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Accident Survivor Barbara Van Orden Returns To The Stage

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Thursday, January 6, 2011; Posted: 10:01 AM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

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Robert Mitchum and Barbara Van Orden

After years of rehabilitation that resulted from a horrific accident, the woman who opened for entertainers like Sinatra, Berle and Rickles, BARBARA VAN ORDEN (www.barbaravanorden.com), returns to the stage.

Although her career began as a fashion editor at Vogue Magazine, it wasn't long before she was placed in front of, and not behind, the camera. She received some good advice and became a leading print model who graced the covers of many leading magazines, eventually segueing into doing television commercials. The entertainment industry soon took notice when she developed a nightclub act as a singer, comedienne (writing all her material) and actress. She began in the Catskill Mountains opening for many of the greats, such as [Milton Berle](#), [Don Rickles](#) and [Red Buttons](#), to name a few. She went on to do all of the Playboy Clubs working with talents such as [Buddy Hackett](#), [Morey Amsterdam](#) and [Soupy Sales](#). A move to the West Coast was inevitable, and she assumed a recurring role in television's *Welcome Back Kotter*, shortly adding many TV films and series episodes to her resume. In between films and series, Barbara opened for many Vegas headliners. While in Vegas opening for [Shecky Green](#), [Frank Sinatra](#) came to the show. After the show, she was thrilled when he asked her if she would open for him in the Persian Room at the Plaza Hotel in New York.

On August 12th 1982, everything literally came to a crashing halt when an epileptic driver ran her over in [Beverly Hills](#). Barbara was crossing the street when she was hit by a car that resulted in 12 breaks in her right leg, five breaks in the left, internal bleeding, crushed back, broken ribs, a fractured disc in her neck and a three inch gash in her skull. After years of therapy and 18 surgeries later, life was still being lived from a hospital room and she had to learn to walk all over again. It took her 27 years of fighting the Workman's Compensation system to get what the Work Comp system had originally agreed upon when the accident happened, to finally award a settlement (just paying of all medical bills etc.) on Oct. 6 2009. There was no monetary support for Ms. Van Orden's years of suffering. Never giving up her dream, Ms. Van Orden has recently appeared at the famous [Jim Caruso's](#) CAST PARTY held in Los Angeles' Magic Castle, which brought her to the attention of agent Carlyne Grager (Dramatic Artists Agency, Inc.), whose clients include, [Carol Channing](#), [Tippi Hedren](#), [Rose Marie](#), [Rip Taylor](#) and Hanna Montana's [Romi Dames](#). Van Orden has now written and produced a cabaret theatre show, which she is currently scheduled to perform in cabarets across the country including Sterling's Upstairs at Vitello's and Catalina in CA.



Shakespeare