

# BULKY DOCUMENTS

(Exceeds 300 pages)

**Proceeding/Serial No:** 9115866 and 91157981

**Filed:** 12/02/2005

**Title:** Notice of Reliance under Rule 2.122(b)  
Second Notice of Reliance under rule  
2.122(e)

**Part** 2 **of** 4

**BLACK CANYON RAFT TOURS** A three hour, "no rapids" float trip guides guests down the Colorado River through Black Canyon. Trips depart at 10 a.m. and return at 4 p.m. daily for \$64.95 including lunch and transportation to and from the Expedition Depot in Boulder City. An additional \$5 will transport guests to and from their Las Vegas hotel. One day advance reservations are recommended and guests should bring a hat, sunblock and shoes they don't mind getting a little wet. For reservations call 293-3776.

**GRAND CANYON** By plane, helicopter or bus, visitors can tour the breathtakingly beautiful Grand Canyon via a number of different tour services in town. One mile deep and 280 miles long, the canyon follows the path of the Colorado River. The west and south rims are open to tours as well as mule trips and hiking to the bottom. Campgrounds and accommodations are available on both rims. By car Grand Canyon National Park is less than 300 miles south on Interstate 93, east on Interstate 40 and north on Highway 64 to the canyon. (602) 638-7888.

**VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK** Formed 150 million years ago from the shifting of sand dunes, Valley of Fire is Nevada's first state park, so named because of the fiery red sandstone in the area that has been sculpted by the wind and rain into spectacular domes, spirals, beehives and other unusual formations. Visitors can bike, picnic, camp and hike on interpretive trails describing many of the best designs and shapes in the park. Visitors can also view Indian petroglyphs in Petroglyph Canyon. This 35,000 acre park is an hour drive north on Interstate 15. (702) 397-2088.

**RED ROCK CANYON** The colored rock strata formations exposed in the red rock area record more than 500 million years of geologic history. Visitors can take a 13-mile self-guided drive through the scenic loop open daily during daylight hours or hike through the rocks on various trails. The visitors center offers displays explaining the geology, history and plant and animal life of the area and is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Red Rock Canyon is located 20 miles west of Las Vegas on West Charleston Blvd. on the scenic Red Rock loop. 363-1921.

**MT. CHARLESTON** Located in the Toiyabe National Forest, scenic Mt. Charleston is Nevada's fifth highest mountain at 11,918 feet. The road in climbs 8,000 feet past piñon-juniper woodlands to pine forests. Hiking trails — cleared to the highest peaks, horseback riding, sleigh rides, and a lodge for dining add the finishing touches to this picturesque mountainous background. Lee Canyon offers skiing in season and weekend scenic tour rides during the summer. Mt. Charleston is located 36 miles north of Las Vegas on Highway 95. 593-9500.



**HOOVER DAM —** Hoover Dam rises 725 feet above the Colorado River, supplying power to several states. Hoover Dam is just 30 miles south of Las Vegas in the picturesque Black Canyon area.

# Songs of the Songbirds 'Mystère' Under the Big Top



SHOWBIZ

LAS VEGAS, NV  
WEEKLY 75,000

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C.O.B.G.BURRELLE'S

et.... GX

Beautiful and enchanting songbirds Elise Gouin and Nathalie Gauvin

**T**hey sing like birds, their voices beautifully blending together to provide some of the most extraordinary haunting sounds to fill a showroom or theater anywhere in the world.

But, they are here in Las Vegas as part of "Mystère," the latest offering of the world-famous Cirque du Soleil at Treasure Island.

"They" are two young French-Canadian women, Elise Gouin and Nathalie Gauvin, who stand high above the audi-

ences and provide the mystical and engrossing sounds that accompany the various acts and environment that is "Mystère."

Clad in their flowing, almost translucent costumes, the women at times appear as if they are floating as they resemble



Magical Wonders of "Mystère"

gorgeous birds standing high above the crowd looking down at everything occurring below them.

If the truth be known, that is exactly what the two women are doing most of the time. They are keeping an eye on what is happening on, off and around the stage while also listening in their headpieces to the musical director.

The women must be ready to alter their singing at any moment to go along with whatever is happening in the show. For instance, if they are singing while the trapeze act is in progress and one of the flyers misses a trick and has to do it again, the women must instantly be prepared to repeat that part of the musical score that goes with that segment of the show.

Both women believe it is helpful to have classical training to obtain the range and sounds needed for their performance in "Mystère."

Gauvin explains that it is very important to keep one's voice healthy. Sharing her secret with us, she explains that she drinks hot water mixed with lemon and ginger juice for her throat. The mixture, she says, warms her vocal chords and also heals them.

Gouin says they both like to swim underwater, an exercise that helps their breathing.

Gouin, an alto, and Gauvin, a soprano, agree that their voices together "have a certain sound" that is truly haunting. Gauvin says, "It almost seems that our voices were made to be blended."

That very well may be, as "Mystère" audiences nightly enjoy the unusual sounds from the two "songbirds" of Cirque du Soleil.

— Penny Levin

#### "Mystère"

■ Where • Treasure Island

■ When • 7:30 & 10:30 p.m. Tues.-Sun.

■ Information • 894-7722

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SHOWBIZ

LAS VEGAS, NV  
WEEKLY 75,000

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# Sea Battles and Adventures Await All Who Visit Treasure Island

**G**ather around, me hearties, while I spin a tale that may not shiver yer timbers, but will certainly give some mighty fine pleasure.

For the finest adventure a swashbuckler can imagine, head on down to Treasure Island at the Mirage. There, in Buccaneer Bay, you'll witness a stirring bit of seamanship that harkens back to the good old times when brigands, pirates and the British engaged in battles for booty. Ah, those were the days.

Until now, that kind of excitement could only be found in adventure stories. But, this is Las Vegas, so being able to witness a sea battle from the Strip is just another bit of the whimsy to be found in the new Las Vegas.

At Treasure Island at the Mirage sea battles between the buccaneers and the British are a regular part of the daily fun activities.

And where else but in Las Vegas could these brief, but stirring, engagements be seen at no cost from a Strip sidewalk facing the wonderful pirate's village on Buccaneer Bay.

This is not a place for the timid. Be forewarned the battle will rage as the cannons roar and thick smoke fills the air. It's a fierce-some sight.

The sounds accompanying the battle are wonderful. Waves lap against the shore, and seagulls chatter as the pirates exchange conversation while they work together on their ship, the Hispaniola. They are busy unloading the ill-gotten gains stolen on their forays around the seas.

Intent on their task, they do not at first notice the HMS Britannia stealing around the corner at Skull Point until the British Naval officers challenge the pirates to surrender.

The pirates refuse and proudly stand guard to defend their ship and their home, Buccaneer Village.

They scramble to their battle posts after the British captain warns them, in the name of His Royal Britannic Majesty, King of England, to lay down their arms and receive a boarding party.

The pirates meet the challenge head on. They hold everything British in contempt and scoff at what they view as the inferior seamanship of their foes. Nothing would please them more than to devastate the British in battle.

It's a tense moment for both sides. The British fire a warning shot just short of the Hispaniola's bow. The pirates assume battle positions and answer in kind. Their cannon punches a hole in the Britannia's topsail and the die is cast. Neither side would consider

surrender. It will be an encounter to the finish.

When the Hispaniola is hit broadside and dark smoke billows forth from the deck, the British captain arrogantly assumes victory and gives a final warning to the pirates advising them to lower their colors and to prepare to be boarded.

The pirates respond "never!" and the battle rages on.

Oh, such excitement, such fire and smoke, such delicious acting, such entertainment.

After many cannon shots the smoke clears. What seemed like a lost cause for the pirates — surprise, surprise — turns into triumph, and the British sailors are forced to abandon ship. Standing proudly on deck, the British sea commander, of course, goes down with his command.

The pirates celebrate their victory and the onlookers seek more adventure inside Treasure Island.

The sea battles take place every 90 minutes from 3 to 10:30 p.m.

For more adventure, visitors need only go as far as Buccaneer Bay. It is there that anyone desiring it may try their hand at the pirate life.

Buccaneer Bay is an 18,000-square-foot entertainment center, offering video games, pinball and electronically simulated games.

Plundering souls in search of adventure and excitement will find plenty within the interiors of Botany Bay.

Begin your adventure as a pirate and treasure hunter where "X" marks the spot at the entrance. Here, a welcoming emblem proclaims the pirates' message: "Buccaneer Bay, A Safe Haven for Pirates and Mutineers Alike." Pass through a dimly lit hallway until you enter the Map Room where an ancient treasure map will guide you on your way.

As if it isn't adventure enough to be inside the dramatic stone

interiors of Buccaneer Bay. Designed as a Moorish castle, it offers stone alcoves with skeletons, sword fights and the sounds of life in a pirate village. There's something enjoyable in Buccaneer Bay for every member of the family. Youngsters will find games designed just for them in the Enchanted Chamber. For those looking for pinball and video games, The Armory is the spot.

When you've proven your skill as a pirate, The Treasure Hole redemption center will reward you. But beware: a hideous pirate soul will try to turn you away. Just run him through with your sword.

Buccaneer Bay is open 10 a.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday; and 11 a.m. to midnight Sunday ■



Buccaneer Bay — A Safe Haven for Pirates and Mutineers Alike.

B Y M U R I E L S T E V E N S

TIC 2025

**T**HE ROAR OF THE CANNONS at Treasure Island are so loud that the British ship Britannia will once again take on the pirate ship Hispaniola. This stirring battle is but a prelude to the pleasures found in the pirate-themed resort. While all the swashbuckling is taking place outside

that each table offers a bird's-eye view of the action.

Buccaneer Bay Club is filled with treasures collected around the world by their own design team.

In addition to being a beautiful place to dine, Buccaneer Bay Club offers a fine menu.

Featured on the a la carte

Buccaneer Bay Club also features fine steaks, rack of lamb, and fish and seafood.

Prepare to be tempted by the basket of home-baked crusty bread sticks and flat breads that are a delicious part of the bread basket served with all meals.

Desserts (\$4.50-\$7.50) are equally tempting: souffles, creme brulee, white chocolate cheesecake with warm raspberries, pear Paradise and a Pirate's Plunder chocolate treasure chest are but a few.

Reservations are a must at the Buccaneer Bay Club. Dinner hours are 5 to 10:30 p.m.

Walk the plank into another beautiful dining room. The Plank, designed to look like a literate buccaneer's home library, this gracious dining room is filled with elegant volumes—taken, no doubt, from some unlucky gentleman. Sitting in the comfortable room amid the books and warm wood decor, diners will experience a sense of well-being even before the food arrives.

The Plank's a la carte menu offers an array of seafood, various cuts of prime rib, chicken and an assortment of steaks.

Glorious cold and hot seafood appetizers (\$6.95-\$9.95), chowder and soups (\$3.95), salads (\$3.75-

\$5.50), and a number of appealing entrees (\$14.95-\$45) that will please the most discerning diner are offered. All entrees are served with a choice of potato or rice and a vegetable of the day.

The long list of scrumptious desserts (\$3.50-\$4.95) includes a tower of chocolate designed just for chocolateolics: the cannonball, white chocolate ice cream topped in white chocolate nuggets with blackberry sauce; blueberry bread pudding served with vanilla bean sauce; and the peach parrot, warm peach and raspberry cobbler with vanilla ice cream. Every one, sublime.

The Plank serves dinner Thursday through Monday, 5:30 to 11 p.m. Reservations are a must.

One of the greatest female pirates in history, Hsi Kai Ching Yuh, has a namesake Asian restaurant in Treasure Island. The legend of her life is printed on the menu. Only the photo is bogus; the story is true. It is also true that Madame Ching's serves Chinese cuisine in a setting of elegance. The dining room is filled with treasures that would have pleased any plunderer.

Dining at Madame Ching's is a great adventure. The menu is extensive, offering foods from many regions of China and other parts of Asia. The appetizer selection (\$4.50-\$7.95) includes



Treasure Island, in the dining rooms of the hotel all is calm and serene.

Most landlubbers find the pirate battle an intriguing diversion. I do, too, but prefer to watch it while dining in the Buccaneer Bay Club. Almost every table in this lovely room offers a clear view of the sea battles. Buccaneer Bay Club is designed around the bay so

menu are cold and hot appetizers (\$6.95-\$12.95)—among them a savory celery root flan and escargot nestled in a freshly baked brioche. Soups (\$4.95-\$5.50), salads (\$5.25-\$6.50) and a fine selection of entrees (\$15.95-\$25.50) are offered, including such specialties as Colorado buffalo prime rib, duck Melba and pheasant Charles. Of course, Buc-

caneer Bay Club also features fine steaks, rack of lamb, and fish and seafood.

Prepare to be tempted by the basket of home-baked crusty bread sticks and flat breads that are a delicious part of the bread basket served with all meals.

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## Resort Marks the Spot for Decadent Dining

by Muriel Stevens

# Tasty Treasure

hundred corner crab and shrimp cakes. Vietnamese rice paper spring rolls, dumplings, potstickers, baby clams with black bean sauce and more.

The shellfish selection (\$16.95-market price) is wonderful—many kinds of shrimp dishes, lobster, crab, salmon, gray sole, sea bass and scallops. Pungent curries (\$12.95-\$17.25) of chicken, shrimp, lamb or vegetables are served with steamed white rice and many traditional accompaniments. Beef, pork, chicken and duck are prepared in a variety of tasty ways. A host of delicious tofu dishes, vegetables, noodles and rice combinations are available (\$6.50-\$13.95). Such traditional Chinese favorites (\$14.75-\$60) as shark's fin soup, whole steamed fish, live crab and shrimp served with the heads are available, too. Chef Michael Wong never uses MSG; dishes are seasoned naturally, with his expert touch.

Dessert choices (\$3.25-\$4.50) include traditional selections and offerings from the pastry cart. As far as I know, the delicious chocolate chip fortune cookies that come after dinner, are only served here.

Dine at Madame Ching's Wednesday through Sunday, 5:30 to 11 p.m. For reservations, call 894-7349.

The newest of the Treasure Island fine restaurants is Francesco's, featuring the cuisine of the Mediterranean. There are many Sardinian specialties, a tribute to Chef Marco's heritage.

Francesco's is located at the entrance to the hotel.

A tempting selection of antipasti (\$3.95-\$9.95), soups and salads (\$4.50-\$4.95), and pastas and risottos (\$8.95-\$15.95) are always available. Chef Marco suggests that diners ordering the antipasto misto have it served family style. A double-sized platter (\$13.95) includes a variety of meats, roasted peppers, grilled zucchini, provolone cheese and marinated olives. Included among the pasta selection is a lovely dish of fettuccine with portobella mushrooms and asparagus in a light cream sauce, strozzapreti pasta with shrimp, zucchini and saffron, and baked cannelloni made with lean veal, ricotta cheese and Swiss chard—light and delicious.

Entree choices (\$9.95-\$19.95) run the gamut from eggplant Parmigiano to a grilled New York steak served with bell peppers, onions and roasted potatoes. A selection of fresh fish changes daily.

Desserts (\$3.75-\$5) are scrumptious. Not to be missed is the warm chocolate-hazelnut cake or the house-made cannolis.

Francesco's, with its colorful decor and interesting food choices, is a welcome newcomer.

Francesco's serves dinner daily from 5:30 to 11 p.m.

Reservations are requested for all of the Treasure Island fine restaurants. Parties of eight or under call 894-7223; larger parties should call 894-7371. No children under five.

# ROUND TABLE BUFFET



## WHERE A ROYAL FEAST AWAITS.

BREAKFAST

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**\$5.49**

DINNER

**\$6.99**

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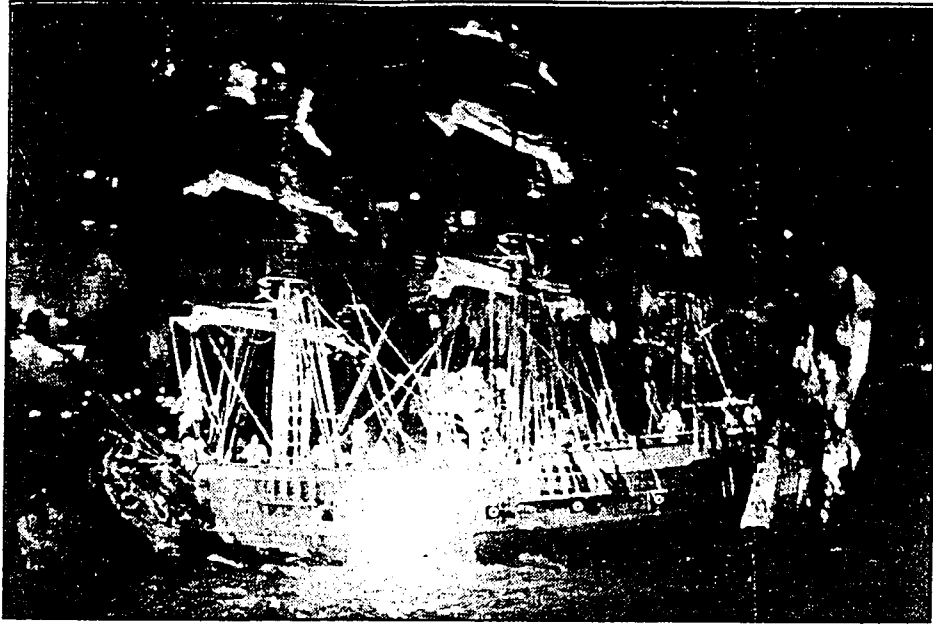
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*The lagoon at Treasure Island is filled with reclaimed "gray water" from the hotel and an aquifer beneath the hotel and casino. No water from the Las Vegas Valley Water District is used for decorative purposes at the Mirage or Treasure Island.*

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## The state of scarce water

By LYNN DAVIS  
Contributing Writer

Despite searing heat, despite scraggly vegetation that doesn't hold dirt, and despite an aggressive public information campaign, it is still sometimes difficult to fathom that water resources in Las Vegas are limited.

Take a look around and you're likely to be confused: At least 24 public and private golf courses in the Las Vegas area and twice as many public parks throughout Clark County nurture lush and green oases in what once was stark and barren desert.

Cottonwoods, poplars and mulberry trees, which are indigenous in climate with plenty of rainfall, line many Las Vegas streets.

And over 125 businesses are listed in the Yellow Pages to service and repair an indeterminate number of swimming pools.

To make the situation more confusing:

At the Lakes, an upscale master-planned community at the western edge of Las Vegas, small schooners sail on man-made lakes that spread across 30 acres and take 184 acre-feet of water to fill.

And a few miles north, at an equally tony neighborhood, Desert Shores residents lounge on a hauled-in beach that fronts a man-made lake 71 acres large, with a water volume of 405 acre feet.

What is going on here?

As early as the 1930s, visionaries in the Las Vegas Valley recognized the region's limited water supply and enacted the first of many subsequent lawn watering restrictions.

But it has only been in the past three to four years that Las Vegas have become downright serious about the issue of water conservation.

With a precious four inches of rainfall each year and recent unprecedented growth, community leaders are staring down the well.

"It's an issue. A lot of people are realizing that water resources will, ultimately, make or break the economic prosperity of

Southern Nevada," says Larry Brown, spokesperson for the Southern Nevada Water Authority. "So in recent years, there have been a number of positive changes."

Since 1990:

The Southern Nevada Water Authority was created to manage and "bank" water resources;

The Colorado River Commission of Nevada staged a water summit to pursue new sources of water;

The Las Vegas Valley Water District created a Public Services Department to lead a comprehensive campaign to reduce residential and commercial water consumption;

The Desert Research Institute worked on a cooperative project to catch urban runoff;

Contractors were hired to rehabilitate

*Continued on page 6*

# Scarce water

*Continued from page 3*

older reservoirs and replace corroding water mains to help prevent leaks;

State, county and city building codes were amended to mandate low-flow toilets and plumbing fixtures, and recycling and water reuse systems;

And a moratorium was called on carving out man-made lakes.

And that's not all:

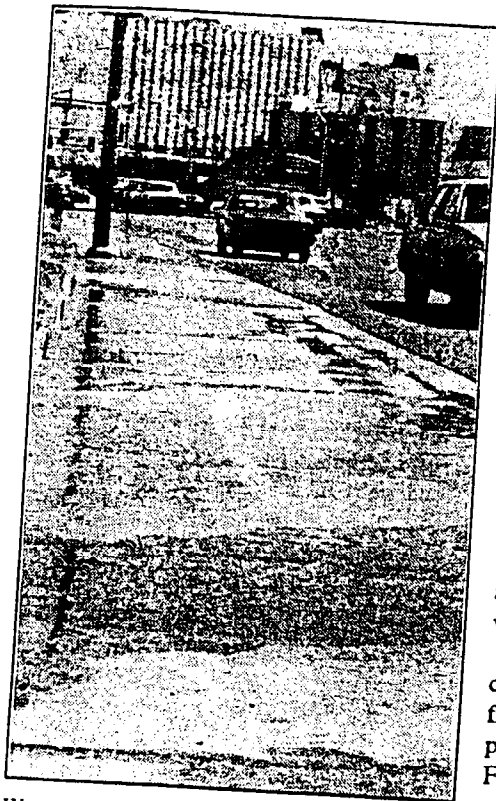
Businesses and homeowners are planting native mesquite, Modesto and fan-tex ash. They're seeking out the free advice from xeriscape landscape designer Pete Ducombe at the Desert Demonstration Gardens, a 2.5-acre facility that showcases alternatives to

traditional landscape and irrigation designs, or hiring commercial designers.

Landlords of multi-family dwellings and owners of small and large businesses are calling water audit technician Pat Green at the water district for free consulting. Managers of golf courses are calling another phone line at the water district for evapotranspiration rates to plot their irrigation schedules.

And, according to Leslie Mihalko, public information officer for Clark County Parks and Recreation, computerized irrigation systems, which have been installed at the county's large parks, are now measuring evaporation, adjusting watering times, and automatically shutting off during rainstorms.

Businesses are following the conservation trends — or, in some cases, leading the



*Water is scarce in the Las Vegas Valley, but sometimes you wouldn't know it by scenes such as above, where runoff flows abundantly.*

way.

The Luxor located "The Nile River" along the hotel and casino's perimeter to board tourists for an almost one-third mile ride on replica Egyptian barges. And, although the illusion of The Nile is deceptively deeper, the barges glide on only 18 inches to 20 inches of water.

Treasure Island engineered a lagoon with enough water to submerge a British frigate with reclaimed "gray water" from the showers and tubs of guest rooms and with non-potable water from a shallow ancient aquifer that lies 20 to 30 feet beneath the hotel and casino.

(A measure of the resourcefulness of the Treasure Island and neighboring Mirage water systems is a daily savings of 35,000 gallons and the fact that no water from the Las Vegas Valley Water District is used for decorative purposes.)

ITT Sheraton announced plans to con-

struct a 3,000-foot "River of Gold" under and around the new Desert Kingdom using the water-efficient designs and experience from 35 Sheraton Hotels located in water-scarce areas around the world. And, in their announcement, pledged to invest \$3 million to \$4 million of the \$750-million project in "extra" water conservation features beyond what is now legally required.

Water authorities say they have the know-how to get the water here. The bigger question is from where does it come.

"From an engineer's perspective, the engineering part of getting water to Southern Nevada is relatively easy," says Howard Vander Meer, vice president and director of the water division of G.C. Wallace Engineering and Architecture. "It's the policies and politics that make it difficult to deliver water."

Vander Meer ranks local public officials and community leaders as a 6 on a scale from 1 to 10 for their current interest and preparedness in addressing water limitations. Five years ago, those same public officials may have rated a "1."

Understanding water politics in Southern Nevada can be something akin to swimming in murky waters.

There are a number of entities — states divided by "lower" and "upper" geography, tribes of Native Americans with granted rights, governmental and quasi-governmental agencies at federal, state and local levels, and citizen groups — that all claim a part of responsibility for the region's water supply.

To date, there is no clear and absolute consensus on how to find new resources of water but, it's safe to say, everyone involved (even peripherally) in water management advocates conservation as a means of manipulating the supply.

But, even with increased conservation, Southern Nevada needs to do more, says Janet Frasier Rogers, chairman of the Colorado River Commission of Nevada.

Rogers and six other appointed commissioners control Nevada's allocation of Colorado River water and an allocation of hydropower.

Primarily the commission oversees the Colorado River Compact, which annually

*Continued on page 7*



allots 300,000 acre-feet of water to Southern Nevada — a skimpy 4 percent of the Colorado River's flow.

The compact, which was executed in the 1920s and politically set up to foil future changes, equally divided 15 million acre-feet of the Colorado River between Upper Basin States (Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana) and Lower Basin States (Arizona, California and Nevada), and parceled out some water rights to 10 other "players" in-

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***Last spring, the commission and the Southern Nevada Authority organized the Southern Nevada Water Summit to hear proposals for various projects that could provide additional water to the region.***

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cluding Indian tribes and Mexico.

With 7.5-million acre-feet between Arizona, California, Nevada and a few tribes, apportionment decisions were primarily based on agricultural potential.

Then, Southern Nevada's stark landscape spotted with chols, barrel cactus, Mormon tea, sparse residences and road runners seemed like the last place on earth to dedicate Colorado River water. So Nevada was granted a minimal 300,000 acre-feet,

enough analysts are now projecting to accommodate Las Vegas' growth to 2010 or 2015.

"It's evident the crystal ball wasn't working in the 1920s," says Rogers. "Then only about 2,300 people lived here and there was a need to irrigate only 5,000 acres.

"At that time, 300,000 acre-feet seemed like more than we would ever need. But that certainly isn't the case now," she says.

Currently, 80 percent of water used in Southern Nevada comes from the Colorado River. The remaining 20 percent is groundwater.

Last spring, the commission and the Southern Nevada Authority organized the Southern Nevada Water Summit to hear proposals for various projects that could provide additional water to the region.

The two-day water summit drew many participants and nine categories of ideas ranging from:

Construction of a desalinization plant in Mexico in exchange for Mexico's share of Colorado River water (estimated cost: \$200 to \$1200 per acre-foot); to

Diversification of a portion of the Columbia River through eastern Oregon and northern California eventually into Lake Mead (estimated cost: \$50 to \$100 per acre-foot); to

Shipping Alaskan water in tankers to California or Baja Mexico in exchange for

*Continued on page 8*

# Scarce water

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*Continued from page 7*  
some of California's or Mexico's apportionment (estimated cost: \$500 to \$2000 per acre-foot); to

Leasing and transferring water from the Cibola Valley irrigation district in La Paz County, Ariz. (estimated cost: \$100 per acre-foot for the first three years and up-front costs to transfer perpetual water rights).

"The water summit tried to educate the universe (to the limitations of water)," says Rogers. "Now we're analyzing all proposals. We're truly dedicated to exploring all options."

And she stresses: "We're not ruling out

anything."

"It's imperative that we keep looking into the future. There is absolutely no need for our situation to become a crisis," says Rogers.

"We've identified a process. We've identified a time line. And we cannot be sidetracked."

Part of the reason for the urgency: growth.

"For a relatively small town, we have a big-city construction industry that can handle the big projects necessary to address water development," says Bill Karren, and engineer for Martin & Peltyn, Inc.

And that capability will be increasingly important as the population and business growth expands.

Two intake and treatment facilities — one state-owned and other federally-owned

— now supply all municipal and industrial water to Clark County.

Although the infrastructure also includes 13 pumping plants, 16 rate-of-control stations, a four-mile main aqueduct, the four-mile River Mountain Tunnel which taps water from Lake Mead, and 60 miles of transmission lines, it's not enough.

Last spring, the Southern Nevada Water Authority initiated the environmental impact statement process to examine five sites considered for water treatment plants and an underground pipe extending to the lake which would likely cross federal land.

The EIS research is expected to take about 18 months and then will be reviewed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Following that, the public will be offered opportunities for comment, says Brown, the spokesman for the Water Authority.

Once approved, the project will take three to five years to complete.

"It's a very meticulous and drawn-out process to see that all environmental concerns are addressed," he says. "Because of the length of the process, we have a very narrow window to get (new public works) in place."

Perhaps the most immediately significant water management tool is relatively new water pricing structure executed by the Las Vegas Valley Water District which rewards conservation.

