

Eating extravaganza in Vegas

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By Kathryn Reed

When I lived in Las Vegas from 1993-96 I seldom went to the Strip. I'd tell friends where to go, what to see – even loan them my car. I'd go for the occasional show or maybe a meal.

Casinos don't do much for me. I seldom gamble. I don't like the toxic smoke, the noise, the artificial make-believe over-the-top one-upmanship of it all. I'd rather go to the real Paris, Venice and New York.

But one thing Vegas is definitely good for is scrumptious food. The dining options could get me to go back in a Southwest hour. Well-known chefs keep hanging their shingles in this desert outpost.

When I was in Vegas in June I ate out a lot, saw the hyper-energetic Bette Midler and stayed on the Strip at Caesars Palace. Frolicking pool-side in near 100-degree temps was another worthwhile indulgence. This is better people watching than the casino floor.

First up was Hubert Keller's Burger Bar. This is a veggie burger you won't find in the frozen food section. The concoction is a close second to the "homemade" one I've had at Moody's in Truckee. This is what we vegetarians call a true veggie burger.

Sue had a buffalo burger that she raved about until she got the bill. She hadn't realized how the build-your-own-burger gimmick would translate to build-a-bigger-bill.

Next night was Gandhi – truly authentic Indian food that had this vegetarian wondering if her stomach was going to

obscenely protrude at the pool the next day.

My final night of dining in Vegas was at Trevi in the Forum Shops next to Caesars. Location (walkable from the hotel room and to see Midler) and ethnicity (Italian) were the primary reasons for choosing this restaurant.

It more than satisfied our diverse taste buds, since Sue is likes that meat stuff. An array of dishes steadily flowed from the kitchen to our table for our sampling pleasure. Nothing was bad or even slightly undesirable. We could have easily eaten here every lunch and dinner.

Eating outside at Trevi's means being on a patio of sorts cordoned off from shoppers who are coming in and out of places like Tiffany, Gucci and Estee Lauder.

Instead of traditional garlic bread the restaurant offers Pizzetta Trevi, which is a rosemary flatbread with garlic and Parmesan cheese. It was a fun twist to get the night going. I'm not a big eggplant fan, but the Eggplant Parmigiana appetizer could convert me. The Caprese Salad (homemade mozzarella, tomatoes, basil, olive oil) was light and flavorful – an ideal summer starter.

The recipe for my favorite entree is below. The rich mushroom sauce is balanced by the spinach and cheese. The flavors meld to form a mouth-watering feast that isn't too heavy, despite the ingredients. All of Trevi's pastas are made fresh at the restaurant.

Fazzoletto Bertolini by Trevi Chef Peter Scaturro

1 6×6 sheet pasta

3 ounces sauteed spinach

3 ounces Ricotta

2 ounces Bacchamel

1/8 teaspoon chili flakes

Salt to taste

Pepper to taste

1 T shaved Parmesan

4 ounces wild mushroom sauce (made from a mixture of portabella, crimini and porcini mushrooms and vegetable stock)

Mix ricotta, spinach, salt and pepper in bowl. Cook pasta sheet in salted boiling water until tender, then drain well. Heat spinach-ricotta mix in sautee pan with Bacchmael. Add pasta sheet to spinach ricotta mixture and toss well. Place in a pasta bowl and ladle mushroom sauce over the top. Garnish with shaved Parmesan.

This is for one serving.

SLTFD station relocation talk not embraced by all



SLTFD wants to relocate the station on Highway 50

near Al Tahoe
Boulevard.

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Lorenzo Gigliotti is fueling a fire of discontent as he lobbies to build a firehouse and training center at Lake Tahoe Community College.

While Gigliotti addressed the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board this summer, the Lake Tahoe Community College board heard from President Paul Killpatrick on the matter the same night.

Gigliotti talked about having his department take over South Tahoe High School's ROP fire program. He had not approached Principal Ivone Larson before that night about this, nor the instructor.

:Right now you are missing the bridge between the ROP and college," Gigliotti told the school board.

In the college board packet was a history of the floating acre. That's the piece of land Gigliotti wants the LTUSD board to sell-lease-give up. The unified district owns the acre located on LTCC property. LTCC has the discretion to approve where the floating acre exists, according to board member Roberta Mason.

"Why aren't you asking the college to use their land?" LTUSD member Sue Novasel asked the chief.

He said he was told to ask the unified board about the floating acre. Gigliotti has never given a presentation to the college board.

Before the meeting Killpatrick said he is wary of having a training facility on campus because of the surrounding forest.

The college fire academy is a collaborative effort among local

agencies. No one department has ownership of it. Those close to the situation said it appears SLTFD wants to put its seal on the academy.

Plus, Lake Valley has a training facility at its station near Christmas Valley, so the need to have a second one on the South Shore is questionable. The dated burn tower still provides realistic training scenarios.

“We don’t have enough structure fires to put people in there who have little or no training,” Lake Valley Fire Chief Jeff Michael said of the importance of the burn tower.

