

Tiny theater a giant awards hit



Recipients of Desert Theatre League Star Awards for their dramatic endeavors over the last season at Groves Cabin Theatre in Morongo Valley are, from left, Steve Fuji, Bob Harrison, Joy Groves, Ken Lindsey and Denise Carter.

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MORONGO VALLEY — Groves Cabin Theatre, the tiny cabin that could, has collected several times as many Desert Theatre League Star Awards over the years as the theater has seats.

In its 21 years of honoring top Coachella Valley and Morongo Basin theater productions, Groves Cabin has won well over 100 awards, including six for productions from the last season.

The lesson learned last year was, when life gives you lemons, win multiple awards by presenting the short play "When Live Gives You Lemons, Make Lemonade." Steve Fuji was named outstanding director for a one-act or short play, Joy Groves was outstanding lead actress and the theater won the outstanding production award.

Denise Carter won outstanding supporting actress in a drama for her role in "Doubt: A Parable," the play adapted into a film that is now in theaters.

Ken Lindsey was outstanding lead actor in a one-act or short play in "Snowstars." Outstanding supporting actor in a one-act or short play was Bob Harrison for "The War of the Worlds."

The theater now has 21 seats (including a spot next to the door for a hostess) after a reconfiguration over the summer enlarged the stage. According to the theater's Web site, www.grovescabintheatre.org, originally the seats were fold-up chairs, then repurposed airliner seats. The cabin now sports three tiers of traditional theater seats.

Groves gives a nod to two Morongo Valley do-gooder institutions — the Clean Team and Hummingbird Lodge — for help with a summer spruce-up and cabin painting.

The viewing experience for a Groves Cabin theater goer brings a deeper understanding to the concept of intimacy, where audience members are all but participating in the production, only a few feet away from the actors.

The Daniel MacIvor play "Marion Bridge" is next on the theater's production schedule, with presentations beginning at 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. Sundays from Feb. 7 through March 1.

The production takes to the road for one presentation at the Blak Box Theatre in Joshua Tree at 8 p.m. March 7.

Directed by the award-winning Bob Harrison, the play stars Donette Swain, Julie Scott and Sue Bradley.

Theater veteran Pat Smith designed the small but detailed set. The production is presented by special arrangement with International Creative Management.