Threshold pricing was introduced in 1991 and refined to the current pricing structure to change water habits without causing an adverse impact on our customers' quality of life, says Brown.

Residential and commercial customers now pay 98 cents, \$1.16 and \$1.47 per thousand gallons, respectively, as they increase consumption depending on the threshold determined by meter size.

For example: residential users with standard 5/8" meters pay the minimal 98 cents per thousand gallons for the first 5,000 gallons used and then pay \$1.16 per thousand gallons for the next 10,000 gallons used. For residential users, any use above 15,000 gallons costs them \$1.47 per thousand gallons.

"It's a simple concept to understand," says Brown. "If you choose to use, you pay more."

"We don't make decisions about appropriate usage. The consumer does."

Brown acknowledges that some people have the mistaken impression that a larger-size meter, say, a 10" meter with a first threshold of 575,000 gallons, is a better deal.

"But people need to understand that larger-meter users pay up front for their usage, when they sign up and get service. The water district built equity into rate and is committed to conservation incentives."

This year is the first year the water district has used three tiers of pricing and, according to Brown, the pricing is working to curb consumption.

We're aware that incentive pricing is just one part of effective water conservation programs."

LAS VEGAS BUSINESS  
PRESS

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# A milestone in casino entertainment

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Gilles Ste-Croix, director of creation for Cirque Du Soleil's "Mystère," compares the production's "constant state of evolution" to life itself.

New stunts are worked into the program and others are taken out as the progression of time allows and sometimes dictates change.

Mystère, which achieved its 2,000th performance March 14 in its custom built, 1,500-seat Treasure Island showroom, in



Rob  
Bhatt

Gaming

many ways also marks a significant stage in the evolution of Las Vegas.

Once primarily associated with celebrities winding down their careers and topless showgirls, today's Las Vegas entertainment scene carries a new level of sophistication.

The unique characteristic in Las Vegas casino entertainment is diversity. It's the combined effect of technology intensive stage productions, venues for international headliners, family oriented performances and nightclubs for the — real and perceived — chic. And there's still shows like **Crazy Girls**.

No small ingredient in the new mix of sophistication is *Mystère*, the choreographed orgy of acrobatics that has dazzled capacity audiences since Christmas 1993.

Interestingly enough, the evolution of Las Vegas entertainment coincided with Cirque Du Soleil's own evolution.

**Bill Riske**, general manager of Cirque's Las Vegas division, said the production company received numerous inquiries from Las Vegas entertainment representatives hoping to reposition themselves.

When **Steve Wynn** brought the blue and gold tents of *Nouvelle Expérience* to the *Mirage* in 1992, it was the first time the roving band of entertainers established a fixed production site.

The opening of Treasure Island included the first theater built specifically to Cirque Du Soleil specifications. Last year, *Mystère* passed *Saltambinco* for most performances by any of Cirque's 10 productions at 1,600.

Wynn reportedly treated Cirque's cast to dinner March 9 at *Shadow Creek* to commemorate its latest milestone, while Cirque officials planned a celebration on March 16.

Meanwhile, a new troop of Cirque performers is rehearsing for a new production including water acrobatics to be housed in *Bellagio*, the new Mirage megaresort scheduled to open Oct. 15 on the Strip.

Besides helping demonstrate that a show could succeed in Las Vegas in a non-smoking venue without nudity, the success of *Mystère* has also helped shape the production company's approach to venue selection.

Besides the yet-unnamed *Bellagio* production, Cirque Du Soleil will also launch a third permanent show, possibly as early as this year, at *Walt Disney World* in Florida.

Also...

Two New Year's celebrations — including Chinese New Year and an extra

Saturday in January — helped boost Clark County gaming revenues a modest 6.05 percent over the same month last year.

The Chinese New Year typically falls in February, but this year, it was celebrated during the first month of the Western calendar year. The calendar also helped when five Saturdays instead of the typical four were included in the year's opening month.

Throw in the Super Bowl, and Nevada casinos saw three events that traditionally attract high rollers and their affinity for baccarat, said **Russell Guindon**, senior research analyst for the Nevada Gaming Control Board.

In past months, the volatile card game has seen large casino losses, but the house won big — just about everywhere — this time around.

Downtown Las Vegas, which has stayed flat for the past several months, saw baccarat contribute heavily to its relatively sizable 8.42 percent gain.

Downtown casinos saw the baccarat win jump about 1,000 percent over last year. Table and game wins climbed 20.6 percent in Glitter Gulch. For the fiscal year that began July 1, downtown gaming revenues are .01 percent more than the same period during the prior year.

Strip casinos reported wins were up 5.29 percent over January 1997, when the opening of New York, New York created a surge of visitors and gaming revenues.

Most of the Strip gains were attributable to table games. The slot win only grew .6 percent even though coin-in was actually down .4 percent from last year.

The baccarat win on the Strip was 41 percent more than last year. Without good baccarat revenues, the Strip's gains would have only been 1.6 percent, according to Guindon.

North Las Vegas gains slowed to 3.49 percent. A 6.5 percent gain in the slot win offset the 14 percent drop in table game win, showing a good month for players in a market geared largely toward area residents.

The only losses posted in Clark County were in the flat Laughlin market, which saw 1.73 percent revenue decrease.

Statewide, gaming revenues are up 6.29 percent for the fiscal year compared to the same period during the prior year.

Washoe County and South Lake Tahoe casinos averaged double digit gains for the month compared to January 1997, when devastating floods accompanied the start of the new year.

The Boulder Strip saw a 22.49 percent jump in gaming revenues, largely attributable to the July 1997 opening o

Continued on page 6

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# Gaming

Continued from page 7

Sunset Station.

Also...

**Craig Sullivan** is leaving his position as chief financial officer for **Primadonna Resorts Inc.** to open a financial consulting firm for gaming companies. Primadonna is reported to be among his first clients.

**Tom Brosig**, president of **Grand Casinos Inc.**, will assume additional title of chief executive officer for the company, replacing **Lyle Berman** in that capacity. Berman will continue in his role as chairman of the board, overseeing new business development opportunities and

maintaining responsibility over design and concept creation at Grand's casino resorts.

Brosig and Berman, along with **David Anderson** and **Stanley Taube**, founded Grand Casinos in 1990.

**America West** is expanding service to the Pacific Northwest from its hubs in Phoenix and Las Vegas beginning May 5. The additional service includes a second daily, round-trip flight between Las Vegas and Portland and a second daily flight from Seattle to Las Vegas.

**H.C. Rowe** is the new director of entertainment for **Rio Suite Hotel & Casino**. His duties include assisting in the development of the resort's new convention/entertainment center scheduled to open in spring 1999. Rowe's prior experi-

ence includes working as director of entertainment for **Aladdin Hotel & Casino** for four years and 10 years in a similar position at **Golden Nugget Hotel & Casino**.

The new management team at the **Las Vegas Showboat Hotel, Casino & Bowling Center** is headed by recently appointed President and CEO **Keith Wallace**. **Nick Gullo** has been named vice president of casino operations and **Joe O'Brien** is the new vice president and chief financial officer.

Wallace replaces **Carlton Greer**, who was reassigned to **East Chicago, Ind.** Wallace has more than 34 years experience in the gaming industry and is a former vice president of operations for the **Peppermill Resort** in **Mesquite, Nev.** He joined Showboat in 1989 as vice president of operations and general manager.

Gullo is a former casino shift manager at the **Frontier Hotel & Gambling Hall**. He worked as casino manager in 1993 at the **Showboat Star Casino** in **New Orleans, La.**, and, in 1996, he was promoted to vice president of gaming operations for the **Showboat Mardi Gras**.

O'Brien replaces **Leann Schneider**, who was also reassigned to the **Showboat Mardi Gras**.

**Douglas R. Sanderson** was promoted to chief executive officer for **SEGA Gaming Technology** following a unanimous vote March 6 by the corporation's board of directors. Sanderson will also continue as president, the position he has held with the company for the past three years. **Joe Robbins** will continue to hold his position of chairman. **T. Garth McBride** was prompted to chief financial officer.

# The Mystique of 'Mystère'

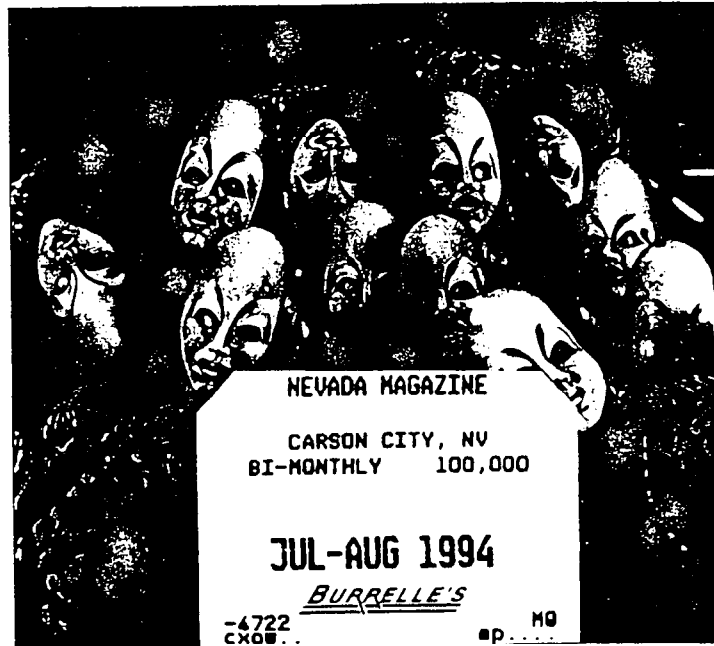
41920 BR  
BY ART NADLER

When the French-Canadian performance troupe Cirque du Soleil premiered "Mystère" at Treasure Island earlier this year, the company's founding creator, Guy Laliberté, rose from the audience and graciously thanked Steve Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts, Inc., which owns the hotel. Now, Laliberté said, the world-famous circus troupe had its own theater, one in which the troupe's members could perform feats they'd only dreamed about since the group's conception 10 years ago.

With that, the lights dimmed and the 1,538-seat theater was transformed into a surrealistic world where strange creatures danced and swayed to composer Rene Dupéré's New-Age jazz score. Japanese Taiko drummers descended from the 80-foot ceiling. A 36-foot circus ring broke off from the main stage and sank as if swallowed by an earthquake. An oversized vaudevilian character resembling Baby Huey appeared and started taunting the audience.

Las Vegas has seen some rather incredible acts through the years, but the Cirque du Soleil has brought a pool of talent never before seen on the Strip. Indeed, assistant director Pierre-Philippe Guay sees "Mystère's" 70 artists—which include acrobats, clowns, comedians, actors, dancers, singers, and 10 musicians (no taped music here)—as one glorious celebration of art. This canvas, or *tableau* as he calls it, unfolds before you like a beautiful French impressionist painting.

Cirque du Soleil may be a big-top production that has gotten a little bigger, but it hasn't let audience members forget that they are as much a part of the performance as the characters on



Dexterous acrobats amaze audiences in Treasure Island's "Mystère."

stage. Intimacy is the most important ingredient in Cirque Du Soleil's *tableau* of colors.

The 90-minute performance is non-stop. As one act ends, another immediately begins. The theater's stage and ceiling are constantly transformed, stretching your peripheral vision to its limits. Set designer Michel Crête's massive, 72-foot-wide trapezoid platform drops, revolves, and spits out new acts on command.

During one segment, Chinese poles drop from above, and a cast of 20 colorfully dressed chameleon characters

slither on stage. Grasping the cylinders, they ascend in chorus-line perfection, at times hanging upside-down and sideways. Their precise gymnastic movements leave the audience astonished.

"We try to accumulate different languages of the body," assistant director Guay says of "Mystère's" visual impact. "The stage is always moving. Everything changes night by night."

"Mystère's" bungee-trapeze performance is mind boggling. High-wire aerialists attached to bungee cords literally fly over the audience. At times the performers resemble children playing on backyard swing sets while executing

near-misses that would make fighter pilots wince.

The Korean plank, or teeter, act has been carried over from the Cirque's earlier production, "Nouvelle Experience." The act involves three-man jumps with a fourth person appearing in a grand finale.

"It took us two months of practice just to be able to jump up and down straight on the teeter," says Cirque gymnast Michael Rice of Las Vegas. "On a trampoline you use your own power, but on the Korean plank you have to use someone else's power."

After a rousing Taiko drum bash, a giant caricature of a snail creature rolls on stage to close the "Mystère" spectacle. The lights come up, and the entire cast appears and waves to the audience.

Unlike most stage productions in Las Vegas that let you know you are the audience and they are the stars, Cirque du Soleil makes you feel as though you're family. It's hard to let the cast go.

Art Nadler is a feature writer for the Las Vegas Sun.

## Joining the Circus

"Mystère" plays at Treasure Island in Las Vegas at 7:30 and 10:30 nightly, dark Monday. Tickets are \$42 (plus tax) for adults and \$21 for children 12 and under. Tickets are available at the Cirque du Soleil ticket booth at Treasure Island and The Mirage, or call 702-894-7722 or 800-392-1999. The theater is equipped for wheelchairs and has a sound system for the hearing impaired.

## NIGHTLIFE

# Strip Stunts

*BURRELLE'S*

BY ANN HENDERSON

As a pirate in Treasure Island's daily swashbuckling sidewalk show, Keoni Kramer is lit on fire twice a week and blown off his ship's 28-foot-high rigging several times a day.

Kramer and his shipmates represent the newest type of Las Vegas entertainer—the stunt man. In a city known more for feathered showgirls than plunging pirates, several adventure-themed shows are appearing at resorts hoping to draw family audiences. Stunt men (and women) are the main ingredients of shows like the Excalibur's tournament jousts, the Hilton's "Starlight Express," and Circus Circus' all-you-can-watch big-top acts.

At Treasure Island, hundreds of people jam the hotel's wooden walkway to watch a spectacularly noisy 12-minute naval battle between the pirate ship *Hispaniola* and the British frigate *H.M.S. Britannia*. The show uses 28 stunt men, who play the roles of eight pirates and 10 British sailors.

"We don't want to just amuse the audience," says Jewels Love, the hotel's director of entertainment operations. "We want to scare them. We want them to say, 'Wow!'"

Stunt men are a unique combination of technician and athlete, according to Love. "They have to maintain their own stunts and rigging, which demands a high level of skill and discipline not only as actors and stunt men, but as special-effects experts as well," he says.

While the audience is lining up to watch the show, Kramer says, the stunt men are checking and rechecking the equipment.

"If something isn't right, we have the authority to cancel a particular stunt," he says. "We



Keoni Kramer gets fired up about his stunts during the pirate battle.

get 100 percent backing on that."

Kramer's specialty is the body burn that visitors can see during the 8:30 and 10 p.m. battles on Friday and Saturday, a stunt he alternates with a fellow high diver, Sonny Tipton. Kramer's skin is coated with a flame-retardant gel while his costume is coated with a flammable solution. He catches on fire when a charge on the

ship is triggered by remote control.

When he's not impersonating a pirate flambeau, Kramer climbs the ship's rigging under the skull and crossbones, fights another pirate over a bag of treasure, and wins the struggle by shoving the shipmate into the water. Kramer later gets thrown into the drink when an explosion rips through the stronghold behind the pirate ship.

During each performance, 16 technicians work behind the scenes to orchestrate the cannons, explosions, falling masts, and sinking-ship finale. They also fill the continual need for towels and dry costumes after each dunking.

The cast spent about two months learning the tightly scripted battle plan. Chip Krupe, the show's production manager, says they dangled, jumped, and perfected hand-to-hand combat techniques on wooden replicas at the former Dunes Hotel.

Kramer, a 25-year-old native of Hawaii who has trained in the martial arts, has done stunt work for television and movies. He says being a Las Vegas stunt man offers more than just an adrenaline rush—even when he's on fire.

"Every day is different. You never know what to expect," he says. "Society teaches us to be careful, to conform. Being a stunt man helps me challenge what I've been taught. That's when you learn to trust yourself. But," he adds, "I do like the adrenaline."

Battles between the pirate ship *Hispaniola* and the British frigate *H.M.S. Britannia* are waged at Treasure Island every 90 minutes from 5:30 to 11:30 p.m. daily. Admission is free.



Pirates and pyrotechnics highlight the Treasure Island show.

Ann Henderson is the Las Vegas representative for Nevada Magazine.



# NEVADA

MAGAZINE

April 1998

INSIDE:  
Complete Guide  
to Events & Shows

## Amazing Free Shows

Pirates, statues, and volcanoes help  
hotels make spectacles of themselves

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TIC 2375

Pirates battle the British Navy at  
Treasure Island in Las Vegas

# PIRATES OF



A66

TIC 2376

Pirates prepare for a spectacular battle with the British Navy in Buccaneer Bay at Treasure Island. The high-seas show sets sail on the Strip six times daily.

# Pizzazz

Volcanoes, statues, and buccaneers come to life as Nevada hotels make a spectacle of themselves.

By Deke Castleman

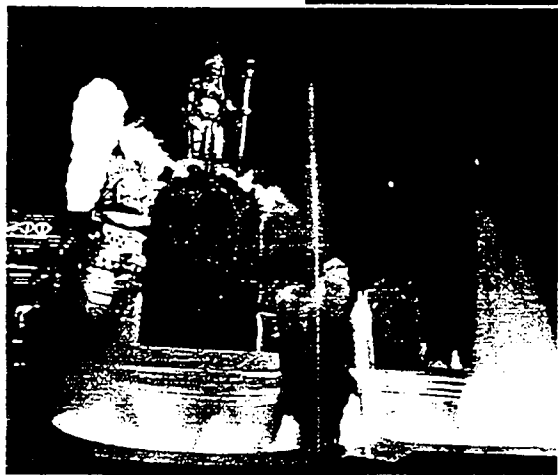
As you stroll through the new wing at the Forum Shops at Caesars, you will encounter a number of extraordinary sights—a five-story Trojan horse at F.A.O. Schwartz, an IMAX motion simulator with a 3-D screen, and a caviarateria, a bar that specializes in caviar. Standing in the Great Hall, you admire the Roman statues and make faces at the fish swimming in an enormous saltwater aquarium.

Suddenly the lights dim, and thunder rumbles through the rotunda. The real show is ready to begin.

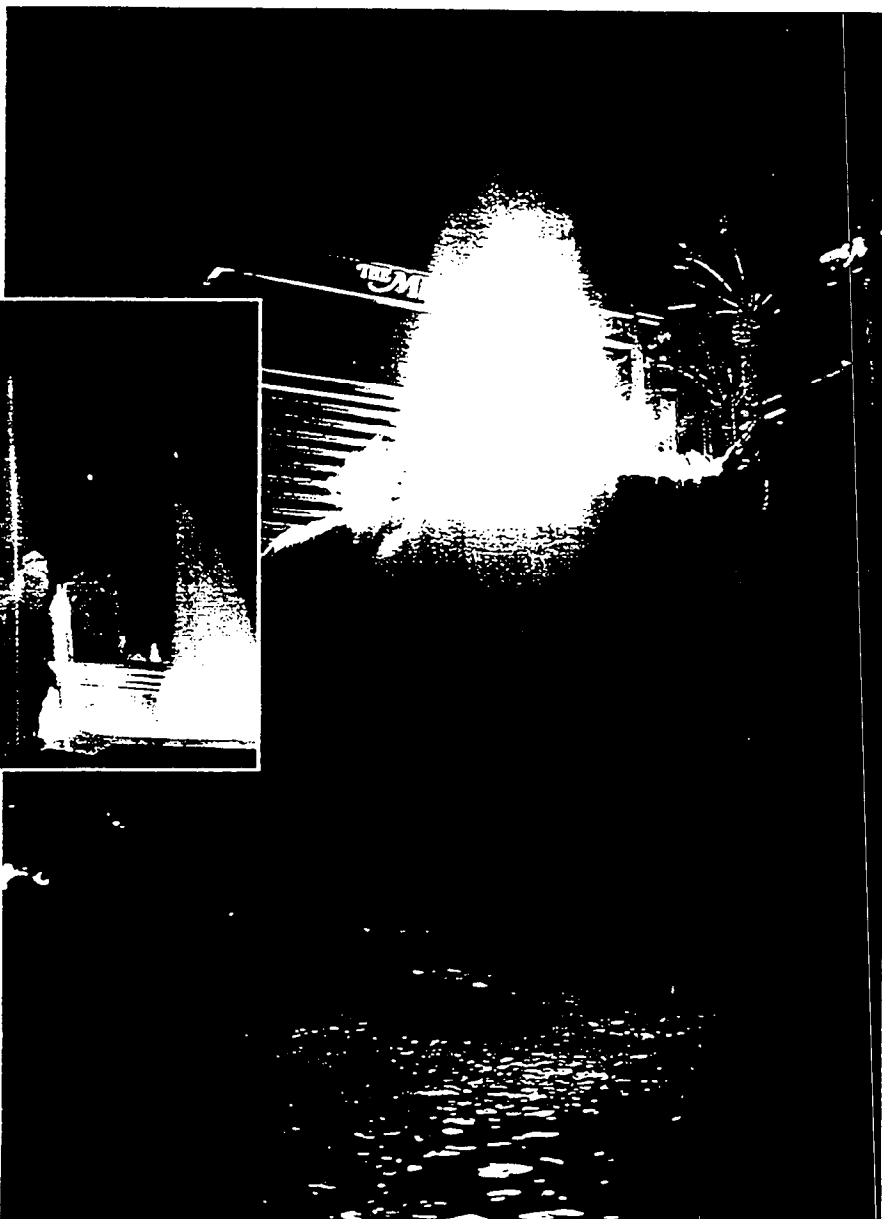
Statues descend through the floor and disappear. Up through the fountains—amidst fire, smoke, and steam—rise three animatronic characters: Atlas, king of Atlantis; Alia, his daughter the princess; and Gadrius, his son the prince. For the next eight minutes the royal family struggles for control of their mythical kingdom. As they threaten, taunt, and laugh at each other, the polyurethane figures seem so realistic that you start thinking they're human.

The eight-foot-tall, 500-pound Gadrius, for example, has 45 moving parts. His head nods and turns. His mouth opens and closes. His cheeks expand and contract. Even his brow wrinkles and smooths. At the same time his shoulders shrug, his torso twists, and his fingers move—all controlled by hydraulic cylinders, pneumatic actuators, and rotary manifolds and synchronized by software at 33-millisecond intervals.

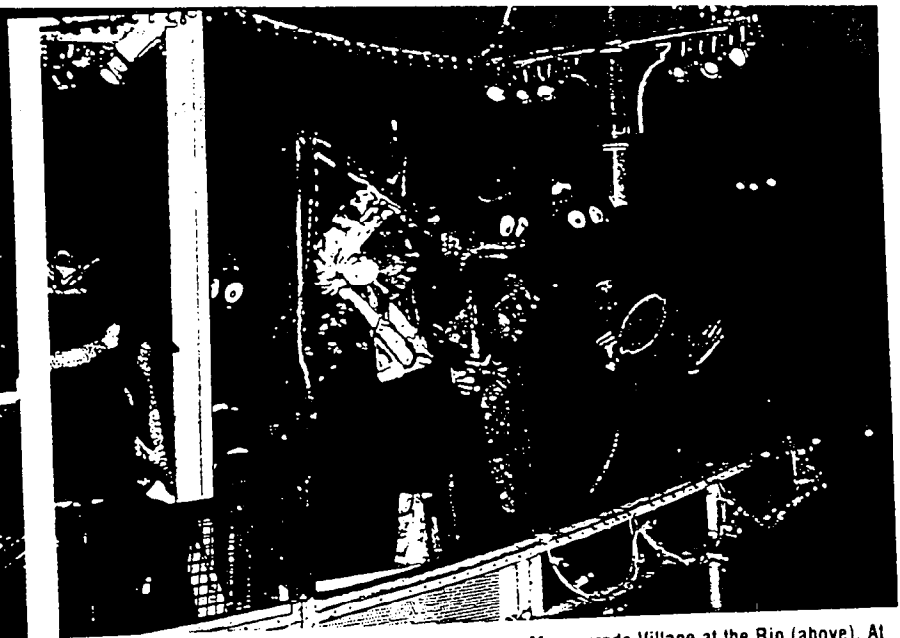
At the show's climax, a fiery battle ensues, and



The lost continent of Atlantis magically springs to life inside the rotunda of the Forum Shops at Caesars in Las Vegas.



The Mirage volcano assumed the role of hotel marquee and began a veritable eruption of free spectacles at Las Vegas resorts. The lava flows every half hour at night.



Singers, dancers, and even customers ride floats in the Masquerade Village at the Rio (above). At left, the 120-foot-tall mining machine puts on a show at the Silver Legacy in downtown Reno.

TIC 2378

A68

Atlas' throne unfolds into a hideous beast that drives the kingdom to its watery doom. Afterward, the audience disperses, presumably to eat some caviar, buy a toy, or, ultimately, feed some quarters into a slot machine.

"Atlantis" is the latest in a long line of loss-leader spectacles that Las Vegas and, to a lesser extent, Reno have rolled out to bring the people in. Some of the most elaborate shows take place outdoors, while others are designed for indoor astonishment. Many follow their hotels' respective themes—pirate battles, animatronic animals, light shows, and lava flows—and they are free.

This style of extravagant attraction can be traced all the way back to the feverish imagination of Jay Sarno, a mad genius who, it has been said, "threw off a shower of sparks wherever he went." After dreaming up the toga-clad and statue-strewn Roman theme for Caesars Palace in the mid-1960s, Sarno went on to open a bizarre casino that featured circus acts performed over the blackjack tables and slot machines. It was a spectacle, all right, but it wasn't yet free. In the beginning Sarno charged admission to the carnival area. The entry fee lasted mere months, and for the past 30 years Circus Circus has presented its clowns, trapeze artists, jugglers, and unicyclists free of charge between 11 a.m. and midnight daily.

The free extravaganza as a gambler lure didn't catch on in a big way for another 21 years, until 1989, when the feverish imagination of another promoter, Steve Wynn, produced the first automated free show—an erupting volcano. Each night after dark a 54-foot manmade mountain fronting the Mirage, with just a



An animatronic wolf is the star of "Sunset Stampede" in the Sam's Town atrium.

Outside the Excalibur castle, a fire-breathing dragon and Merlin the Magician greet guests.

The volcano set the stage, and the standard, for the many such shows that have followed, the variety and extent of which are unequaled anywhere else on Earth.

Indeed, when Wynn opened Treasure Island next door four years later, he knew he had to outdo himself. So he built Buccaneer Bay, and every night a British Navy frigate sails around the corner from Spring Mountain Road into the bay, there to engage a privateer's schooner in eight minutes of swashbuckling, cannon-firing "pirate-technics." Twenty stuntmen wind up in the drink. A great place to catch the action is from a seat on the patio of the Buccaneer Bar.

Then there's the Fremont Street Experience, that colossal graphic-display system that delivers state-of-the-art animation and acoustic effects on the curved underside of a 90-foot-high, four-block-long canopy covering downtown Las Vegas. More than 2.1 million polychromatic lightbulbs and 208 concert-quality speakers combine for six-minute, high-fidelity kaleidoscopic light shows

—(Left) Silver Legacy (top left), Kate Butler (middle)

with country, spacey, and Vegas themes. Like the volcano and pirate battle, the shows themselves are one-of-a-kind, but perhaps the greatest moment in the Experience is when someone somewhere flicks a switch and Glitter Gulch's whole flamboyant neon facade is simply shut off. For a moment, from Fitzgeralds to the Las Vegas Club, it's dark on Fremont Street, and that's something to see.

A year ago the Rio unveiled its new Masquerade Village casino, restaurant, and retail wing with its signature Show in the Sky. During the show singers, dancers, stiltwalkers, and bungee swingers, all in outrageous Mardi Gras-style costumes, perform on the main stage. Meanwhile, parade floats—a riverboat, teacup, hot-air balloon swan—circle the casino, suspended from a track on the ceiling. The Show in the Sky is the only spectacle in which visitors can participate; sign up in the casino to dress in costume and ride one of the floats.

