

Wayne Newton's world: Singer is happy, healthy



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Is this man human? At 73, **Wayne Newton** is busier than ever. Despite multiple ongoing projects and a few more in the works, the singing legend will walk the runway Saturday night at Destination Fashion, an annual fundraiser for the Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis at Bal Harbour Shops. The star-studded evening will also include Tommy Lee Jones, Christian Slater and rocker Tico Torres. We spoke to Newton before his trip.

Why do you like to attend the Destination Fashion fundraiser?

We [wife is **Kathleen McCrone Newton**] are looking forward to it. A lot of friends of ours are there, and we've been supporting this cause quite a while. It's something very near and dear to our hearts. Paralysis is not a one-off situation for the person who has the problem, but it affects loved ones as well. I'm thrilled to see the headway being made.

What's happening in your career?

What's happening is me leaving in about a week to Paris, Dubai and Ireland, then I open at the brand new Las Vegas Arena on April 6. Although I'm not at liberty to say, because the deal hasn't been signed yet, I'll probably be doing four or five shows a week on one of The Strip hotels again. It's going to be busy.

In October, you opened up your 52-acre Vegas ranch, Casa De Shenandoah, to the public. How is that going?

It's been a project that has taken more time, and been more difficult, than I anticipated. But it's a very special place I started building in 1966. We got so many letters from people saying, 'We want to see what's behind the walls.' Now they get to see all the Arabian horses, my car collection, monkeys, exotic animals, birds flying all over the place. We're doing in excess of 200 people a day.

You show no sign of slowing down. What's your secret?

I'll do anything that won't impair me. I started exercising again. But truthfully speaking, I love working; I'm better off physically and mentally. I'm having more fun, too, because I think I probably reached that point in my life when I realized the importance of what I do. It helps me want to help other people in ways that I can. It's been a very enlightening experience all the way around.

How is your voice holding up? Do you have any rituals before performing?

You know, I don't. I recently got a checkup from a very well-known throat doctor. He [examined] me and said, 'Oh my God.' And I said, 'Oh Lord, what's wrong?' He tells me, 'I've seen 25-year-olds who would love to have your vocal cords.' So I'm completely healthy. If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

What remains your most requested song?

I think *Danke Schoen* will be with me for the rest of my life and maybe into the next one. It's funny: I've had bigger selling records, but this one has lasted five decades — by banks for commercials, for TV shows, motion pictures. I get calls every single day from somebody or other wanting to use it as background music. That song has taken on a life of its own.

Tickets: www.themiamiproject.org/events/destination-fashion



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