

FORT MYERS FLORIDA WEEKLY

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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“Burlesque is a dying art form that we are trying to keep alive. It is a classic tease, and also a form of self-expression.” — **Nettie Boom** (Annette Bennett), co-founder

## THE ART OF TEASE

GLAM! BAM! BURLESQUE!

Nettie Boom ▶



Rosie Luxure ▲

BY SANDRA YEYATI  
Florida Weekly Correspondent

AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY, burlesque in the United States was a kind of variety show that featured a diverse selection of entertainers, including comedians, singers, magicians and striptease artists. By the late 1930s, as the popularity of exotic dancers grew, a typical burlesque show had up to six dancers, one or two comics and a master of ceremonies.

On Saturday, July 23, Southwest Floridians will have an opportunity to enjoy a revival

SEE GLAM! BAM!, B4 ▶



### INSIDE



#### Arts Commentary

Follow the yellow brick road for an entertaining trip to see “The Wizard of Oz” at Broadway Palm. **B18** ▶



#### Top Picks

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#### Collector's Corner

There's nothing corny about a classic motif. **B2** ▶

## Newest exhibitions at Tribby Arts Center celebrate summer

### SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

It's a celebration of all things summer in the three galleries of Tribby Arts Center at Shell Point as “Fireworks and Fishin’: Scenes of Summer” and “Gone Fishin’: Woodworks by Roger Ruth and Tom Young” are on display through Aug. 27.

“Summer seemed the perfect opportunity for such light-hearted exhibitions and their whimsical installations,” said Marge Lee, curator of Tribby Arts Center. “The Shell Point artistic community, which includes many retired professional artists and art educators, enjoyed the challenge

and responded with imaginative works.” In the Shell Point Gallery on the Tribby's first floor, where “Fireworks and Fishin'” is on display, visitors will find an array of paintings as well as objects made of glass, pottery, textiles, mixed media, wood, and more, with many available for purchase to benefit the artists and the Tribby.

Photography is represented with

SEE TRIBBY, B14 ▶

COURTESY IMAGE  
“Let Freedom Ring,” by Helen Kettelman.



#### Cuisine

Caffè da Michele Osteria Italiana opens at Miromar Outlets. **B19** ▶



“Glam! Bam! Summer Sirens” features solo striptease performances, two vocalists and choreographed numbers by a troupe known collectively as Glam! Bam! Burlesque!

RAPHAELLA MATTIA PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GLAM! BAM!

# GLAM! BAM!

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of that bygone era in an enthralling, one-night-only performance at the Sidney and Berne Davis Performing Arts Center (SBDAC). Led by celebrity drag queen and emcee Chloe Bone Cicconi (Brandon Freed), “Glam! Bam! Summer Sirens” features solo striptease performances, two vocalists and choreographed numbers by a troupe of six dancers known collectively as Glam! Bam! Burlesque! which was founded in 2016.

“Burlesque is a dying art form that we are trying to keep alive. It is a classic tease, and also a form of self-expression,” says co-founder Nettie Boom (Annette Bennett). “Since taking up burlesque seven years ago, I’m a lot more confident than I used to be. It makes me more happy as a person, and I’m always inspired to be creative and do the next big thing.”

Ms. Bennett explains, “For this show, we were inspired by a scene from the movie ‘Oh Brother Where Art Thou?’ where these sirens are singing a lullaby in a pond and they lure the men and seemingly turn one of them into a toad. We were so inspired by these beautiful forest nymphs. And especially with what is going on now in the world, we wanted to show that women are powerful. Women have magic, and we need to realize that and utilize it more.”

According to co-founder Rosie Luxure (Rose Burstein), burlesque has in recent years become a female empowerment movement. “From a woman’s perspective, it’s all about embracing our bodies. Everyone is beautiful, no matter the color of your skin or what size you are,” she asserts. “Our cast is full of a range of different looks and ethnicities, and I think that’s important in today’s time more than ever. It makes our show very relatable to audiences, the majority of which are women. It’s about acceptance and embracing who you are and our bodies.”

During their solo performances, the dancers take the stage wearing glamorous, bedazzling costumes and slowly remove items of clothing while dancing provocatively to the music, many of them stripping down to pasties and thongs in what is known as “the big



ALEXA LUXE PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY OF GLAM! BAM!

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reveal.” Known for her intensely seductive and exotic performances, Ms. Bennett says that the audience frequently cheers with every peel and reveal, encouraging her to go further, not just uncovering her body, but displaying more of her personality and sensuality.

Ms. Burstein, who makes her own costumes, adds, “When you’re taking things off, like a glove that has 5,000 rhinestones on it, you’re also showcasing your beautiful costume as you’re removing it in a very tantalizing, sultry way.” A classically trained dancer and choreographer, she is proud of the Glam! Bam! Burlesque! group numbers, which the girls develop and practice weekly over the five months before each new production. “That’s what sets

us apart from other burlesque shows and the one thing that we get complimented most about,” she says. “We’re an actual troupe. We practice together and perform a group act, whereas most of the burlesque shows across the country are just solo artists that come together for a production.”

Two of the performers are accomplished vocalists and sing while performing their solo striptease dances. This, according to Ms. Burstein, is quite unusual in burlesque circles. Pink-haired Latina Kelly Koquette (Kelly Rivadulla), a musical theater performer since childhood, adds drama and pizzazz to her enthralling performance. Lola Leather-Bomb (Jenna Damiano), who sings in several bands, including Floyd

Nation and The Rockefellers, as well as on her own in local venues, delivers a memorable, multi-layered performance.

Audrey Delicious (Audrey Bennett) is Ms. Bennett’s identical twin sister, a mother and a finance executive, but on show night, she brings a soulful vibe to the mix, choosing older, bluesy songs to accompany her movements, and when she flips her gorgeous hair, the audience goes wild. Lucy Faire (Katie Vance) is a plant expert and nature lover, as well as a costume and headdress designer. She is known for her porcelain skin and soft and sweet performance style.

Like all of the performers, Ms. Burstein looks forward to taking the stage. “It goes by so fast. The lights dim, you take a deep breath, the music comes on and you blink and it’s over. You can’t see anyone in the audience because of the spotlight, so you’re dancing like no one is watching. You give it everything you have, and when it’s over, you think, ‘God, it went too fast.’”

Also performing are invited burlesque artists Jezebel Red, from Fort Lauderdale, and Morgan LaRue, from Gainesville. Josh Rowan, known and loved around town as The Pitbull of Blues, will be opening the show from 7 to 8 p.m. and will also play during the 30-minute intermission. After the show, attendees are invited to join the performers at Sidney’s rooftop bar for cocktails. ■

## In the KNOW



### “Glam Bam Summer Sirens”

- » **When:** Saturday, July 23, 8 to 10 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.) followed by afterparty at Sidney’s rooftop
- » **Where:** Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center, 2301 First St., Ft. Myers
- » **Cost:** \$40, general admission; VIP table seating also available
- » **Tickets and information at:** [glam-bam-burlesque.ticketleap.com](http://glam-bam-burlesque.ticketleap.com)