Las Vegas' newest free public show can be seen in the outdoor Carnival Court at the remodeled Harrah's on the Strip. Fireworks open and close "Carnaval Fantastique," which features 15 dancers, gymnasts, acrobats, showgirls, and stiltwalkers. At 20 minutes, "Carnaval Fantastique" is not only the longest show of its kind in Las Vegas; it's also one of the few you can enjoy sitting down (at tables outside the Ghirardelli ice-cream parlor).

The Forum Shops has another animatronic show besides the new "Atlantis." In 1992, Caesars Palace introduced the Festival Fountain to entertain the estimated 20,000 people who walk



The Fremont Street Experience has transformed Glitter Gulch into a light-and-sound show.

through the Forum Shops each day. Laser lightning and stereo thunder awaken Bacchus, Roman god of free spectacles and animatronic emcee for the show. His costars are Plutus, Venus, and Apollo. The Festival Fountain is decidedly less high-resolution than "Atlantis" in the Forum Shops' other wing, which goes to show how far the technology has advanced in six years. This show is suitably enhanced by a margarita or two from La Salsa Mexican restaurant, nearby in the rotunda.

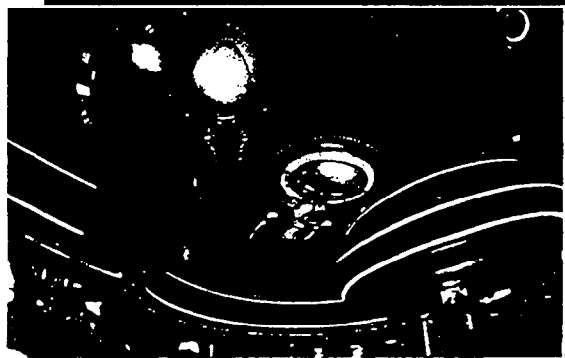
Bally's has a striking nighttime light show. In Bally's plaza, a light, water, and sound show splashes waves of color across the palm trees fronting the Strip. At the Excalibur, the thrill is more old-fashioned as a fire-breathing dragon and Merlin the Magician greet guests.

Dancing waters are an old attraction in Las Vegas; the Desert Inn featured choreographed jets of water way back in the 1950s. Today, you can catch a 10-minute dancing-waters show, "Sunset Stampede," in the 18-story atrium at Sam's Town. High atop a waterfall-carved cliff, a larger-than-life animatronic wolf opens and closes (and steals) the show. The dancing waters leap from the pool below to neck-cracking heights amidst synchronized laser images and a booming Western soundtrack.

In Reno, a similar show takes place outdoors in the pool area at the Peppermill in Reno. During spring and summer a number of creatures—a grizzly bear, wolf, two bighorn sheep, and a mountain lion—come to life as they emerge from the manmade

(Continued on page 86)

## New Trek



Earthlings gather at the entrance to the Star Trek ride.

Although it's not a show, can be seen at the Las Vegas Casino. This "24th-century" casino, which fronts the Strip, is the most visually extravagant gambling establishment in the city. Its design is straight out of the *Star Trek* movies.

As a feature, you pass your finger through a light sensor. Employees wear *Star Trek* uniforms. Even the slot machines offer tips like: "High concentration and recognition of winning combinations may be

a spectacle as well, although it's not free. You enter into a sort of *Star Trek* museum, which displays *Star Trek* movies and television series, and a time capsule beamed onto the *Enterprise* for a four-minute movie. Your reentry into the 20th century—breaking through a time portal—is a thrill and a half. Finally, you're deprogrammed. Altogether, it's a 25-minute Experience if you go from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.—Deke Castleman

# PIRATES OF PIZAZZ

(Continued from page 15)

Sierra Mountain, bringing a touch of the wild to the splashy scene.

Another Las Vegas-like free show is found at Silver Legacy, inside the huge dome that changed the downtown Reno skyline in 1995. There, you can stare at a gigantic machine, sort of a cross between a mining headframe, an oil derrick, a train trestle, and a railgun—in short, the world's largest erector set. This all-in-one Mr. Magoo contraption mines ore from deep

under the Legacy, refines it into silver, and mints one-dollar silver tokens (the first two processes are apocryphal, but it actually performs the last procedure). The machine is a spectacle in itself, but a show does accompany it: 15 minutes of smoke and fireworks and lasers and music go on four times daily.

Circus Circus in Reno, like its Las Vegas counterpart, presents circus acts daily as well as a carnival midway. For a bright idea

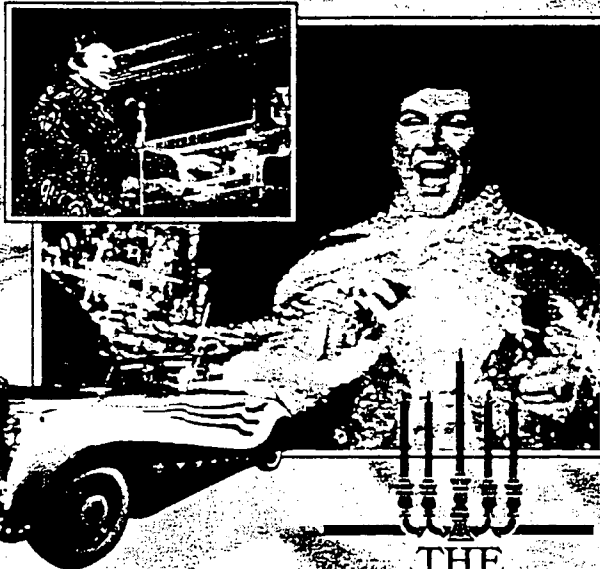
outdoors, the Comstock Hotel, near the Truckee River, lights up its corner of town with the best display of neon fireworks anywhere. The Atlantis, too, sends waves of color up its hotel towers.

The signature show is still under development, so the details are sketchy, but it's known that Bellagio, Mirage Resorts' \$1.7-billion "greatest hotel on Earth," will feature a \$30-million choreographed water ballet in conjunction with the nine-acre lake that fronts the Las Vegas property. If Mirage Resorts' recent history with the volcano and pirate battle is any indication, the free-spectacle ante will be raised enormously by whatever emerges from the designers' imaginations.

*Deke Castleman is managing editor of the Las Vegas Advisor.*

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## Spectacle Guide

Following is a sampling of free outdoor and indoor spectacles at Nevada hotels. The area code is 702 throughout the state.

### • Las Vegas •

**Bally's** • 739-4111: Light, water, and sound show takes place every 20 minutes at night.  
**Circus Circus** • 734-0410: Circus acts perform between 11 a.m. and midnight daily.  
**Excalibur** • 597-7777: Fire-breathing dragon.  
**Forum Shops at Caesars** • 893-4800: "Atlantis" and the Festival Fountain both play every hour on the hour at the Forum Shops between 10 a.m. and 11 p.m.  
**Fremont Street Experience** • 678-5600: Light-and-sound show plays every hour on the hour between 6 p.m. and midnight.  
**Harrah's** • 369-5000: "Carnaval Fantastique" at 6:15, 7:45, and 9:15 p.m. Tues.-Fri. (on Sat. and Sun. at 4:45 as well). Dark Mon.  
**Mirage** • 791-7111: The volcano erupts every 30 minutes from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. (in winter starting at 6 p.m.).  
**Rio** • 252-7777: Masquerade Village relives Mardi Gras every two hours starting at noon Mon.-Thurs. and 1 p.m. Fri.-Sat.  
**Sam's Town** • 456-7777: "Sunset Stampede" lights up at 2, 6, 8, and 10 p.m.  
**Treasure Island** • 894-7111: Buccaneer Bay shows take place every 90 minutes, at 4, 5:30, 7, 8:30, 10, and 11:30 p.m. (wind conditions cooperating).

### • Reno •

**Circus Circus** • 329-0711: Circus acts perform between 11 a.m. and midnight daily.  
**Peppermill** • 826-2121: Pool show every half hour in the afternoon and evening, late spring to early fall.  
**Silver Legacy** • 329-4777: Mining machine comes to life daily at 4, 6, 8, and 10 p.m. ■

Nevada Appeal

CLARK COUNTY

JANUARY 11, 1994  
SUNDAY

APR 17 1994

BURRELLE'S

# Treasure Island is attention grabber

4921132  
BY RICHARD MORENO

Not too many years ago, casinos grabbed your attention by handing out free drink coupons or offering cheap shrimp cocktails.

Not anymore.

Today's "come-ons" can include artificial volcanic eruptions, white tigers, dolphins, circus acts, pharaohs, emperors, kings, roller coasters; and, more recently, pirates.

In fact, the new Treasure Island resort in Las Vegas offers perhaps the most elaborate variation of the old free coupon lure.

It works like this: every hour or so, a huge crowd gathers around a small lagoon and pirate village — called Buccaneer Bay. A faint murmur rises as about a dozen pirates appear on the deck of the 80-foot long Hispaniola, the ship docked at the village.

The pirates begin unloading their booty, while the sounds of life — seagulls, waves and noisy colorful pirate chatter — fill the air. Suddenly, another ship — A British frigate named the HMS Britannia — slides around the corner from the pirate village and moves into the bay.

As the full-size ship enters the lagoon, the British captain loudly demands the pirates lay down their arms and surrender. The pirates jump to defensive positions on their ship, which is apparently trapped in the bay.

The pirate captain responds with a curse and the British fire a warning shot just short of the Hispaniola's bow. The pirates fire back, punching a hole in the British ship's topsail.

Angrily, the British fire again

with a cannon shot that rips through the side of the pirate ship, causing dark smoke to pour from the deck.

The two sides trade insults and then the English ship pops off four quick shots; two hitting the water, one striking the deck and the last blasting through the mast, which breaks off and dramatically falls from the ship — pirates jumping everywhere.

But the pirate captain, who somehow remained aboard his ship, refuses to surrender. Another shot from the Brits explodes the pirate's powder magazine, where the explosives are stored, and a pyrotechnical display erupts.

The desperate pirate leader spots his only remaining unfired cannon, at the other end of the ship. He grabs a rope hanging from one of the masts and, in best Errol Flynn tradition, swings across the boat, snatches a fuse from the burning deck, and lights the cannon.


Since this is Vegas, where pirates always win, the shot is a perfect strike. It smashes into the British ship at the waterline, exploding the Brittania's ammunition.

The proud ship shudders — the British sailors begin leaping from its smoking, fiery deck — then gradually sinks until only its masts remain above water. Meantime, the English captain salutes, then goes down with his ship.

A narrator welcomes all to enter and enjoy the bounties of Treasure Island.

It's one hell of a come-on.

Of course, Treasure Island is a bit more than the 15-minute pirate show. The pirate-themed hotel has



Traveler

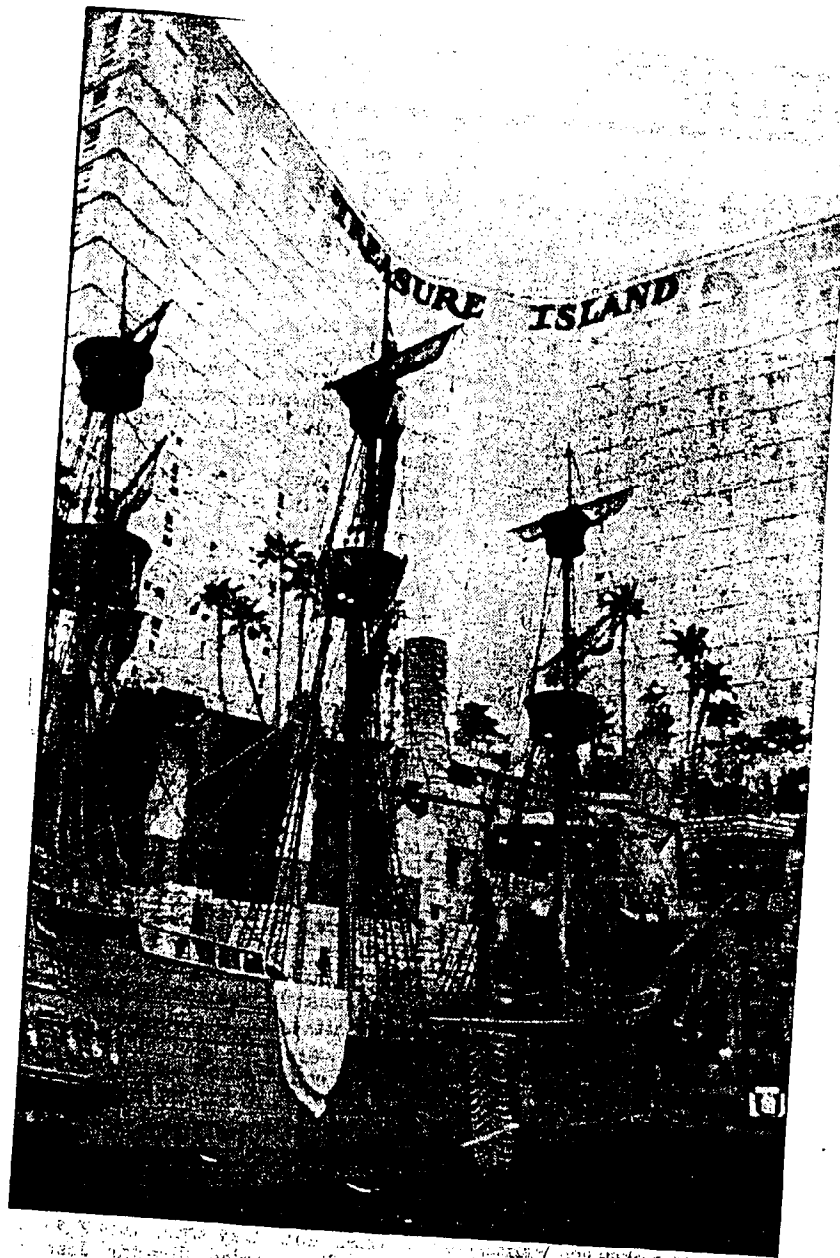
three, 36-story towers with 2,900 rooms, casino, two gourmet restaurants and six more casual eateries, and a small shopping area.

Additionally, in keeping with Las Vegas' new push to attract families and non-gamblers, the resort has Mutiny Bay, an 18,000 square foot arcade with video games, pinball and the new simulated games (where you really feel like you're flying a jet or riding a motorcycle).

A particularly unique experience can be found at "Mystere," a new show from the Montreal-based Cirque du Soleil troupe. The program, which features 70 performance artists, clowns, musicians, and acrobats, is an unusual mixture of athleticism, illusion, contortionism, and bizarreness — like watching the Legislature.

Treasure Island is located adjacent to the Mirage Resort on the Las Vegas Strip (both are owned by Steve Wynn). For more information about Treasure Island, call (800) 727-6667.

Richard Moreno's Backyard Traveler column appears in Sunday's Appeal. He is the author of "The Backyard Traveler" and "The Backyard Traveler Returns," which are available at local book stores.



Treasure Island Hotel Casino

Richard Moreno photo



Rocky Mountain  
Construction

MAY 9, 1994

BURRELLE'S

## HILL AND KNOWLTON

### FRP skulls highlight Vegas resort sign

LAS VEGAS — Two huge 32-ft.-tall pirate skulls add to the buccaneer atmosphere of the new Treasure Island Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip. Made of fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP), the skulls are part of a 160-ft.-tall entrance sign welcoming guests to the resort complex. Molded Fiber Glass Companies/West, Adelanto, Calif., produced the FRP skulls, along with ornate scrolls and sword hilts for the signs.

Dimensions of the pirate-themed skulls are awe-inspiring. Diameter of the pirate's earring is 6 ft., and his gold tooth is 3 ft. long.



Completed Treasure Island sign features molded FRP skulls, scrolls and sword hilts.

The free-standing sign was designed by Atlandia Architects and engineered and built by Ad/Art Signs Inc. Headquartered in Stockton, Calif., Ad/Art Signs specializes in producing large, free-standing signage for the entertainment and other markets.

And such large, free-standing signs are all the rage with Las Vegas resorts today. They're a major part of all the newest resorts (Luxor, MGM Grand and Treasure Island), and existing resorts (most recently the Las Vegas Hilton) are replacing older, smaller signs with giant new ones.

"There is a movement towards large three-dimensional signage," stated Rowland Tessier of Ad/Art Signs. "The Treasure Island sign is unusual because it has both the flat, two-dimensional surface combined with the three-dimensional parts."



MFG/West worker polishes the teeth (including 3-ft.-long gold tooth) of one of the FRP skulls for the Treasure Island Hotel and Casino sign. — Darald Bennett photo, reproduced by permission of the Daily Press. All rights reserved.

Ad/Art Signs decided to use fiberglass for the parts because FRP offered advantages over alternative materials. Fiberglass could be molded into large, three-dimensional shapes and pigmented with the desired color and translucency for the backlighting of the skulls. Another significant benefit is the high strength-to-weight ratio of fiberglass.

But building a human skull 32 ft. tall, 20 ft. wide and 13 ft. deep takes more than a skeleton crew. Tooling for the large intricate parts was completed by MJM Studios, located in New Jersey. Mike MacLeod, owner and sculptor of MJM, directed a team of artisans in hand-sculpting the skulls, scrolls and sword hilts. To create this work of art, the sculptors were lowered on swings over the skull and utilized video cameras and monitors to view the entire skull as they worked on each portion.

MFG/West utilized a hand lay-up/spray-up process to build the fiberglass components. Completion required 15,000 lb. of material and 10,000 hours of labor.

There were some special challenges in producing such large parts. Spray-up of the laminate required extra care to produce uniform thickness and translucency. Releasing the large parts from the plaster molds was also difficult since the parts were hand-sculpted with intricate details.

TIC 1895

LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE

LAS VEGAS, NV  
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NOV 4 1994

BURRELLE'S

Las Vegas ISRAELITE

**Mystere Characters  
'Escape' Treasure Island,  
Spend Afternoon At  
Hughes Center  
Tenant Appreciation**

492038



**TOWERING VIEW** – A character from Cirque du Soleil's Mystere production from Treasure Island casts a striking pose in front of the 17-story First Interstate Tower at the recent Hughes Center's 5th Annual Tenant Appreciation party. The Howard Hughes Corporation sponsored the colorful event, attended this year by about 1,200 tenants of the 120-acre master-planned mixed-use center. Members of the cast from the Mystere production made a rare guest appearance at the circus-themed event, joining a circus band and various entertainers.

Characters from the Cirque du Soleil's Mystere production recently "escaped" from Treasure Island and made a rare guest appearance on the grounds of Hughes Center where more than 1,200 tenants participated in the 5th Annual Tenant Appreciation event.

Tenants converged from the landmark First Interstate Tower and adjoining buildings of the 120-acre mixed use master-planned business and financial park to a circus atmosphere on the grassy mall.

Mystere characters set the tone for the circus theme which included a 13-piece circus band, directed by George Morrissey, and magician Kevin Barnes, ventriloquist Ken Karter, multifaceted entertainer Scott Linker and Dandy the Clown.

"It is our way of showing appreciation for the continued support of our distinguished tenants," said Judy Cebulko, director of property management for The Howard Hughes Corporation, developer of the center.

Cebulko said balloons, authentic circus posters and a buffet luncheon transformed the lush grounds into a festive atmosphere.

"Our tenants thoroughly enjoyed the popcorn and cotton candy served from traditional machines operates on site and a genuine calliope and huge 'circus tent' entrances put the finishing touches on our theme."

Flair Marketing and Party Plan-It, Inc. coordinated the entertainment and decorations. /

TIC 2140

# Un fotógrafo anda suelto...

Por Steve CRESPI

Estuvimos de manteles largos en compañía de nuestro titor, Ana María y los chicos de la prensa, en "Francesco's" el restaurante italiano de lujo del Treasure Island Hotel & Casino. Si usted está buscando por una suprema experiencia en el arte del buen comer y la buena clase, entonces "Francesco's" es el lugar para usted. El servicio es de primera, verdaderamente impecable. El manager, o Maître D'Hotel Mario Disi es un anfitrión remarcable que lo hace sentir a usted como en su casa. Yo solo puede decir que este fotógrafo le anda suelto le pegó al clavo cuando lo invitaron a probar un menú en este maravilloso restaurante con ambiente florentino y toque veneciano. El mejor que he visto en mis muchos años en LV. Mi platillo favorito, el que yo elegí fue delicioso Veal Marsala cubierto de champiñones, estuvo simplemente "sensacionalle."



Para abrir boca, como aperitivo nos sirvieron unos scampis gigantes al estilo Mediterráneo, ricamente sauteados en garlic al "burro" que quiere decir mantequilla en italiano, la tierra



de mis padres, con su respectivo toque de vino bianco; igualmente apetitoso se veía el Osso Bucco que estaba saboreando el Sr. Corro y el pescado a la Florentina de la bella Ana María, todo esto rociado por un vino exquisito Valpolicella escogido por el Sommelier. Pero no tomé mi palabra como un hecho vaya y compruébelo por si mismo. No se arrepentirá.

# Creating the Perfect Wedding

When it comes to matrimonial matters, Nevada has a reputation for providing everything from romantic traditional weddings to ceremonies that will be remembered for their unusual settings. For example, A Little White Chapel in Las Vegas offers ceremonies in the Tunnel of Love, a 160-by-20-foot canopy decorated with stars, cherubs, the moon, and the words "I Love You, I Want You, I Can't Live Without You." The tunnel is being promoted for drive-, walk-, even rollerblade-through weddings. Treasure Island in Las Vegas offers weddings aboard the British naval frigate, the *H.M.S. Britannia*.

From a marketing standpoint, one of the hottest trends in the industry is the vow renewal ceremony, which offers an excellent opportunity for promotions to older couples. Some tips: Valentine's Day is the busiest day for weddings in Nevada, and prices can be higher on that holiday. Generally, prices are lower and reservations easier to obtain at midweek. Chambers of commerce listed in the Vacation Hot Lines in Nevada Events and Shows are a helpful source of wedding chapel locations.

The following Las Vegas-area hotels responded to a survey about the services they provide. Ministers' fees are extra except where noted. Nevada's area code is 702.

## Las Vegas

**Bally's:** Celebration Wedding Chapel holds up to 50 guests and can be reserved for up to one hour. The chapel has a modern Victorian setting with crystal chandeliers and a stained-glass mural. At \$235, "Cherish," the basic wedding package, allows 30 minutes for the ceremony, candlelight, music, a bridal bouquet with matching boutonniere, and a photo package. A unity candle ceremony is available. The chapel can provide flowers and video and still photographers. Call 739-4939 or 800-872-1211.

**Bellagio:** When the hotel opens in fall 1998, it will have two wedding chapels, one accommodating 90 guests and the other 50. The chapels will be decorated in pastel colors and have draped frame windows of amethyst Venetian glass. Wedding parties have a minimum



Altar-bound couples who prefer traditional ceremonies will find a choice of elegantly decorated chapels, such as the European-style wedding chapel at Treasure Island in Las Vegas.

of one hour chapel time, and prices will begin at about \$850. Call 888-464-4436.

**Circus Circus:** Chapel of the Fountain seats 45 guests. The chapel's blue color scheme is set off by a stained-glass window and a fountain. At \$125, the hotel's basic wedding package offers the ceremony, minister, and music. Couples who want a package with accommodations can choose the "Big Top," which includes a one-night stay, photos, flowers, and a wedding video for \$350. Call 734-0410.

**Excalibur:** The Canterbury Wedding Chapel has two chapels, one that can handle 35 guests, the other 140. The chapels can be reserved in 30-minute increments. They are decorated in pastel green and cream and have oak wood, tiered chandeliers, floral arrangements, and stained glass patterned after Notre Dame. At \$165, the basic package includes the ceremony and music. The chapel can provide flowers, video and still photographers, wedding cake, and reception. The bride and groom can be married in medieval costumes. Couples who want a package that includes accommodations can choose the "Count and Countess," which offers a one-night stay, room service breakfast for two, the ceremony, music, flowers for the bride and groom, photos, and video for \$495. Call 597-7777.

**Flamingo Hilton Las Vegas:** The Garden Chapel seats 65 guests and can be reserved from 30 to 45 minutes. The chapel is a garden setting with high ceilings and topiary art. The basic wedding package includes the cer-

emony and is \$150 Sunday through Thursday, \$175 on Friday and Saturday. The chapel can provide flowers, video and still photographers, gown and tux rental, wedding cake, and reception. Packages that offer accommodations begin at \$369. Call 733-3492.

**Imperial Palace:** We've Only Just Begun Wedding Chapel seats 100 people and can be reserved for 30 minutes. The chapel is decorated with burgundy love seats, chiffon-draped pillars, and flowers. Ceremonies can also be conducted in the hotel's automobile collection. At \$55, the basic wedding package includes the ceremony, limo service to and from the marriage license bureau, and the minister's fee. Flowers, video

and still photographers, gown and tux rental, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Call 800-346-3373.

**Jackie Gaughan's Plaza:** Heritage Wedding Chapel at the Plaza seats 60 guests and can be reserved for 30 minutes. At \$149, the basic wedding package includes wedding coordinator, ceremony, flowers for bride and groom, photos, and taped music. The focal point of the chapel is a white baby grand piano and stained-glass window. Flowers, video and still photographers, gown and tux rental, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Packages that include accommodations begin at \$499 for "Veils and Bows," which offers a one-night stay, personal coordinator, ceremony, flowers, music, photos, and video. Call 888-241-5000.

**MGM Grand:** The Forever Grand Wedding Chapel is in the blueprint stage and should open in fall 1998.

**Monte Carlo:** The Chapel at Monte Carlo seats 105 guests and can be reserved for 30 minutes. At \$285, "Chanully" includes the ceremony, music, photos, and flowers for bride and groom. The chapel has painted murals behind French doors and light wood with color accents of ivory, peach, and pink. Flowers, video and still photographers, wedding cake, and reception are available. The Monte Carlo offers live music, vow renewals, and an on-site florist. Packages with accommodations include the "Chateau Royale," which lists a two-night stay, room service continental breakfast,

and the amenities in the "Chantilly" wedding package plus additional photos and a video. Prices are \$750 Sunday through Thursday and \$850 Friday, Saturday, and holidays. Call 800-22-8651.

**New York-New York:** New York-New York Wedding Chapel has a small chapel that seats 30 guests and another that seats 52, which can be reserved for 30 minutes. The decor is of a penthouse overlooking Central Park. Flowers, video and still photographers, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. At \$205, the basic wedding package includes a ceremony in the small chapel and minister's fee. Couples can choose the "Park Avenue Promises" package with accommodations and its one-night stay, ceremony, flowers for bride and groom, photos, video, and wedding gift basket. Prices are \$625 Sunday through Thursday, \$650 on Friday. Call 888-652-6969.

**The Orleans:** Chapel Orleans holds 500 guests and can be reserved from 30 minutes to one hour depending upon the package selected. The chapel has murals, draped pillars, and flower arrangements. At \$100, the basic "Zirconia" package includes the ceremony and minister's fee. Flowers, video and still photographers, gown and tux rental, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Multilingual services are available. The "Diamond" is a package with accommodations and includes a two-night stay, manicure and pedicure for the bride, breakfast in bed, limo service to the marriage bureau, champagne flutes, video, flowers for the bride and groom, photo album, and music for \$675. Call 365-7555.

**Rio Suite Hotel:** The Gardenia Chapel seats 60 guests, which is booked in 30-minute increments, and the Rose Chapel, which is reserved on an hourly basis. The decor is lined oak tones, white pillars, and arched ceilings. The "Copacabana" basic package includes the ceremony, minister's fee, photos, and flowers for bride and groom. The price is \$375 Sunday through Thursday and \$400 Friday, Saturday, and holiday weekends. Ceremony-only options are available upon request. Flowers, video and still photographers, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Couples can choose an accommodations package, the "Rio Carnivale," which lists the ceremony and minister's fee, one-night stay, complimentary hors d'oeuvre and champagne tray, photos, video, flowers for bride and groom, pianist, limo to courthouse (or a one-hour joyride), wine tasting for two people, wedding cake (for up to 20 people), and two tickets to ride in the Masquerade parade. The price is \$1,575 Sunday through Thursday, \$1,650 Friday, Saturday, and holiday weekends. Call 888-746-5625.

**Riviera:** The Wedding Chapel in the Riv-

iera Hotel seats 50 guests and can be reserved for 45 minutes. At \$179, the basic package includes the ceremony, photos, and flowers for the bride and groom. The decor is a blend of soft colors: ivory, mauve, burgundy, and pink. Flowers, video and still photographers, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Couples can choose the "Luxury-Regal" accommodations package, which lists a two-night stay, photos, flowers for the bride and groom, video, and live music for \$879. Call 800-634-6753.

