Trabuco Hills Makes a Check-In Worth Checking Out in Suite Surrender
written by Pearla Seif, a junior at Tesoro High School

Wartime Hollywood descends upon the Palm Beach Royale Hotel, where two rival divas prepare for a benefit performance. When a mix-up places them in the same Presidential suite, the staff must navigate their egos, tangled misunderstandings, and an ever-growing number of G.I. guests.

Matthew Pettay excels as Mr. Dunlap, the maniacal manager whose composure deteriorates with every disaster. His vacant stares and twitching eye betray his derangement, while his frantic gestures and clutching at sweat-soaked hair make his unraveling hilarious. Leaping around as his plans -- and the hotel itself -- go up in flames, Pettay hurtles through the suite as a tour de force of physical comedy.

As the dueling divas, Kaelynn Kirby's haughty Claudia and Aubrey Mariano's playfully sultry Athena are a masterclass in contrasting star power. Kirby commands with a resonant growl, each "Pippet!" a dagger, while Mariano's swinging hips and high-strung, rasping delivery make every moment memorable. Their outsized egos make the suite scarcely large enough for either, though flashes of generosity belie their theatrical feud.

Supporting these titans are their long-suffering assistants. Avery Triman brings graceful composure, grounding the show with Murphy's romantic endeavors, while Alex Ariza's Pippet is a whirlwind of dutiful service and unfortunate timing. His increasingly suggestive entanglements in Francis's romantic overtures fuel Claudia's hilarious, escalating misconceptions.

Stoking the comedic fire are Braden Berg's endearingly awkward Francis and Martin Rodriguez's starstruck Otis. Francis's fumbling passion for Murphy collides with Otis's celebrity-induced squeals. Prying into the fray is Grace Moeller's Dora Del Rio, a gossip columnist whose spirited determination is rivaled only by her inability to avoid a swinging door.

Ava Wong embodies Mrs. Osgood with remarkable composure. Her crystalline enunciation makes each invitation to another military branch hilarious as she politely disregards Dunlap's distraught protests. Her "duet" with Claudia achieves a comedic zenith, each off-key note a small masterpiece of delightful awfulness.

Charlie Flores-Bell's pink and sea-green set establishes the hotel's opulence, echoed in Rose McPherson's handmade bellboy uniforms. Dunlap's matching tie and Osgood's tastefully glamorous outfits reinforce their duty to the hotel. While Pippet's sepia complements Claudia's shimmering palette, Murphy's coral and green accents echo Francis rather than Athena's amethyst gown -- hinting at their romance.

Beneath the theatrical feud, Trabuco's production reveals shared nobility: egos sacrificed on the altar of wartime charity, rivalry yields to a greater purpose.