

Timeless Titanic

By Jeannie Borbe
Vegas.com

If you loved the 1997 movie "Titanic," then the Titanic exhibit at the Luxor will blow you away.

Featuring more than 300 artifacts, as well as breathtaking replicas from the famous ship, the Titanic exhibit truly brings history to life.

"This is a very unique opportunity in Las Vegas," said Cheryl Mure, director of education for Premier Exhibitions. "It's not only entertaining, but educational and emotional."

Formerly showcased at the Tropicana, the exhibit reopened at the Luxor in December 2008. The remodeled exhibit features 20 never-before-seen artifacts including gaming chips, passenger papers and even decorative sections from Titanic's famous Grand Staircase. In addition, there are many personal pieces within the exhibit.

One of the most heartfelt elements of the exhibit is the personal stories of the passengers. During the tour, the exhibit's staff shares personal tales from the passengers.

Some stories have a tragic, yet romantic ending. For instance, some wives chose to stay behind with their husbands instead of climbing onto the lifeboats.

"I think seeing all the personal effects from all the people that perished was very touching," said Noelle Dunn, a visitor from Jacksonville, Fla.

At the beginning of the exhibit, patrons receive a boarding pass of an actual passenger on Titanic. On the back of each boarding pass is the age and the itinerary of that person. At the end of the tour, patrons find out if he or she survived the Titanic by finding the name on the wall memorial.

Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition at the Luxor

Hours: Open daily, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Last admission is sold at 9 p.m.

Cost: \$27. Tickets are good for seven days from date of purchase.

Contact: (702) 492-3960

The exhibit also includes passenger quotes. One of the most poignant sayings came from Jack Thayer, a first-class passenger: "There was no moon and I never seen the stars shine brighter," he said. "It was the kind of night that made one feel glad to be alive."

Amazing artifacts

In addition to the passengers' stories, other fascinating details include their belongings.

From a diamond and sapphire ring to a platinum pendant with diamonds, some of the most beautiful pieces recovered from the Titanic are sparkling jewelry.

"They're so spectacular," Mure said. "There are some pieces in our collection that I would wear."

Surprisingly, these dazzling gems managed to keep their original luster.

"We don't restore any of the artifacts, we conserve them," Mure pointed out. "Our goal is not to return the artifacts to their former glory, but present them as they were found."

"All of those things were typically found inside a leather bag, or something made of leather," she continued. "[The leather] repelled all those microorganisms on the bottom of the ocean, so nothing could eat through the leather."

Aside from jewelry, plenty of the Titanic passengers brought their own china and silverware. Each cup, plate, pitcher and bowl has its own interesting, distinct look.

"It makes me think of who was eating

off of it," said Mure. "It just transports me back in time."

One of the most unique pieces discovered is the au gratin plates set, stacked neatly in rows.

"The au gratin dishes were found inside of a wooden crate," explained Mure. "[While] the wood had deteriorated over time, there they were – lined up in the sea bed. So we recreated that image in the exhibition."

Other artifacts include ship tools, postcards, currency, a pipe, a spittoon and playing cards.

The Big Piece

While the tiny pieces leave behind a lasting impression, The Big Piece definitely stands out.

"I think the most impressive thing was the massive amount of the huge piece of the ship's hull," Dunn said.

This piece is currently the largest Titanic artifact ever retrieved. The Big Piece weighs an astounding 15 tons and measures more than 26 feet long.

"Bringing that inside was actually a 48-hour process," Mure said. "It involved cranes and a special team of people. It's the crown jewel of our collection [and] requires a lot of care."

Riveting replicas

In addition to the artifacts, the exhibit also features amazing replicas from the Titanic. One of these includes the staircase replica. Most remember the staircase scene in "Titanic" with Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. Seeing the staircase in person brings the Titanic to life.

"It's really dramatic [and] really draws you into the story," Mure said.

The staircase is where first-class passengers met, mingled and admired each other's outfits. The intricately-detailed staircase replica includes iron, bronze and even the stained glass dome. Visitors have



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Visitors touch the iceberg at the Titanic exhibit at Luxor.

Titanic facts

705 passengers survived, but 1,523 were lost.

The Titanic was the largest moving object in its time.

More than 10,000 men worked on the Titanic for nearly three years to construct the hull and internal structure.

More than 100,000 people gathered to watch the Titanic sail off to New York.

For a third-class passenger, a ticket was \$40 (\$770 today). For a first-class passenger, tickets were \$4,500 (\$90,000 today).

It took about 60 pounds of coal for the ship to move 60 feet.

the option of having their picture taken and purchasing it at the end of the tour.

Other noteworthy replicas include the promenade deck (which features the sounds of waves crashing and a starry sky) as well as an iceberg, which guests are more than welcome to touch. Since the iceberg was specifically created for the exhibit, it contains its own cooling system to prevent it from melting.

Make sure to stop and take a look at the third-class and the finely decorated first-class sleeping quarters. Adorned with burgundy colors, elegant décor and mahogany accents, the first-class suite was considered more luxurious than any hotel room on land in its time.

Great for the entire family

From young to old, visitors of all ages will enjoy this exhibit.

"Kids love Titanic!" Mure said. "I've had more kids stump me with questions about

Titanic than anyone else because they are so intrigued by the story. It's definitely a wonderful family destination."

"It was more impressive than I thought it would be," Dunn added. "It was pretty interesting [with] all the historical artifacts they recovered from the bottom of the ocean."

There is also gift shop for those who want to take a piece of Titanic home with them. Visitors can purchase everything from T-shirts, stuffed animals, captain hats for kids, cups, key chains and much more.

Titanic's overall experience gives guests a better perspective and appreciation of what happened on that fateful night.

"We want [visitors] to remember the story of Titanic and the heroism of the crew and the passengers that were lost that night," Mure said. "We don't want to forget them."