

## Two casinos add off-season shows - Philadelphia Inquirer

Written by Administrator

Friday, 11 February 2011 04:55 -

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THERE WAS a time when extended-run production shows were as much a part of the Atlantic City scene as blackjack and buffets. But changing (read: younger) demographics, a loss of midweek bus business to Pennsylvania and other economic issues have pretty much left Tropicana Casino and Resort the last house standing in the non-summertime, non-Christmas revue game.

It remains to be seen whether a full-blown trend is developing, but for the first time in years, other gaming halls are dipping their toes in the off-season production show waters.

Thursday, the Atlantic City Hilton raises the curtain on "Boardwalk Follies," a variety show headlined by magician **Michael Turco** and featuring airborne acrobats the **Aerial Sisters** and singer

**Jacklyn Maffucci**

, as well as a troupe of female dancers. The hook here is that the cast will periodically change to encourage repeat business.

"Boardwalk Follies" will be joined on Feb. 23 by "Moonshine Follies" at Resorts Atlantic City. It's being produced by Montreal-based **Mario Bizanet**, who for much of the past decade has supplied the Trop's revusicals. While those shows were fairly generic (saluting the likes of Broadway and the 1960s), "Moonshine Follies" is a custom-built job tied into Resorts' recently instituted Roaring Twenties theme.

"Moonshine Follies" marks the return of the old-school extended-run revue to AyCee's first legal gambling den for the first time since Merv Griffin sold the property in the mid-1990s. (Under his guidance, the property hosted a new show every few months.) According to Resorts co-owner, president and CEO **Dennis Gomes**, reviving the musical revue was pretty much a no-brainer.

"We want to bring back the kind of entertainment customers love," said Gomes, who assumed control of the casino-hotel in early December. "We believe in the production show [format] when it's put together by experts. We think our producer and [cast and crew] are the best around. And we think it's a great [marketing tool] for us."

If nothing else, "Moonshine Follies" has already reaped Resorts a publicity bonanza: An Atlantic City Expressway billboard hyping the show features a large photo of a very shapely female derriere barely covered by rows of vertical beads. Earlier this week, some area parents

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of young children made their objections known to the regional media, which has resulted in plenty of free advertising for the casino.

Showtimes for "Boardwalk Follies" (which runs through April 3) are 8 p.m. Thursday and Saturday, 9 p.m. Friday and 3 and 7 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$29. Showtimes for "Moonshine Follies" (which runs through April 17) vary. Admission is \$20. Find tickets for either production at 1-800-736-1420 or ticketmaster.com.

### Mount Airy matinees

While we're on the subject of casino productions, Mount Airy Casino Resort in Mount Pocono Borough continues to be the only gaming hall in Eastern Pennsylvania to regularly program theatrical entertainment.

The rural gaming retreat recently debuted a series of Wednesday afternoon shows (in conjunction with Corner Bistro Dinner Theater of Carbondale) in Gypsies Nightclub. The lineup includes "Bella's Big Fat Mystery Wedding" (Wednesday); "Nunsense" (March 9 and 16); "Little Shop of Horrors" (April 13 and 20); "American Homicidal" (a murder mystery, May 11 and 18); and "This Is New York" (June 8 and 15).

All shows begin at 2:30 p.m., \$20. More at 866-468-7619 or mountairycasino.com.

### Happy couples

need not apply

Valentine's Day, *Schmalentine's Day*.

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That's the company line at Bally's Atlantic City, which is dedicating this weekend to those who aren't part of what singer-songwriter Joe Jackson once called "happy loving couples."

The casino has designated Monday as "Anti-Valentine's Day." To mark the occasion, it is offering a half-price "singles buffet" in the Virginia City Buffet tomorrow from 9 to 11 p.m. To receive the discount, you must show a picture of your ex. From 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Baltimore-based cover band **Mobtown Saints** will perform "anti-love songs" on the Main Stage at the Wild Wild West Casino.

And the Beer Pong facility at Wild Wild West will host a "Girls vs. Boys" competition with winners receiving lavish hotel/spa/dinner/nightclub packages.

### Where have

all the crab legs gone?

In case you're a fan of the Waterfront Buffet at Harrah's and haven't been there lately, you should know crab legs, arguably the most popular item at any casino buffet, are no longer available Sunday through Thursday. Nonetheless, the \$29.95 tab is the same as it is on Friday and Saturday.

Harrah's officials justify this by noting that four new dishes - Jonas crab claws, popcorn shrimp, crab imperial and crab cakes - are now offered in lieu of everyone's favorite crustaceous cuisine.

Chuck Darrow has been covering Atlantic City and casinos for over 20 years. Read

his blog [www.philly.com/Casinotes](http://www.philly.com/Casinotes) . E-mail him at [darrowc@phillynews.com](mailto:darrowc@phillynews.com) . And listen to his Atlantic City reports

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Saturdays at 1:45 a.m. with Steve Trevelise on WIP (610-AM) and 3:05 p.m.

on Atlantic City's WOND (1400-AM) with Marc Berman.

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