



Photos by Liesa Evans

The cast of *Dirty Laundry*, *The Spin*, get together at the Auburn Saloon in Calgary just prior to their second show this season on Monday, Jan. 19, 2009. The show, which is now in its ninth season, is a live, improvised soap opera set in 1964 at the fictional firm ADHD Advertising. Find more photos online at www.weeklyalbertan.com.



Lunchbox takes out their Dirty Laundry

By Liesa Evans

Calgary comedy lovers are happy local theatre group, *Dirty Laundry*, have returned for the ninth season of their popular live and improvised theatrical soap opera.

Titled "The Spin," this season's comedic offering takes place at the downtown Lunchbox Theatre almost every Monday evening until May 11, 2009.

"It's very entertaining," said audience member Nicky Peeters.

This is the fourth season the Fort Calgary events co-ordinator has attended.

Set in 1964 in the fictional office of ADHD Advertising, the show follows the sensational and dramatic lives of the firm's employees.

The *Spin* operates exactly like a soap opera with the plot of each two-hour episode carrying into the next.

However, you don't need to see every single episode to keep up with the story line.

The characters are announced at the start of each show along with a recap of what happened the previous week.

For Peeters, it is the improvisational aspect that makes *The Spin* an entirely different experience.

Working with absolutely no script, the actors are kept on their toes trying to make the story up as they go while also providing the next funny gag.

But the cast's performance is not a simple free for all with each actor trying to

outdo one another.

Instead, they craft their performance in a sophisticated and generous manner, often taking the time to set their fellow cast mates up for the next great line.

In this way, the members of *Dirty Laundry* blend their performances like experts delivering a quirky and sharp wit. Their familiarity with one another becomes apparent.

"I love that we've been together for a very long time," said actor Tammy Roberts.

Roberts plays Kitty Finch, a nervous and prudish copywriter employed at ADHD Advertising.

The 33-year-old, known for her previous work including Lunchbox Theatre's *The Death Of Me*, is now performing her third full season

with the cast.

Dirty Laundry was first created in Calgary nine years ago when founders Karen Johnson-Diamond and Elinor Holt relocated from Edmonton.

Johnson-Diamond also produces and acts in the show.

While living in Edmonton, both performed for *Die-Nasty*, another improvisational soap opera.

Die-Nasty, now in its 18th season, has been very supportive of its Calgary counterpart offering much advice in those early days.

"They handed us all the mistakes they made on a silver platter," said the producer.

With those early day mistakes now behind them, it is the unexpected elements thrown at the actors that make

this show so much fun to watch.

A highlight of last week's performance occurred when baby-starved Brandy Alexander Decanter-Titan, played by Nicole Zylstra, was on stage.

Pretending to shop at the Bay jewellery counter, a real baby in the audience piped up.

"It seems like wherever I go, I can hear the sound of a baby cry," Zylstra moaned in a breath-heavy French accent.

The audience roared with laughter.

Tickets for *The Spin* are \$12 per episode and can be purchased at the door or by calling 403-701-1284. Season tickets are also available.

Further information can be found online at www.dirty-laundrycalgary.com.