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With time, Delisco should be the real deal

By Jerry Fink <jerry@lasvegassun.com>

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Maybe you saw Delisco earlier this year on the E! Entertainment reality TV series "The Entertainer," hosted by Mr. Las Vegas, Wayne Newton.

If you did, you are in the minority.

The series, a search for the next Las Vegas headliner, didn't do well in the ratings. But a true entertainer -- perhaps two -- may have been discovered.

Delisco, a native of Florida, was the winner. The vocalist's prize included a 17-week engagement at the Las Vegas Hilton. His performances are at 7 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, ending Nov. 29.

He shares the spotlight with the runner-up in the televised competition, comedian Dave Russo. Russo of Boston is Delisco's 10-minute opening act.

The comic is perfectly at ease in front of an audience. He takes command of the stage while he occupies the spotlight.

The only problem is the material -- if he comes up with some funnier stuff Russo should have a decent career in comedy.

Delisco also is comfortable onstage, as if he was born to perform. He needs only a little polish and he, too, should expect to have a career in entertainment.

Only time and experience will take the rough edges off the likable performer.

One of the disservices of these so-called reality shows, such as "The Entertainer" and "American Idol," is that they don't prepare the performers for a career -- only for a moment in the limelight.

Delisco has some performing under his belt -- appearing on Broadway in "Ragtime" and "Smokey Joe's Cafe" -- but he has spent little time in the trenches learning the craft of headlining.

Even so, his performance at the Shimmer is a bargain at \$29. Delisco has a great voice, equally at ease with R&B, gospel and rock.

Who: Delisco.

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Where: Las Vegas Hilton's Shimmer Cabaret.

Rating (out of five stars):
*** 1/2

And he is backed up by an energetic, 11-piece band (including two backup singers) that fills the small stage, leaving little room for choreography.

A gifted songwriter, Delisco performs several of his own songs (closing with "I'm Not Worthy"). But he fills the evening with memorable tunes by many recognizable legends, including the Righteous Brothers ("I Need Your Love"), B.B. King ("Caldonia"), the Beatles ("Let It Be") and Lionel Ritchie ("All Night Long").

Delisco also took a stab at performing Sammy Davis Jr.'s classic "Mr. Bojangles." If this number were cut from the show, it wouldn't be missed. Delisco's forte isn't dancing.

He seems to be adopting some of the style of Clint Holmes onstage -- talking about his life in show business; connecting with the audience by bringing up family.

But Delisco has a few years to go before he can walk in Holmes' comfortable shoes.

For now, he needs to concentrate on developing his own style and making the most of the talent with which he has been blessed.

Jerry Fink can be reached at 259-4058 or jerry@lasvegassun.com.

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