**Treasure Island:** The Wedding Chapels seat 30 and 60 guests and can be reserved from 30 minutes to one hour. The European-style decor features marble-lined altars and floral arrangements. At \$387, the basic wedding package includes flowers for bride and groom, photos, wedding coordinator, music, and minister's fee. Flowers, video and still photographers, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Couples can choose the "Pearl Package" accommodations package, which lists a one-night stay, flowers for bride and groom, video, photos, music, wedding coordinator, minister's fee, and toast-ing flutes for \$799. Call 800-866-4748.

**Tropicana:** The Island Wedding Chapel seats 60 guests and can be reserved in 30-minute increments. The tropical-Hawaiian decor features waterfalls, palm trees, and a lagoon. At \$295, the basic wedding package includes live music, flowers for the bride and groom, and photos. The chapel can furnish unity candles, frames, albums, and cake tops. Flowers, video and still photographers, gown and tux rental, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. Couples can choose the "Tropics" accommodations package, which lists a two-night stay, limo service for one hour, photos, music, flowers for bride and groom, video, bottle of champagne, commemorative champagne glasses, and a wedding frame for \$795. Call 800-325-5839.

### Laughlin

In the resort town on the Colorado River, couples can be married during a cruise aboard the *Edgewater Belle*. The boat's captain, who is an ordained minister, officiates at the ceremony (298-1047). The Riverside also offers shipboard weddings (298-2535, ext. 5822).

**Colorado Belle:** The hotel's catering department customizes ceremonies for 100 guests in one-hour increments. The decor features white plantation columns, white lattice arch with ivy, white saun chair covers with tulle bows, and white aisle runner. At \$300, the basic wedding package includes the ceremony,

live piano music, photo session, and a complimentary two-night stay on the couple's first anniversary. Flowers, still photographer, wedding cake, and reception are available. Weddings can also be performed outside with the Colorado River as a backdrop. Packages with accommodations are customized for the wedding. Call 298-4000.

**Harrah's Laughlin:** The Harrah's Laughlin Wedding Chapel seats 30 guests and can be reserved for one hour. The chapel has an old-fashioned, traditional look. At \$199, the basic package includes the ceremony, flowers for the bride and groom, and photos. Flowers, still photographer, wedding cake, and reception are available. Call 298-4600.

**Riverside:** The Wedding Chapel seats 22 guests and can be reserved in 30-minute increments. The traditional decor is white tulle, silk flower baskets, a wedding arch, and candlelight. At \$135, the basic package includes the ceremony, flowers for bride, groom, maid of honor, and best man, commemorative champagne glasses, and a bottle of champagne. Flowers are included, and video and

*One of the hottest trends in the industry is the vow renewal ceremony, which offers an excellent opportunity for promotions to older couples.*

still photographers, gown and tux rental, wedding cake, and reception can be provided. The Riverside also offers gazebo, riverboat, and beach-house settings. Couples can choose the "Forever Yours" package with accommodations, which consists of the basic package and a one-night stay. The package rates are \$265 from September 2 to May 15, and \$300 from May 16 to September 1. Call 298-2535, ext. 5822.

### Mesquite

**CasaBlanca:** The outdoor gazebo accommodates up to 400 guests, with no specified time limit for the ceremony. The gazebo is set in tropical landscaping that surrounds a lagoon with a waterfall. Indoor ceremonies are also available. At \$145, the basic package includes the ceremony and flowers for the bride and groom. Flowers, still photographer, wedding cake, and reception can be arranged. Couples can choose the "Honeymoon Special" accommodations package, which features a one-night stay, ceremony, and flowers for the bride and groom for \$275. Call 800-459-7529 for details.

*Next issue look for information about wedding services and locations in the Reno, Sparks, and Lake Tahoe area.*

NEVADA TRAVEL UPDATE 7

TIC 2389

## GAMING TODAY

LAS VEGAS, NV  
WEEKLY

MAY 12 1998

BURRELLE'S

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# Lines move fast when you're 'comped'

By BARRY DANIELS 8307

**YOU'VE BEEN** waiting about 45 minutes at your favorite casino buffet when you see a party of four passing everyone in your line faster than a nervous ambulance driver on the way to the hospital. They bolt directly to the head of the line, hand the cashier a white slip of paper, and are seated within seconds.

Your initial reaction is to: 1) Smash their faces into a pile resembling lumpy mashed potatoes; 2) Dump a Jell-o mold on top of their heads; 3) Open a can of garbonzo beans and pour the juice down their necks.

Why are they already en-

joying their appetizer while you're still waiting in line? Simple. They have a "comp," while you have a bad case of shrimp cocktail drooling syndrome.

The question then becomes, how did they get that "comp" and, more importantly, how can you get one?

By betting on race and sports events at certain casinos around town, you too can go to the front of the line with a coveted "comp."

**Jimmy Croley**, race and sports manager at Treasure Island, reports the "comp"

system at his establishment has been a great success.

"All of our race and sports bettors are presented with a Treasure Island Sporting Club Card," noted Croley. "Every time the player makes a bet, they present their card to the ticket writer who swipes it through a credit card-like machine. Points are awarded for every wager, but the promotion is geared more toward horse bettors because of the large bets we already receive on sports. For every \$1 wagered on the horses, the customer receives two points. By contrast, for every \$3 bet on sports, the club member

*B* Please see Comped p17

## Casinos make points with players

Comped Con't. from p3 <sup>B</sup>  
receives just one point.

**IN CASE YOU'RE** wondering, it takes 7,000 points to see **Mystere** and every 100 points may be redeemed for \$1 toward your room rate.

Two months ago, the race and sports book at the **Sahara Hotel** started a Homestretch Club exclusively for horse players.

"The club has been received really well," said **Rich DeLuca**, race and sports director. "It has helped us tremendously. For every dollar wagered, a Homestretch Club member receives one point toward rooms, restaurants and even gift certificates to Herda's appliance store. We continue to hand-comp our sports players."

The **Imperial Palace** has the town's oldest redemption club, according to **Kelly Downey**, assistant race and sports manager.

"We have separate redemption clubs," stated Downey. "The one for sports

is called the Parlay Card Club. The one for races is called the Turf Club. We don't have an actual card for members, but instead issue them a four-digit number they must use when making a wager. The Turf Club rewards its members with one point for every dollar bet, while members of the Parlay Club Card must wager \$3 to earn one point. The exception is wagers on parlay cards, where the number of points awarded is equal to the dollar amount wagered."

### THE GAMING CONTROL

**BOARD** had proposed a regulation change that might affect these redemption clubs. The amendment stated that a race and sports book shall not agree to refund or rebate to any bettor any portion or percentage of the full face value of a wager.

**Greg Gale**, who heads up the Gaming Control Board's Audit Division, stated that at the present time the amendment prohibits cash rebates only and does not affect the rewarding of casino services such as restaurants, shows and rooms.

GAMING TODAY

LAS VEGAS, NV  
WEEKLY

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GOING OUT

DECEMBER 29, 1998 - JANUARY 4, 1999

# Burton, Gans, Cassidy top nominees for best performers

## 'EFX,' 'Lord of the Dance,' 'Mystere' among top production shows in 1998

Magician Lance Burton, with nominations in several categories, leads an impressive array of candidates for this year's "Best of the Best" awards in the Las Vegas hotel entertainment industry.



This is  
Las Vegas

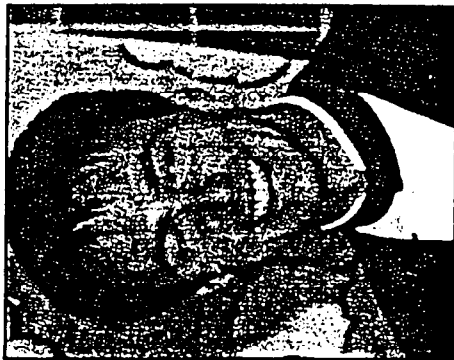
BY DON UHERSON

A80

TIC 2497



Pared down to three choices in each category from hundreds of top acts and shows, they will be narrowed to the final selections next week.



LANCE BURTON

Burton, the star of his own show at the Monte Carlo, leads nominees for *Entertainer of the Year*, *Magician of the Year* and *Showman of the Year*.

Fellow magicians Penn & Teller, who worked primarily at *Bally's* during the year, have also been nominated in several categories.

All three magicians have

been high profile on stage and TV this year and have brought much positive attention to the city's expanding entertainment picture.

Impressionist **Danny Gans**, who stars in his own show at the *Rio*, garnered either *Entertainer*, *Headliner* or *Comedian of the Year* on virtually every such list last year and is nominated again in several categories.

The production "EFX" at the *MGM Grand* and its star **David Cassidy** were very popular in 1998, though David leaves the show at the end of the year. The lovely **Susan Anton**, who starred in the *Flamingo Hilton's* "Great Radio City Spectacular" for a great part of the year, and ice skater **Dorothy Hamill**, a guest star in the *Star-dust's* "Enter the Night," represent the competition in the production show star of the year category.

The production show categories have been separated by size (casts of 25 or more, less than 25 and less than

10). Selections were made based on considerations such as quality, affordability and uniqueness. One or two shows or headliners were not around long enough in 1998 to be considered in specific categories.

The *Flamingo Hilton's* "Forever Plaid," **San Remo's "Broadway Cabaret" and "Tap Dogs" (no longer at the *Stratosphere*) are the top choices for best of the small-**



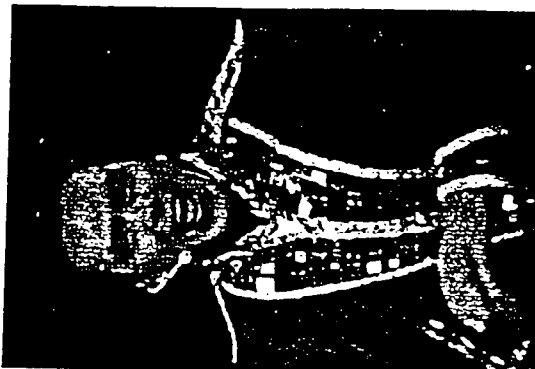
DANNY GANS

est revues.

Among the other top shows of varying sizes in 1998 were "Mystere" at *Treasure Island*, "EFX,"

"Lord of the Dance" at *New York-New York*, the *Imperial Palace's* "Legends In Concert," *Stratosphere's* "American Superstars" and the *Excalibur's* "King Arthur's Tournament."

We also have a special category that recognizes that local entertainer or entertainers who best represent Las Vegas entertainment to the world as well as for what they contribute to this community. It's called the *Liberty Showman of the Year* award and this year will go to either **Lance Burton**, **Penn & Teller** or **Danny Gans**.



DAVID CASSIDY  
IN "EFX"

The overwhelming majority of performers and shows along the Great Bright Way are the best in the world. With that in mind, here's the entire list of nominees for those that stood out just a bit as the "Best of the Best" in Las Vegas showrooms for 1998:

### **LIBERACE SHOWMAN OF THE YEAR**

For best representing Las Vegas entertainment to the world through quality of giving onstage, offstage and within the community. Lance Burton (Monte Carlo) Penn & Teller (Bally's) Danny Gans (Rio)

### **ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR**

Lance Burton  
Danny Gans  
David Cassidy (EFX — MGM Grand)

### **HEADLINER OF THE YEAR**

Tom Jones (MGM Grand)  
LeAnn Rimes (Caesars Palace/LV Hilton/MGM Grand)  
The Righteous Brothers (Orleans)

### **COMEDIAN OF THE YEAR**

Penn & Teller  
Howie Mandel (Caesars Palace)  
The Amazing Johnathan (Sahara)

### **MAGICIAN OF THE YEAR**

Lance Burton  
Penn & Teller  
Joaquin and Lillia Ayala (Spellbound—Harrah's)

### **CONCERT PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR**

Celine Dion (Caesars Palace)  
The Rolling Stones (MGM Grand)  
Janet Jackson (MGM Grand)

### **NEW PERFORMER OF THE YEAR**

Sharon Haynes (as Patsy Cline—Gold Coast)  
Marlene Ricc (Great Radio City Spectacular)  
Patrick Cassidy (EFX)

### **SPECTACULAR OF THE YEAR**

Mystere (Treasure Island) EFX  
Lord of the Dance (New York-New York)

### **SHOW OF THE YEAR**

Cast of less than 25 American Superstars (Stratosphere)  
King Arthur's Tournament (Excalibur)

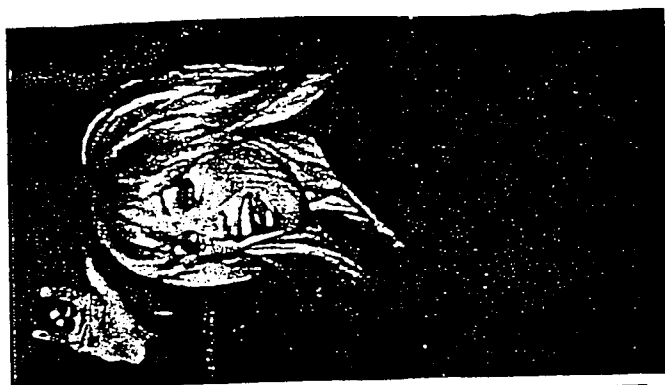


**DOROTHY HAMILL**  
IN "ENTER THE NIGHT"

Legends In Concert (Imperial Palace)

### **REVUE OF THE YEAR**

Cast of less than 10  
Forever Plaid (Flamingo Hilton)  
Tap Dogs (Stratosphere)  
Broadway Cabaret (San Remo)



**SUSAN ANTON**

### **NEW SHOW OF THE YEAR**

Lord of the Dance  
O (Bellagio)  
Broadway Cabaret

### **PRODUCTION SHOW STAR OF THE YEAR**

David Cassidy  
Susan Anton (Great Radio City Spectacular — Flamingo Hilton)  
Dorothy Hamill (Enter the Night—Stardust)

### **SHOWGIRLS OF THE YEAR**

Folles Bergere (Tropicana)  
Enter the Night  
Jubilee (Bally's)



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## BEAR STEARNS STOCK REVIEW JASON ADER

# A month of stock declines

Between July 17 and August 17, gaming stocks continued to decline along with the broad index. The Bear Stearns gaming industry index decreased by 12.3 percent, to 345.5 over the last month, while the S&P Index decreased 8.7 percent to 1083.7. The Bear Stearns Nevada Gaming Index decreased 12.5 percent over the last month to 263.8.

As overcapacity and difficult business conditions continue on the Las Vegas Strip, the stock prices of several major operators have been hurt. MGM Grand's stock (MGG) fell 8.5 percent for the month, to \$30 1/4, while Mirage Resorts (MIR) price decreased 11.7 percent, to \$18 7/16, on news of Chairman Steve Wynn selling 3 million shares of the company's stock.

The stock price for Circus Circus (CIR), the company with the greatest exposure on the Las Vegas Strip, continued to decline during the month with a drop of 20.6

percent, to \$12 1/2. Investors appear to be concerned about the company's announcement that Mandalay Bay, its latest development under construction on the Las Vegas Strip, has sunk up to 16 inches in areas.

Meanwhile, the Bear Stearns Riverboat Index declined 11.8 percent for the month, despite recent stabilization in many of the riverboat markets. Several operators with properties in the

emerging markets experienced declines. Harrah's Entertainment's (HET) price decreased by 12.9 percent, to \$18 1/2, despite a favorable response to its planned merger with Rio Hotel & Casino (RHC). Boyd Gaming (BYD) shares fell 12.6 percent, to 5 3/16. Hollywood Park's (HPK) share price decreased 1.1 percent for the month, to \$11 5/16. Finally, Station Casinos' (STN) stock price dropped nearly 60 percent following the termination of its merger agreement with Crescent Real Estate Equities (CEI).

Also on a decline, the Bear Stearns Gaming Equipment Index decreased 11.3 percent for the month, to 850.5. International Game Technology (IGT) was flat, closing at \$23 15/16, while Tech's (GTK) shares dropped 14.2 percent, to 29 3/4. Finally, Alliance Gaming Corp. (ALLY) showed a decrease of 25.8 percent for the month, to \$2 7/8, while Anchor Gaming's (SLOT) shares fell 11.3 percent to 65 3/16.

## Harrah's, Rio to Merge

Harrah's Entertainment and Rio Hotel and Casino announced a definitive merger agreement



through which Harrah's is expected to acquire all Rio shares in a one-for-one stock transaction and the assumption of Rio's outstanding debt. The transaction is valued at approximately \$518 million and the assumption of \$370 million in Rio debt (year-end 1998) for a total value of \$888 million. This would imply a multiple ranging from approximately 6.8 times to 7.1 times estimated \$125 to \$130 million 1999 EBITDA for Rio. The transaction is expected to

be tax-free to Rio shareholders.

We believe the merger is positive for both companies, and expect the deal to be accretive to earnings in the first year after closing. Through the merger Harrah's will gain immediate access to its first full destination resort, replete with "must-see" features, and a cross section of the Las Vegas tourist and "locals" markets which the company does not currently penetrate.

The merger is contingent upon approval by a majority of shareholders of both companies. Approvals must also be obtained by gaming regulators in multiple jurisdictions. Given that Rio is licensed in Nevada, which has a well respected regulatory environment, we anticipate timely approvals in

other gaming jurisdictions. The companies expect the deal to close by the end of 1998.

Rio is a unique and highly attractive property, but it also a single property and dependent upon the increasingly competitive Las Vegas Strip market. At a range of 6.8 times to 7.1 times estimated 1999 cash flow, we believe the transaction is priced fairly both for Harrah's and Rio shareholders. Other recent proposed gaming transactions have varied in value, ranging from 6.5 times forward EBITDA (Harrah's/Showboat, Colony Capital/Harvey's Casino Resorts) to 8.25 times forward EBITDA (Hilton Hotels/Grand Casinos).

However, the comparison of these precedent transactions to the Harrah's-Rio merger is difficult. While the prior deals have typically involved the acquisition of a company trading at a significantly lower multiple, here the transaction represents the use of one low-multiple stock as currency to purchase another, tax free.

Through the Rio merger Harrah's will gain access to its first premier destination resort in Las Vegas, and entree into the high-end gaming market. In addition, the company will penetrate the stable Las Vegas "locals" market, which still makes up a sizable portion of the Rio patron base despite the fact that more recent improvements at the property cater primarily to tourists.

While Rio is a single-property company, it is well respected owing to its methodical development history and strong management. The company's suite-only hotel rooms and famous "Carnival World Buffet" have historically been its strongest selling

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points. The property has grown in five distinct phases, from a mid-sized casino primarily serving the "locals" market, to a first-rate award-winning themed destination resort. Rio currently offers over 2,500 suites and over 3,000 gaming positions within 120,000 square feet of casino space.

The latest major attraction at Rio, added to the property last year, is the "Masquerade Village." The village is a food, entertainment and retail attraction offering periodic "Rio/Mardi Gras style" parades with floats suspended from the ceiling. An additional \$200 million in improvements associated with the Masquerade Village is also nearly complete. The latest expansion includes roadway improvements, a 100,000 square foot convention center, 10,000 square feet of new retail space, nine luxurious "Palazzo" suites (to help Rio secure its place in the increasingly competitive high-end baccarat market), an expanded outdoor entertainment area with an additional swimming pool, a 650-car valet parking garage, and other related amenities.

Through the merger Harrah's

will also acquire the newly developed 18-hole "Rio Seco" golf course and golf training center, located in suburban Las Vegas. Given the large number of patrons Harrah's is expected to host between the existing Harrah's Las Vegas and Rio properties, the utility of the course should be better maximized under the combined company than it is by Rio today.

Future development plans for Rio are now expected to be scrutinized by Harrah's management. The most significant project on Rio's plate is a new and separate 3,000-room resort on 43 acres adjacent to the existing Rio property.

Under the plan, the company would build a separate 3,000-room hotel-casino resort property; a new road, which would provide additional access

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to the Las Vegas Strip; and various additions to the existing Rio Suite Hotel & Casino.

While the timetable, theme and cost of the separate hotel casino resort project have not yet been established by Rio, we would estimate the cost at approximately \$500 million to \$550 million. Given the increasingly competitive conditions on the Las Vegas Strip, with more than 21,000 new rooms expected to be developed by 2000, we believe Harrah's will move cautiously in evaluating this ambitious plan.

Risk associated with Rio's emergence into the high-end Asian baccarat market should be minimized through the Harrah's merger. Rio has aggressively pursued the high-end Asian baccarat business in recent months. New amenities at the property are geared for the high-end player, and Rio appears to have successfully captured market share from other casinos catering to high-rollers.

As a stand-alone casino, earnings volatility related to high-end play presented a substantial risk for Rio. The market is expected to become more competitive in the future, and "bad luck" at the tables during any given quarter can severely influence results. This was the case last quarter when EBITDA at Rio decreased by more than 18 percent to \$20.1 million, from \$24.5 million during last year's comparable quarter. The decline was almost exclusively attributable to below average table-game hold percentages.

In the context of approximately \$1.8 billion in anticipated revenues from the combined company, high-end play is expected to represent less than 1 percent of company-wide revenues. This should effectively reduce the risk associated with high-end play for Harrah's. Meanwhile, Harrah's will have the facilities and ability to carefully scrutinize high-end play and determine what role it should have in the company's future.

Just before announcing their merger, both Harrah's and Rio announced their planned investments of \$15 million each in a new Las Vegas-based airline, to be called National Airlines. At the time of the announcement we indicated that as key investors in the new airline, each company would be able to capitalize on marketing opportunities

and provide a cushion in maintaining occupancy levels at their properties.

Ironically, the companies have stated that it was during their discussions of the airline investment that their compatibility and the potential benefits of the merger came to light. With \$30 million invested in National Airlines following the merger, Harrah's should represent approximately 38 percent of the voting common stock of the airline. Now, as the only gaming operator with an investment in National Airlines, we believe the benefits to Harrah's could be immeasurable.

We expect the merger to be accretive to Harrah's earnings in 1999, with most of the benefits being manifested through synergies and cost savings. There are several ways we believe cost savings can be achieved.

Harrah's anticipates approximately \$7.0 million in savings in operating costs, split equally over the first two years following the close of the deal. The company also anticipates savings in purchasing costs.

We believe that as a single property Rio has significant diseconomies of scale to be exploited. We would also point out, however, that some items unique to Rio will have to be maintained to preserve the property's unique and separate identity. We would anticipate cost savings in the areas of insurance, maintenance supplies and services, laundry services, and limited food supplies.

Finally, we expect Harrah's to refinance Rio's \$370 million in debt, reducing the company's blended rate (estimated to be above 9.0 percent) to Harrah's 7.0 percent credit facility. The companies believe this should result in annual savings of approximately \$4.5 million to \$5 million in interest expense.

We believe incremental revenue growth could be realized through market synergies, especially in the Las Vegas market where Harrah's currently operates a casino near Rio. However, as such synergies are difficult to quantify we have not included revenue growth in our pro-forma estimates for the combined company.

Harrah's and Rio indicated that there is currently minimal cross-over between their respective patron data bases, implying that cross-marketing opportunities should be substantial. This could allow Harrah's to market the Rio property as a unique experience to existing Harrah's patrons, and integrate Rio patrons into the Harrah's Total Gold national brand and customer loyalty program.

While both properties currently enjoy favorable occupancy levels (94 percent at Harrah's and 95 percent at Rio) Harrah's plans to increase the average gaming win per occupied room with the expanded marketing reach gained through the merger. Forwarding the effort of cross-pollinating the Harrah's and Rio patron bases should be the technological innovations being implemented across the Harrah's (and newly acquired Showboat) properties.

Harrah's uses Total Gold and related (and in some cases proprietary) technology to cater to the specific needs of this most valuable market segment through nationally implemented and tailored marketing programs. The company believes that by rewarding these patrons and offering them the most desirable incentives possible, they are likely to become loyal Harrah's patrons in multiple markets. Harrah's is likely to apply the same technology in attracting tourists who visit Rio in Las Vegas to Harrah's properties in their home markets.

The addition of Rio to Harrah's portfolio reinforces our current outlook for the company. We continue to view Harrah's as one

of the most recognized brand names in casino entertainment. Following the Rio merger Harrah's will operate 22 casinos in 18 distinct markets. The company is expected to control nearly 36,000 gaming positions with a total of over 1.1 million square feet of gaming space. In addition, the company will operate over 12,000 hotel rooms and suites at its casino properties.

Through the Rio merger Harrah's will gain access to its first premier destination resort in Las Vegas, entree into the high-end gaming market, and penetration into the stable Las Vegas "locals" market. Outside of Las Vegas, Harrah's continues to minimize risk associated with future earnings volatility through its geographic portfolio diversification.

In addition, we believe supply and demand conditions have stabilized in many of the emerging markets where Harrah's operates. We believe the Showboat acquisition was also a good strategic move for the company, which should be accretive in 1999.

Finally, we believe that although Harrah's is currently digesting two major acquisitions, the company should still be poised to make future acquisitions that are also accretive to earnings. On a pro-forma basis we expect the combined Harrah's company to have annual cash flow of approximately \$727 million on revenues of \$2.8 billion. We expect combined pro-forma 1999 long-term debt to be \$2.3 billion. We expect to continue to value the combined company at 7.5 times 1999 EBITDA, implying a target price of approximately \$25. Independently, on an enterprise value/EBITDA basis, Harrah's was recently trading at approximately 6.7 times our 1999 EBITDA estimate of \$600 million, based on a recent closing price of \$20 1/4. Rio was trading at approximately 6.9 times our 1999 estimated EBITDA of \$127 million, based on a closing price of \$19 1/2. We maintain our "Attractive" ratings on both companies.

## Mirage Earnings Below Expectations

Mirage Resorts' earnings for 2Q98 were below our estimate of \$0.23 per share versus \$0.35 in 2Q97. For the quarter, net revenues decreased 6 percent, to \$322.9 million from \$344.4 million while operating cash flow (EBITD) declined 20.0 percent, to \$77.3 million from \$96.8 million.

The decline in earnings was attributable to several factors. First, earnings were affected by a lower-than-historical table games win percentage, which impacted earnings by approximately \$0.04 to \$0.05 per share. Second, the company experienced a 13 percent decline in baccarat activity, accounting for roughly \$0.01 per share. Third, the company incurred higher staffing and training costs relating to Bellagio, which accounted for another \$0.01 per share. And last, the company estimates that the temporary injury of one of the principal performers in the Siegfried & Roy production affected earnings by yet another \$0.01 per share.

This show is very important to the company and should not be dismissed. Because of the injury, Siegfried & Roy ran 42 fewer shows than during the same quarter last year. With this show running at roughly 95 percent occupancy with seats going for \$88, this translates into a loss of roughly \$5.2 million in entertainment revenue, excluding any lost casino business from the crowds.

The results for the Mirage and Treasure Island include gains of \$2.6 million each (for a total of \$5.2 million) related to the sale of 16

acres of land to the owner of the adjacent Fashion Show Mall. This land was previously used by both hotel-casinos for employee parking and as such qualifies as operating income rather than a one-time gain for accounting purposes (i.e., it appears above the line rather than below the line). Therefore, for comparison purposes, the EBITD numbers for The Mirage and Treasure Island are really overstated by this amount.

Corporate expense rose slightly in the quarter when compared to historical results, and interest cost approximately doubled over the prior-year quarter as the company prepares for the opening of Bellagio and Beau Rivage. The additional interest cost was largely capitalized, as the increase in debt was caused by the company's ongoing construction projects.

The table-games win percentage in the quarter was 16.8 percent, versus 20.1 percent in the prior-year period. The company's win percentage over the past three calendar years has averaged 20.3 percent. Management estimates that the differential between the 20.3 percent and 16.8 percent win percentage in a quarterly period equates to approximately \$0.04 to \$0.05 per share.

The 13 percent decline in baccarat activity during the quarter, assuming a normal baccarat win percentage, equates to approximately another \$0.01 per share. Much of the decline in baccarat was associated with the economic and currency declines in certain countries in the Far East.

