

Wildhorse Pow Wow showcases Native American culture

By Tammy Malgesini

Go! Magazine

MISSION — After two years of silent drums, Native American drummers, singers and dancers will once again participate in cultural traditions during the Wildhorse Pow Wow.

Open to all, people are invited to enjoy the sprint of the gathering. Colorful regalia and intricate ceremonial clothing is featured during the celebration.

In its 26th year, the event gets underway with the grand entry on Friday, July 1, 7 p.m. at the Pow Wow Event Grounds at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, located off Interstate 84, exit 216 at Mission. The dancing and drumming competitions continue Saturday, July 2 and Sunday, July 3, with the grand entry at 1 p.m. both days. There is no admission charge.

With more than \$90,000 in cash and prizes on the line, tribal members from across the United States and Canada will compete. Dancers of all ages participate in a variety of categories, including traditional, fancy, golden age, grass, chicken and jingle.

The host drum is Southern Style from Montezuma Creek, Utah. Bigg J.R. Keeswood shared about the "vibe and power" of the drum in a documentary produced in 2018 about the group's journey to the Gathering of Nations. The largest pow wow in North America, it's held each spring in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Keeswood said producing music encourages people to dance. That, he said, can facilitate happiness and healing.

The Wildhorse Pow Wow also features traditional foods and



Xavier Bolton of Stand Off, Alberta, competes during a tiebreaker round of dancing on July 7, 2019, at the Wildhorse Pow Wow. After a two-year hiatus, the dancing and drumming competition returns July 1-3, 2022, at the Pow Wow Event Grounds at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, Mission. EO Media Group, File

Native American arts and crafts. Vendor booths will offer everything from Indian fry bread and beadwork to clothing and jewelry.

Also, leading up to the celebration, Wildhorse Resort & Casino is hosting Pow Wow Comedy Night. The free show is Thursday, June 30, 7-10 p.m. in the Rivers Event Center.

Headlining the event is Tonia Jo Hall (Lakota, Dakota, Hidatsa), aka "Auntie Beachress." In addition to yucking it up, the comedienne is a motivational speaker, jingle dancer and self-described "pow wow addict."

Hall told Native Max Magazine that she got her start in comedy in 2011. Armed with sub-par equipment, she posted videos on the internet.

"Going viral wasn't on my

mind," Hall said. "Making others laugh was the goal."

Opening the show is Marc Yaffee, founder and co-star of the "Pow Wow Comedy Jam."

According to his biography,

Yaffee was adopted as a child and raised by a Mexican mother and a Jewish father. It wasn't until early adulthood that he learned of his Navajo roots.

Yaffee got his start at an open

mic in 1999. Since then, his career has included gigs at tribal celebrations, atop a tool shed in Iraq and in Las Vegas showrooms.

For more information, visit www.wildhorseresort.com.



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