



More seats, new beer and 'Amp'-ed up identity for St. Augustine venue

By Dahlia Ghabour
March 7, 2019

File this under "well, they call it that anyway" ...

The St. Augustine Ampitheatre will now officially be known as "The Amp" the colloquial name for the theatre.

The new name came with a new logo, too — but those aren't the largest of the updates coming to the theater this season. Theater director Ryan Murphy spoke to the Business Journal to detail the rest of the enhancements, which include a partnership with Intuition Ale Works, new food truck park and an additional 700 seats for the venue.

"It's important for us to take a step on the national landscape," Murphy said. "We are The Amp in St. Augustine now, rather than St. Augustine, and Ampitheatre next. And all these things just happened to come together at once. It's indicative of us doing really well the last couple years."

It was the amount of sold-out shows last season that allowed the Amp to add more seats this season. The theatre, which previously had just over 4,000 seats, has added 700 in the back 300 section on risers.

"This space existed as flat lawn areas, which were never meant to be viewing areas because you're on a flat surface and can't see," Murphy said. "We always intended it for additional seating but ran out of funding. Now we can add those extra seats."

Adding more seats means they can price tickets more affordably – and it also means the theatre's team can look at booking shows that might have been out of their range before. Murphy said the extra seats are installed under a lease agreement for \$200,000.

"We have always banked on our reputation to attract artists, because we're well-known for treating artists well," Murphy said. "Now we can look at offering a little more financial incentive for them to come. I think this helps open up the door to a different tier of artists for sure."

The second of the additions is an Amp-specific Intuition brew called "Backstage Brew." The beer is a "clean, light-bodied pilsner with a sweet, malt flavor and subtle hints of herb and spice," according to a release.

"We've always said that craft beer and live music are the perfect combination," said Intuition Ale Works Chief Operating Officer Brad Lange. "We developed Backstage Brew specifically with concertgoers in mind. It is an easy-drinking pilsner that will appeal to both diehard craft fans as well as folks who just love great beer."

Murphy said that Intuition approached them for the partnership and he agreed – partly because many artists visiting St. Augustine would request it.

"Instead of an artist asking for a 12-pack of whatever craft beer is local, we've seen people requesting Intuition specifically," he said. "We've gone through different periods of serving different craft beers at the Amp but this is the first time someone is offering to establish a tap with our logo here."

The addition of a committed food truck area came out of a desire to fine-tune the concessions area, which would often get bottlenecked with people trying to purchase food before shows and during intermissions.

The concessions stand will still have "quality offerings like Hebrew national hot dogs and hummus and popcorn," while the food truck spots on either side of the theatre will have space for four trucks to sell other options. The trucks Mojo's Tacos and The Bullet are nearly always on site, Murphy said, with rotations on the other two spots.