Furthermore, the level of baccarat play during the quarter was also affected by the lower issuance of credit extended to customers from those countries as a result of the Far East declines, but also to a greater extent certain customers' playing habits. Customers are playing more conservatively by playing smaller hands than otherwise and also in shorter increments of time.

Such behavior has had negative implications, and unfortunately we do not see any near term improvement. We expect that this softness in high-end play could persist until most of these Far Eastern economies begin to recover.

Nonetheless, other components of the company's gaming activity have generally equaled or exceeded historical levels. This is particularly encouraging as we await the mid-October opening of Bellagio, which should really drive the high-end business for the company in the later part of this year.

The Bellagio room reservations office recently completed its first 100 days of accepting reservations, and despite no advertising, over twice as many reservations had been placed for Bellagio as was the case over the preopening time periods for The Mirage and Treasure Island. The average rate for rooms and suites booked through this office to date is approximately \$258 per night. While this number does not include convention and wholesale bookings and the ultimate average rate may differ, it is encouraging and exceeds expectations.

At a recent closing price of \$21 1/2, Mirage is trading at approximately 22.6 times and 14.3 times our estimated 1998 and 1999 EPS projections of \$0.95 and \$1.50, respectively. On an enterprise value/ EBITDA valuation (reflecting estimated debt levels at year-end, respectively) shares of Mirage are trading at 13.9 times and 8.2 times our estimates. We maintain our "Attractive" rating with a 12- to 18-month price target of \$29 (10 times our full year 1999 EBITDA estimate of \$776 million).



## MGM Grand Earnings as Expected

MGM Grand reported second-quarter earnings of \$0.25 per diluted share, compared with \$0.56 per diluted share in the prior year's second quarter. The 55 percent decline in earnings was expected after the company pre-announced the shortfall in June as a result of lower-than-average gaming hold percentage at MGM Grand Las Vegas and lower earnings at the company's 50-percent-owned New York-New York Hotel & Casino.

In addition, MGM Grand Las Vegas also experienced lower casino volume in late June 1998 compared with the 1997 period, which included the June 1997 Holyfield/Tyson heavy-weight championship boxing event. As a result, management (at the time) guided consensus estimates to a range of between \$0.25 to \$0.30 per share.

For the quarter, net revenues decreased 11.3 percent, to \$185.4 million from \$209.1 million in the same period last year. EBITDA for the quarter fell 33 percent, to \$48.9 million from \$73.3 million in the second quarter 1997. Net income for the quarter was \$14.4 million, down from \$33.0 million for the second quarter 1997.

Net revenues at the property declined by 10 percent, to \$167.0 million from \$185.6 million. Operating cash flow (EBITDA before corporate expense) declined 36 percent to \$36.0 million from \$56.4 million in the second quarter of 1997. This reduction was principally due to the unusually low table games hold percentage, particularly in baccarat. Hold percentage on table games was in the 17 percent to 18 percent range, compared with 19 percent to 20 percent in last year's quarter, while hold percentage on baccarat was roughly 15 percent in this year's quarter, compared to the high-20-percent the company experienced last year.

However, on a more positive note, the results obscure the fact that, excluding last year's second-quarter Holyfield/Tyson boxing event, customer activity by most measures was ahead of last year's pace. Adjusting last year's quarter without the boxing event shows that table drop during this year's quarter was up between 5 percent and 10 percent, while baccarat drop was also up an impressive 30 percent.

But when comparing the quarters on an "as is" basis (i.e. with the fight), table-game drop was down 5 percent to 10 percent, while baccarat drop was down 1 percent to 2 percent. Slot drop was down approximately 4 percent.

Hold percentages aside, it becomes apparent how important major/high profile events are to MGM Grand. These events have traditionally brought record numbers of attendees to the property over the years.

During the quarter, occupancy increased to 98.0 percent and the average room rate was \$97, yielding approximately \$95 in revenue per available room (RevPAR). This compares to occupancy of 95.2 percent and an average room rate of \$101, yielding approximately \$96 in RevPAR for the same period last year.

Revenues at New York-New York declined nearly 20 percent to \$54.7 million for the quarter from \$67.4 million during last year's period. EBITDA fell to \$25 million from \$35.5 million, while margins remain strong at 45.9 percent, compared with 52.7 percent in the 1997 quarter. MGM recognized \$7.3 million in pretax income from its equity interest in the

*Continued on page 30*

## Ader *Continued from page 12*

project as compared with \$12.2 million during the second quarter of 1997.

During the quarter, New York-New York occupancy was 96.9 percent and average room rate was \$90, yielding approximately \$87 in RevPAR. This compares to occupancy of 99.6 percent and ADR (average daily rate) of \$102 which yielded \$100 in RevPAR in the same period last year.

The property has been impacted by the effect of increased competition amongst the mid-market facilities (i.e. Treasure Island Monte Carlo, Circus Circus Las Vegas Excalibur, and Luxor) which has made it more difficult to recognize higher hotel RevPAR. Furthermore, competition for casino revenues (particularly quarter and dollar slot players) remains very intense.

As a result we believe the property will

now generate between \$95 million and \$105 million in EBITDA annually, down from \$130.1 million in EBITDA in its first year of operation. Even at this more normalized run rate, this is still a tremendous return on investment. New York-New York was built for approximately \$460 million.

MGM Grand Australia in Darwin generated cash flow (EBITDA) of \$3.1 million for the second quarter, compared with \$2.2 million in the prior year's second quarter. Net revenues were \$8.3 million compared with \$8.8 million for the same period in 1997. The property's operating cash flow margin improved to 37.3 percent as compared with 25.0 percent in the second quarter of 1997.

The company earned management and development fees from its two South African casinos of \$0.6 million for the quarter ended June 30, 1998. Expenses related to managing and developing these facilities totaled \$0.3

million for the quarter.

The company is on target to manage its third casino in South Africa in the City of Johannesburg, which is believed to be the largest gaming market in South Africa. The casino project is subject to various approvals and regulatory conditions. It is anticipated that a temporary casino will open in September 1998, with the permanent facility opening in late 2000.

The company is continuing its efforts to secure licenses in additional jurisdictions in the Republic of South Africa. The company's partner, Tsogo Sun, will provide all project costs, and MGM Grand will earn fees for the development and management of the hotel/casino properties.

By all accounts, competition in Las Vegas has intensified. But while the MGM Grand Las Vegas has suffered in the first half of the current year as a result of below-average hold

percentages on high-end play, the property is attracting strong customer traffic and is generating solid gaming activity. Similarly, the property is generating high occupancy and RevPAR is up compared to last year.

These are positive trends and are encouraging in light of the MGM's \$700 million investment in retheming and enhancing the property. This should help the company maintain its leading position in the market and help differentiate it from older, less attractive properties that have resorted to room pricing wars that are hurting margins.

As part of the overall make-over of the property, MGM opened its \$88 million, 380,000-square-foot conference center in April. The center is state-of-the-art, contains the latest in meeting facilities, and is designed to provide unique indoor and outdoor environments. To this end, management believes that the convention center will be a prime contributor to future earnings. The convention center is

part of the company's overall master plan to transform the property into the "City of Entertainment."

We believe the convention center will greatly enhance business at the property, attracting large groups and helping to fill some of MGM's 5,005 rooms—particularly during the slower, end-of-week period. To this end, the company hopes to grow the convention business to 20 percent of its available room nights by year end. In the most recent quarter, convention business was 17 percent of available room nights compared to 13 percent during last year's second quarter.

The convention business is considered more desirable to the company as it can pre-sell rooms to this customer base at a \$100 ADR compared to an approximate \$80 ADR to the tour and travel customer that buys his/her room as a discounted package deal. In addition, it is estimated that the average convention customer spends (or budgets) 50 percent more on food and beverage, and other amenities, than the tour-and-travel customer. As a result, MGM should benefit from a slightly different customer mix while having the ability to generate higher ADRs and occupancy levels than it has experienced more recently.

With regard to other property enhancements as part of the master plan, The Mansion at the MGM Grand, which will cater to the high end, is expected to open Jan. 15 in time for Chinese New Year. The company is also renovating the 29th floor of the core property, the penthouse suites, which are expected to be completed by December in time for Christmas and New Years.

The company has also decided to proceed with the renovation (at \$7,000 per room) of most of its standard rooms that have not been upgraded since the property's opening in December 1993. As such, we can expect 6 percent (300 rooms) of the property's rooms to be out of service for a period of 10 to 14 days at any given time once renovation begins. Therefore there will be a period in which maximum occupancy is 94 percent.

We continue to believe that MGM is one of the leading gaming companies in the industry. Notwithstanding the disappointing hold percentages on table games (particularly on baccarat, which is mostly a "luck" factor) in the first half of the year, and despite the challenging environment in Las Vegas, we favor companies like MGM that control the leading properties in Las Vegas, given our expectation for selective growth in that market.

We maintain our "Attractive" rating and our 12-month target price of \$35. At a recent closing price of \$32 15/16, the stock was trad-

ing at 38.5 times our 1999 EPS estimate of \$1.80 and roughly 10.0 times our 1999 EBITDA estimate of \$270 million.

## Harrah's Reports Solid Earnings

Harrah's Entertainment reported 2Q98 earnings of \$0.33 per share from continuing operations, compared to \$0.25 per share for the same period last year. The quarter's results compare to our estimate of \$0.31 per share, and the consensus estimate of \$0.32.

One-time items for the quarter included \$6.7 million in venture restructuring expenses related to Harrah's New Orleans and abandoned Michigan and Indiana Native American projects, and a one-time pre-tax gain of \$13.2 million from the sale of the company's interest in a restaurant affiliate. Harrah's earnings were \$0.36 per share taking the net impact of these one-time items into account.

The company reported earnings of \$0.20 per share after an extraordinary loss related to refinancing debt at a lower interest rate. Harrah's EBITDA (before unusual items) was \$115.7 million for the quarter, a 23.6 percent increase over EBITDA (before unusual items) for the same period last year.

Operating profit before unusual items and equity in the earnings of nonconsolidated affiliates, was \$91.0 million for the quarter, a 20.1 percent increase over last year. Companywide, revenues were \$478.6 million for the quarter, a 17.1 percent increase over last year.

Harrah's completed its merger with Showboat Inc. in late May, one month earlier than expected. According to the company, the Showboat integration is moving on schedule, and consolidation synergies, particularly in the area of corporate expenses, are already being realized.

The second-quarter results include income from the newly acquired Showboat assets, with Showboat Atlantic City fully consolidated for the month of June, and Showboat East Chicago accounted for 15 a nonconsolidated affiliate for the month of June. Income from the Showboat interest in the Star City Casino in Sydney, Australia, will be recorded on a delayed basis beginning next quarter.

Other highlights for the quarter included particularly strong performance at Harrah's properties in Las Vegas, Atlantic City and Maryland Heights (near St. Louis). In addition, the benefits of the Harrah's "Total Gold" player club and branding program appear to be positively affecting results for the company, with a 9 percent increase in companywide cross-market tracked play over the 1Q98.

Harrah's Las Vegas continues to benefit from last year's expansion, and appears to be the primary beneficiary of Harrah's new marketing campaign. Revenues and EBITDA were up substantially in the second quarter. The year-over-year comparison is difficult, however, as construction was on-going at the property during last year's second quarter.

Harrah's Atlantic City properties also had a strong quarter, including both Harrah's Atlantic City on a stand-alone basis, and the Showboat Atlantic City property. Revenues and EBITDA increased year over year at both properties.

The company noted a particularly encouraging growth trend emerging over the past two quarters in Maryland Heights, Mo., where results have generally been disappointing since the property opened in March 1997. Results at Harrah's other riverboat and managed markets were solid for the quarter, with the exception of Shreveport, La., and Tunica, Miss., where

competition has heightened in recent months. Finally, Harrah's Lake Tahoe property operated below its potential during the second quarter, primarily due to low dollar-slot hold percentages.

We continue to view Harrah's as one of the most recognized brand names in casino entertainment, now operating 21 casinos in 18 distinct markets. We believe supply and demand conditions have stabilized in many of the markets where Harrah's operates, and the company's geographic portfolio diversification should lower the overall risk of future earnings volatility. The Showboat acquisition was a good strategic move for the company, and should be accretive in 1999.

In the future, we expect Harrah's to be a consolidator of distressed gaming assets at prices that should be accretive to future earnings. At a recent closing price of 21 1/4, Harrah's was trading at an enterprise

value/EBITDA multiple of approximately 6.6 times our 1999 EBITDA estimate of \$600 million. Applying a 7.5 times multiple to our 1999 EBITDA estimate implies a 12-month target price on Harrah's shares of \$26 per share. We believe Harrah's shares are attractively priced and, based on our valuation, we maintain our Attractive rating.

### Caution Is in Order

We maintain our view that the best strategy is to invest in large companies that have strong management teams, access to low-cost capital, and a solid track record in developing new properties. Investors in Las Vegas should be concerned about the potential risk of insufficient airline service to facilitate consumer demand over the next 12 to 24 months. This could have negative implications for profits. We would only focus on companies that control the leading properties in Las Vegas, given our

expectation for selective growth in that market.

We are optimistic about the expansion plans of large Nevada-based companies in Atlantic City and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. However, caution is in order regarding investment in all regional markets due to over-saturation and highly competitive business conditions.

We expect more consolidation over the coming months and view this as the primary trend supporting valuation levels for casino companies. However, given the robust national economy and the current negative political sentiment toward gaming, we believe that the prospects for new jurisdictional expansion are limited. Innovative gaming equipment manufacturers find themselves in a potentially lucrative position as gaming companies seek new technological advances to drive casino revenue. Given the limited growth potential for the gaming industry, we advise cautious investing. ▲

# Bear Stearns Gaming Stock Index

52 WEEK		Company	Ticker	CLOSING PRICE		
High	Low			8/17/98	7/17/98	% Change
12.75	3.63	Acres Gaming	AGAM	4.25	4.69	-9.3%
1.84	0.01	Advanced Gaming Technology	AGTI	0.01	0.03	-63.3%
6.63	2.88	Alliance Gaming Corp.	ALLY	2.88	3.88	-25.8%
4.25	1.06	Alpha Hospitality	ALHY	1.44	1.63	-11.5%
10.50	2.25	American Bingo & Gaming Corp.	BNGO	2.75	2.94	-6.4%
0.06	0.01	American Gaming & Entertainment	AGEL	0.02	0.02	0.0%
1.75	0.97	American Vantage Companies	ACES	1.13	1.31	-14.3%
11.00	4.50	American Wagering	BETM	5.06	5.33	-5.0%
6.50	3.06	Ameristar Casinos S	ASCA	3.13	4.25	-26.5%
99.50	42.50	Anchor Gaming	SLOT	65.19	73.50	-11.3%
5.75	2.50	Argosy Gaming Corp.\$	AGY	2.63	3.00	-12.5%
3.13	1.56	Autotote Corp.	TTE	2.50	2.75	-9.1%
9.94	5.13	Aztar Corp.	AZR	5.31	6.75	-21.3%
13.50	4.88	Blackhawk Gaming & Development	BHWK	11.13	12.25	-9.2%
9.25	4.88	Boyd Gaming Corp.t	BYD	5.19	5.94	-12.6%
1.22	0.38	Butler National Corp.	BUKS	0.56	0.56	0.0%
4.13	2.38	Casino America	CSNO	3.44	3.56	-3.5%
7.63	2.13	Casino Data Systems	CSDS	2.63	2.81	-6.7%
2.44	1.09	Casino Magic	CMAG	2.13	2.03	4.6%
2.19	0.53	Casino Resources	CSNR	0.75	0.75	0.0%
1.38	0.66	Century Casinos	CNTY	1.05	1.09	-4.3%
44.50	16.25	Churchill Downs	CHDN	31.00	39.50	-21.5%
26.69	12.25	Circus Circus Enterprises	CIR	12.50	15.75	-20.6%
0.37	0.08	Country World Casinos	CWRC	0.18	0.11	63.6%
4.88	2.50	Crown Group Inc.	DICE	3.38	3.81	-11.5%
33.63	17.63	Dover Downs Entertainment	DVD	30.75	32.63	-5.7%
1.03	0.50	Europa Cruises Lines	KRUZ	0.53	0.66	-19.0%
5.56	0.50	Florida Gaming Corp.	BETS	0.69	1.31	-47.6%
3.88	1.38	Full House Resorts	FHRI	2.38	2.44	-2.6%
13.00	3.31	Gametek International	GMTC	3.50	3.88	-9.7%
4.63	1.31	Global Casinos	GBCS	1.81	1.75	3.6%
19.13	10.50	Grand Casinos	GND	10.69	14.25	-25.0%
2.13	0.28	Great Bay Casino Corp.	GBY	0.59	0.34	74.6%
40.69	26.19	Gtech Holdings Corp.	GTK	29.75	34.69	-14.2%
26.38	16.94	Harrah's Entertainment	HET	18.50	21.25	-12.9%
30.00	16.38	Harveys Casino Resorts S	HVY	26.88	27.56	-2.5%
35.81	23.94	Hilton Hotels	HLT	24.25	26.56	-8.7%
3.56	1.31	Hollywood Casino	HWCC	1.56	1.69	-7.4%
22.75	10.25	Hollywood Park	HPRK	11.31	11.44	-1.1%
5.75	1.75	Innovative Gaming Corp. of America	ICCA	2.97	3.44	-13.6%
5.13	0.88	Interactive Entertainment (Sky)	IELSF	1.09	2.44	-55.1%
0.51	0.04	Interactive Gaming & Comm.	SBET	0.04	0.11	-63.6%
14.00	7.50	Interlott Technologies	ILI	9.38	10.38	-9.6%
28.69	17.25	International Game Technology	ICT	23.94	26.94	-11.1%
6.19	0.69	International Lottery & Totalizator	ITSI	0.75	0.91	-17.2%

13.94	10.75	Jackpot Enterprises	J	11.00	12.25	-10.2%
11.63	4.50	Lady Luck Gaming S	LUCK	7.13	8.13	-12.3%
0.41	0.06	Las Vegas Entertainment Network	LVEN	0.19	0.25	-25.0%
2.56	1.31	Latin American Casinos, Inc.	LACI	1.56	1.84	-15.3%
1.31	0.06	LS Capital Corp.	CHIP	0.07	0.09	-22.2%
46.88	26.56	MGM Grand S	MCG	30.19	33.00	-8.5%
9.00	4.50	Mikohn Gaming	MIKN	4.56	5.88	-22.3%
30.38	17.94	Mirage Resorts +	MIR	18.44	20.88	-11.7%
8.38	4.50	Monarch Casino & Resort	MCRI	6.25	6.25	0.0%
3.63	1.28	MTR Gaming Group Inc.	MNTG	2.44	2.38	2.6%
0.35	0.02	NuOasis Resorts, Inc.	NOOA	0.09	0.09	-3.5%
26.50	7.00	Paulson Gaming	PSON	7.88	8.13	-3.1%
20.13	6.25	Penn National Gaming	PENN	6.38	7.31	-12.8%
5.75	2.44	Players International +	PLAY	4.69	5.06	-7.4%
15.25	7.25	Powerhouse Technologies, Inc.	PWRH	8.94	10.06	-11.2%
7.00	1.75	President Casinos	PREZ	1.75	2.44	-28.2%
20.00	10.00	Primadonna Resorts *	PRMA	11.88	14.63	-18.8%
22.25	8.25	Radica Games	RADAF	15.25	17.50	-12.9%
29.13	16.50	Rio Hotel & Casino	RHC	17.75	17.69	0.4%
15.50	5.75	Riviera Holdings	RIV	7.25	7.56	-4.1%
2.75	1.38	Sands Regent	SNDS	1.63	1.75	-7.1%
2.75	0.50	Santa Fe Gaming Corp.	SGM	1.00	1.13	-11.1%
24.00	18.25	Scientific Games Holdings Corp	SG	19.75	22.69	-12.9%
11.50	6.00	Shuffle Master	SHFL	8.00	8.75	-8.6%
18.63	5.94	Silicon Gaming S *	SGIG	6.31	7.69	-17.9%
14.50	5.38	Sodak Gaming	SODK	7.31	6.56	11.4%
0.05	0.01	Star Casino	SCAS	0.03	0.03	0.0%
16.63	5.69	Station Casinos *	STN	5.94	14.75	-59.7%
3.00	0.51	Stuart Entertainment *	STUA	0.63	1.00	-37.5%
51.25	30.25	Sun International S	SIH	42.75	46.75	-8.6%
12.94	5.00	Trump Hotel & Casino Resort	DJT	5.19	7.94	-34.6%
1.03	0.06	Worldwide Leisure Corp	WWLC	0.14	0.13	7.8%

### MONTH'S TOP PERFORMERS\*\*

	Closing Price	% Change
Sodak Gaming	7.31	11.4%
Rio Hotel & Casino	17.75	0.4%
Monarch Casino & Resort	6.25	0.0%

### MONTH'S WORST PERFORMERS\*\*

	Closing Price	% Change
Station Casinos	*5.94	-59.7%
Trump Hotel & Casino Resort	5.19	-34.6%
Grand Casinos	10.69	-25.0%

### INDEX COMPARISONS

	8/17/98	7/17/98	12/31/97	% Change	
				month	year
S&P 500 Index.....	1083.7	1186.8	970.4	-8.7%	11.7%
DJIA .....	8574.9	9338.0	7908.3	-8.2%	8.4%
Gaming Equip. Index.....	850.5	958.4	1004.4	-11.3%	15.3%
Gaming Riverboat Index .....	483.3	547.9	475.4	-11.8%	1.7%
Gaming Nevada Index.....	263.8	301.5	325.1	-12.5%	18.8%
Gaming Industry Index.....	345.5	393.9	413.7	-12.3%	16.5%

\*\* Stocks priced over \$5.00.

\* Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. is a market maker in the security of this company and may have a long or short position in the security.

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§ Within the past three years, Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. or one of its affiliates was the manager (co-manager) of a public offering of securities of this company and/or has performed other banking services for which it has received a fee.

## Mirage Resorts Plans Family Hotel in Vegas

■ **Gaming:** The \$300-million Treasure Island complex is expected to intensify competition in Nevada's biggest entertainment oasis.

By GEORGE WHITE  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Mirage Resorts Inc. said Tuesday that it will build a \$300-million family oriented themed resort in Las Vegas, escalating the fight for family business in the Nevada gaming and adult entertainment oasis.

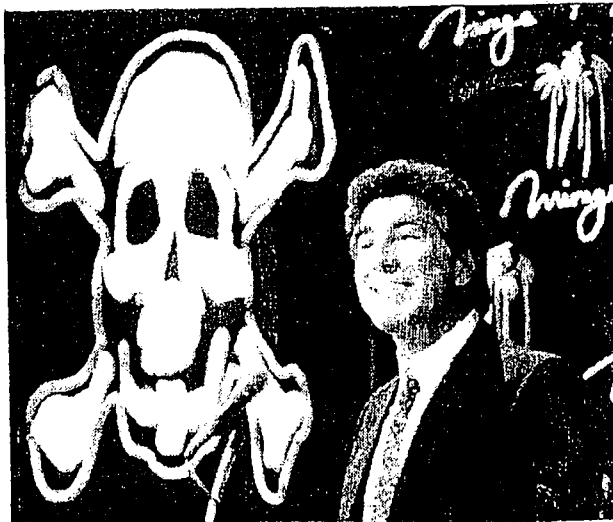
The Las Vegas-based company, which owns the Golden Nugget casinos in Las Vegas and Laughlin, Nev., said its latest mega-casino—to be called Treasure Island—will have 3,000 guest rooms and will be located adjacent to the Mirage, the firm's flagship casino and resort.

The new resort is expected to open in mid-1994, Mirage Resorts said.

The company joins a long list of gaming firms entering the burgeoning family entertainment market in a city once viewed as an adults-only vacation spot. Circus Circus Enterprises Inc. in June, 1990, opened the Excalibur, a 4,000-room hotel and casino that has a medieval theme and offers substantial non-gaming entertainment. Circus Circus is expected to announce soon that it plans to build yet another property.

In addition, MGM Grand Inc., which is controlled by Beverly Hills investor Kirk Kerkorian, this month began construction on a \$600-million, 112-acre complex in Las Vegas that will include a 5,000-room hotel and a theme park.

The Mirage Resorts announcement is another sign of changing times in Las Vegas, said Manny Cortez, executive director of Las



JIM LAURIE / For The Times

Steve Wynn announces plans for new resort called Treasure Island.

Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

"Because of the proliferation of gaming around the country, the local casinos have decided that they can survive only by expanding and diversifying to attract a broader [spectrum] of people," Cortez said.

However, the building boom is expected to create a competitive shakedown in Las Vegas. The city has about 77,000 hotel rooms, a 20% increase over the past two years. With just the announced expansion plans, Las Vegas would have an additional 10,000 rooms by 1994, said Willard Brown, a gaming industry analyst at Dean Witter Reynolds in New York.

"The smaller casinos and the casinos with weaker management are going to face some tough times," Brown said. "By 1994, a number of casinos will be barely hanging on, some will be purchased by larger operations and some will head into bankruptcy."

However, some casinos are already feeling the competitive pressure. The hotel occupancy rate thus far in 1991 is 80%, compared to 86% for the same period in 1990. Casino revenue growth in 1991 is

about 3%, compared to about 10% a year earlier, said Walter Tyminski, an industry analyst who contributes to Resort Management Report, a trade journal published in Midlothian, Va.

"Besides [new] construction, business has never recovered from the downturn that occurred during [the Gulf War] and slowdown in the economy," Tyminski said.

However, Mirage Resorts Chairman Steve Wynn said Treasure Island will allow his company to enter the lucrative lower-priced, family-oriented market. Room rates at the new property will average \$40 a night, he said. The Mirage, a 3,000-room, \$630-million hotel and casino that opened in November, 1989, caters to the upper end of the market, with rooms averaging \$120 a night.

Some major casino stocks dropped in Wall Street trading after the Mirage announcement. In New York Stock Exchange composite trading, Mirage closed at \$24.50, down \$1.50. In other Big Board trading, Circus Circus fell \$1.25, closing at \$34.125, while Hilton slipped 12.5 cents to \$42.875. However, Caesars gained 87.5 cents to close at \$32.375.



