

Ritz-Carlton – the first 5 star resort in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed, San Francisco Chronicle

Recession was not a household word when the Ritz-Carlton Highlands, Lake Tahoe broke ground in July 2006. But the \$300 million resort opens this week in an economic climate that is less than ideal – especially in the greater Lake Tahoe area.



The Ritz-Carlton at Northstar opens Dec. 9.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

The past couple of winters have not been great snow years. In fact, 2009 is the third drought year. Skier visits were down 10 percent in the 2008-09 season compared with the prior season, according to the National Ski Area Association.

Still, Ritz-Carlton officials are optimistic that their arrival on the scene is just what's needed to stimulate the local economy. This is the first five-star resort in the area. It's also the first resort to be built in decades.

Read the whole story

Horizon to be transformed into Candy Cane Lane

Santa's Candy Cane Lane is coming to the Horizon in Stateline for three days of holiday activities geared toward children.

The festivities are Dec. 11 3-7pm, and Dec 12-13 noon-6pm in the convention center of the hotel-casino.

Mrs. Claus will help each child write a message to Santa. The Horizon has checked with the North Pole and has been assured Santa will be writing letters back. Santa will haul his letters home each night at 7:15, 6:15Â and 6:15, on the respective nights.

Hot cocoa, candy canes and games are free. Holiday movies will be shown.

For \$5 kids (and presumably adults, too) can get a framed picture of themselves with Santa. It costs \$1 to make ornaments, \$2 to decorate cookies and \$10 to build a gingerbread house.

A holiday crafts fair will be going on at the same time. Carolers will be strolling, music playing.

Les Claypool coming to

MontBleu

By Tara Hall, LiveDaily

Alt-musician Les Claypool has unveiled a short selection of winter dates early next year in support of his most recent solo set, "Of Fungi and Foe."

The Primus bassist, who will ring in 2010 with a New Year's Eve performance in San Francisco, will hit the road for a solo excursion beginning Feb. 12 in Aspen. Claypool will wrap up the seven-date trek, which focuses on the Midwest and parts of the West Coast, with a Feb. 20 gig in Eugene before heading across the pond for a month-long European run.

Read the whole story

Pearl Harbor details remain vivid for survivors

By Forrest Hartman, Reno Gazette-Journal

It's been 68 years since the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, but Howard J. Spreeman of Carson City says he remembers nearly every detail of the attack that drew America into World War II..

"I was just ordering breakfast," said Spreeman, who was an aviation radioman stationed at Naval Air Station Kaneohe Bay, across from Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. "I ordered bacon and eggs. It's one of those things I'll never forget.

"And a plane came over and almost took the roof of the place

off.â€

Read the whole story

Violinist Itzhak Perlman coming to Reno

The worldâ€™s foremost violinist, Itzhak Perlman, celebrated for his musical work on the score for â€œSchindlerâ€™s List,â€ brings his virtuosity to the Reno stage in an exclusive engagement as part of Artownâ€™s Encore series Jan. 21.

Artown fulfills its mission to enrich Renoâ€™s art industry by garnering some of the most eminent and distinguished artists from around the world and bringing them to northern Nevada. Perlman is one such artist who draws praise all over the world and will share his musical mastery with Reno audiences.

â€œSeeing Itzhak Perlman perform is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many people and weâ€™re thrilled to be able to bring him to Reno,â€ Artown Executive Director Beth Macmillan said in a press release. â€œThe communityâ€™s love and appreciation for the arts provides the support needed for organizations such as Artown to bring artists like Perlman to Reno, and in turn performers like Perlman enhance the richness of our community.â€

Perlmanâ€™s American debut, more than 50 years ago with an appearance on the “Ed Sullivan Show”, launched him into the spotlight of worldwide recognition and acclaim. Since then he has appeared with every major orchestra and performed recitals throughout the world including the January 2009 Presidential

Inauguration and the 2007 State Dinner for Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.

