

Actor's Café serves up 'Arsenic and Old Lace'

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If you look up "community theater" in the encyclopedia, there's probably a production shot of Joseph Kesselring's "Arsenic and Old Lace," which runs through Jan. 10 at Scottsdale Desert Stages Theatre's [Actor's Cafe](#).

Over the last 70 years, this two-act farce has probably been performed in every church basement and high-school drama club from sea to shining community-theater sea.

The Bible-thumping, sweeter-than-sugar Brewster sisters (a superb Shirley Windhorst and equally superb Alice Bjorklund) get a rush out of playing God: They put lonely, homeless men out of their misery by serving them elderberry wine laced with enough poison to knock off a gorilla.

Teddy (Jeff Greenwalt), their nut job of a nephew, earns his keep by burying the bodies in the basement. All's well until another nephew, Mortimer (Cullen Moll), a theater critic and a total buzz wreck, fails to see the compassion.

But before Mortimer can put a stop to the mercy killings, his wacky brother Jonathan (Jeff Carpenter), along with his boozy companion, Dr. Einstein (Ryan Toro), arrive to further gum things .

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