

Deja Vu? Or was it just new?

Review of Magic at the Beach 2010 Myrtle Beach, SC
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Do you remember your very first Magic Convention? I remember mine very well, so well I could re-live it almost verbatim however I won't. I would like to recap that experience in order to give you, the reader an idea of my first magic convention experience. Travel back with me to the year 1999, I had made a trip I would never forget to a place I had traveled many times before.

My wife at that time pulled up to the building and dropped me off to let me walk on my own to my very first magic gathering. I walked into the sliding glass doors and to my left a table with papers and people everywhere. Almost too confusing to endure but I was too excited to care. Once I obtained my inaugural magicians badge I felt as if I graduated from pretend magician to real magician. I became a member of the secret society and would never be the same! Each and every event I attended was more fresh and new than the last and I couldn't get enough of it. However I was still a rookie and clueless how I would be effected by this event.

The feelings of a first time convention returned to me this past weekend. Magic at the Beach January 14th through 16th 2010 was a great convention to kick off the New Year. The staff of this event was all aptly equipped to make this event the best it could be and they did just that. All the events were scheduled properly and ran smoothly into the next scheduled event. The dealers room as loaded down with tables of great magic as well as quality demonstrators. Elmwood Magic, Fred Mitchell Books, Mad Hatter Magic, Magic and Mischief, SEO Magic, Conley's House of Magic, Trick Master, Rocco, and Mark Mason and all the session magic was happening in the dealer's room. The first event was an Escape show presented by Eric Hall. I should say I am not a huge fan of escapes but you could tell Mr. Hall had a great knowledge of his craft and also possessed the ability to be entertaining at the same time. His Houdini journal joke almost made me fall over in hysteria. (You had to be there)

Next was a grand welcome reception for all registrants and guests. What a spread, 5 different types of pickup foods; cheese, veggies, chips, and much more! The beef was not just any beef; it was a whole beef shank that was hand carved for you as you exited the food line! Also they had real southern sweet tea! I was so excited it wasn't the half sweet stuff that you must add sweet and low to make it taste right. Next up was dessert and that table was so sweet it would have put anyone into a sugar diabetic coma, but I only had one piece of pie. If I wanted to however, I could have had Cheesecake, Pecan Pie, Pumpkin Pie (or was it sweet potato), Apple Pie, or Cake!

All the main events were exceptional, the close up show the cabaret show, and the stage show were most likely the best this year can offer! I know it most certainly raised the bar for all other convention in the US to live up to. Lectures from Bob Little, Murray SawChuck, Dave Kaplan, Soma, Shawn Farquhar, Ken Scott, Rocco, Rick Merrill, and myself made this not only a fun and exciting event but insightful to say the least. The Cabaret show starred Bob "Wild Man" Little as the MC and what a grand MC he is! Murray SawChuck wowed us with his quick humor and amazing fashion sense. Shawn Farquhar dazzled us with a portion of his act that won him the Gold! Rick Merrill was a massive highlight for me, he proved that you can be great and at the same time simple in props. He used pure sleight of hand to fool everyone in attendance! Soma is simply genius, his creative mind and ability to entertain

makes him a great addition to any show! Dave Kaplan is a true Vaudevillian with the ability to take a moment and turn it into an event!

The Close up show was not only top notch but it had the best of the best giving it all they got! Murray SawChuck gave us a live showing of the truly amazing "mid-air card stab" using a little twist of his own, invented on Celebracadabra! Rick Merrill charmed us with his charming humor and incredible card and coin magic, even adding some insight on how he was raised; UNO anyone? Shawn Farquhar showed us how cups and balls are supposed to be done (or was it how no one could possibly do it but him?) I showcased my "World's most dangerous card trick" and a new rope effect that received a great reaction. I also wanted to wait until last to mention this next performer, which in most cases is bad form but I think in this case it has merit. Rocco Silano took the close up show to a level of excellence that would have made the most skeptical believe. I should know I was the skeptic! My Mother and Father came to see me perform and they absolutely loved him and were head over heels about his act. You may not know my Mom and Dad but that speaks volumes! I know now what makes Rocco a great act ... not only is it that time and effort it takes to do what he does but as an audience member you feel the passion and desire Rocco stores inside for magic. When it is show time Rocco opens the flood gates and gives it his all!

The Gala show could have possibly been a critical part of the event and topped off the weekend with a mound of cherries on top! Ken Scott controlled the flow of the show by demonstrating why he is Atlanta's Magician of the year for multiple years and one of the world's foremost Kids Show entertainers! Murray opened the show with his CD act. Even though from the seats it appeared there may have been some technical issues Murray still finished the show with professionalism and pizzazz. Shawn Farquhar stung us with his "Shape of my Heart" routine that won him the FISM award for close up magic in Beijing China 2009. Dave Kaplan offered the first half of his Vaudeville show with ease, having the crowd in stitches! The Reed sisters surprised us with the Sister Act. I remember seeing these sisters in Gatlinburg, TN the very first year I attended and even then you could tell they had what it takes to make it in magic. All I can say without giving a lot away to those that did not see the sister act is if you miss it you would never know! Aside from amazing illusions and well choreographed dancing with a high energy pace the act was phenomenal. Dave Kaplan flew back in to give us the second half of his Vaudeville show and I have to say he has what it takes to make a show well rounded by himself much less the amazing line up that was already there. Soma, as I was told, had to go to the hospital before the Gala show. He turned out to be fine and even though he was still feeling ill he did his show with grace and never showed a sign of sickness. Aside from his misfortune, he had the audience flabbergasted! His cell phone act is one of the world's best acts and more than earned the title of FISM's best.

Well folks I have said a lot and I hope you will come to the Magic at the Beach 2011 convention in the beautiful Grand Strand of Myrtle Beach, SC. Oh and don't let me forget, the weekend didn't end with the show there was an delightful event at the end of the evening that I will keep to myself for now ... maybe come next year and see what you missed? Until 2011 keep the magic alive!