

The Concierge

ENTERTAINMENT HERE AND ABROAD



MESSY FUN IN VEGAS

Baz Luhrmann show is unlike anything else you’ll see on the Strip

LAS VEGAS — Bombastic is a tad strong, but that’s the word that came to mind during the first scenes of “Baz — Star Crossed Love,” a theatrical interpretation of three films from Australian director Baz Luhrmann. The show, which has been revised a handful of times before arriving at the Palazzo Theatre, braids together Luhrmann’s films “Romeo + Juliet,” “Moulin Rouge!,” and “The Great Gatsby” into one quick, slick little package.

The word that came to mind during the next few minutes of the show was messy.

Why were Romeo and Juliet hanging out at a Gatsby party? Why was the ringmaster from “Moulin Rouge!” narrating the action from non-“Moulin” films, and why were dancers from “Strictly Ballroom,” yet another Luhrmann big screen offering, writhing about? Had they missed the memo that “Strictly Ballroom” wasn’t part of this shindig?

I’m an avid Luhrmann fan, so I went back and watched these movies, some of which I hadn’t seen in more than two decades. My discovery: Luhrmann’s

films are bombastic and messy, and that’s what makes them fun. That should (and does) translate to Vegas. But the surprise of “Baz” is that, unlike many other Vegas shows, it doesn’t spoon-feed its audience or hit it over the head with a PBS tote bag filled with overdue library books. The harried pace assumes the audience can keep up, much like the almost cartoon-ish first hour of “Moulin Rouge!” If you step in unprepared, it’s daunting.

I’m not saying “Baz” is erudite, but do your Luhrmann homework before you buy a ticket. If the action on stage is baffling, you can simply listen to the familiar pop songs, watch the talented dancers, and soak up the rich visuals. But it’s best to come prepared for a show that is gleefully bombastic, shiny, messy, and quite unlike any other entertainment option on the Strip.

“Baz — Star Crossed Love” runs through Feb. 28, 2017, at the Palazzo Theatre (located in the Grand Canal Shoppes). Tickets start at \$62, 866-641-7469.

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A hesitantly hipster eatery

Libertine Social brings a little light to the Vegas scene

LAS VEGAS — There’s only one way to effectively judge a restaurant that brazenly calls itself a “next generation gastropub.” It’s a little game I play called Stump the Bartender.

The drink menu at Libertine Social, the recently-opened restaurant at Mandalay Bay, is filled with intricate cocktails, interesting beers, and house-infused vodkas and rums. When my waiter asked me what I’d like to drink, I told him to let the bartender surprise me. I explained I preferred rum-based cocktails on the sweeter side, but not too sweet, and on the fruity side, but not too fruity. Oh, and I like Prosecco. What arrived at the table was a fizzy pineapple-infused rum-based masterpiece.

That was followed by parmesan churros (as wonderful as it sounds), and one of the best salads I’ve ever consumed in Vegas, called Maggie’s Market Green Salad. This is the work of James Beard Award-winning chef Shawn McClain. If you haven’t heard of him it’s because he’s one of the only Vegas chefs who doesn’t have a program on the Food Network. His restaurant is located in a space that doesn’t look as if it belongs here. It even has a (somewhat)



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF

A pineapple mojito and parmesan churros.

secluded outdoor patio.

After the meal, I rang up McClain to learn the inspiration behind this very un-Vegas Vegas eatery.

Q. How did you come up with the concept for Libertine Social?

A. We really just wanted a lively social environment. We boiled it all down and said, “How can we really diversify this space to encapsulate a lot of those ideas?”

Q. When I was there and looking at the décor, the cocktail menu, and the food, I almost got a hipster vibe. Almost as if you took a place in Brooklyn and made it Vegas-size. It has more of an indie vibe than what you would normally find here.

A. Absolutely. I would hate to

use the word hipster. There’s so many affiliations to what that means to people, but indie is a great word. New generation is the way that we started to categorize it. I gave Alessandro Munge, who is the interior designer, complete control to really see our vision and get a funkiness out of it. It’s an independent spirit.

Q. I was surprised to see outdoor seating that feels more intimate and less see-and-be seen. Is that something that’s unique for the city?

A. It is. You have these European string lights above you and some great Alexis Diaz artwork on the wall. As you walk in the restaurant, you get this great view of the patio through the windows, and it pulls you through the space instead of

having the destination end at the dining room.

Q. I was also surprised at the amount of natural light coming into the restaurant, which is a bit of a rarity in Vegas.

A. I think it’s more popular now. Traditionally, it was never like that. I think it will be a continuous trend in the city.

Q. I talked to my waiter a bit about the food. He mentioned that there’s an emphasis on trying to use things that are as local as possible. But is it possible in Las Vegas for you to find local produce?

