyard, it brings to life the people and properties that made Vegas what it is today.

Martina worked as a dancer in many long-gone Vegas shows before turning his focus to choreography. Among them were "Sizzle" and "Bare Essence" at the Sands (he worked on the Copa Room stage quite a bit), "Magic Magic" at the Landmark and "Edge of

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the Night" at Stardust. "Vegas! The Show" pays tribute to all of these properties and more in its look at implosions throughout the years. A scene that is particularly nostalgic for Martina: "When we go into the implosions, I stand back and say, 'I worked there, I worked there.' It made me feel really invested from the start."

In conceptualizing the show, Martina's main concern was to pay homage and stay honest to the time period; to do so, he approach it like a period piece.

"In portraying each artist, even if we have a laugh, there's integrity at the very base," he said. "In many shows, it's easier to take shots at people and laugh at them. It's not as easy to deliver quality talent and make sure that the audience feels as close as it can to the real thing."

"I want people to look at this and think, 'Oh, I see why people loved this town and why there was such respect and adoration for the Rat Pack, or for Elvis,'" said Martina. "That's very important to me."

He counts Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly and Michael Kidd among his greatest inspirations. "Fred Astaire because of his attention to detail, Gene Kelly for his suave organic movements, and Michael Kidd for his exciting athleticism," said Martina. "Those three people combined is sort of how I always check myself to see if I'm on track."

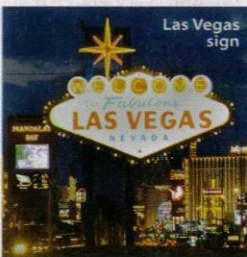
Rediscovering Classic Vegas

Revered casinos such as the Sands, Landmark and Dunes may be long gone, but there are numerous places to capture that old-Vegas feeling. Try these on for size:

EL CORTEZ

Open since 1941, the El Cortez is the longest continuously operating casino in town. To celebrate its 70th anniversary, the historic property debuts four new hotel suites this month that were redesigned as part of the Design A Suite Downtown Contest.
600 E. Fremont St., 385-5200.
www.elcortezhotelcasino.com

"WELCOME TO FABULOUS LAS VEGAS" SIGN



Designed by Betty Willis and installed in 1959, the "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign served as a beacon for tourists traveling from Southern California to Las Vegas. Now, the sign itself is an attraction. Camera crews stake out its gravel median, souvenir shops hawk its likeness and thousands of tourists a year pose between its steel supports.

On the Strip, about a quarter-mile south of Mandalay Bay.

FLAMINGO WILDLIFE HABITAT

When it first opened, the Flamingo sat closer up to the Strip, on the area now inhabited by water turtles, koi, pink flamingos and other exotic creatures. The beautifully manicured lawn houses

a monument to Bugsy Siegel, who first built the classic property.

3555 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 733-3111.
www.flamingolasvegas.com

THE PEPPERMILL

One of those "only-in-Las Vegas" joints, the Peppermill greets diners with mirrors, neon and the largest entrees you've ever seen. This decidedly retro place is one of the best places in town for people watching (we've met numerous celebrities), and those sharing a special night out will want to cozy up the bubbling fire pit in the lounge.

2985 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 735-4177.
www.peppermilllasvegas.com

SAHARA STEAKHOUSE

This vintage steakhouse, still known for incomparable service, harkens to the days the Rat Pack played the Sahara's stage. It's lost none



of its charm; tucked inside, you'll never want to let go of the experience. Great values abound, and the steakhouse is one of Vegas' true gems.

2535 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 737-2111.
www.saharavegas.com

FREMONT STREET

Finally, get thee downtown! There's nothing more classic about Vegas than good old Fremont Street, the bustling center of commerce in the early 1900s. Here, you'll find classic hotel properties (including the oldest, the Golden Gate, built in 1905), classic signs such as Vegas Vic and Vicki, and the open-air neon museum guests pass through every night.

Las Vegas Blvd. at Fremont St.
678-5777.



www.wheretraveler.com 13