Lake Valley acquired a portable from STHS so the academy has a designated classroom this fall.

“I think we have a facility we are all using now,” Michael said.

Snippets from Lake Tahoe

KTHO AM-590 (www.kthoradio.com) will be simulcast on FM-96.1 beginning this fall.

Caught in the banking meltdown is Colonial Bank’s Kingsbury Grade branch “ which has new owners.

El Dorado County’s Red Hawk Casino is a sponsor of SF Giants.

Coffee & Confectionary Shop is open at Camp Richardson.

Look for Tahoe Youth & Family Services to soon open a thrift store.

Tree House has moved to Ski Run Marina in SLT.

Abundant Hydroponics is open at 1611 Shop St. in SLT.

Brooks Bar at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline is one of the top 50 19th holes, according to Golf Digest.

Bette – From ‘Beaches’ to desert



By Susan Wood

LAS VEGAS – She still has it.

Most women can only hope to have their act together in their 60s like the graceful, energetic Divine Miss M.

“Las Vegas, you look divine,” Bette Midler belts out to another near sold-out show on a hot Vegas night. She could have been looking in a mirror.

Her voice is almost as rich as it was in her prime. Her enthusiasm has not diminished from the first time I saw her in 1990 in San Diego – in a much smaller venue.

The superstar singer and actress with four Grammy’s and an Academy Award nomination is at it again at Caesars Palace’s Colosseum in “The Showgirl Must Go On”. She will have put on 400 shows by the time her two-year contract expires in February.

This 4,300-seat mega showroom originally built for Canadian singer Celine Dion is a tribute to what a world-class stage ought to look like.

Midler's show is part Vaudeville, part concert and a little bit of her trademark raunchy humor. For those who have followed Midler through the years, this show is vintage Midler and never disappoints – except for it only being 90 minutes.

It opens with a video of a tornado blowing through a mountain of Louis Vuitton luggage weighing about 2,200 pounds. She is a storm to be reckoned with.

"I'm exhausted. That's what happens when you do your own singing," Midler admits while sprawled on the floor.

"Thirty years ago, the audiences were on drugs. Now I'm on medication. Twitter, twatter. Everything's going so fast Midler muses.

Midler has been at this song-dance-comedy routine for about four decades. She started her career in a New York bathhouse with pianist-singer Barry Manilow accompanying her. The two teamed up again years later for a collection of songs as a tribute to jazz singer Rosemary Clooney. Ironically, he was playing across the street at the Las Vegas Hilton.

Midler has never forgotten her roots, asking the audience where the gays are. They weren't shy about letting her know they were in the house.

The Hawaii native illustrated her upbringing by pulling out a ukulele during one of her encore performances to sing her trademark number "Friends."

Devoted fans could recite more than one signature song from Midler, who blanketed the 1980s and '90s with hits from her depiction of Janis Joplin in "The Rose" to "Wing Beneath My

Wings," a song about friendship from the tear-jerker film "Beaches" with Barbara Hershey.

But the true sense of Midler's distinguishable traits comes out in her onstage characters that have survived an industry prone to an insatiable desire for stars to reinvent themselves. Sophie Tucker, the infamous star of her middle-aged trailer trash jokes, lives beyond campy backyard parties to take center stage at Caesars Palace.

Not many performers would have the cajones to roll out in a wheelchair or come in on a crane hook dressed like the mermaid Delores Delago.

Midler may be aging, but she's still hip and trendy, making occasional references to current events. Amid 132 costume changes (with Midler in six of them), she compares the demise of Fannie Mae to the temptations of the Las Vegas Strip.

Only as Midler could deliver, it was a no-holds-barred evening filled with the "Caesar salad" showgirls, for whom Midler can't resist remarking on their 100 percent natural breasts. In full mermaid fins, the showgirls join Midler in a New York Rockettes-style leg extension.

Midler is able to transcend the times, her characters and the surroundings.

Her philanthropic work extends from a garden in New York to South Lake Tahoe, where she and Bill Harrah financed the first alternative birthing room at Barton Memorial Hospital in the early 1980s. Within the first few years, hospital admissions surpassed 4,000 with 500 babies born annually.

How fitting the showgirl returns to a Harrah's property.

Other things to know:

"The Showgirl Must Go On" plays until February 2010 at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas. Midler et al are

scheduled Oct. 14-Nov. 15 and Dec. 30-Jan. 31. Cher and Elton John fill most breaks.

Tickets range from \$117-\$272.

Caesars Palace's Garden of the Gods pools and gardens were remodeled in late summer. The 5-acre project now features a swim-up blackjack table, 18-foot waterfall and added cabanas.

The recently renovated 540-room Forum Tower has already hosted dignitaries and became the inspiration for the 2009 movie "The Hangover," which was set in Las Vegas.

www.bettemidler.com

â€¢ www.caesarspalace.com

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Special Bread & Broth meal

The Bread & Broth Program at St. Theresa's Church in South Lake Tahoe is observing its 20th anniversary of serving by celebrating its volunteers through the years with a special dinner Oct. 26 from 4-5:30pm in the Church Hall.