LOS ANGELES TIMES

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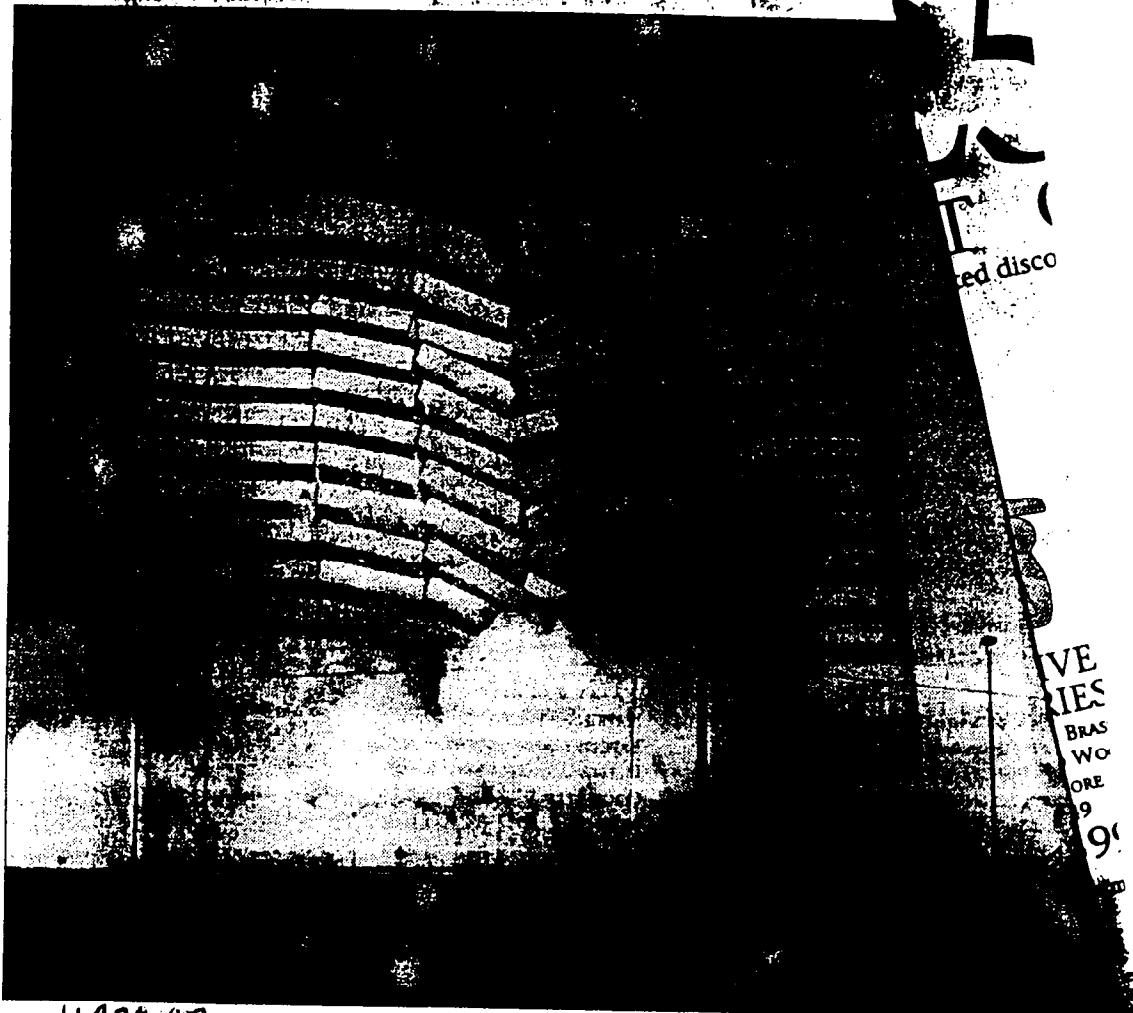
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## Going Out With a Bang



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The old 17-story tower of the Dunes Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas crumbles after a series of blasts caused by 315 charges of dynamite. The casino complex was demolished to make way for two new Mirage resorts. About 3,000 people gathered on the Strip to watch the 4 a.m. demolition.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES, CA  
DAILY

FRIDAY

SEP 23 1994

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COLUMN ONE

# Las Vegas Gambles on Families

*4926BR - Drasula*  
■ Campaign to lure  
parents and children  
brings big crowds—and  
backlash. Holdout casinos  
decry the image change.  
Even backers concede that  
poor planning has caused  
some gaffes. FRONT PAGE

By MICHAEL A. HILTZIK  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

LAS VEGAS—Darrell Luery still remembers the day he came face to face with this city's new image as a family resort. It was at the vast new MGM Grand Hotel, where he almost tripped over a woman changing her infant's dirty diaper on the casino floor.

"It was one of those yucky ones, and I had to see the whole thing!" he says.

What makes the incident particularly piquant is that Luery is president and chief operating officer of Bally's Las Vegas, a neighboring casino trying desperately to hold the line against this year's influx of Vegas vacationers with children.

But Bally's may be trying to turn back the tide.

Las Vegas this year is likely to see a record 29 million visitors. By most accounts an unprecedentedly high percentage will be children, hauled off for vacations in what used to be known as America's Sin City by parents dazzled by a burst of nationwide hype positioning Las Vegas as the country's newest family resort.

The impact was visible all summer long, as the fabled Las Vegas Strip was awash in children. They thronged the walkway in front of the new Treasure Island resort three times a night to watch an elaborate live pirate battle; ogled dolphins and white tigers at the neighboring Mirage, and dropped thousands of dollars worth of quarters into state-of-the-art video games at the new Luxor and MGM Grand casino-hotels.

But the one thing they were not permitted to do was gamble, and therein lies a key reason that the family resort idea is generating perhaps the most important debate about Las Vegas' future since Bugsy Siegel built the original Flamingo hotel-casino in 1946.

"To me it seems funny that we're going after a market for whom the biggest activity in town is illegal," says John A. Schibrowsky, an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, who has studied the economics of the phenomenon.

Phenomenal it is: Hotel occupancy rates in town have been running higher than 98%, despite the addition of about 10,000 rooms in nine months.

"When you look at the numbers of people traveling to a casino destination in America, they're popping," says Glenn W. Schaeffer, the former president of Circus Enterprises who is a partner in Gold Strike Casinos, which is planning a new family-friendly resort for the Las Vegas Strip.

For now, at least, the city's

▶ Please see LAS VEGAS, A7

# VEGAS: Family Attractions Alter Image of 'Sin City'

Continued from A1

resort planners seem to have found a formula to appeal to many visitors too young to gamble.

"It's awesome," said Randy Dickenson, 13, of Chicago after an hour's play at the Luxor Hotel's vast, two-story video arcade. (He estimated he had spent about \$15 pumping quarters into Mortal Kombat II and virtual reality combat games.)

But Schibrowsky and others argue that Vegas is so dazzled by the near-term success of its family promotion that it has not focused on the problems a radical change in tourist demographics would bring to the city.

For one thing, the traditional practice of using rooms, restaurants and even air fares as loss leaders to get customers to the playing floor will have to be reconsidered if the number of rooms occupied by non-gamblers continues to rise. That in turn will cut into Las Vegas' price advantage over such more-established family resorts as Orlando, Fla.

"This town was built on cheap rooms and cheap meals to get people to gamble," says Dean Harold, a senior vice president of Bally's. "Are [family customers] playing as much in the casinos? No, they're not. And if you can't make the money in the casino, you're going to have to make it up in the room rate."

The family market also means not only parents changing diapers in the casino, but an apparent increase in gambling violations by minors.

Last month the State Gaming Board issued the first citation to a Strip casino—ironically Bally's, which discourages family business—for allowing a minor to gamble. (The 19-year-old lost more than \$6,200 in three hours of blackjack.)

Bally's has agreed to pay a fine of \$20,000 to \$25,000 and to toughen its enforcement of underage gambling rules, according to officials of the casino and the State Gaming Commission.

families may mean redesigning casinos to keep children off the floor, upgrading swimming pools and other amenities to give them more to do, and acquiring more expertise in non-gaming entertainment attractions—an area in which such major casino companies as MGM Grand and Circus Circus Enterprises lately have committed embarrassing fumbles.

"I'd say they need more facilities for the kids, other than letting them spend \$200 an hour on the video games," said one frequent Las Vegas visitor, Frank Russo, a Coral Springs, Fla., businessman who was making his first visit with his daughter, Dina, 13, in tow.

Dina, weary of looking at man-made sights and being asked by security people to move along, agreed that Las Vegas needs more organized teen-agers activities. "There's a lot more for us to do on a cruise," she sighed.

Some casino executives fear, meanwhile, that repositioning this town as a family resort could alienate its traditional clientele of serious gamblers without significantly expanding the total market. Executives at the Las Vegas Hilton, the city's premier convention hotel and a mecca for high rollers, say they already are getting more business from customers who resent having to gamble elsewhere with a lot of kids around.

Other casinos already have embarked on counter-marketing against the family hype.

"We want people to think of us as the last bit of real distinction and class left in a place turning more mid-market and family-oriented," says Henry Gluck, chairman and chief executive officer of Caesar's World, the owner of Caesar's Palace, one of the top hotels for serious gamblers on the Strip. The hotel has upgraded several of its most luxurious high-roller suites and is planning to double the size of its upscale Forum Shops mall, which has three street entrances but only one exit—into the casino.

The case is widely seen here as a warning that gaming authorities believe the casinos are too lax about monitoring the behavior of people under 21, the state's legal age for gambling. Ron Asher, the Gaming Control Board's enforcement chief, says his agency regards underage gambling as "an industrywide problem" and that several more cases are being prepared against other casinos.

"When I was growing up in Las Vegas we understood that you could not even walk through the casino to get to the restaurant," says Nevada Gaming Commissioner Steve DuCharme. "The hotels had to provide another route. Now everyone who comes in has to walk through the casino, because they put a sea battle out front and a 35,000-square-foot video arcade in the back."

Keeping children and gambling devices apart is not made easier by one of the axioms of modern casino design—that slot machines should be located along the routes of heaviest foot traffic. Because those are generally the paths between, say, the video arcade and the room elevators, underage visitors inevitably confront temptation.

**“W**ord of mouth and common sense tell you that if you put them in harm's way, some kids are going to reach in their pockets and plunk down their paper-route money," DuCharme says.

Indeed, a recent informal sortie around the casino floor at the MGM Grand turned up several children casually dropping coins in nickel or quarter slots and many more standing by as their parents played, which is illegal.

MGM executives say all their floor staff are trained to warn off underage gamblers. However, gaming authorities say that in periods of heavy family travel the flow of minors through casinos may be too great to police adequately. Like liquor store clerks, casino dealers and bosses may have to get into the habit of "carding" anyone who looks underage, Asher says.

Under Nevada law, a minor who gambles or loiters around a table game or slot machine and the casino where it occurs both can be charged with misdemeanors; violations carry fines of up to \$1,000. The casino is also subject to administrative penalties, including fines of up to \$250,000 or loss of its license—regardless of whether casino personnel knew the gambler was underage.

Accordingly, accommodating

**S** till, some say that rising competition for gamblers' money across the country leaves Las Vegas no choice but to position itself as more than a gambling venue. Although casino gambling once was permitted only in Nevada and Atlantic City, N.J., 21 states have legalized full-range casinos and virtually all of the largest metropolitan areas are within 200 miles of slot-machine and table-game play.

Over the last year or two, that competition has inspired Vegas hotel managers to try to broaden their appeal. "The overpowering statistic is that only 15% of vacationers in the country have ever visited Las Vegas," says Clyde Turner, Circus Circus Enterprises chief executive.

If Las Vegas' traditional marketing target was a 50-year-old whose children had departed the nest, leaving him with plenty of disposable income and time, now the focus has shifted.

"Our principal marketing target is the baby boomer in his 40s," says Gold Strike's Schaeffer. "He'll frequently choose to travel with his family, so you have to offer a full-service entertainment product."

The new marketing era took off with the launching late last year of three major Strip resorts costing more than \$2 billion combined: The Luxor, an Egyptian-themed pyramid opened by Circus Circus; Steve Wynn's pirate-themed Treasure Island, and the MGM Grand, with Wizard of Oz decor and a theme park designed to resemble a mini-Disneyland.

They joined two properties also regarded as family-market oriented, both owned by Circus Circus Enterprises: the original 1968-vintage Circus Circus and its 1990 spinoff, the Arthurian-themed Excalibur.

The three new mega-hotels were not all equally pitched to tourists with children—Mirage Resorts, owner of Treasure Island, likes to call its properties "family-neutral" rather than "family-oriented." But the openings generated a world-class publicity blast, including a cover story in Time magazine just as many families were planning their summer vacations. The result: Near-capacity business all summer.

The hoopla inspired by the new resorts generated its own momentum. Already, ITT Sheraton has announced a 3,500-room, \$750-million themed resort to go next to its Desert Inn hotel-casino and be called Desert Kingdom. Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts, plans to build a major themed resort on the Strip location once occupied by

the Dunes, which he demolished to great fanfare earlier this year. All together, as many as 20,000 new rooms may open by 1997.

The latest surge, however, has created an "identity crisis," in the words of Barry Shier, president and chief executive officer of the Golden Nugget, Mirage Resorts

high-grade hotel-casino for serious gamblers in downtown Las Vegas. "We are an adult Disneyland, but we are not Disneyland, and I do not believe it is anyone's intent that we should become one," Shier told the magazine Las Vegas Style this summer. "Now with school out for the first extended period since

Dean Harold, left, and Darrell Luery of Bally's have doubts about the wisdom of luring families. But Circus Circus has built an amusement park.

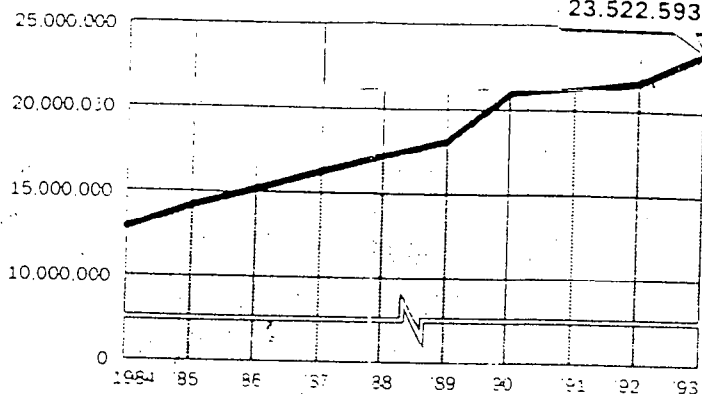


## New Look for Sin City

Tourism in Las Vegas is reaching record heights as a segment of the city's hotel industry sets out to draw families to what has long been an adult-oriented destination. But the new visitor mix is hammering away at per-person gambling levels, which had already been falling for a decade as conventioners and low rollers displaced Las Vegas' traditional customers.

### TOURISM IS UP...

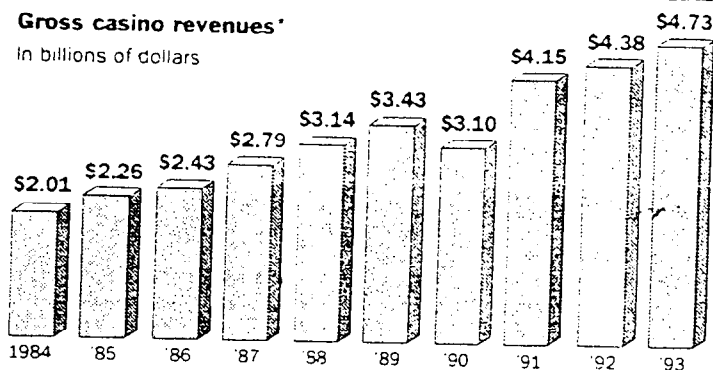
Visitors to Las Vegas (including repeat visitors)



### ...AS IS BETTING IN CLARK COUNTY'S CASINOS...

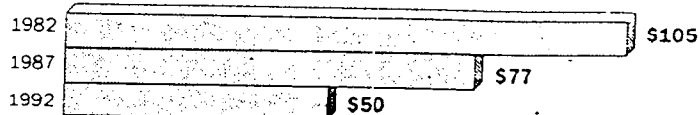
Gross casino revenues\*

In billions of dollars



### ...BUT THE AVERAGE VISITOR'S DAILY GAMBLING BUDGET HAS PLUNGED...

Based on surveys of visitors



### ...AND GAMBLING LEVELS ARE WEAKEST WHEN THERE ARE MORE CHILDREN IN TOWN.

Data is for 1991-92

Season	Percentage of visitors with children	Daily gambling budget, per person
Winter	5%	\$62
Spring	6%	\$47
Summer	12%	\$39
Fall	5%	\$53

\*Includes gambling by tourists and residents

Sources: Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority; University of Nevada, Las Vegas

TIC 2122

A101

KEN OELERICH, Los Angeles Times

these new properties opened, people are saying things like the gaming contribution per customer is not as it used to be. Well, big surprise! If you've got children occupying certain rooms, they can't gamble."

In fact, the evidence shows that parents coming with children also gamble less than those who come alone. Joseph Oxman, a Seattle food broker who recently spent three days at Treasure Island with his wife, Darcy, and two children, said he had budgeted \$200 a day to play blackjack. On his last visit in 1984—without the children—Oxman and his wife each had spent \$400 a day. (This time, the kids each were spending about \$30 daily on video games.)

"You come here and even if you want to gamble you can't, because you have to watch the kids," said Marvin Hicks of Monroe, Mich., a guest at the Tropicana whose family responsibilities were keeping him from the craps tables. Added his wife, Dawn: "You can't even drop a coin in the slot machines, because with the kids you have to keep moving through the casino."

Statistics bear out their experience. Visitors' average gambling budgets in 1992, the last year for which such a breakdown is available, were highest in winter and fall when the percentage of tourists with children was lowest, and bottomed out at \$39 per person per day in summer, when the percentage of parties with children peaked at 12%.

As it happens, economics and other factors have been driving down visitors' gambling budgets generally—to \$50 per person per day in 1992 from \$105 in 1982. That's a troublesome trend that will only continue if Vegas becomes more family-friendly, particularly when compounded by a growth in conventions, many of which bring non-gamblers to town.

(The percentage of non-gambling visitors rose to 10% in 1993 from 3% in 1987, according to the city's Convention and Visitors Authority.)

For now, there is reason to wonder whether Las Vegas can create the kind of resort flavor that keeps families coming back year after year without getting bored—or offended. Girlie shows and other raw cabaret acts may largely have been shouldered off the glossy south end of the Strip ("The PG mentality is here," says Gold Strike's Schaeffer), but a large percentage of the taxis in town still bear roof placards advertising a downtown attraction called "Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch."

Some experts doubt that even top-notch gaming executives can prosper in the trickier entertainment business, as they must to maintain a family trade.

"Blackjack and slot machines are

well understood and quite predictable," says Eugene Christiansen, a New York-based casino consultant. "But family entertainment takes a whole different set of skills."

Nothing proves that as well as the travails of Vegas' two most highly touted family attractions: the MGM Grand's Grand Adventures Theme Park and Circus Circus's Grand Slam Canyon, a venue of roller-coaster rides and themed amusements.

Both charged ambitious admissions prices when they opened last year—\$25 a head for MGM's park and \$20 for Grand Slam Canyon. Both were flops.

Grand Slam Canyon was rife with design flaws, including a flume ride that drenched its customers ("Now it's just a light spray," says Turner). Attendance was so poor that the company shut down the attraction for three weeks last October for a total redesign. It reopened with an admission price of \$3, with an additional fee charged for individual rides.

**M**GM, meanwhile, oversold its theme park's quality without devoting to it sufficient imagination and expense. "It was announced as a \$110-million park," says a competing casino executive. "At Disneyland, Splash Mountain alone cost \$80 million."

Among the MGM park's shortcomings is that it is open to the skies in a town where the daytime temperature during the summer vacation months can top 110 degrees. The park closes at 7 p.m., just about the time the desert heat begins to wane.

Already, MGM Grand has cut the admission price twice, most recently to zero (customers wanting to enjoy its seven rides buy a separate admission at \$15 for adults, \$11 for children). That change almost instantly doubled revenues at the retail shops and restaurants in the park. Still, on a recent midday visit, the park was virtually deserted while the state-of-the-art video arcade inside the air-conditioned hotel was jammed.

For all that, most observers believe the family trend in Las Vegas is just beginning, powered by a generation of executives no longer convinced that the casino needs to be the only profit center in the hotel. The Mirage and Treasure Island are turning profits by selling trademark T-shirts in their retail shops, and room and food prices at the MGM Grand suggest they no longer are pure loss leaders.

"Visitors' gambling budgets may be lower, but their overall vacation budgets are not," says Schaeffer. "At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what part of the store they spend it in." 7



Chris Hirst of Seattle lifts his son Sean so he can get a better view of the pirate show in front of Treasure Island on the Vegas Strip. Photos by PAUL MORSE Los Angeles Times

A103

TIC 2124

LOS ANGELES TIMES  
December 30, 1994  
F2

HILL & KNOWLTON

**New Year's Cheer:** KCAL-TV Channel 9 will host a live New Year's Eve television special from B.B. King's Blues Club at Universal CityWalk. The evening's entertainment includes Arthur Adams and his band and headliner Popa Chubby. Comedian Howie Gold will host the live 11 p.m.-12:30 a.m. show, which will be combined with live coverage from Las Vegas' Treasure Island and Mirage hotels, anchored by Sarah Purcell and Jack Perkins. Tickets to the Los Angeles party are \$75 and available through the club.

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LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES, CA  
SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 1995

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## Yo, ho, yo, ho: It's a pirate's life for actors at Treasure Island

By STACEY WELLING

It's hard to imagine a sea in a city surrounded by Joshua trees and dusty landscape.

But right on Las Vegas Boulevard is Buccaneer Bay, a manufactured oasis in front of Treasure Island that erupts nightly with live battles between two full-scale ships.

Centered in front of an 18th Century-style Caribbean pirate village, hundreds of battle gazers line a wooden dock along the bay a half hour before each show.

"It doesn't matter if it rains or snows," says stage manager Frank Coombs. "There still are 1,500 people on the dock before every show. It's amazing."

Visitors can expect elbow-to-elbow crowds of 2,000 people per show, making it one of the city's most popular attractions.

The 12-minute production begins as pirates unload stolen booty from the *Hispaniola*, a battle-worn ship with a bow blackened from one too many near misses with pursuers.

Then, the *HMS Britannia* emerges, and British naval officers order the bandits to lay down their arms and surrender. The pirates refuse. The British respond by firing a warning blow that hits just short of the *Hispaniola's* bow, causing a big splash of water. The pirates return fire with a cannon blast that punches a hole in the *Britannia's*

topsail. Thus, the fiery battle begins.

At the center of this smoke-filled, swashbuckling spectacle is the crew of 29 performers and 12 technicians who have the job of turning "The Buccaneer Bay Show" into reality each day.

A few like Craig Dunbar, who plays the British gunner officer Mr. Smythe, are trained actors.

"It may not be 'Hamlet,' but it is gratifying," says Dunbar, who at 44 is the oldest cast member (The youngest is 19.) "For a lot of these people, it may be the only performance of live theater they have ever seen in their lives."

Most other cast members are athletes with varied experience ranging from football to bodybuilding to construction work. The only woman on the cast was a jockey before she came aboard.

"They're getting shot at, they're swinging on ropes and doing all the childlike things we'd all like to do," says Coombs. "But it is a physically demanding job, and the fatigue factor can really set in."

Sonny Tipton, who plays a pirate, is a lifelong high diver. During weekday shows he falls 40 feet off the *Hispaniola's* mezzanine-level yardarm into the bay. During weekend shows, pyrotechnic explosions set him on fire.

"The body burns are more complicated to do because there's no gimmick or trick," says Tipton. "I'm really on fire. It takes four or five people and 45 minutes of



Photo by TOM GRIFFIN

"The Buccaneer Bay Show" bursts into swashbuckling action several times daily at Treasure Island.

setup time to get a 20-second burn."

The bay ranges in depth from six to 35 feet, where the British ship sinks courtesy of a tilt deck under the water. The high-dive area is 12 feet deep.

During the winter, the most coveted job is that of the pirate captain because he's the only cast member who doesn't get wet. Everyone else on both ships eventually goes overboard as part of each show. And the water isn't heated. Water temperatures dipped to a chilly 42 degrees in January.

Cast members change costumes between each show. Wet suits are

available, but not everyone wears one.

Shows are canceled if winds are blowing more than 15 m.p.h. The same guideline applies to volcano eruptions in front of The Mirage.

"Ash blowing into the audience from the explosions can be a problem," Coombs says. "If the audience were behind a glass wall, we'd run a lot more shows than we do."

If shows are canceled, cast members work behind the scenes in acting workshops. They also do most of the cosmetic maintenance on the ships, including painting the props,

repairing the sails and re-rigging ladders and ropes.

"It's a constant battle to replace or fix whatever burns or dries out," Coombs says. "In between shows, the crew is out sewing on patches to whatever isn't heat resistant."

Six scuba-trained technicians work each show to maintain the technology both under and behind the show: the computers, hydraulics systems and mechanical operations.

The show's pyrotechnic punch is shared between the two ships. Each show unleashes

W. Please see PIRATES Page 74



Photo by TOM GRIFFIN

Treasure Island's Buccaneer Bay erupts nightly on Las Vegas Boulevard as two full-scale ships battle.

## PIRATES: Buccaneer Bay comes to Las Vegas Boulevard

Continued from Page 76  
104 explosions through a combination of fireworks and gas. A techni-

cal director, who occupies a booth above the set, controls wave effects and boat movements during the show.

Directors and technical assistants work with the captains of both ships to keep their eyes on changing wind patterns or other problems that may arise from explosions. The captains also watch their crews and the audience.

"If I see a problem, I have the ability to stop the show from the boat," says Mark Steelsmith, who trained exotic animals and worked as a magic show technician before he joined the Buccaneer Bay cast. Everyone knows where he is sup-

posed to be. When we get hit, different people start going off the boat at different times. It's choreographed that way."

Ship captains hold enable switches in their hands throughout each show. If they smell gas, spot a hydraulics problem or see a cast member fall too closely to an explosion site, they press their switches to stop or delay individual effects. Switches that will stop the entire production are also located in strategic spots around the stage.

Steelsmith uses his enable switch about once a week.

There is one thing, though, the audience can always count on at Buccaneer Bay: The pirates always win.

It's a reality that comes with the territory at Treasure Island. There also is a bright side for those who go down with the Britannia every night—they still get paid every two weeks.

Weekend hours for "The Buccaneer Bay Show" are 4:53, 7:30 and 10 p.m. There are additional 11:30 p.m. shows on Fridays and Saturdays.

Welling is a free-lance writer living in Las Vegas.

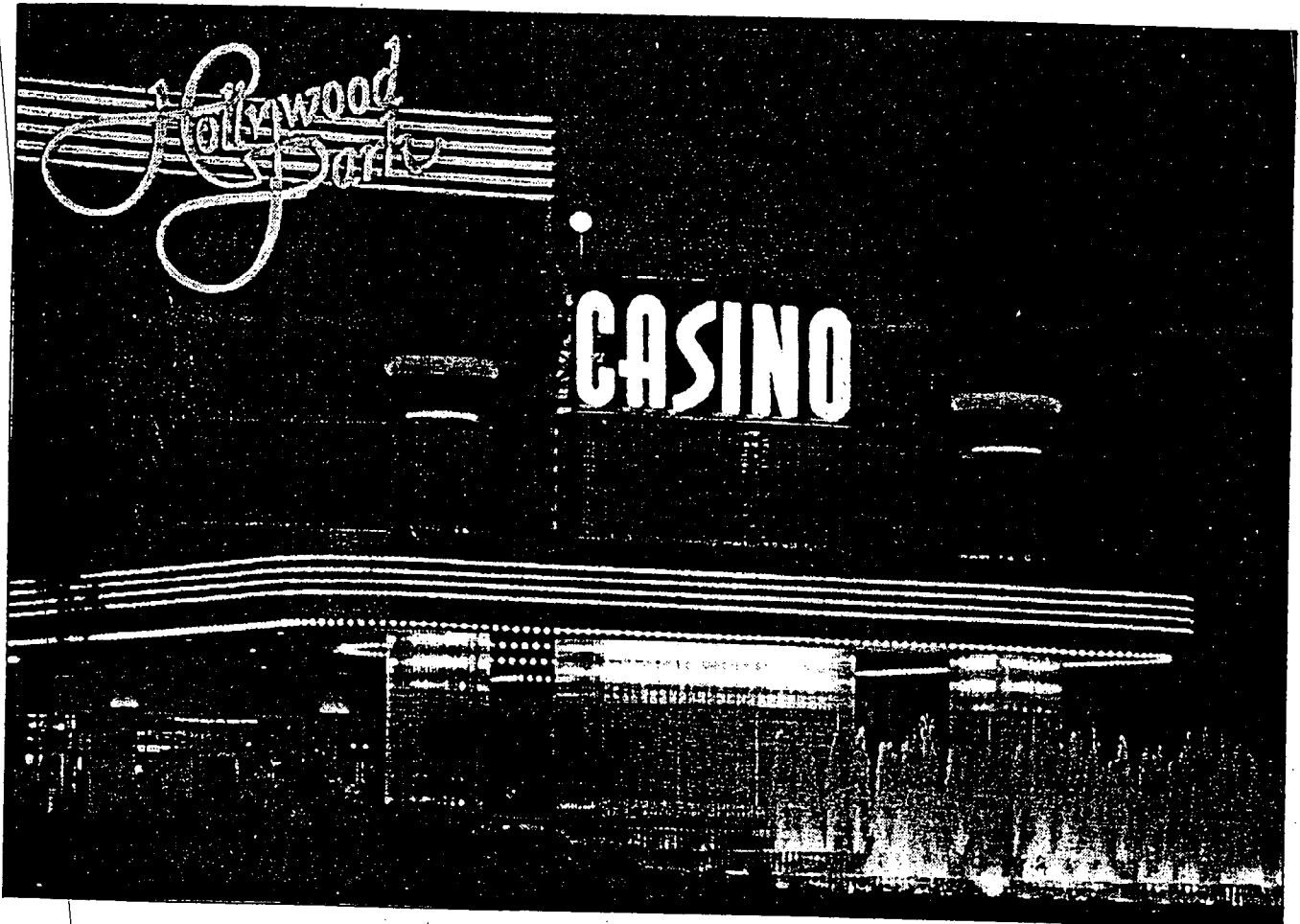
HILL & KNOWLTON

LOS ANGELES TIMES

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## California and the West



FRANCIS GARDLER / Los Angeles Times

Hollywood Park Casino's Las Vegas-style ambience is skin-deep for now, but some see a full array of gambling soon.