The emotion he lends to music is made evident by his proudest achievement, playing the violin solos in John Williams's film score for Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List." Perlman's career has been studded with 16 Grammy Awards, including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as four Emmy Awards and a Kennedy Center Honor, just to name a few. In addition to touring and performing, Perlman is a frequent presence on the conductor's podium working with symphonies and orchestras throughout North America and he serves on the faculty of The Perlman Music Program founded by his wife, Toby Perlman.

Pianist Rohan De Silva accompanies Perlman for the performance. A frequent on-stage partner with Perlman, De Silva collaborates with a variety of musicians for performances throughout the world including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the U.S. Library of Congress and venues in Amsterdam, Milan, London, Tokyo and New Zealand, just to name a few. De Silva, a native of Sri Lanka, studied music at the Royal Academy of Music in London as well as The Juilliard School. He also serves on the faculty at The Perlman Music Program and Japan's Ishikawa Music Academy where he gives masterclasses in collaborative piano.

Artown, a nationally recognized monthlong arts and culture festival held in Reno each July, recently introduced the Encore series to present artistic offerings throughout the year. Artown's Encore highlights dance and musical artists unable to visit Reno in July. Additional upcoming presentations include Soweto Gospel Choir March 26 and Pat Metheny's Orchestrion Tour April 23.

Perlman and pianist De Silva perform Jan. 21 at 8pm at Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts with tickets priced at \$40, \$75 and \$100. Tickets are available at the Pioneer Center box

office, by phone at (775) 686-6600 or online at www.RenoIsArtown.com.

Festival shines light on holiday merriment

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Barton employees are best known for not spreading things that are contagious, but today will be their fourth day of making sure everyone catches the holiday spirit.

Laughter filled the air and smiles seemed to be everywhere on Saturday during the Teddy Bear Breakfast.



Plenty of room
in this
mailbox for
letters to
Santa.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

For those who brought their stuffed animals, the Barton elves took them to the workshop to have them decorated. One monkey dressed in Harley-Davidson gear game back with pink earrings

to go with the pink skirt and black leather jacket.

This is the first year of the Festival of Trees and Lights at MontBleu. The money raised will go to the community clinic that Barton Healthcare runs.

“It benefits the community clinic because we’ve had an overrun of patients without insurance,” Barton spokeswoman Denise Sloan said in her best elf accent. “The clinic has had to increase its hours to include Saturdays.”

The showroom has been transformed into a winter wonderland with trees decorated in more ways than one can imagine. One section is devoted to what kids at the schools on the South Shore came up with. Others are the work of several Barton employee groups. Still more are the work of professional designers in the area.

All the trees can be bid on – with the winner taking possession of the tree and everything beneath it.

Santa is perched on a throne of sorts, eager for kids to have their picture taken with him and to hear what they want for Christmas.

A station is set up to write letters to Santa – which Rebekah Miller, 10, and Dayna Genna, 8, were eager to do. But they wouldn’t reveal what was in those letters that were eventually stuffed into a huge mailbox.

A stage is set up with rotating acts.

Today’s fun begins at 9:30am with Colleen Klym leading Christmas carols; 10am is the music duo of Skiff’s Project; 11:30am is Raina Silva’s Hula Kids; noon Forever Dance takes to the floor; 1pm is the Fratella Marionettes’ North Pole Review; 2pm the Sierra Ballet Theater Company performs; 3pm is a demonstration by Halau Hula – O Leilani.

In Gingerbread Junction in the showroom at 10am Kerri Russell

will read and sing from “In the Meadow Don’t feed our Bears.”

From 2-4pm everyone can make holiday crafts

To get into the Festival of Trees and Lights it costs \$5 for adults, \$3 for ages 2-12 and those older than 55.

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Nevada’s ex-first lady tells all

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

On Jan. 1, 2007, when Jim Gibbons was sworn in as Nevada’s 29th governor, Dawn Gibbons, his wife of 23 years, looked at him adoringly – a happy, proud, loving spouse who was sure she was loved in return.

Dressed in a red velvet suit, with her signature blonde hair perfectly styled, she beamed at his every word, and smiled when she and her husband kissed at the end of the ceremony. The next day, at a second public swearing-in ceremony, they held hands – the same pose photographed so many times before.