Every person who has volunteered their time to the program since it started in 1989 is invited to join other community members at the regularly scheduled Monday serving.

â€œBread & Broth is here today due to the dedication and love of its volunteers.â€ Director Diane Weidinger said in a press release. â€œWe're so grateful to have such a wonderful group of people devote their time and energy to this much needed

community service. This meal is a small token of our appreciation.â€”

Along with the special invitation extended to the Bread & Broth volunteers, Mondayâ€™s meal is open to all members of the community, just as it has been every Monday at Grace Hall since 1989.

This month the kitchen staff is expected to reach a bittersweet milestone by exceeding 12,500 meals served since it started 20 years ago.

Contact Diane Weidinger to find out how you can help Bread & Broth as a sponsor, donor or volunteer at (775) 588-3993 or dianeweidinger@yahoo.com.

Bodybuilding competition features 3 ripped Tahoeans



Alex Huxtable

By Kathryn Reed

Itâ€™s crunch time for three Lake Tahoe residents who are putting their bodies up for judgment Saturday.

Everything they eat matters. Everything they do in the next

four days is related to this competition.

Chris Minnes, Cassandra Chandler and Alex Huxtable are going to Hayward to compete in the NPC San Francisco Bodybuilding, Figure & Bikini Championships.

“The last week is really the hardest week,” Minnes, 31, said Monday.

This is because the first part of the week is spent loading up on salt and water with zero carbohydrates. Later in the week he will do the opposite “ he’ll get rid of the salt, the body will drain itself of water and he’ll be power eating the carbs to suck up that water.

All of this is so he can do his best at his first competition. Minnes, who runs 968 Park Hotel, has won power-lifting competitions, but this is different. He will be judged completely on his physique and not his strength.

“It’s definitely a lot more challenging,” Minnes said of the training involved for Saturday’s event. “I’m eating perfectly; not a drop of alcohol, not a gram of sugar.”

It’s been three years since Chandler competed in a figure show. Now that the Incline Village resident has turned 45, she is in the master’s division.

“It’s to show women my age if they train hard you can compete,” Chandler said.

It helps that she works at Push Fitness as a trainer. In fact, all three competitors train at Push. Huxtable, 20, lives in South Lake and works at Embassy Suites.

For this event Chandler didn’t go on an extreme diet, but she kept an eye on what she ingested, and did cardio workouts almost every day in addition to her regular workouts.

“They are looking at how things are proportioned, overall

appearance. They want a feminine, athletic look," Chandler said of the judges.

Truckee River one of many in U.S. being restored

By Jeff DeLong, USA TODAY

MUSTANG, Nev. — On a desert river east of Reno, experts are laboring to correct well-intended mistakes of the past.

The \$7.8 million restoration of the Truckee River at Mustang Ranch — the former site of Nevada's first legal bordello — is one of several projects ongoing nationwide in which millions are being spent to restore rivers to their natural state.

Projects are also under way in Florida, Utah and Texas to return natural bends and wetlands to places where the government took them away decades ago in efforts to avoid flooding.

Read whole story

Pianist Alpin Hong

Internationally acclaimed pianist Alpin Hong will delight guests Oct. 11 at 4 pm at the Resort at Squaw Creek in Olympic Valley. Tickets are \$38/adult and \$20/student.

Sorensen's Winter Survival Workshop

Hopefully, you'll never need to know what to do if you get lost out in a Sierra winter, but it's better to know what to do just in case. Members of the nonprofit, all-volunteer Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team (TNSRT) will lead an easy snowshoe and cross-country ski trek to cover planning and preparation, proper dress and equipment, emergency shelters, and more. Dress in warm layers; with gloves, hat, waterproof and warm footwear. A good time to fuel up on breakfast at Sorensen's Café beforehand (and bring your own snacks and water). For lodging and class sign-ups, call Sorensen's at 800.423-9949.

When: Dec. 12, 2-hour workshop, ages 12 and up; call for times.

Cost: \$25 donation guests/\$50 non-lodging guests (tax-deductible; will benefit TNSRT rescue efforts and will be matched by Sorensen's)

800.423.9949 or (530) 694.2203

www.sorensensresort.com

email: info@sorensensresort.com

Sorensen's Gingerbread House Workshop

Whip up your own architectural masterpiece this holiday season. Artist Diane Campbell provides step-by-step instructions on how to bake, build, and decorate your own one-of-a-kind gingerbread house, complete with all the candy trimmings. (Note: this is a two-day workshop; children ages 12 and over welcome with parent or adult supervision). For class sign-ups and lodging, call 800.423-9949.

When: Dec. 5, 10am-4pm and Dec. 6, 10am-2pm.

Cost: \$65 guest/\$90 non-lodging guests, includes materials for one house; cocoa, cider and treats for all participants.

(800) 423-9949 or (530) 694-2203

www.sorensensresort.com

email: info@sorensensresort.com