TIC 2314

A108

# Gambling Industry Studies the Odds

■ **Betting:** Lobbyists are intensifying their battle for full-scale, Vegas-style casinos in California. They face determined opposition, but time may be on side of gaming interests.

By MAX VANZI  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SACRAMENTO—When the owners of Hollywood Park racetrack decided to build an adjoining poker parlor to help shore up sagging revenues, they had more in mind than straights and flushes.

They built into the new structure a network of ducts that run just beneath the surface of the gaming room floor, even though they are unnecessary for playing Texas hold 'em and Asian *pai gow*, to name a couple of popular card-room games.

But the ducts are important because, if and when full-scale casino gambling comes to California, the Hollywood Park Casino will be ready for easy hookup to scores of slot machines, the gaming industry's most efficient money-maker.

"It's cheaper that way," said board Chairman R.D. Hubbard. When the casino wheels in the slots to replace the poker tables, "we won't have to tear up the whole floor."

But Hollywood Park is not alone in quietly betting that full-scale Nevada-style casino gambling will come to California, bringing with it higher profits. In Sacramento, the larger stakes represented by full casino operators lie waiting, just beneath the surface, like R.D. Hubbard's covered ducts:

No repeal of state laws banning casino gambling is imminent. As positions shift in the Legislature and strange-bedfellow alliances rise and fall among members and lobbyists alike, the confusion of the moment seems to be frustrating the casino expansionists.

But gambling opponents fear that time is on the side of powerful pro-casino forces, and that conditions for bringing down the barriers increasingly ripen as the gambling habit—from the lottery to poker parlors—continues to take hold in the state and nation.

Heading the list is the example provided by Native Americans. If the Indians can run casino-style games on tribal lands where California lacks jurisdiction, the argument goes, fairness and the prospect of new sources of

state revenue make it only right that Nevada casino operators be permitted to do likewise.

Gov. Pete Wilson and Atty. Gen. Dan Lungren argue that Indians are breaking the law by operating about 8,500 slot machines at 20 California casinos on tribal lands. More are assumed to be on the way to 21 new reservation sites. The issue is before both federal appellate courts, where the Native Americans lost a round but appealed to the Supreme Court, and the state Court of Appeal, where the latest ruling went in their favor.

Politically, most Democrats in the Legislature, led by Assembly Speaker Willie Brown of San Francisco, and at least one powerful Republican, Senate Minority Leader Ken Maddy of Fresno, tend to favor allowing Native Americans to run slot machines. Brown combines his support of reservation gaming with his oft-stated desire to open the state to all forms of casino wagering, confining non-Indian gambling to certain urban centers.

On cue, according to opponents of wider gaming, the moment the tribes are able to run their games unfettered, the out-of-state corporate casino interests will be positioned to make the case to do likewise. The state could be tempted to look favorably on those

Please see **GAMBLE, A24**

## Indian Casinos in Middle of Battle Over Slots

By TOM GORMAN  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN DIEGO—With seeming impunity, 22 Indian tribes in California offer Nevada-type slot machines in their reservation casinos despite unsettled lawsuits contesting their legality and Gov. Pete Wilson's steadfast opposition to them.

Just last month, for instance, the Agua Caliente Indians brought slot machines to their downtown Palm Springs hotel casino.

But when the rural Rincon Indians decided to stake out some of the action for themselves and introduced 230 video slot machines at their remote northern San Diego County casino last

week, federal authorities wasted no time in pouncing on them.

After just 24 hours of tantalizing operation—when the machines generated more income than the tribe had seen in months, if not years—the tribe was told to unplug them immediately or face \$20,000 in daily fines and a freezing of tribal assets.

Monday, the Rincon tribal council begrudgingly promised U.S. District Judge Marilyn Huff that they would keep the machines turned off until a hearing June 12, when the U.S. attorney's office will seek a court order to keep the machines turned off for good, until the legality of use is resolved once and for all in California.

So goes the latest skirmish in the

broadening battlefield of California gambling, with the Rincon Indians wondering why they are now the target of federal prosecution while 22 other California tribes—including three other reservations in San Diego County—offer slot action.

"The U.S. attorney's office has clearly drawn the line—with us," said Darrell Gentry, the Rincon tribal administrator. The decision to unplug the slots—despite tribal declarations of Indian sovereignty and accusations of U.S. government oppression—was made to protect the tribe's assets, Gentry said. Among other projects, the tribal council provides water to the 600-plus residents of the reservation.

Please see **SLOTS, A24**

# GAMBLE: Odds on Casino Issue Shifting

Continued from A3  
requests.

According to casino lobbyist Gene Erbin, a former legislative aide once anointed by state Sen. Tom Hayden (D-Santa Monica) as "smarter than all of us" on gambling issues, the temptation for the state emanates from the corporate checkbook. On the one hand, gambling proceeds on sovereign Indian lands are untaxable by the state. On the other, income from Nevada casinos coming to California would be eminently taxable.

"Too much capital, too much institutional pressure" for the state to forgo the opportunity to cash in, said Erbin. "And once you make that Faustian deal, it's over"—prevailing legal barriers fall and casino gambling arrives in California to stay.

Harvey Chinn, a church-organization lobbyist and an almost lone voice in the Capitol in his moral opposition to gambling, said he has been tracking gambling legislation in the Legislature for 35 years and believes with others that a final court victory for the Indians "will change the whole complexion in this state. I think that by and large we will have lost the entire battle here."

Other factors add to his pessimism. Chinn maintains that even as the state prepares to impose strict controls on card room gambling, it is playing into the hands of the big casino interests. Several bills, including one sponsored by Lungren, call for creation of a California Gaming Control Commission to police the card club industry.

Strong commission oversight would send the wrong message to voters whose approval is required before a card club may open in their communities, said Chinn. He has helped defeat card clubs in 18 of 23 local referendums in the past three years. The most potent persuader for voters to reject card clubs, said Chinn, has been their fear that the new gambling activity would attract a criminal element to their communities.

With a state commission in place, he believes, the image of gaming would be cleansed and voter concerns over crime would be put to rest. New gaming territory, he fears, would proliferate.

bling is seen as an addictive, impoverishing vice whether crime-ridden or not. In the California Legislature, he said, "it would be giving away our argument to support a control commission."

Apart from Indian slots or local elections, a more immediate issue for Nevada interests is their corporate status. State law now prohibits gambling companies that are publicly traded from operating in California. The larger gambling firms are publicly traded.

Several gambling bills before the Legislature, including a proposal sponsored by Lungren, have contained language that would drop the prohibition as a bargaining chip to gain legislative support for the oversight commission.

As debated in the Legislature, proponents of allowing the publicly held casinos into California focus attention only on card clubs. They have argued that the large casino companies such as Caesars World and Hilton are clean and easily monitored, although there is evidence that they are now having second thoughts.

As Chinn said and others such as lobbyist Erbin agree, casino companies "are not coming in with all that money to be satisfied with card clubs."

As represented by their Sacramento lobbyists, casino companies are reluctant to admit as much. They tend to refrain from a hard-sell approach.

Jo Linda Thompson, representing Caesars World, tells legislative committees that the casino giant wants only the opportunity to bid for whatever California decides on its gambling future. She adds that Caesars favors legislation dropping the ban on publicly traded corporations and opposes bills that maintain it.

Jack Leon, a spokesman for Caesars at corporate headquarters in Century City, conceded that Caesars has no interest in card clubs, and it recently terminated a business association with an Indian casino in Palm Springs. That leaves full casino gambling, if and when it comes, as the California pot-winner for Caesars.

Similarly, Kathleen Snodgrass, lobbyist for Las Vegas gaming impresario Steve Wynn, argues the case for the same all-important first step—allowing in the public

sure Island, Circus Circus, MGM, Prima Donna and Caesars are some of the casinos represented here. "Nevada interests have hired lobbyists galore. It's a full employment act," said Maddy, who is concerned that "we're headed toward full casino gambling," which he opposes.

But the path leading to big-time gaming is anything but clearly marked, despite the concerns of opponents. For one thing, such a move may require voter passage of a constitutional amendment.

For another, of 24 bills in the current legislative session related to gambling, only one has passed in one house, a measure unrelated to casino interests that would allow racetracks to accept bets in their parking lots at drive-up windows.

Lungren's measure, once considered the lead bill for controlling card clubs, is stalled in an Assembly committee where it was rejected and awaits a second vote. Another measure with casino implications advanced further, then stalled. Pushed by Assemblyman Curtis Tucker Jr., the Inglewood Democrat whose district includes Hollywood Park, the bill would allow tracks—but no one else—to operate card clubs as publicly traded entities and to expand to other card club sites through lease arrangements.

Lungren's office, which once worked with Tucker to craft mutually acceptable legislation, now vigorously lobbies against the racetrack bill, calling it a special-interest exercise in unfairness, as does Assemblyman Phillip Isenberg (D-Sacramento), the author of Lungren's competing measure.

While Democrat fights Democrat and former alliances collapse, Republicans face their own problems. In committee, the Tucker bill and others that would drop the barriers to publicly traded companies attracted many GOP votes, allowing the bills to advance.

The Republican support plummeted, however, on the Assembly floor. In the interim, the Rev. Lou Sheldon and his conservative Traditional Values Coalition of Orange County raised the alarm to voters in several districts that their Assembly members in Sacramento were supporting an expansion of gambling.

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about 4,000 churches where the message was relayed to the congregations. At the same time, Sheldon said, warnings were sent to at least 10 GOP Assembly members who depend on conservative support.

When the Tucker bill failed late last month on the Assembly floor, Sheldon said, "I never felt so good."

Even the lobbying corps is in conflict over the state's gambling future. While Caesars representatives and others push for repeal of the ban on publicly traded corporations, Circus Circus has decided it must "protect our investment in Nevada," said Erbin, one of that casino's lobbyists. Circus Circus thus opposes gambling bills that advance casino interests in California, and has joined Sheldon in his anti-gaming crusade.

## SLOTS: Indian Gambling

### Continued from A3

located in an agricultural valley between Escondido and Palomar Mountain.

The other three reservations in San Diego County—Sycuan, Borona and Viejas—have been allowed to continue operating their 2,500 slots because the machines were introduced before last June, when U.S. Atty. Alan Birsin in San Diego ordered a moratorium on the proliferation of the machines in San Diego County until their legal standing is resolved.

The tribes with slots already in place would be allowed to maintain the status quo, Birsin said.

"We are awaiting the 9th Circuit Court of Appeal's clarification of the legal framework by which Indian gaming restrictions will be

enforced in California," Birsin said. "In the meantime, any tribe electing to make an investment [in slot machines] prior to that decision does so at its own risk."

In preparation for the June hearing before Huff, FBI experts will examine the inner workings of the Rincon slot machines, apparently to demonstrate that they are virtually the same as the slot machines played in Las Vegas, which for now are illegal in California.

At the heart of the Indian lawsuits against the Wilson Administration is their claim that since the state offers its own lottery and keno games, it must negotiate agreements with the Indians to offer similar levels of gambling in reservation casinos.

TIC 2317

A111

# LOS ANGELES TIMES

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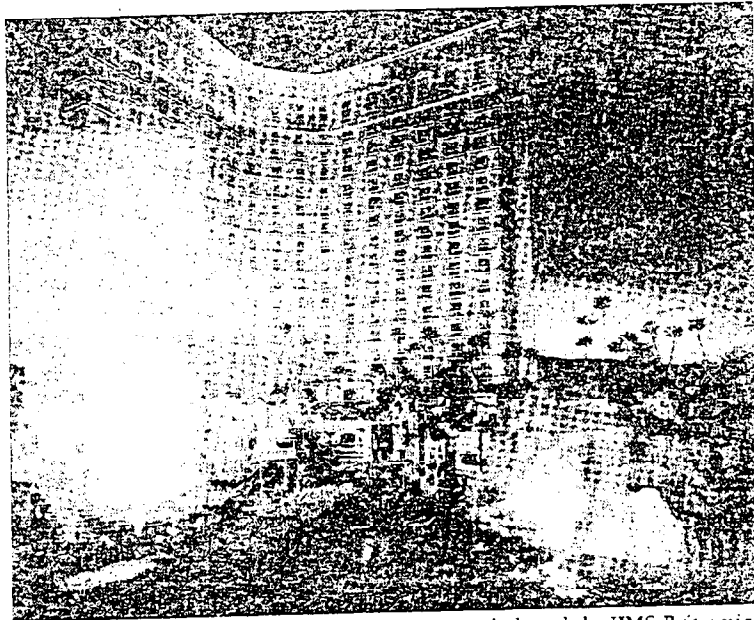
## Begin marriage as a high-seas adventure

Getting married just got a little more daring at Treasure Island.

Under the watchful eye of a "British captain," couples can now embark on arguably the greatest adventure of all—marriage—aboard the HMS Britannia, the ship that sinks in the fiery Treasure Island pirate battle.

"We know that many people who get married in Las Vegas are looking for something a little different," says Jacquie Montoya, wedding chapel manager. "At Treasure Island, we now are able to offer both a more traditional chapel wedding or this adventurous alternative."

Starting at about \$3,000, the "Crown Jewel" package includes, among other features: a wedding ceremony overseen by a minister in British captain garb; a photo package; three services in the beauty salon and spa; dinner at the Buccaneer Bay Club, Treasure Island's restaurant



Treasure Island now offers couples a chance to wed aboard the HMS Britannia, the ship that sinks in the resort's fiery pirate battle.

overlooking the pirate battle; and the Buccaneer Bay Suite for two nights.

For those looking for a more traditional wedding, the resort has two European-style chapels. One

seats 60 guests and the other, 30.

For more complete details on the "Crown Jewel" package and other weddings available at Treasure Island, call (800) 866-4748.



# Las Vegas!

8307

## Still a 'Mystere' after all this time

BY STACEY WELLING

**W**ith its lively music, exotic costumes and talented cast of seemingly superhuman entertainers, there's little mystery to why "Mystere" recently logged its 2,000th performance.

The production takes visitors on a magical journey through a world where bungee artists fly above the stage like ballerinas gliding through midair. A perfectly sculpted duo rotates on a moving platform while displaying astonishing feats of strength. And a clown dressed in a baggy suit and unkempt hairdo pulls off an assortment of pranks and gags.

As a creation of Cirque du Soleil, "Mystere" fuses

the traditions of circus, theater and ballet into a production that has wowed more than 3 million Las Vegas visitors since its debut in 1993 at Treasure Island. When the cast of 72 completed its 2,000th performance this spring, it marked not only an important milestone for the production but served as a cue of sorts to Cirque du Soleil's expanding presence on the Strip.

Because, even as "Mystere" continues to mesmerize audiences, work is underway at the up-and-coming \$1.6-billion Bellagio resort to create a new Cirque du Soleil show that will make its debut when that property opens in October.

Bellagio will feature an eight-acre lake along the

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San Francisco Chronicle

# NATION

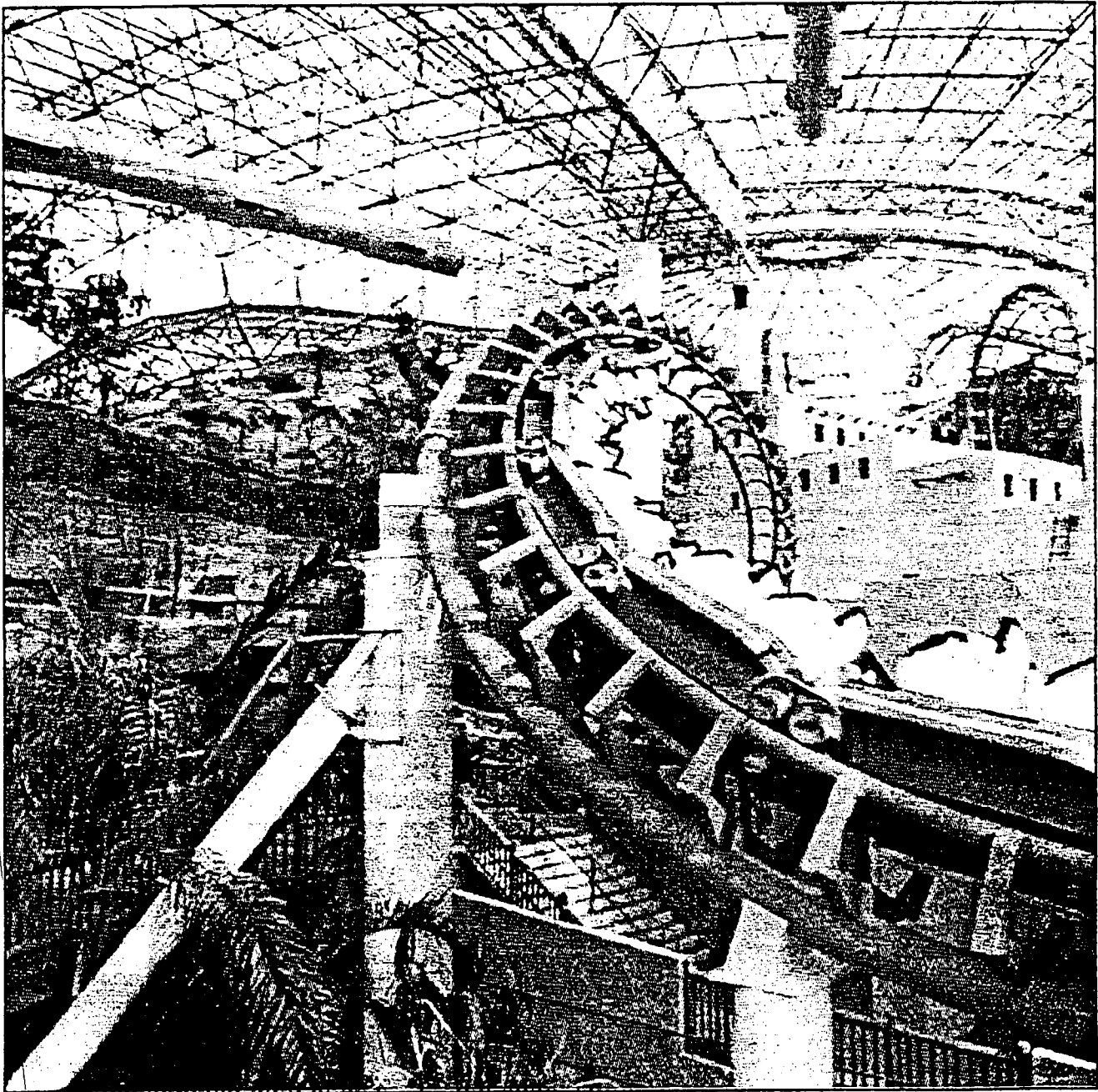
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*"Grandma sure likes those (slot) machines."*

— NATE, 9-year-old from Dallas



PHOTOS BY VINCE MAGGIORA/THE CHRONICLE

At Circus Circus in Vegas, clusters of kidlets rode the Canyon Blaster at the Grand Slam Canyon theme park

## MYSTERE

Continued from Page 68  
resort's Las Vegas Boulevard entrance, complete with a \$30-million water ballet as its signature public attraction. It's the latest addition to the Las Vegas family of Mirage Resorts properties, which include the Golden Nugget, Treasure Island and the Mirage.

Mirage chairman of the board Steve Wynn promises Bellagio will add a new dimension of elegance and upscale entertainment to Las Vegas. And Cirque du Soleil's specially tailored production, still unnamed, is expected to become the perfect production to complement the much-anticipated resort.

"I know this show will have repercussions all over the world," says Russian-born artistic director Pavel Brun. "It's a totally unique venue, and the vision and concept of the show is also quite unique."

Pavel is dividing his time between the Bellagio project and his ongoing work at Treasure Island with "Mystere." Among his many contributions, he co-created "Mystere's" gravity-defying high-bar act that features 14 gymnasts who fly, spin and swing in unison above the production's stage.

One way the Bellagio project will set itself apart from "Mystere" and other Cirque productions is that it represents the first time the theater company will incorporate aquatic elements into a show. Cast members moved in March from Cirque's home base in Canada to begin rehearsing in Las Vegas. All of the performers underwent scuba-diving lessons and were recently certified at Lake Mead, about 40 minutes southeast of the Strip.

Performance nights for the Bellagio project also will differ slightly from "Mystere"—which is

dark on Mondays and Tuesdays—so visitors will be able to see a Cirque production any night of the week on the Strip.

"The two shows will be compared, but even the way it looks right now, in the very early stages of rehearsals, I can tell you for sure that you wouldn't see any similarities except for the (quality)," Brun says.

Most details about the new production are under wraps until the Bellagio's grand opening. Like "Mystere," though, a theater is being built specifically for the show that will be slightly larger than the 1,540 seats at Treasure Island. Cirque's production at Bellagio also will have 70-plus cast members.

Cirque du Soleil has come a long way since 1985 when it started in Quebec, Canada, as a band of offbeat street performers, stilt walkers, fire eaters and mimes. But the artists who created the theater company, including a choreographer, composer and costume designer, always intended to elevate it to a higher art form.

The company's first venture outside Canada was in 1987 when it toured Southern California in its banana-colored trademark big top tent. Since then, Cirque du Soleil has grown into a global enterprise with four traveling troupes, in addition to "Mystere," the theater company's first full-time show. The Bellagio production will open as its second permanent show; a third resident show premieres in December at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

"Mystere" helped pave the way for the theater company's growing success, proving that its creators and performers could meet the demands of an ongoing production.

"My concern at the very beginning of our operation here was that the philosophy and style of performance and life in Cirque du Soleil could be

very hard to adapt to a punch-clock kind of work schedule," Brun says. "But the show is so lively right now. The juices of the whole Cirque du Soleil are just becoming more and more strong in 'Mystere.'"

As the hour-and-40-minute production begins, fog billows across the stage and performers stream into the theater from all directions. Music performed by a live orchestra, inspired by European, South American and even New Age influences, gives the show an international, tribal feel. The music, combined with dramatic lighting and sleek costumes, complement a dazzling assortment of stunningly choreographed acts.

In "The Flying Cube," the hunky Mikhail Matonine manipulates a 50-pound aluminum cube with his hands and feet while suspended above the stage. Brothers Marco and Paulo Lorador of Portugal perform "Hand to Hand" with moves that would maim lesser mortals. The perfectly sculpted duo do handstands on each other's legs, shoulders and heads—all while revolving on a slow-moving, center-stage platform.

Other performers dance and dangle in unison from vertical Chinese poles; some wear giant egg-shaped masks on the backs of their heads and appear to walk backward across the stage. Gymnasts team up during the Korean plank segment to take turns bouncing and spinning through the air off a giant teeterboard, the most dangerous of all acts in "Mystere." "Taiko" shows off a Japanese style of drum playing in which a group of drummers baring chests and legs and wearing long braids descend from the ceiling beating on drums.

Like most circuses, comedy forms a bridge between acts, but "Mystere" pulls it off with unmatched polish. The antics of baby-faced Francois Dupuis keep the audience laughing throughout the show. And the very

animated Wayne Hronek, alias Benny LeGrand the clown, one of the original cast members of the Cirque du Soleil team, wins over visitors from the moment they walk in the door.

"Mystere's" artists hail from 10 countries. Usually individual performers are spotted and then melded together into acts specifically created for Cirque du Soleil productions. Often, performers rotate among various projects within the theater company.

It's one way Cirque du Soleil keeps its productions fresh—and why "Mystere" will maintain its allure even as a sister production shines alongside it in Las Vegas.

Show times for "Mystere" are 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday at Treasure Island. Tickets are \$63.50 for adults and \$31.70 for children. For information, call (800) 392-1999.

Stacey Welling is a Las Vegas writer. Z



Photo by AJ Seib

Since 1993, Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere" has charmed audiences at Treasure Island. Its performers include the Chinese pole artists, shown here, some of whom wear masks on the back of their heads, appearing to walk backward in a bit of whimsical stagecraft. Come October, a second resident Cirque du Soleil production will open at the new Bellagio resort.

By Steve Rubenstein  
Chronicle Staff Writer

## Las Vegas

**F**rom roller coaster to roller coaster they wander, pockets jammed with video game tokens, these new cast-offs of the desert.

Their eyes are glazed, like Mommy's at the slot machines. Their legs are shot, like Daddy's at the craps table.

They are the waifs and foundlings of Las Vegas.

"Mom and Dad sent us out here," said Nikki, 14, of Riverton, Wyo., between roller coaster rides at the MGM amusement park. "They're inside."

He pointed toward the monolith. In Las Vegas, "inside" means the big rooms without windows, where things like night, day and children do not exist.

For the past decade, in a makeover more profound than anything attempted by a plastic surgeon on an aging showgirl, the monoliths of Las Vegas have been cranking out more and more kiddie attractions and multimillion dollar baby-sitting devices.

Is the blackjack capital of the country some new mecca of family togetherness? Or is this just another hustle from the folks who put the zeroes on the roulette wheel?

Take a stroll on the Vegas strip and find out. Teenagers and younger cohorts wander about on their own recognition, navigating between the pleasure domes.

Here in the new family-friendly Vegas, the kids-stay-and-eat-free Vegas, may be found two amusement parks, one water slide park, one monorail, one dolphin park, one Star Trek park and a circus. There are indoor roller coasters, outdoor roller coasters and even a roller coaster atop a 1,000-foot-tall tower.

There are 3-D movies and IMAX giant-screen movies. There are flight simulators. There is even a combination 3-D IMAX giant-screen movie flight simulator.

The contraption is called the "Race for Atlantis IMAX 3-D Ride." It's at Caesars Palace, and a ride costs \$9.50, a sum with a casino half-life that can be measured in nanoseconds.

The other day, the midday crowd at the IMAX 3-D ride was comprised mainly of unaccompanied kidlet clusters. After reaching the head of the line and anteing up the cash, each kid

# Kids In the Cards

There's a place for  
children in the  
new Las Vegas —  
it's just not with  
Mom and Dad



Warrick Price, captain of a stunt pirate ship at the Treasure Island casino, posed with young fans

is handed a visor with 3-D lenses and is herded into the theater, where the seats are bolted to a platform that jerks up and down to follow the motion on the giant screen.

"We've been to the pyramid and the pirate show," said 12-year-old Nate of Dallas, peering through the 3-D visor as if preparing to weld a muffler. "We've seen the white tigers. We've played a lot of video games. Now we're doing this."

He and his 9-year-old sister, Nicole, were in the nominal care of Grandma and Grandpa, who happened to be feeding quarters to the slots.

"Grandma sure likes those machines," said Nate.

Nate and Nicole strapped themselves into their seats. The lights went down and the room began to spin like reels on the Megabucks machine.

The IMAX story has something to do with an underwater volcanic exploding medieval chariot race. It is no less logical than anything else in Las Vegas and over with quicker. At the 11:20 a.m. show, no one threw up.

"It was OK," Nate said afterward. "About what I expected."

They were off for the pirate show in front of the Treasure Island casino, with a possible stop at Circus Circus to watch the trapeze act and try to win a stuffed bear.

Next to them were a pair of teens who said they were supposed to meet Mom and Dad back at the hotel room.

This turns out to be a mantra of Las Vegas orphans. We are meeting Mom and Dad back at the hotel room.

When? Later.

At Circus Circus, the theme park is called Grand Slam Canyon. It's located inside an enormous dome of cotton-candy-pink glass.

Kelly, 16, and his 11-year-old sister, Alexis, had already ridden the coaster and the raft and were in line for laser tag.

"Mom likes the slots," Kelly said. "Dad plays 21. And here we are."

The Burton family had come from Fairbanks, Alaska, for their family vacation, and Kelly seemed to be aware, beyond his years, that he and his sister had been, well, dumped for the afternoon.

"Las Vegas isn't really a fun place," he said. "Actually, I hate it. I wish that all of us were at the beach someplace, all together. That's my idea of a family vacation."

