

BRINGING SEXY BACK AT VAMP THE LOUNGE

Each Friday and Saturday night, a crowd gathers on board the Queen Mary for an evening of unique entertainment as the sexy and playful tradition of burlesque comes alive at VAMP the Lounge. Combining the best elements of classic burlesque, Broadway professionalism and Vegas showmanship, VAMP is quickly becoming one of Long Beach's hottest weekend destinations.

Legend has it that the start of burlesque began with a Chicago chorine named Hinda Wassau, who suffered a major wardrobe malfunction on stage one night. Like a true trouper, Wassau refused to leave the stage until her number was finished. While she boldly combined the arts of dance and striptease, the first burlesque star was born.

More recently, burlesque has enjoyed a major revival. Acts such as the Pussycat Dolls have brought the burlesque tradition into the mainstream by combining teasingly sexual dances with modern pop music. The show at VAMP the Lounge similarly takes elements of burlesque and reinterprets them for today's audiences.

"We have taken the classic burlesque style and put it in a more modern atmosphere," explains Todd Vigiletti, executive producer of VAMP. "We combine songs from the '30s and '40s with today's music. We want to put people on the edge of their seats in a provocative and edgy way."

The stars of the show are the Queen Bees, a collection of six beautiful and talented female dancers. They prowl the stage in slinky, flashy costumes that tend to get smaller throughout the show. Each of the Queen Bees boasts a professional dance background with experiences that ranges from teaching dance to performance as backup dancers for major pop stars. It is this professionalism that sets the VAMP show apart from most other burlesque acts.

"We aim to give people a top-notch show," Vigiletti says. "The Queen Bees are truly trained professionals. Our show also features two vocalists and a comedian. When people come to VAMP, they will see a full show."

The show was specifically designed for its venue on the Queen Mary, and there is not a bad seat in the house. A catwalk extends from the stage into the middle of the room, making the audience feel they are part of the show. After performance, the Queen Bees have been known to come out and mingle with the crowd.

Despite the elegant surroundings, VAMP the Lounge is a relaxed and decidedly unpretentious environment. Because of this, it tends to draw an especially eclectic group of patrons.

"We get a mixed crowd," Vigiletti says. "We get a lot of women here and a lot of couples, both gay and straight. We get people in their 20s and people in their 60s who remember classic burlesque. Everyone feels comfortable here."

THE DETAILS:

VAMP the Lounge is located on the Queen Mary, 1126 Queens Highway, Long Beach. Doors open at 10:45 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. The show starts at 11 p.m. General admission tickets are \$15 (21 and over only). For reservations and more information, call (562) 499-6625 or visit www.VAMPthelounge.com .