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## Cape May Stage Presents

### *Steel Magnolias*

Featuring an Ensemble Cast of Broadway & TV Veterans

(Starring: Karen Ziemba, Ellen Dolan, Kate McCauley Hathaway,  
Marlena Lustik, Meredith Riley Stewart, and Nicole Lowrance)

Cape May Stage  
Box Office: (609) 884-1341  
The Robert Shackleton Playhouse  
Bank & Lafayette Streets, Cape May, NJ 08204  
www.capemaystage.com

#### *Steel Magnolias*

**Written by Robert Harling**

**Directed by Roy Steinberg**

**Cape May, NJ-** Cape May Stage, South Jersey's premier professional Equity theatre, is proud to announce the opening of Robert Harling's heartwarming comedy, *Steel Magnolias*. This alternately hilarious and touching play will begin performances on Wednesday, August 3 (with an official opening on Thursday, August 4) and will run Tuesdays – Sundays at 8 p.m. through Saturday, September 10 at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse located at the corner of Bank and Lafayette Streets in downtown Cape May.

The all-women ensemble cast featuring Broadway and TV/Film veterans includes Karen Ziemba as M'lynn (Tony Winner *Contact*, *Curtains*), Ellen Dolan as Truvy (*Guiding Light*, *As the World Turns*), Nicole Lowrance as Annelle (*Dividing the Estate*, *The Merchant of Venice*), Kate McCauley Hathaway as Clairee (*I Hate Hamlet*, *Les Miserables*), Marlena Lustik as Ouiser (*Foxy*, *Pousse Café*, *I Hate Hamlet*), and Meredith Riley Stewart as Shelby (*Boardwalk Empire*, *Jeanne Ruddy Dance*).

Directed by Cape May Stage's Artistic Director Roy Steinberg, the artistic team includes Robert J Martin (sets), Michele E. Sinacore (costumes), Brian Aldous (lighting) and Benjamin Loverin (stage manager).

Louisiana-born lawyer/actor/playwright Robert Harling wrote *Steel Magnolias* originally as a short story to help him deal with the untimely death of his diabetic sister following childbirth. "My nephew was about to turn five," he explains, "and I suddenly realized that if I didn't put down on paper what happened to his mother, he'd never know who she

was." Luckily, Harling elected to tell his tragic story with a heavy dose of Southern humor, and he set it in a place in which he claims he has never set foot – a beauty parlor, the mysterious and fascinating place where his mother and sister would disappear for a few hours each week with their friends. "I realized the story really had nothing to do with the men," he says. "It was about these women and their support systems. I wanted to have the women comfortable enough to let their hair down."

Six soft-hearted "magnolias" with steely dispositions gather regularly at Truvy's Beauty Salon, the unofficial hub of Chinquapin, La., to chitchat with, counsel, criticize and comfort one another. The wise-cracking Truvy, with the help of her new glamour technician, Annelle, dispenses liberal doses of shampoo, hairspray, free advice and gossip to the town's rich curmudgeon, Ouiser; an eccentric millionaire, Miss Clairee; and the local social worker, and M'Lynn, whose daughter, Shelby, is on the verge of marriage. The play visits these women over the course of two years in which together they experience love, joy, pain, death, and rebirth.

*Steel Magnolias* premiered at the WPA Theatre in New York on March 22, 1987, and subsequently transferred to the off-Broadway Lucille Lortel Theatre, where it ran for an impressive 1,126 performances and was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award. The first "Broadway" production of the play opened April 4, 2005. The story achieved widespread acclaim and popularity in a 1989 movie version.

### **Performance Information**

*Steel Magnolias* officially opens Thursday, August 4th and will run to Saturday, September 10th at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse at the corner of Bank & Lafayette Streets in downtown Cape May. Performances are Tuesdays through Sundays at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$35 adults, \$30 seniors, and \$15 students. Friday, August 12 will be a half-price performance for senior citizens. Following the August 4th opening, all ticket holders are invited to join the opening night after-party at the Pier House, with the chance to mingle with the cast and crew. Call (609) 884-1341 for reservations and information or visit the theatre's website, [www.capemaystage.com](http://www.capemaystage.com).

*Steel Magnolias* is co-sponsored by Capri Motor Lodge and Tisha's. This season's sponsors include 410 Bank Street/Frescos, Exit Zero, CapeSCape, The Corner Cottage Apartments, Harry's Bar & Grille at the Montreal Inn, La Mer Beachfront Inn, Lucky Bones, Cape May Winery, and The Washington Inn.

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