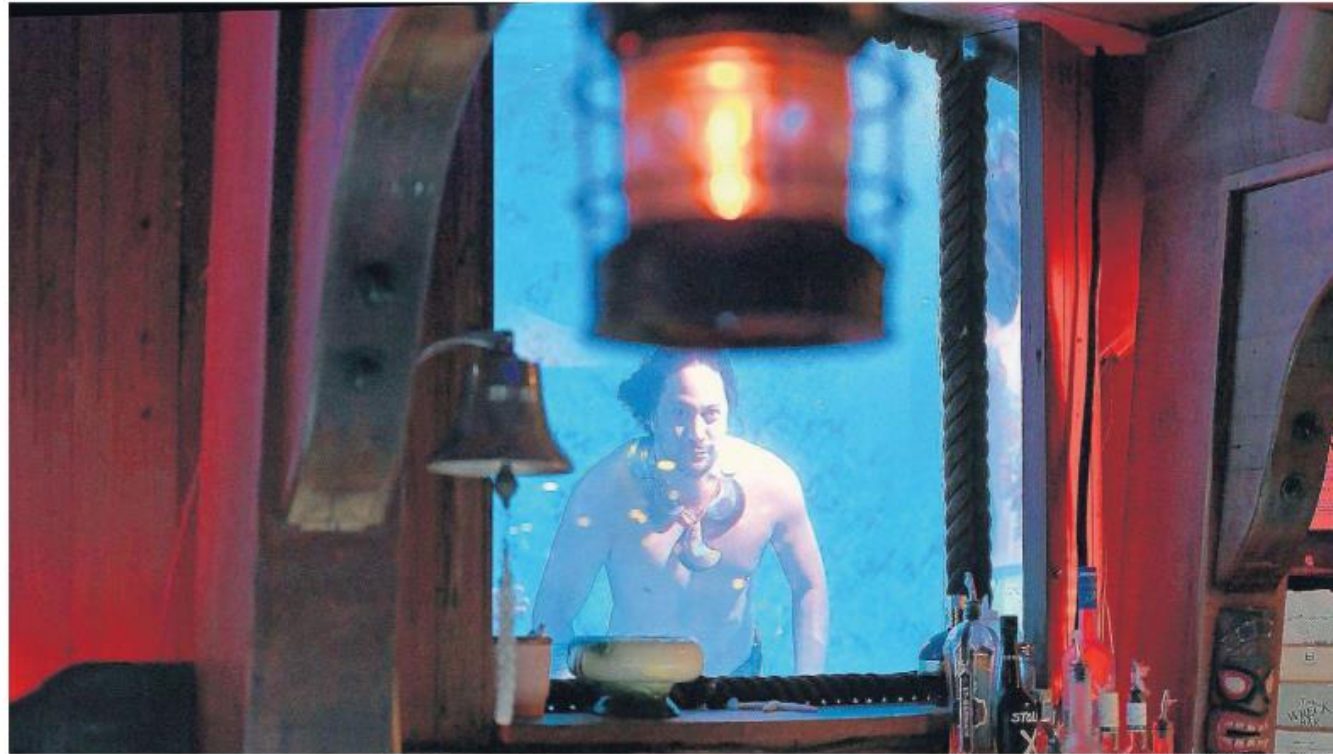


SunSentinel

TRAVEL & LIFE



MICHAEL LAUGHLIN/SUN SENTINEL

Lono Hanohano rehearses Tuesday for The Aquamen Underwater Burlesque Show at the B Ocean Resort pool. The Wreck Bar in the B Ocean Resort on Fort Lauderdale beach is adding a new underwater burlesque show featuring a male cast.

MEN READY TO MAKE A SPLASH

Mermaids make way for male underwater burlesque show

When ready to make a splash

Mermaids make way for male underwater burlesque show

BY ROD STAFFORD HAGWOOD
South Florida Sun Sentinel

Mermaids are diving into the Wreck Bar's pool portholes where, up until now, only mermaids dipped.

"The Aquamen Underwater Burlesque Show" will add a splash of macho into the mix at the B Ocean Resort on Fort Lauderdale beach, best known for its MeduSirena's Live Mermaid Show on weekends.

Staged (or should we say floated) in the bar's porthole windows that look into the resort's swimming pool, the show has six swimmers performing at 9 p.m. Thursdays starting this

week.

The whole vibe is a throwback to the '50s and '60s when porthole bars were quite common in resort destinations such as South Florida.

"Back when they did have these kinds of shows, men did a lot of shows as well," explains Marina Anderson, the show's producer. "They would do things ranging from performing as the Beatles to James Bond fight scenes, and all this stuff would take place in these kind of waters. And now that there are so few left, it really was a great opportunity to be able to revisit those days ... that at one time were pretty preva-

lent and give people a little taste of what it was like back in the day."

What do Aquamen do in the show?

Anderson says she started putting the new men's show together a year ago, auditioning the performers and then starting their training this fall.

"It's a tough thing to describe, because if you tell them you're going to see men underwater doing acts of derring-do ... it is a very abstract concept. So generally I let them know they are going to see something that they probably won't see anywhere else, which is absolutely

true. This is the only underwater male burlesque show in the United States, which is really amazing."

Anderson — whose stage name, in this case her aqua name, is MeduSirena — says that the show morphs depending on audience reaction since the Wreck Bar attracts a lot of repeat customers.

