



Redefining apres entertainment in Vail

Lakewood-based magician Danny Archer brings the art of illusion to Vail

Charlie Owen - COWEN@VAILDAILY.COM - Vail, CO, Colorado - Wednesday, February 11, 2009



VAIL — A range of expressions flashed over the faces of Bob Tate and Stephanie and Mark Johnson as they sat having drinks at The Vail Chophouse after a day of skiing.

Curiosity, disbelief and child-like joy were evident as Danny Archer literally worked his magic on them. Archer, a master of parlor and sleight-of-hand magic tricks, kept pulling a card from the deck that Stephanie had initialed after mixing it back in with the rest of the cards. Each time, she was surprised.

“We are a little blown away,” said Mark, a North Carolina resident.

“I’m a little skeptical, I feel like I’ve been taken,” Stephanie continued.

It’s easy to feel that way when no matter how closely you watch Archer’s hands, you still can’t figure out how he pulls the trick off.

‘A sense of wonder’

Archer, a 52-year-old magician from Lakewood, comes to Vail to do tableside entertainment at the Vail Chophouse every night (except Tuesdays) from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. He also performs an occasional show at the Antlers Lodge in Vail. His next show there is Presidents Day at 4 p.m. and tickets are \$10.

Archer took up magic as a hobby after meeting a magician while working at a tuxedo store. Shortly after that he survived a heart attack at age 39 and, realizing that he could have died, Archer told his girlfriend (now his wife) he wanted to quit his job and take up magic full time. He’s been a professional magician ever since. Archer said he started learning sleight-of-hand (tricks with cards and coins, etc.) then branched out into parlor tricks (cutting a rope in half and putting it back together, mind reading). He enjoys the performing art aspect of magic and compares it to doing theater or playing music.

“(Magic) has a sense of wonder to it ... You can read a book and say ‘wow, that was really good’ and you can watch a dance and say ‘wow, that was really good’ or look into a song but none of those are going to make you go ‘WHAT?!’” Archer said.

‘Redefining Apres-ski’

Archer has written books about magic and made instructional DVDs for beginner magicians. He’s performed all over the world, to audiences large and small. He has control over every aspect of his act and he writes his own material, which includes a lot of comedy and personal interaction with the audience. He’s also created around four dozen of his own tricks, he said.

Improvisation is a very big part of his show, and it’s clear when he’s working with an audience, even a small one like the one at the Chophouse last week, he’s quite capable of captivating anyone with his charm. After Archer finished up his magic show, Stephanie said it was a treat to be entertained so unexpectedly, and well worth the Chophouse’s investment.

“Their money is worth it to pay him,” Stephanie said. “The other restaurants need to hire him.”

“He’s redefining Apres ski. You get music a lot, but not magic,” Tate said.

High Life Writer Charlie Owen can be reached at 970-748-2939 or cowen@vaildaily.com.

If you go ...

What: Magician Danny Archer.

When: Nightly (except Tuesdays) from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Vail Chophouse in Lionshead.

Cost: Free.

More information: Call 303-321-6267 or visit www.dannyarcher.com.