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 of 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 the Titanic exhibit. “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 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 it.

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. 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.

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 is the large mahogany suite that is currently under repair. Most remember the staircase scene in “Titanic” with Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet.

“Kids love Titanic!” Mure said. “I've had that night,” Mure said. “We don’t want to forget 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.”

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 Titanic was the largest moving object in its time.

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

Make sure to stop and take a look at the iceberg the Titanic exhibit at Luxor.

Titanic facts

705 passengers survived, but 1,523 were lost.

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Great for the entire family

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

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