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Go On With the Show



Theaters and shows offer nostalgia, fun and an amazing sensory experience and remain a popular entertainment option for tours. Pictured is the Colonial Theatre in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, which has a history that goes back to 1914 and offers the best of independent and foreign films and live performances. COLONIAL THEATRE.

How to provide an interesting variety of entertainment for a group is one of the biggest things planners contemplate when they are putting together a tour. After a busy day of riding, walking, shopping, gaming or touring, many tourists enjoy activities that allow them to relax and enjoy some entertainment from their seats. This makes theaters and shows great additions to any itinerary. Add in the lights, the sounds, the sets, the performers and the amazing experience of seeing a live production, and you have an activity that is sure to be a hit with your group.

Colonial Theatre Bethlehem, New Hampshire

For 130 years visitors have made their destination Bethlehem, New Hampshire "The Star of the White Mountains," discovering leisurely slices of rural life - fresh air, mountain vistas, and a rich diversity of architecture and history. The Colonial Theatre, a downtown landmark and reputedly the oldest continuously operated movie theater in the United States, remains a significant architectural link to both the history of motion pictures and the era of the grand hotels. The Colonial Theatre was built by Karl Abbot, scion of New England and Florida hotelier Frank Abbott, in the summer of 1914. As documented in K. Abbott's 1950 memoir *Open for the Season*, Abbott with his then partner "Doc" Clark, brought the new century to northern New Hampshire first by converting the family stables to house Humpmobiles, "flivvers" and

Stanley Steamers, and secondly by housing that other most significant icon of these "Modern Times." "The vacant lot across the street at which I happened to be looking suddenly took on a vision - before my eyes rose a modern movie house with electrically lighted marquee."

During the 1910s and 1920s, Bethlehem held the distinction of being the premier summer destination resort in the northeast with more than 30 hotels and four trains arriving daily. Recognizing the diverse and cosmopolitan nature of the summer population, major Hollywood studios used the Colonial Theatre as a test market for their films.

In 1922, overwhelmed with his hotel operations, Karl sold The Colonial to local resident and theater owner, Jack Eames. The transaction was negotiated on an impulse when they happened to meet on the night train to Boston. The theater remained in the Eames family until purchased by the Friends of The Colonial in 2001.

Since that time The Colonial, one of the few Egyptian Revival buildings in the region, has undergone a major restoration, including handicap accessibility, with plans for year-round operations nearing completion. Currently, the 250-seat theater operates from May through October offering the best of independent and foreign films, touring musical artists, theater, children's programs and community events.

Located midway between Montreal and Boston at the intersection of two of the most heavily traveled routes (Interstate 93 and Route 302), in the heart of the White Mountains and the regions attractions, The Colonial offers an easy and interesting side-trip to history. With advanced notice (and thanks to digital technology), your own special feature film, home or club movie can be easily arranged. Group discounts, staff comps, convenient location, off-street parking at the rear of the theater and just minutes from Franconia Notch State Park and The Mount Washington Hotel and Resort make Bethlehem and The Colonial hard to pass by.

After departing The Colonial, a visit would not be complete without a stroll to admire the unique architecture of the grand homes that line Bethlehem's Main Street, a bite at a variety of eating establishments, bargain shopping at numerous antique and artisans shops, and for the golfer, two Donald Ross-designed courses.

To arrange your visit contact Stephen Dignazio, director, Colonial Theatre, PO Box 204, Bethlehem, NH 03574; (603) 869-3422; fax (603) 869-9738; colonial@ncia.net; www.BethlehemColonial.org.

Gem and Century Theatres Detroit, Michigan

Detroit's Historic Gem and Century Theatres have partnered with actor and playwright, Jeff Daniels to bring his newest com-

edy, *Escanaba In Love* to the intimate Gem Theatre this fall. Set in Michigan and taking audiences back to "da UP" (the Upper Peninsula), *Escanaba In Love* is the prequel to one of the Gem Theatre's most popular plays, *Escanaba In Da Moonlight*. The original Purple Rose Theatre Company cast will take the stage at the Gem Theatre beginning in mid September for at least a four-month run. When the original *Escanaba In Da Moonlight* opened in 1999, its four-month production turned into a 16-month record-breaking phenomenon.

In this prequel, the men of the Soady deer camp are back in their Escanaba cabin. As deer hunting season arrives, the guys meet their biggest challenge, not a great buck, or a hunter's dream, but the camp's first female visitor, young Albert Soady Jr's impromptu bride Big Betty Balou. Daniels' hilarious humor kicks into high gear when the Soady men make their best attempts to grapple with their newest, surprising, family member. Complete with all of the laughs and jokes that made the first *Escanaba* a Detroit favorite, *Escanaba In Love* also brings a touching, romantic comedy element to the rugged hunter-humor of Michigan's favorite yooper family.

Group reservations are available now along with all-inclusive dinner and lunch packages at the adjoining Century Grille Restaurant (in



Detroit's Gem and Century Theatres have partnered with actor and playwright Jeff Daniels to bring the hilarious comedy *Escanaba in Love* to audiences starting in autumn 2007. GEM AND CENTURY THEATRES.

the same building) or the Elwood Bar and Grill, one block north of the theater. Travel agent comp programs are available, and street parking for coaches is permitted at the theater. Restaurant packages at the Century Grille and

Elwood Bar and Grill are also available without a Gem Theatre ticket purchase.

The Historic Gem and Century Theatres, Century Grille, and Elwood Bar and Grill are the gems in the heart of Detroit's entertainment district offering theater packages, dinner, lunch, breakfast, wedding packages, special events, boxed lunches, tours and more. For more information, phone group sales at (313) 463-6248, visit online at www.gemtheatre.com, or in person at 333 Madison Ave, Detroit, Michigan. □