

# Genii

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# SHIN LIM



# KNIGHTS

AT  
THE MAGIC CASTLE

BY DANIEL ULIN

**MAGICIANS:** they're everywhere. Last month, for example, Stephen Levine and his kids popped up at *Spamalot* at The Hollywood Bowl, along with The AMA's Group Events Director, Erin Chick. Paul Green, D.J. Grothe, Thomas Donnelly, and Barbara Lewis appeared at Kelli Maroney's Q&A and screening of *Chopping Mall* at The Egyptian in Hollywood. Dr. Ken Kern was spotted deep in thought at Alain Nu, Jerome Finley, and Aaron Alexander's first-ever PSI-Posium in Las Vegas (an absolutely terrific event on every level). And Max Maven and Rob Gould showed up for the wonderful all-improvised Black Version show at Largo at The Coronet.

The Peller Theatre reopened after a two-week renovation with Max's one-man show. The illustrious Mr. Maven's "Spy Story" routine was a serious fooler, and his entire performance was flat-out superb. The all-new sound and light systems really added to the show, and folks waiting in line marveled over the dramatic decorative changes in The Inner Circle. "They put the extra time, work, and money into improving The Peller significantly," commented Max, "which I think speaks volumes about the way the club is running." Other acts in this showroom included Allen Hayden's "Fancy Ring Routine" and Bill Okal's *Miser's Dream*. A few steps away, patrons at The W.C. Fields Bar went wild for Chef Anton's "Trick Pool Show," Mark Collier's "Signed Card to Sealed Wine Bottle," and Tim Wise's Let's Make a Deal-inspired "Bank Night."

Parlour of Prestidigitation audiences scratched their heads over Matt Vizio's "What's Inside." "I read about a bill inside a playing card in an old Jean Hugar pamphlet from 1937," said Matt, "so that was the starting point. That particular version didn't permit the spectator to tear open the card, so I did some thinking and changed it so the spectator tears open the card to find his own bill. It's always fun performing it in The Museum and The Hat & Hare, and doing it in the Parlour for an entire week really helped me hone the routine." Other Parlour acts included David Regal's very funny "The Beer, The Ball, and The Baby"; J. Neal's "Malini Egg Bag"; Mark Gibson's "Puppy Puzzle"; Arthur Trace's "Invisible Bees"; Robert Dorian's "Time on My Mind"; and Handsome Jack's "Vainfabulation." "I have a new book coming out," said Jack



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNE SACKMANN

Dominique Brick drew rave reviews for her Close-Up Gallery performances during Future Stars week

(who really killed it on *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* a couple of weeks before his Parlour act,) "and I wanted to put all my material on video—especially stuff I don't have footage of and haven't performed here for a while. 'Vainfabulation' is the thing I may be proudest of this week, and one of the top two routines I enjoy doing."

In The Palace of Mystery, David Kovak's "Card on Necktie," Farrah Siegel's "Hula Hoop and Whip" finale, and Sebastian Krane's eerie "The Door" wowed everyone. Other Palace stand-outs included Matt Marcy's "Perfect Match," Chris Randall's "IBM Martini Rings Act," Joseph Tran's "The Barbie Girl"; Wes Matheson's take on Andrew Mayne's "Freefall," John Accardo's very funny "Wallet Prediction," Jacob Lin's neat manipulation act; and Dana Daniels' and Richard Allen's "No Show," which included Dana's hysterical performance of "The Amazing Suit Jacket Escape."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN JOSEPH OCHAB

Max Maven fried weekend crowds with his annual one-man show in the newly-renovated Peller Theatre

DON'T FORGET THAT AS A GENII SUBSCRIBER YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A BONUS VISIT TO THE MAGIC CASTLE EACH YEAR!



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN JOSEPH OCHAB

Princess Irene, Erika Larsen, Michael Carbonaro, and Siegfried enjoyed a fun-packed evening at the club

The Close-Up Gallery featured artists like Castle first-timer Mahdi Gilbert, whose *Oil and Water* (a tribute to René Lavand) was breathtaking. "It's awesome being here," said Toronto-based Mahdi. "It's a little nerve wracking performing for so many magicians, and that's always so different from performing for regular people. But I like the pressure and I like how people have responded to my magic; that makes me excited and pushes me to go even further with my performances. I think magic should be about making people feel powerful. Then they have choices and things happen to them. To me, amazing things happen to amazing people—that's what magic is." Other acts in this showroom included Junior Member Dominique Brick's take on Mathieu Bich's "Spreadwave"; Boris Wild's "The Kiss Act"; Jonathan Pendragon's "Infinite Improbability"; Jason Tong's "Triple Climax"; George Tovar's take on Jerry Andrus's *Miser's Miracle*; Danny Ray's "A Million Pieces"; Diamond Jim Tyler's "Diamond Jim's Ring and String"; Father Jim Blantz's "Dunbury Delusion"; David Stryker's "Back in Time"; and Evan Alberto's *Any Card at Any Number*. "Being a Junior Member is a great experience," Evan commented after his show, "because it allows you to really grow as a performer. The best thing

for me is the opportunity to get critiqued by my fellow Juniors. When I'm performing here in the evening rather than one of the brunch shows, it's an entirely different experience. I just forget the age difference and try to focus on connecting with my audience. I want to become a doctor, and I'm looking for ways to incorporate that goal into my act with effects like 'Gypsy Thread'."

The Magic Genie, Wacko, and Arty Loon thrilled weekend family brunch crowds, while Boris Wild, Mahdi Gilbert, Phil Van Tee, Rob Zabrecky,

and Joseph Barry lectured to enthusiastic Magician Members on Sunday afternoons in The Parlour. Other highlights at the club last month included visits from Will Ferrell (*Saturday Night Live*) and Thomas Gibson (*Criminal Minds*); our outstanding annual Future Stars week; the inaugural Magic Weekend Seminar with John Carney; Dennis Forel's "Balloons 101-A" perk; our lively Young Adults Night; and new special cocktails from Beverage Director Chris Taggart along with innovative menu items from Executive Chef Jason Sperber.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN JOSEPH OCHAB

Handsome Jack, The Magic Castle's official sex symbol, kicked back in The Library after his Parlour show

"We're going to change certain things we're offering and showcasing special seasonal menu items," Jason said one evening. "It's pretty exciting. Stay tuned."

On behalf of all AMA members, I'd like to give a special shout-out to Entertainment Director Jack Goldfinger, who's been doing a spectacular job of booking talent at the club. "I've got 562 emails from performers who'd like to work here," Jack told me one evening outside The Palace, "and I'm going to answer each and every one!" Boris Wild weighed in on why Jack is so del-

uded with requests. "The Castle is the place to perform for sure," said Boris. "The place itself is so magical. And when you're here, they take great care of you. You feel like someone special, and you know, when you feel this, you really give it back as a performer."

And from this gorgeous turn-of-the-century mansion atop the hill at Franklin and Orange, that's a wrap for now, ladies and gentlemen. Magician extraordinaire Tom Tom Frank will be my guest columnist next month, and I'll look forward to seeing you all again in December!



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN JOSEPH OCHAB

Matt Vizio, who often works in The Museum on weekends, blew everyone away in The Parlour of Prestidigitation



PHOTO COURTESY OF IEZIE RINTI

Chef Anton's fast-paced, eye-popping "Trick Pool Show" in The Inner Circle involved a lot of audience participation.

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