



Howie Mandel will leave you laughing

By MIKE BEGGS

One of North America's most recognizable comedians and TV personalities, Howie Mandel headlines Credit Valley Hospital's annual Laugh Out Loud Gala fundraiser on Saturday, February 9 at the International Centre, supported by fellow Canadian funnyman Gerry Dee.

Mandel is the Emmy-nominated host of the hugely popular prime time TV Game show Deal Or No Deal, on NBC, which pulls in some 20 million viewers per episode. He's also a judge on the smash NBC hit America's Got Talent (alongside Sharon Osbourne and Howard Stern), is executive producer and host of the Fox series Mobbed (an unscripted show using hidden cameras), and hosts the new NBC game show Take It All.

And with idols like Johnny Carson, and Steve Martin, he continues to do 200 standup comedy shows a year. He slayed them in Mississauga a few years back, with a keynote performance at the Mayor's Gala.

As the story goes, Mandel's comedy career began while on a pleasure trip to Los Angeles in 1979, when he was coaxed up on stage by friends during an amateur night at the legendary Comedy Store club. As luck would have it, a producer was in the crowd and hired him immediately to appear on the comedy game show, Make Me Laugh. That led to late night talk show appearances, a stint as R&B diva Diana Ross' opening act, and six seasons on the award-winning NBC drama, St. Elsewhere (as the wild Dr. Wayne Fiscus).

He was also the creator, executive producer, and voice of Bobby on the animated children's hit, Bobby's World, which ran for eight seasons on Fox, and continues on in syndication in 65 countries.

Mandel is ranked No. 54 on Comedy Central's list of the Top 100 Comedians of all time. In 2009, Forbes listed him as

the world's ninth-richest comic. Mandel, and his long-time wife Terry Martel have three children. They live in Los Angeles.

"My point of reference is life, in everything I do," he said of his success, a few years back.

But the Willowdale native has always had a penchant for crazy pranks and props.

"I wasn't just the class clown, I was outrageous," he says of his high school days.

That culminated with him being expelled when he surreptitiously called in a construction company to bid on an addition to one of his schools.

Years later, on a guest appearance on The Late Show with Johnny Carson, he broke everyone up by wheeling out a giant stuffed elephant on wheels, with a massive carrot on its back.

Not so funny has been Mandel's lifelong struggle with ADHD, OCD, and mysopia (a rampant fear of germs), all documented in his humorous, bestselling 2009 autobiography Here's The Deal: Don't Touch Me. Mandel won't touch handrails or elevator buttons, washes his hands constantly, often wears surgical gloves, and does a double fist pump with contestants on Deal Or No Deal rather than shaking hands. He shaved his head several years back, because he liked the "clean and streamlined" feel of it.

"People sneeze, I live in terror," he joked to the press. "But I'm medicated, and I go to therapy."

Ironically, he had considered dropping out of show business before the Deal Or No Deal offer came along, several years back.

Credit Valley

Hospital serves close to 2 million people in Mississauga and the surrounding areas. Funds raised from the Laugh Out Loud Gala will be directed to the expansion of the hospital's surgical robotics program, to enhance cancer care in the community.

The night kicks off with a cocktail reception at 6 p.m., dinner and show at 7:30, and the 9:30 after party with desserts and dancing. The International Centre is located at 6900 Airport Road.



By ROSS MACDONALD

I've been going to Myrtle Beach for over 25 years. I love the Carolinas and I particularly like this part of them. Granted, it's a bit of a tourist trap, there's way too much salt in the food restaurants serve, and the golf courses can be in iffy condition depending on the time of year. A particular peeve I have with the latter is the usually unnecessary cart rules. You know, cart paths only, 90-degree rule, etc., etc.

Nonetheless, Myrtle is for me, and any chance I have to go, I'm there.

In early October I was off to see The Wizard as part of a three-day tournament arranged by Buffalo Communications. Along with The Witch and Man O' War, The Wizard is one of three courses, all designed by renowned architect Dan Maples, that make up the appropriately named Mystical Golf.

I had previously played all three - The Witch several times - and was particularly looking forward to playing them under "tournament" conditions. Each offers a different golfing experience, and, as the scores over the three days

Play Mystical for me

proved, The Witch is probably the toughest test.

The tournament kicked off on the Monday at The Wizard, which sits right next door to Man O' War. The castle-like clubhouse is indeed fit for a sorcerer, and that magical feel extends to the course. Maples literally moved the earth to create dramatic elevation changes, and with its ample bunkering and man-made ponds, The Wizard requires pinpoint shotmaking.

Course conditions were also excellent. The manicured fairways made it easy to strike precise irons, and the perfectly groomed bentgrass greens, though tricky, made it easy to get the ball rolling smoothly and online.

Day two at The Witch was a much different story. The cool temperature made for much tougher playing conditions on a course that certainly didn't need any more defences. The tight, winding fairways put a premium on well-placed drives, and mishits left long and difficult second shots to greens with

narrow openings.

Putting was just as tough, as it usually is for anyone who can't figure out Bermuda greens. The grain makes it extremely difficult to calculate breaks and judge speed. The scores said it all as moving day found most players moving in the wrong direction.

The final round at Man O' War was a perfect chance to make up ground lost at The Witch. The unassuming clubhouse conceals a well-stocked and nicely merchandised pro shop, and the course seems just as straightforward, at least at first glance.

But true to its name, Man O' War is armed with strategically located bunkers and water hazards and undulating bentgrass greens. Wayward drives and a shaky putter are punished accordingly. The course was in terrific condition, highlighted by the quick greens, a rarity in Myrtle Beach.

The Mystical courses are well worth including in the rotation for any golf trip to Myrtle. They also make the perfect

triumvirate for a three-day getaway. Fly out of Buffalo, settle into the Sea Mist - a great place to stay by the beach - and enjoy three challenging layouts that offer fine conditions and warm hospitality.

Much of Mystical Golf's customer-friendly atmosphere can be attributed to its owner, Claude Pardue. He certainly understands how critical service is in these uncertain economic times. Like many other golf destinations, Myrtle Beach has been hit hard.

A ubiquitous presence during our stay, Mr. Pardue was an engaging hands-on host for all on-course and off-course activities. When it comes to making guests feel welcome, he and his staff get it.

Just as impressive from a service standpoint was the Sea Mist, long a favourite accommodation for golfers heading to Myrtle. In fact, its name is pretty much synonymous with golf in the Grand Strand area.

The Mystical experience is tough to beat for anyone looking for a winter getaway.

It's affordable and it's fun. For more information, go to their website at: www.mysticalgolf.com.