Now, she says being first lady has ‘been a nightmare since Day 1.’

Read the whole story

South Tahoe kicks off holiday season

By Kathryn Reed

Even the body heat of hundreds of holiday revelers could not keep teeth from chattering. The cold night air didn't seem to matter to the children who awaited Santa's arrival and the lighting of South Lake Tahoe's Christmas tree.

For more than 20 years, Santa arriving via a Borges horse-drawn sleigh has been a tradition in this ski town.



Jenny Arias, 4, tells Santa what she wants for Christmas.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

The Tahoe Schools Choirs sang famous carols that the audience joined in on. This started Friday evening's festivities outside the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority center in the heart of South Lake Tahoe.

Mayor Jerry Birdwell was on hand to say a few words. One little kid thought he was Santa.

Once the real Santa arrived, sleigh rides were provided for free, Santa's lap was available to all the good boys and

girls, Dianna Maria De Borges was signing copies of "Sleigh Rides in Lake Tahoe: Memoirs of Sam Borges," and hot cocoa and cookies warmed people up.

The tree, with its big balls, bows and candy canes, magically became aglow at the hands of Santa. A menorah was also lighted in honor of Hanukkah, which begins the night of Dec. 12.



Tahoe Schools
Choir sings
carols.



People stood
in line for a
sleigh ride.



South Lake

Tahoe Mayor
Jerry Birdwell

‘White Christmas’ comes to STHS stage

South Tahoe High School Performing Arts Department will be performing Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas” Dec. 10-13 in the STHS Little Theatre.

You may remember the old movie classic starring Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye. Well, this new stage version (it played on Broadway for the first time just last year) has been updated with some absolutely wonderful chorus numbers while keeping the old favorites.

Under the direction of Nanette Niven is a star-studded cast with seniors Christopher Yarrow, Nick Kushner, Catie Kushner, Chelsea Wightman, Will Caglia, and Emily Dixon in the leading roles. A bevy of talented actors, singers and dancers make up the musical chorus with choreography by Marcia Sarosik and vocal instruction by Bob Grant.

A full orchestra, under the direction of STHS music instructor Casson Scowcroft includes students and professionals.

Showtime is 7pm Dec. 10-12 and 2pm Dec. 13.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors, free for Super ASB.

Tickets are available at the door or from the STHS ASB Office (530) 541.4111, ext. 285 between 10am-3pm.

These performances will be the last major shows in the theater before it is remodeled and becomes part of the Tahoe Arts and Design Academy. If you have ever performed on the Little Theatre stage, you're invited to join the cast on stage for the finale during the Sunday matinee.

SLTFD in gear for holiday season

Dear South Lake Tahoe Community,

It's that holiday time of year and the SLTFD would like to encourage everyone to think of those less fortunate members of our community. At all the city fire stations, you can drop off any new or like-new condition used toys into the Christmas Cheer Barrels. Any donations will be gratefully forwarded to needy households this holiday season.

Also, the city fire department will again be handing out candy canes from the decorated fire truck driving throughout the community. Starting on Dec. 10 through Dec. 24 each night, the holiday truck will make its way through specific sections of the city.

The truck leaves Station 2 each night at 5pm and will drive through each neighborhood until 8pm. These scheduled dates will be dependent on the weather, and may be changed due to driving conditions or emergency responses.

You can also visit Santa's House at fire Station 2, across from South Tahoe Middle School, Dec. 13-21 from 6-8pm.

Christmas Truck Schedule 2009

Dec. 10 Main Areas

Dec. 11 Keys/Venice

Dec. 12 South Y/Tata/Barton

Dec. 13 Keys Blvd./State Streets

Dec. 14 Tahoe Island

Dec. 15 Stateline/Pioneer Trail

Dec. 16 Gardner Mountain

Dec. 17 Springwood/Bijou Pines

Dec. 18 Glenwood

Dec. 19 Heavenly Valley

Dec. 20 Ski Run

Dec. 21 Al Tahoe

Dec. 22 Sierra Tract

Dec. 23 Stateline/Hotels

Dec. 24 Hwy. 50/Shopping Centers