

UNDER THE BIG TOP

Circus Americana creates family, lifelong memories

By Summer Aguirre

Circus Americana believes that the Big Top is its living room — and each person who steps into its tent becomes a part of its family. Presented by the Chandler-based Taylor family, the all-human extravaganza creates the nostalgia of a vintage circus while presenting a contemporary twist. From death-defying acrobatic feats to innovative acts with a comedic flair, Circus Americana invites guests of all ages to encounter an enchanting blend of illusion and spectacle.

For its opening in the Valley this spring, Circus Americana is slated for performances every Thursday to Sunday from Thursday, March 16, to Sunday, April 2, at Bell Bank Park in Mesa.

“I think people love having experiences, and we think this is just an absolutely wonderful experience — coming to the circus is an experience,” says the Taylor family patriarch, Martin, who is a fire artist, juggler and stilt walker. “People can come to enjoy the thrill, the excitement, the love, the tenderness of the show itself with their family, and they’ll bring home memories for a lifetime.”

Launched as The Taylor Family Circus in the early 2000s, Circus Americana consists of the core Taylor family, which includes Martin and his wife, Barbara, and their seven children. The kids range from school-age to adults, and all are performers in the show.

The Taylors are joined by over a dozen other individuals, some of whom are extended family members, that accompany them as performers on stage and manage concessions and merchandise.

Christened “Circus Americana” to honor the American traditions of the circus, the Taylor family’s circus is equivalent to stepping into “The Greatest Showman” with a modern-day flair.

Martin says their production is geared toward



families, adding that those who like a “fun, loving, wholesome, apple pie type of show” will enjoy themselves at Circus Americana.

A typical show is split into two acts, consisting of a variety of performances for the audience to gasp in awe.

Kicking off with a mesmerizing stage illusion and magic show segment, the numbers range from vampires contorting in impossible positions to an exciting aerial fire-eating performance.

Elia Taylor, the family’s eldest daughter and a choreographer, acrobat and contortionist, performs a skillful pointe ballet routine on the tightrope. She is one of the few individuals in the world who has mastered this art.

“We also usually have one of my cousins. He is a strongman, one of the most amazing in the world. We’re so honored that he’ll be doing this show with us,” Elia says. “He does bending metal and is a fabulous whip artist — he puts out candles with a single whip, it is pretty amazing. I hold my breath when he does his act.”

After enjoying the spectacles of the show, guests can hop into the circus ring for a meet-and-greet and photo opportunity with the strongman, pirates, mermaid, music box dolls and the rest of the cast.

“Circus is such an amazing art form. There’s so many different facets of it. And when you’re given the opportunity to practice circus, you want to be able to do a little bit of everything,” Elia

says. “So that’s the great thing about our circus, is that we’ve given the chance to be a part of so many different skills, get to be a part of so many different places and get to meet so many different people.”

What sets Circus Americana apart from other productions is its intimacy and the opportunity for its performers to connect with each and every one of their audience members.

“When you’re in our circus tent, because every seat is only like 5 to 10 feet away, everyone is so close that you could reach out and touch them, so you can see them,” Elia says.

Not only does this make the experience more personable for spectators, but for the performers as well. They love interacting with their audiences and value each individual person.

With the circus’ personable setting, the cast has witnessed little girls in awe at the acrobats and wanting to go up high in the air just like them, little boys thrilled to shake the strongman’s hand and be lifted by him, and excited grandmothers who want to go onstage and hang out with the clowns.

“As a performer, you get to see that wonder and enjoyment on every one of those faces,” Elia says. “It’s very rewarding. It’s why we love what we do. It’s pretty beautiful.”

Being able to share the thrilling experiences of the circus, or even just a single unforgettable moment, is a privilege for the Circus Americana

team.

“We believe that as circus performers and as children of God, that we are supposed to take care of people,” Elia says.

“The moment you’re in our circus, you’re family, and we’re here to take care of you because we love you already,” she adds.

The family circus has entertained audiences as far away as Kentucky. While they’ve spent more time on the road in recent years, the Taylors love to perform in their home state in Arizona.

“We’re just thrilled to be able to do what we love to do and to share that, and we’re excited that Bell Bank Park is giving us that opportunity,” Martin says. “It’s an absolutely stunning and beautiful facility, and it’s going to be an absolutely wonderful experience for anybody who comes out — they will enjoy the show and the park.” **EF**

Circus Americana

WHEN: Various times Thursday through Sunday from March 16 to April 2

WHERE: Bell Bank Park, 6321 S. Ellsworth Road, Mesa

COST: \$25 general admission (bleachers), \$45 VIP (seats)

INFO: circusamericana.com