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'The King' Returns To Mesquite

Elvis Tribute Artist Clint Ingbretson serenades a fan at Thursday night's sock hop held at the Casablanca.

*By Beth Amick
Elvis Fan*

Elvis has not "left the building." In fact, the King of Rock and Roll was well-represented by 25 Elvis Tribute Artists (E.T.A.s) who rocked the Casablanca Resort and Casino August 5-8. They were brought to Mesquite by Rea Link ("Mama Rea") of Uniquely Elvis.

The Elvis Tribute Artists who performed and interacted with the public did so to benefit "Any Soldier Incorporated," which sends care packages to U. S. soldiers overseas, benefitting approximately 61,850 service members.

Many events were on the calendar for the busy weekend including bowling, dancing, a slot tournament, Elvis karaoke, a Blue Hawaiian Luau buffet and the Best of Elvis from the 50's, 60's and 70's competition.

The top three from each decade competition advanced to the final round with the first place winner pocketing \$2,000.

The Elvis Sock Hop was held at the Casablanca Showroom on Thursday evening. Several "Elvis" were in attendance, and for one dollar, guests were able to dance with them.

Jim Bishop, a funeral director/mortician, from Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada was there to help celebrate Elvis Rocks Mesquite, earning \$250 for "Any Soldier Inc." Casablanca Resort and Casino matched that donation. The "Shake, Rattle and Bowl" with Elvis took place Friday at the Virgin River Resort.

The lanes were crowded with fans and Elvis Tribute Artists mingling with one another. One of the "Elvis" in attendance was Vince Grosso, a dentist from Kissimmee, Florida, who has been performing as Elvis for ten years.

The winners of the Best of Elvis Competition (left to right) ERock (third place), Travis Allen (second place) and Mark Anthony (first place).

The results for the Best of Elvis Competition were: third place, ERock of Buckner, Mo, second place was Travis Allen of Las Vegas and first place went to Mark Anthony of Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada. "It's an honor to be able to perform for everyone as Elvis, and to be selected as winner in this competition is also a huge honor," remarked Anthony.

Another Elvis Tribute Artist, Clint Ingbretson, commented on the honor of portraying The King of Rock and Roll. "It has become my life's work to accurately portray and pay honor to Elvis Presley," Ingbretson explained. Rosa Cox from Grand Junction, Colorado enjoyed attending the event. "I hope that Elvis Rocks Mesquite returns every year because it's been a really nice experience."

Another attendee, Tony Lewis, of Mesquite, was excited with the weekend's turnout. "Casablanca sold out, so this was a wonderful experience." Elvis Rocks Mesquite was a "show within a show." All of the cameras that were rolling in the Casablanca showroom were also filming for "An American Elvis," which will be a four-part miniseries on the cable network with Collin Foster of Las Vegas as the host. Many of the Elvis Tribute Artists were filmed backstage for this miniseries.

More than a thousand people were in attendance over the weekend. "This has really mushroomed," said Link, Elvis Rocks Mesquite Show Producer. "It's my understanding that this is going to be an annual event in Mesquite." All of the fans who enjoyed the Elvis Rocks Mesquite event have just one thing to say: "Thank you. Thank you very much."