



MEMBER NEWS

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A NEW YEAR AND YOUR NEW CLUB

When we announced that Arlene and I had purchased an old restaurant in Montecito and planned to turn it into a private club people assumed we were going to open another Magic Castle like the one in Hollywood. We tried to explain that we were looking for a good real estate investment in Santa Barbara that would also satisfy our creative needs for the future.

With the New Year we celebrate the 55th anniversary of The Academy of Magical Arts and the opening of The Magic Castle. The success of the combination of the AMA and the Castle makes one believe in magic.

Fifty-Five years ago many thought the Larsen Brothers were crazy to think that magicians and magic enthusiasts would support a club in Hollywood. The AMA now has 5,000 members. Half are magicians and half are non-magicians who love the Castle and magic.

Our new Magic Castle Cabaret is not a club for magicians (Magicians from every magic organization including the AMA will always be welcome to visit by appointment with one night per person door charge). We want our neighbors to have a social club devoted to magic and variety entertainment. As new members you have expressed faith in the promise that we will deliver a very special concept. Members and their guests will experience an evening in an old-world elegant atmosphere as it might have been in a typical European Cabaret. (Close-up magicians and variety performers performing for their friends.)

Most of our new members live in the area in the path of the largest wildfire in California history. It started four days after we published our first newsletter. It was a month of evacuations and trepidation. Although our home on TV Hill and the Cabaret were not threatened by the Thomas Fire, we evacuated for a few days to breath the air in Hollywood.

The events of the month of December and the holiday season have resulted in more delays on our scheduled official opening. The good news is we have finally opened escrow on the purchase of our full bar liquor license. We are still waiting for city permission to obtain a building permit for our exterior veranda.

We are pleased our membership is growing and is reaching capacity. So if you know someone that received an invitation to join and have not responded remind them not to put it off.

We hope to host a number of intimate members only preview parties starting next month.

I found some files dating back to 1961 when we announced that brother Bill was going to revive dad's Academy of Magical Arts and I would turn Thomas Glover's old Lane Mansion into a Magic Castle. For the next year and a half we kept running into obstacles and moved the expected date of opening many times. Faithful members of the AMA never gave up hope and rejoiced when we finally opened our doors on January 2, 1963.

Good things are worth waiting for.

**"A SOCIAL CLUB
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GAMBRINUS, THE KING OF BEER FINDS A NEW HOME

A large Bavarian beer pump from the early 1800's resided at the Hollywood Magic Castle beneath the center arch of the Grand Salon bar until 2014. The sculpted portion depicted Gambrinus, a Flemish King of mythology who, according to legend, was the creator of beer. It was removed when a multi-tap beer pump was installed on the bar top between Irma's room and the Grand Salon.

One of the first things I wanted to create was the proper Victorian atmosphere – a turn of the century bar. Even in the early 60's those grand old Gay Nineties bars were going for thousands of dollars. I decided to build one with architectural items I was able to find. My new bar



needed something to make it look authentic. I found it in an antique shop in Culver City. It was a genuine Bavarian

beer pump. It was porcelain Dresden with pewter faucets and a pewter statue of Gambrinus the King of Beers on top. It was totally impractical but it looked beautiful and served as a conversation piece on the main Castle's Grand Salon for fifty years. When it was replaced in 2014 I gave it a new home on our bar at our home in Santa Barbara.

Now Gambinus has another new home. When you indulge in an adult beverage at our new/old antique bar at the Cabaret you will notice Gambrinus, the King of Beer guardian over the side-bar.

BEFORE AND AFTER

When we bought the old Café del Sol property it was being operated as an "Events Center." After years of problems we finally were able to start physically working on the building. There were unseen problems that had to be addressed including a new roof and numerous cosmetic repairs that naturally and inevitably occurs as a result of normal wear and aging.



BEFORE



AFTER

CABARET LOUNGE

When members of the Hollywood Magic Castle visit our new Magic Castle Cabaret in Montecito they will see a number of old friends. I'm not talking about old members. Over the past half century I have been rescuing antique architecture to create the warm Victorian atmosphere of the Castle. Often we had wonderful materials left over from our various projects. When I donated my entire antique fixtures including paneling, chandeliers, art glass windows, bars, and décor to the Academy of Magical Arts I had one condition in the contract and that was if any of my properties were replaced due to future remodeling I would be offered the opportunity to have such items returned. Remember those stained glass windows that used to adorn the library wall in the Inner Circle? The AMA wanted to replace them with museum showcases and they were returned to me. Now they are displayed as a divider in the bar area of the cabaret. I'm very proud of the new bar at the cabaret although it looks like it might have had an earlier life in a castle in Spain. The bar and the back-bar are an amalgam of furniture antiques. The front of the bar is made of the same custom designed carved wood that we used as the paneling of the Magic Castle's Peller Theater. Our latest Angel Member, Linda Schimberg originally donated it.

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I love giving life to old building materials. It's a fun challenge and it's all part of giving our members a unique private club. The Academy of Magical Arts at The Magic Castle is still the only club of its kind in the Universe. The Magic Castle Cabaret is strictly a social club devoted to the enjoyment of magic and variety arts in beautiful Montecito.

– Milt & Arlene Larsen