"We don't want them to feel that they are seeing the same thing twice," she says. "And since the cast is as diverse as this one, you want to be able to produce something that will allow them to know what to

See **AQUAMEN**, 2

2E | Sun Sentinel SunSentinel.com Sunday, February 3, 2019 BR

AQUAMEN

Continued from Page 1

expect. It's very organic. And I think the sign of a good swimmer is to be able to work and go with the flow, to react to an audience calling or yelling. We can hear them through these windows. You'll never get the same show twice. I think that is actually a really great aspect of the show."

A little background

Anderson has been an aquatic performer at the Wreck Bar for 13 years, first as a figure swimmer known for her how-does-she-do-that breath control and her tourist-magnet mermaid costume. Soon afterward she was packing the venue as the director/producer of the underwater show starring her mermaid Aquatics. The women put on a family-friendly show at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. There's also a "Mermaids and Mimosas" Sunday brunch from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.



MICHAEL LAUGHLIN/SUN SENTINEL

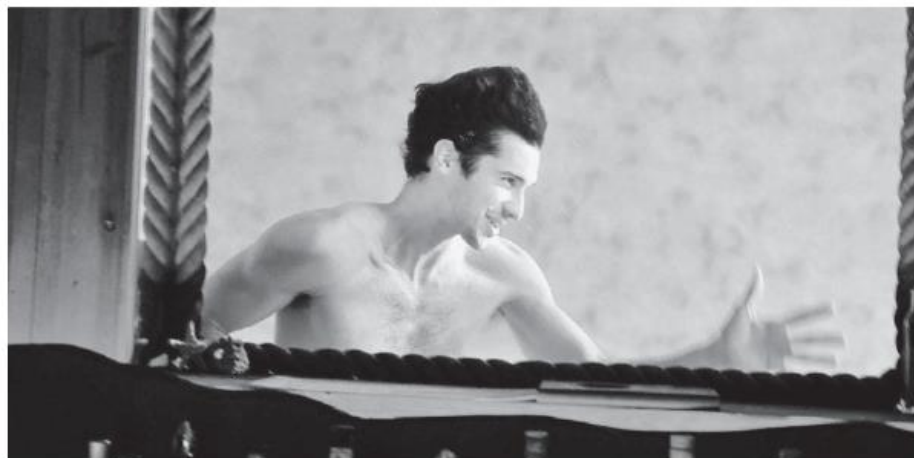
Evan O'Sheehan rehearses Tuesday for The Aquamen Underwater Burlesque Show at the B Ocean Resort pool.

And there's the swim-tease of a show that's more for grownups that starts at 10 p.m. on weekends. That show, which Anderson started in 2017, was inspired by Esther Williams' elaborate synchronized swimming movies at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Meet the diving dudes

Josh Eccles (36, from Arizona, gives shark scuba diving tours for Emerald Charters): "I came to one of the mermaid shows, and they were having such a good time, and they happen to mention online that they were going to do a male show and I was like, 'Oh yeah, I'm definitely going to be a part of that.' I think the biggest surprise is how natural we look underwater."

Afa Michelsen (36, from Tonga, performer at the Mai-Kai restaurant Polynesian show): "Actually one of



Joseph Hernandez rehearses.

my cast mates, his wife is a mermaid, and she mentioned, 'Hey, they're looking for guys.' And I said, 'Hey, I eat fire, so why not? Let's go play with water.' "

Jimmy James (34, Hollywood, ocean rescue in Miami): "I came to the first preview show, and I could

feel the energy coming through the glass from the guys, and I said, 'I got to be a part of this. It just looks too fun. This is definitely out of my comfort zone. People who know me ... they would never ever peg me to do this and that is why I'm doing it in a way.

But you know, if you don't do new things and challenge yourself into new areas in life, you stay the same forever, and that's not my goal."

Evan O'Sheehan (22, Hollywood, ocean rescue in Miami): "I'm a pretty decent breath holder. I've

grown up playing in pools, started when I was really young at my grandma and grandpa's house. And then in the summer time, one of the summer camps that my mom put me in was junior lifeguards for Hollywood, Florida, and we do breath-holding training as part of that where we carry bricks underneath the water as far as we can. So other than that I've been a competitive swimmer, so I've always had a large set of lungs."

Lono Hanohano (41, Hawaii, performer at the Mai-Kai restaurant Polynesian show): "[At the audition] she mainly wanted to see how comfortable I was in the water. And to see my level of swimming, so she could see where she could teach me and train me and what she needed to do to get me up to par. I've known Marina for years now, through the Mai-Kai

scene."

Joseph Hernandez (26, Hollywood, elementary school teacher): "I wanted to be in show business down here. I did theater in college, so I kind of wanted to get back into theater, and this was a platform."

How to see the show

There's no cover charge. Doors open at 6 p.m. every Thursday, and patrons get a free glass of prosecco. Between 7-8 p.m. there are \$7 cocktails and appetizer specials available (\$8 cocktails between 8-9 p.m.). The show starts at 9 p.m.

Reservations are recommended. Call 954-245-3836 or email Restaurant.reservations@BOceanFortLauderdale.com. For more information, go to BHotelsAndResorts.com/b-ocean-resort.

rhagwood@sunsentinel.com