A. When I first came to Vegas [from Chicago], I thought, “Where are we going to get everything?” Then I quickly realized within the first year that Southern California is so close and so readily available. You have access to a huge source of agriculture from the micro-climates in Southern California. The produce we get out there is unbelievable.

Interview was edited and condensed for space.

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HERE

GET SPOOKED AT THE ZOO

Snake your way through the woods at Boston’s Franklin Park Zoo and watch this haunted habitat come alive with more than 20 creatures. This new Halloween experience, called The Midnight Zoo, takes place Thursdays through Sundays 6-10 p.m. until Oct. 30. As you wander along a mysterious moonlit trail, you’ll happen upon creatures wearing elaborate costumes and stretching up to 8 feet tall. The live, 360-degree interactive experience is geared to anyone 6 and older. It takes place after regular zoo hours, meaning regular exhibits and attractions will be closed. Tickets run \$10 to \$15. 617-541-5466, www.zoonewengland.org/midnightzoo

ENTERTAINMENT GALORE AT MAINE FAIR

Watch participants from across North America tackle log rolling, ax throwing, and other “woods skills” competitions at the historic Fryeburg Fair in western Maine (bordering Conway, N.H.). This 166-year-old event, considered one of the nation’s top agricultural fairs, runs Oct. 2-9. See more than 3,000 horses, sheep, goats, pigs, cows, and rabbits at the livestock and farming exhibitions, and a display of old farm equipment and memorabilia. Don’t miss the horse and ox pulling, sheepdog trials, firemen’s musters, carnival rides, and nightly entertainment, and pick up products made with local farm ingredients from the specialty foods pavilion. Admission: \$10 per day, including night shows; kids 12 and under free; seniors 65 and older free on Tuesday. 207-935-3268, www.fryeburgfair.org

THERE



FLORIDA HOSTS THE WORLD’S LARGEST FOOD AND WINE FEST

Head to Disney World for the 21st Epcot International Food and Wine Festival, believed to be the largest event of its kind in the world. This impressive festival, which runs through Nov. 14, features 30 global marketplaces, more than 50 wineries, and 35 breweries from around the world, at least 250 guest and Disney chefs, and nearly 400 culinary demonstrations and interactive seminars. The event also includes three burger block parties, beverage boot camps, food and wine pairings, and a chance to be part of the guest audience during the taping of five episodes of “The Chew,” ABC’s Emmy Award-winning series. Each night, watch more than 1,200 fireworks explode over the World Showcase Lagoon, and catch three live concerts. 407-939-5277, www.epcotfoodfestival.com

HAWAII’S NEW TRAIL-RUNNING RAGNAR RACE

Run through lush jungle and along white sand beaches during a new Ragnar Trail Relay on the North Shore of Oahu. This running relay takes place April 21-22 at Turtle Bay Resort, a peninsula located between two stunning bays, and punctuated with white sand beaches, palm trees, and lush forests. Each runner on the eight-person teams will complete three loops that begin and end at Ragnar Village, and add up to about a half marathon per person. The single-track trails loop through the jungle and run alongside sandy beaches. Camp with your team at the village, where you’ll find s’mores, hammocks, and plush grass for tents, or stay at the nearby five-star Turtle Bay Resort. Registration starts at \$1,600 per team of eight; \$1,060 per team of four. 877-837-3529, www.runragnar.com/event-detail/trail/oahu

EVERYWHERE

THIS LUGGAGE TAG PROTECTS YOUR PRIVACY

Lulabop’s simple and effective luggage tag can help you maintain privacy when you travel. The Rolla Tag is a ½-ounce aluminum tube that’s about the size of a mini flashlight and contains a nylon fabric on a spring. Write your name and contact info on the nylon tag and then it automatically rolls up inside the aluminum holder, like a scroll, in order to hide and protect your information. The Rolla Tag easily attaches to your suitcase, ski bag, child’s backpack, or any other bag via a sturdy elastic strap. \$9.95. www.lulabop.com

A SMART HELMET FOR SAFER RIDING

Whether you’re going on a cycling tour, a weekend adventure, or your usual bike commute, you can still ride safely with Livall’s new illuminated bike helmet. The Bling Helmet BH100 comes with tail lights and turn signals that you control from a small remote control that’s attached to your handlebars. These lights help motorists and other cyclists see you, and know which way you’re riding. The helmet’s internal sensors can help detect sudden accelerations and decelerations, and will send out an SOS alert to your emergency contacts in case of an accident. Connect your Bluetooth-compatible helmet to your smartphone, and you can also listen to music or chat on the phone thanks to the helmet’s built-in microphone and mini speakers. The Livall app also displays ride stats (e.g. distance, speed, elapsed time), maps, and more. The adjustable helmet comes in two sizes: 54-58 cm and 58-62 cm. Its internal battery charges by micro USB and lasts up to 20 hours. \$199.99 on Amazon.com. 408-906-8222, www.livall.com/usa



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