



THE cast of "Lethal Libations" perform at the Artisan restaurant, one of many local eateries offering an interactive murder mystery.

COURTESY PHOTO

Murder, she ate: New Vegas dish for Vegas

Restaurants trying to knock 'em dead with mystery

By Jerry Fink <jerry@lasvegassun.com>
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Murder is on the menu at the Artisan Hotel's restaurant. For \$79.95, at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays you can enjoy a delicious meal and solve a crime.

"Based on the clues and on the investigation, by asking the right questions you can solve the mystery," said Jay Joseph, head of A Touch of Mystery, a company that provides mysteries for all occasions - for dinners, corporate events, cruises and other events.

"Mystery" offers 10 story lines. The one playing weekly at the Artisan is "Lethal Libations," an interactive murder mystery that includes a four-course meal with paired wines. The premise of "Libations" is that you are invited to the Third Annual Gallespi Vineyards Taste Test.

To best enjoy the evening, guests should create their own character names and immerse themselves in the unfolding story, which involves the murder of an unpopular figure.

There is no shortage of suspects or clues. "The great thing about it is that you can be part of a team and observe what goes on to learn the truth and be as interactive as you like," Joseph said.

The cast mingles with diners and discusses the case with them, answering questions and dropping clues. The solution to the mystery changes every few weeks.

"Lethal Libations" is one of three dinner theaters in Las Vegas - soon to be four when "The Sopranos' Last Supper" debuts Friday at Krave nightclub.

"Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding" (featuring a wedding involving two Italian families) is performed nightly at the Rio's Calypso Room. Tickets are \$89.95 for general admission and \$140.50 for VIP.

"Marriage Can Be Murder" is at the Egg & I restaurant, 4533 W. Sahara Ave., at 7 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays and at 6 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets are \$53.82.

There was another dinner theater recently, "Ba-Da-Bing," which was at several venues at different times, among them Alexia Park, the Orleans and the Stardust. Creator Ben Morgan is seeking a new home for his production.

Joseph got his start in the mystery business in Los Angeles in 1985. "The manager of a restaurant wanted to do something for a party, so I wrote a mystery," he said. From there he quickly expanded to writing mysteries for fundraisers, private parties, corporate and other events.

In addition to the Artisan, Joseph has produced mysteries at Lawry's The Prime Rib restaurant and for cruises on Lake Mead.

The Artisan restaurant seats 54, so reservations are suggested. For information, call 497-7936.

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