

NY firm takes over South Shore fireworks; app allows music synchronization without radio

By Kathryn Reed

Three barges loaded with an array of canisters will make their way this morning from Tahoe Keys Marina to a secure holding area near Stateline. Then a small vessel will deliver a slew of pyrotechnics to the barges in anticipation of Saturday's fireworks display on the South Shore.

An 18-wheeler carrying empty canisters of varying sizes was being unloaded June 30, with the materials transferred to the barges.

"With three barges, what we look for is the ability to have movement, some animation to the show," Joseph Mercante, project manager for Fireworks by Grucci, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Instead of lifting three of the same or red, white and blue we can move from one side to the other or all at once with a lift so the audience sees the relationship of the three barges."



Employees of Grucci load the barges June 30 at Tahoe Keys Marina with canisters that will be filled with pyrotechnics. Photos/Kathryn Reed

His company is well versed in creating displays with a water setting. This allows for more creativity. Red strobing dahlias are a flower shape, with the deep red reflecting off the water like a strobe. Mercante said at some angles the reflection on the water has a triple effect.

The kamuro shell from Japan is one Mercante only uses on water.

“This willow shell is just like the tree. It will break out wide and will dip almost to the ground,” Mercante explained. “It’s something we would not want to do in a land-based area where that might touch the ground.”

Grucci was one of the first companies to sync its display with music. They did in 1976 for the country’s bicentennial. Arthur Fiedler was conducting the Boston Pops. Since that time

technology has evolved so it's not just music playing during a fireworks show.

Grucci created the score for Saturday's show, with the blessing of the Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority – the entity paying for the event. Mercante said it is patriotic in nature, with other music selections.

What will be new for Tahoe is the ability to hear the music without radio access. Grucci has an app for 99 cents that allows people to access the music on their iPhone or Android.

Grucci manufactures its fireworks, so there is more control over the material used. This means less superfluous material – which is a boon for when it comes time to clean up the mess that night and in subsequent days.

This is Grucci's first time to work in Tahoe. And it's the first time in decades that there is a new operator of the annual show. Fireworks by Grucci – which is based out of New York – was awarded a contract to put on the July 4 and Labor Day weekend shows by the Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority. The more than \$100,000 July 4 show is costing about what it was with the other vendor.

The company has been around since 1850.



Various sized canisters are needed to accommodate the multitude of fireworks.

“At the end of the process the TDVA board decided that Fireworks by Grucci was a better overall value, and as one of America’s oldest and largest companies the experience of shooting top tier shows globally was an important factor,” Mike Frye, who handles events for Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Grucci has two Guinness World Records – one for the largest fireworks display. The company has worked seven consecutive presidential inaugurations; and the Olympic Games in Beijing, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles and Lake Placid.

“This is a world renowned company that has set world records. They have a good safety record and are environmentally responsible. We anticipate a safe clean firework show that will please the audience,” Eric Guevin, Tahoe Douglas fire marshal, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In addition to being permitted by the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, the company has permits from the U.S. Coast Guard and Nevada Division of Wildlife.

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Other info:

There are other sanctioned fireworks shows in the basin. However, all personal fireworks are illegal – even the ones that are labeled “safe and sane.”

As of today fire restrictions are in affect. The U.S. Forest Service is only allowing propane or gas-type grills on beaches. Fires are only allowed in established campgrounds with permanent fire pits

July 4 display details:

- Number of days to install – five
- Number of hours to choreograph – 25
- Number of pyrotechnicians – 12
- Number of man hours to set up – 720
- Largest firing aerial shell – 10 inches
- Show starts at 9:45pm and lasts 25 minutes.
- The barges are in Stateline, near the California border.