(LA Times)

TIC 2160

A118

BURRELL'S

Sunday Sun Times Dec. 4, 1994

# TRAVEL

Sunday



TIC 2161

A119

Sunday

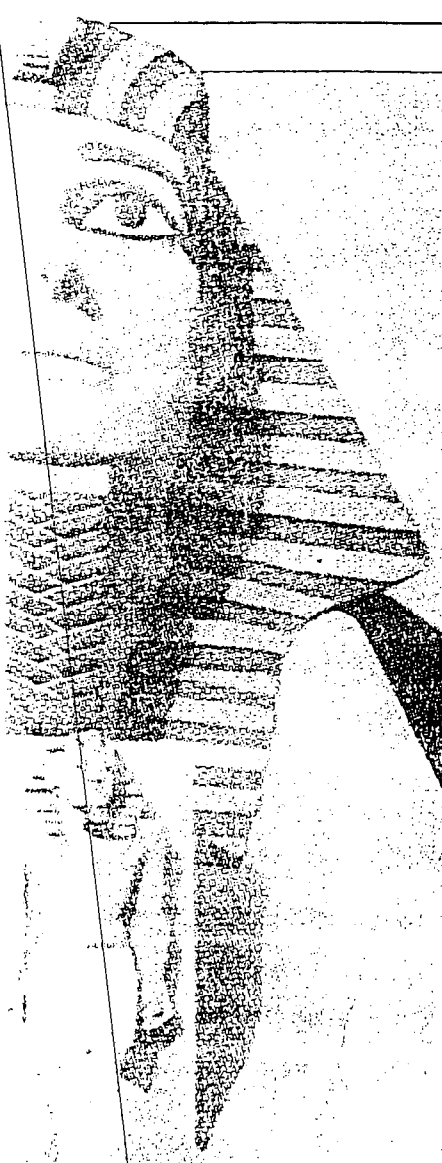
December 4, 1994

FOR RAINY DAYS  
ON THE ROAD,  
FUN AND GAMES

Page 6

LEARNING TO LOVE THE NEW

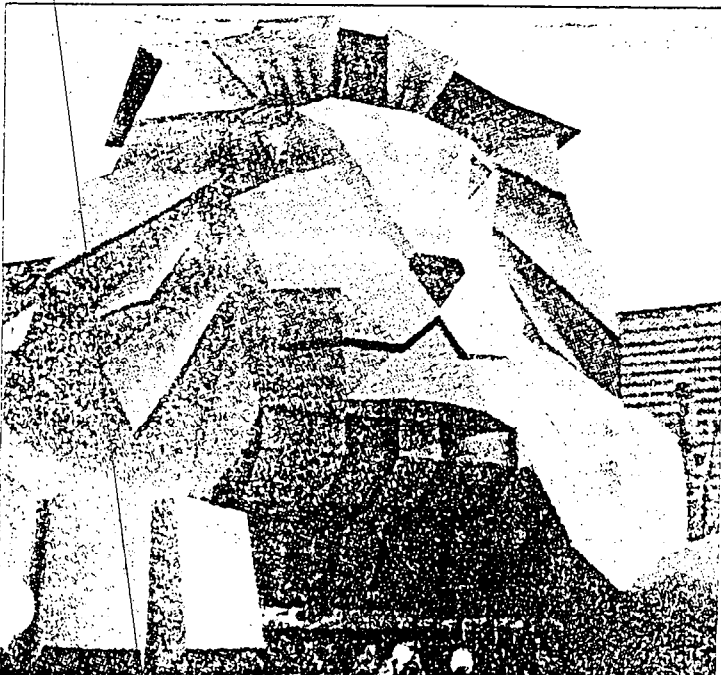
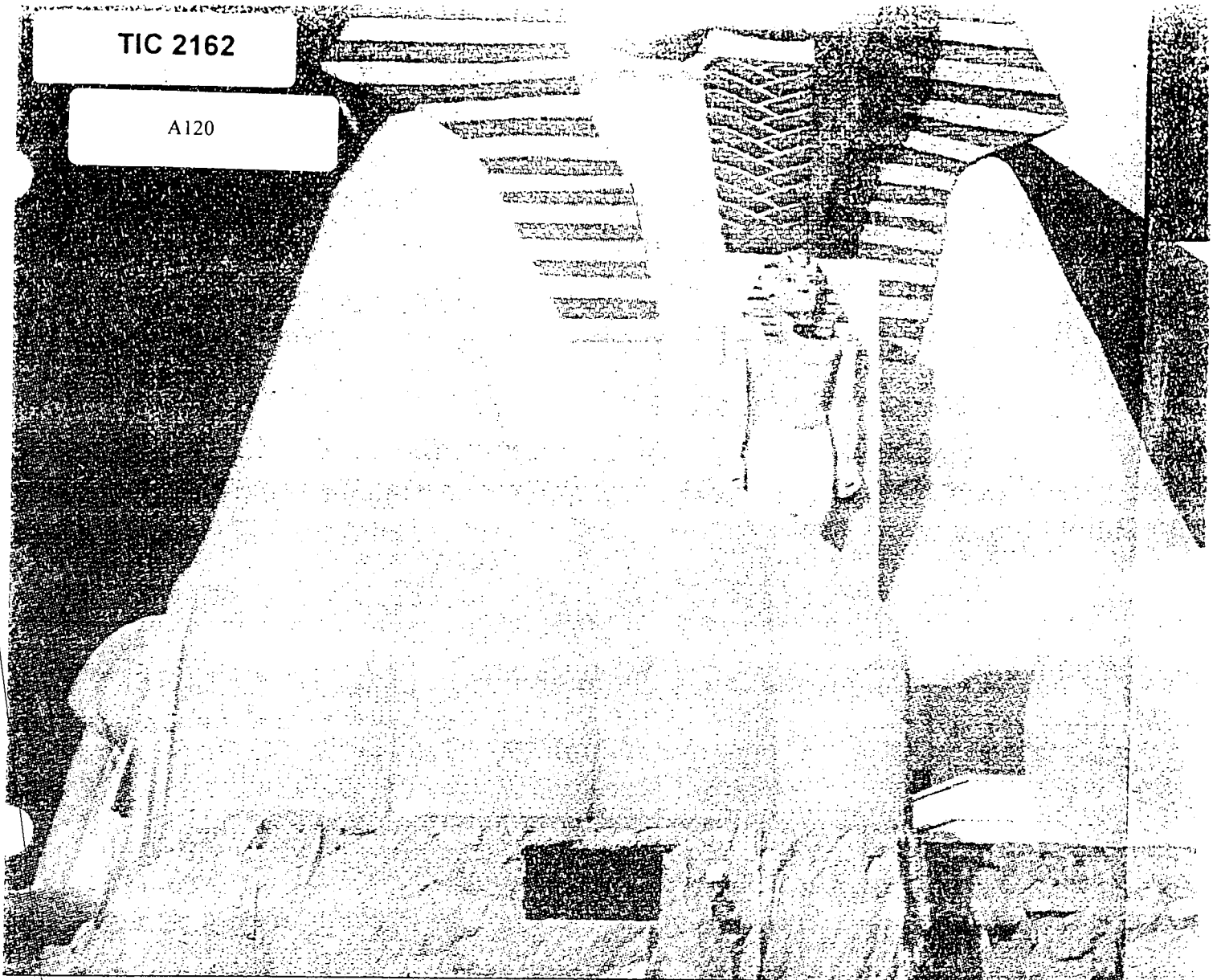
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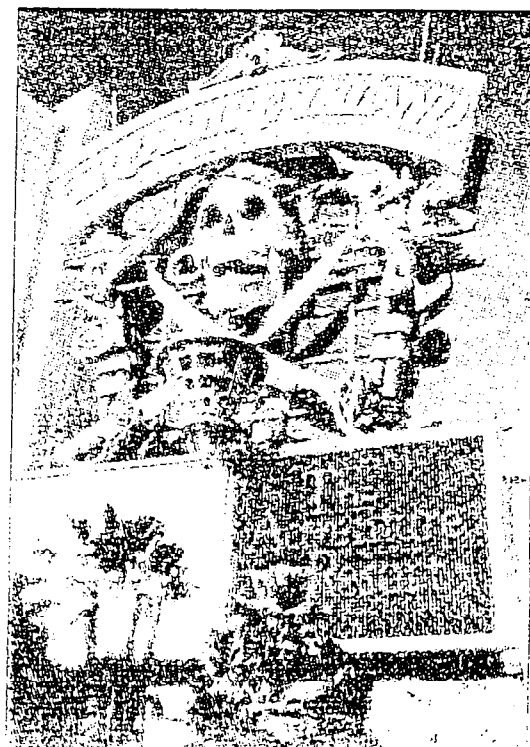
TIC 2162

A120



JACK SCHNEDLER PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE SUN-TIMES

The biggest and newest themed casino hotels in Las Vegas include the MGM Grand, the Luxor and Treasure Island.



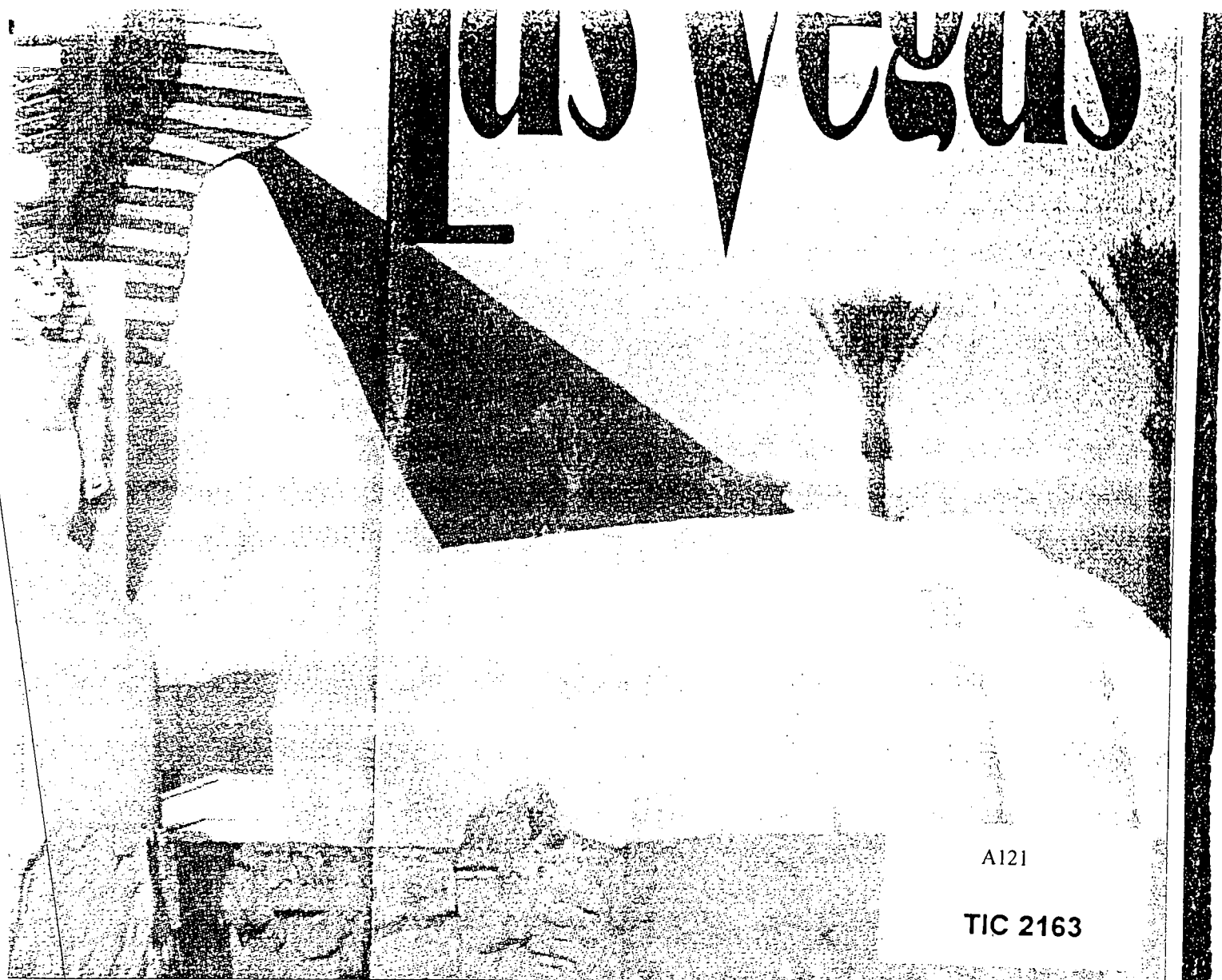
BY CH

**L**AS VEGAS here in the here. So n Comparing La bling towns—R Laughlin—is like Piper Cub. It's a ria. It's like cor League to Rolle Las Vegas is generis that the any place else o Half the peop stand it.

The other ha for the gambling and the people free folks who stopping at one ute casino after witness an eruptio tle, a fire-breath and artificial lig of Jupiter.

On a recent da Strip, starting off 30 to cover the





A121

TIC 2163

44263K  
BY CHUCK WOODBURY

**L**AS VEGAS, Nev.—If you have not been here in the last year, you have not been here. So much has changed in Las Vegas.

Comparing Las Vegas to Nevada's other gambling towns—Reno, South Lake Tahoe, and Laughlin—is like comparing a Boeing 747 to a Piper Cub. It's like comparing Chicago to Peoria. It's like comparing the National Football League to Roller Derby.

Las Vegas is so big and bizarre and *sui generis* that there is really no comparison with any place else on earth.

Half the people I ask about Las Vegas can't stand it.

The other half think it's terrific—if not for the gambling, then for the entertainment and the people—the zillion seemingly care-free folks who walk up and down the Strip, stopping at one gaudy, gimmicky, thrill-a-minute casino after another. Along the way, they witness an erupting volcano, a pirate-ship battle, a fire-breathing dragon, and enough neon and artificial light to be seen from the moons of Jupiter.

On a recent day, I walked a good part of the Strip, starting off at Circus Circus, where I paid \$3 to enter the new amusement park, Grand

Slam Canyon, which might better be named Grand Sham Canyon. The roller-coaster ride is exciting, but it lasts only a couple of minutes.

Two water rides get you wet, but slickers are not rented, only sold. So I didn't ride, which didn't leave much else to do. I could have boarded a mechanical duck in the kiddie area—but, frankly, I quit riding ducks 40 years ago.

A \$10 ticket gets you unlimited rides in Grand Slam Canyon, which may be worth it for teenagers, but not for older adults who like to stay dry, or little kids. Grand Slam Canyon is just one of many new attractions in Las Vegas designed to make the town more of a family destination.

The year-old, pyramid-shaped Luxor Hotel and Casino is mind-boggling. At night, you can't even see it because the exterior is black glass with virtually no light; think of it as the Strip's black hole. Inside, you look up and up; it's like no other building I have ever seen.

There are a few non-gambling, non-food attractions at the Luxor, including a boat ride on the "Nile," which basically takes you around the edges of the casino in a moat while a guide tells lame jokes. It's an uninspired ride, but considering it's in a casino in the desert, it's worth a few bucks.

There's also a duplicate of King Tut's  
Turn to Page 6



# Vegas

Continued from Page 1

tomb. It's pretty neat, worth a visit, especially if you're into Tut stuff.

At the Luxor, I rode a virtual-reality ride designed by "Star Wars" genius George Lucas. I came out dizzy and green, so it was a good ride. You enter, then take a simulated elevator ride deep into the earth. The elevator "breaks loose," of course, so you free-fall, get rescued, and then must take a daring flight back to earth's surface—complicated by an evil ship that wants to blast you and a beautiful princess into bits.

It's all make-believe, but it looks and feels real. Pregnant women, sick people and fragile older folks are advised not to ride this, and they shouldn't.

There are other rides at the Luxor, but I chose to continue my tour of the Strip.

## Biggest on the planet

Across and up Las Vegas Boulevard, the MGM Grand Hotel, with 5,009 rooms, laid claim to the title of the World's Largest Hotel when it opened last December. It also includes an theme park, which I didn't see because I arrived after it closed. I have heard it's OK, but no Disneyland.

The MGM Grand casino itself is enormous—an incredible 171,500 square feet. You walk in the front door through the mouth of a lion to a scene from "The Wizard of Oz," with life-sized characters frozen in time as they walk down the Yellow Brick Road.

Las Vegas boasts more restaurants—from classy joints to fast food—than in most cities its size. The Treasure Island Hotel-Casino, which opened in October of 1993, includes a regularly scheduled and realistic battle between a pirate ship and a British man o' war. It takes place right along Las Vegas Boulevard.

The ships fire at each other, there are huge explosions of fire, and sailors fly through the air. Then the British ship sinks (a sure bet), and the noisy show is suddenly over. Hang around a few minutes to watch the sunken vessel resurface, then magically sail 100 yards away to do battle again an hour later.

There are other casinos along the route, including the Mirage with its erupting volcano, the Excalibur with a fire-breathing dragon, and dozens more. I spent only a day; you need a week to see it all.

If you haven't been to Las Vegas for awhile, and you want to have some fun and witness the amazing ingenuity of American entrepreneurship, make the trip. You don't have to gamble a penny to be entertained for days.

## Specifically

For information, contact the Chicago office of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitor Authority, now in a new location on the mezzanine level of 2 Prudential Plaza, 180 N. Stetson Ave.; call (312) 861-0711.

The monthly newsletter Las Vegas Advisor provides an array of useful information. A one-year subscription costs \$45, and a single issue is \$5; write: Las Vegas Advisor, 5280 S. Valley View Blvd., Suite B, Las Vegas, Nev. 89118; or call (702) 597-1884.

Chuck Woodbury is publisher and editor of On the Road, a quarterly newspaper he produces while traveling in a motorhome.

A122

TIC 2164

(LA Times)

Sunday San Times Dec. 4, 1994

BURRELLE'S

# Tackling Glitter Gulch With Two Teens in Tow

By Tom Gorman  
Los Angeles Times

**L**AS VEGAS, Nev.— Years ago as a child, I was whisked through Glitter Gulch as a *persona non grata*; my parents plunged through a casino in search of cheap shrimp cocktails, tugging me tightly in tow. If I stalled for even a moment, some goon in uniform curtly admonished my dad to keep me moving.

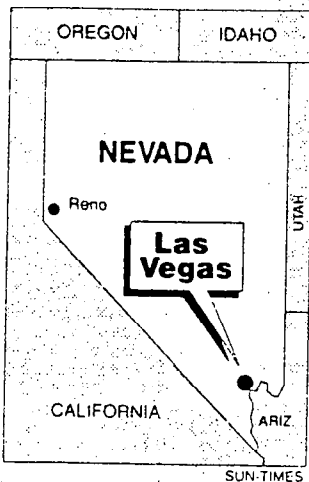
Las Vegas was no place for kids.

Now here we are, family of four, in a hotel room 30 stories above the Strip, feeling downright welcomed by the city's marketing ploy to tap Middle America: Bring the kids!

What a street scene: a fire-belching volcano, a pyramid with its high beam cutting a white shaft to heaven, an oversized lion protecting Dorothy and her Emerald City friends, and pirates beating the shot out of English seamen.

Having written about the Disneyfication of Las Vegas for the Los Angeles Times, I unwittingly piqued the curiosity of our two kids—Paul, 18, and Cassie, 13.

My wife, Jeanne, and I agreed a that three-night family getaway—especially if we ignored the slots—could be fun. For the most part, the rooms and meals are good values here, discounted to draw gamblers to town who'll return their savings to the casinos anyway. But we'd be too smart for that.



A123

TIC 2165

bar and the kids tried out the 30-foot-high water slide. It was tame by teen-age standards but, on the other hand, the only hotel water slide on the Strip. (There's a great water-slide park on the Strip, Wet 'n Wild, but we passed on it this time around.)

The highlight of our Vegas escape came that first night: Cirque du Soleil's show, Mystere, in a specially built show-room at Treasure Island. Mystere is the second-priciest show in town (\$52.80 with tax, compared to Mirage techno magicians Siegfried & Roy at \$78.35), as well as the most awe-inspiring: an inventive, poetic presentation of choreographed human strength—part ballet, part brawn.

Next day, we dropped our teens at Grand Slam Canyon, the small amusement park under glass adjacent to Circus Circus. The time alone allowed Jeanne and me to browse through hotel shops and lay by the pool to unwind.

Grand Slam Canyon won favorable reviews from Paul and Cassie. There are only a handful of rides, a couple of them quite wet. But the kids repeated the double-loop roller coaster several times, and had a riot in the laser-tag arena. Players in teams "shoot" each other in the dark with harmless, light-emitting beams that activate targets on opposing players' shoulders.

### Pirate battle

That evening, we anchored at Treasure Island. The hotel's street-front pirate show—an engaging battle of epithets and cannon fire—really is a blast and is best seen twice. Get there 30 minutes early, find a spot on the bridge leading to the hotel to watch one side of the action, then flip-flop for the next show.

The balance of the night was spent inside Treasure Island's

youth fun zone, a collection of video games and carnival midway activities called Mutiny Bay. Day 3 was spent at the new MGM Grand theme park and midway. MGM realized the park wasn't worth the original admission price of \$25 and dropped it to \$18.95. Still too steep, it's now down to \$13. If you merely want to accompany the kids but eschew the rides, you can get in for free and just browse the shops while kids play.

The log ride with its final plummet offered a cooling drench, but a boat cruise through a movie "back lot" was cornball. And its version of a roller coaster lasted only a minute, compared to the two-minute ride at Grand Slam Canyon, according to timekeeper Paul. No reflection on our high-brow cultural upbringing, but Jeanne and I got our biggest hoots at a live "Three Stooges" show.

We retreated to MGM's midway games. Together we dropped about \$50 on dollar games, and please don't bother asking what we have to show for it. (But can I interest you in a small stuffed purple dragon?)

After we exhausted the MGM, we took pedestrian bridges for a midnight walk across the Strip to the Excalibur, a previous favorite haunt. Be warned: Even with my wife and two children there, sidewalk smut peddlers in front of the Excalibur thrust escort-service handouts in my face, and I had to explain to Cassie what one jerk meant by "room service."

The next day, we checked out of Treasure Island and spent a couple hours at the Forum Shops at Caesars. Paul and Cassie found can't-live-without T-shirts and hats at the Warner Bros. memorabilia store.

Our last stop in town was the pyramid-shaped Luxor. The hotel's signature, "The Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid," is a three-part ride, \$13 per person.

Part 1 was the best of the trilogy: a simulated airborne ride through the interior of a pyramid on your way to rescue something or somebody. Never mind the plot and just brace yourself for a baring, convincing ride with the kind of t

We booked a two-queen-bed room at Treasure Island, the classy but less-endowed sister of the Mirage, for \$79 a night.

After our five-hour drive, we rewarded ourselves following a speedy check-in by going pool-side (although to our dismay, we had to traipse in suits along the side of the casino games). Jeanne and I tested the pool



JACK SCHNEDLER/SPECIAL TO THE SUN-TIMES

Costumed character representing the trademark MGM lion greets a youthful Las Vegas visitor at the theme park behind the MGM Grand, the world's largest hotel.

nology unveiled at Disneyland's Star Tours.

In Part 2, you're seated in a mock television studio that's part live, part video; the keynote event is a 3-D experience. For Part 3, you're sitting in the world's steepest theater facing a giant, vertical screen where the convoluted plot of this trilogy gimmick is supposed to be wrapped up.

### No Luxor midway

There is no midway at the Luxor (thank goodness), but its Sega video games with oversized display screens are the best on the Strip. Three virtual-reality games each cost \$4. In one, you're a jet pilot, turned into every possible position to challenge your equilibrium. In another, you're a gunman in a darkened space tub, but Cassie said the instructions were too quick and confusing and termed the ride "stupid."

The Treasure Island buffet was excellent; lunch at the Luxor's cafe lets you gaze and wonder at the interior of the pyramid; lunch at the MGM theme park didn't gouge us, and inside the MGM there's a fast-food court that even has

McDonald's. But if you're driving around, head east a few blocks to Maryland Parkway for fast-food alley.

Our biggest concern about coming to Las Vegas was exposing our children to gambling because the Nevada casino mecca now presents itself as a G-rated slice of Americana, and we have our misgivings.

Indeed, with just one significant exception, kids in Vegas can't avoid the casino scene and literally brush up against the slots. The exception is the Luxor, where the entertainment level is separate from the casino downstairs so the gambling is as easily and altogether avoided.

Is Vegas becoming family-friendly in order to groom kids as future gamblers of America? At Treasure Island, our kids enrolled in the Mutiny Bay Club, promising them a newsletter and special premiums. It's just like the slot-machine clubs with membership cards that the casinos are offering adults. Hmmm.

But the only quandary we faced upon our arrival home was where Cassie was going to put all her new stuffed toys.

SENIOR WORLD OF LOS  
ANGELES

EL PASO, CA  
MONTHLY 150.000

APRIL 1994

**BURRELLE'S**

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ENTERTAINMENT 49-26

Cirque du Soleil's new  
show, MYSTERE, designed for  
the Treasure Island Hotel in Las  
Vegas, is the largest production

the company has ever presented  
in North America. It features an  
international cast of 70 artists in-  
cluding acrobats, clowns, actors,  
comedians, stilt walkers, sing-  
ers, dancers, and a band playing  
an original score.

Treasure Island's 1,525-seat  
theater was custom built to  
Cirque du Soleil specifications.

TIC 1811

A126

SENIOR WORLD/RIVERSIDE

EL CAJON, CA  
MONTHLY 42,500

APRIL 1994

-1032  
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BURRELLE'S  
c121

ENTERTAINMENT  
Cirque du Soleil's new  
show, MYSTERE, designed for  
the Treasure Island Hotel in Las  
Vegas, is the largest production

the company has ever presented  
in North America. It features an  
international cast of 70 artists in-  
cluding acrobats, clowns, actors,  
comedians, stilt walkers, sing-  
ers, dancers, and a band playing  
an original score.

4926 BR

# Yo, ho, ho — Battle royal waged on Las Vegas' Buccaneer Bay

49266R

S ometime after 10 p.m. the chud of cannonballs shook my room at Treasure Island, the flamboyant new Las Vegas resort whose theme is loot and plunder.

Flames flashed in the mirror as I edged to the window to watch these peaky pirates take another bottle-of-rum shot at the Britannia in Buccaneer Bay.

Seven times a day these foes engage in battle, the square-rigged British frigate sailing around the Point and demanding the surrender

**BURRELLE'S**

## Letter Home

JUDITH MORGAN

of the 30-foot pirate vessel Hispaniola. Seven times a day the Britannia sinks, her captain going down with the ship.

Throngs of onlookers cheer the spectacle from a broad plank walkway and bridge, where you actually feel the heat as the ship erupts in fire.

"The pirates always win," said Jules Lauve, the hotel's entertainment director. "After all, this is Las Vegas."

Even if the battle is fixed, it's the best free show in town and, for my money, one of the two best at any price. The other winner, which also happens to play at Treasure Island, is the dazzling entertainment of Cirque du Soleil, the sly and sophisticated Montreal-based troupe of acrobats, jugglers and jugglers that performs twice nightly in a 1,500-seat theater.

During a recent visit to Las Vegas — my first in almost 20 years — surprises never ceased.

There was the push by huge new hotels-cum-theme parks (led by the 5,005-room MGM Grand, the world's largest hotel and casino) to lure families to the gambling capital with glitzy galleries of video games, pinball machines and electronically simulated rides.

Behind the scenes, I was even more amazed by the computer sleight of hand that manipulates the



Wet and wild: Pirates celebrate their victory in a battle against a British frigate at Treasure Island.

Union-Tribune CHARLIE NEUMAN

entertainment.

The battle in palm-fringed Buccaneer Bay, for example, involves 12 British seamen and a pirate crew of eight. (A thousand former stuntmen, ushers, waiters and gymnasts applied for these physically demanding roles, and 200 auditioned.)

From control panels hidden within the stone and rebar Caribbean village around the lagoon, nine men and women handle the technical work — the snouts and screams, the pyrotechnic wizardry of flames and fireworks, the splintering of a tall mast.

The show can be stopped from backstage or by the captain of either ship, each of whom has a red emergency button. One evening the show was stopped when a tourist jumped into the water, Lauve said, "and it wasn't even spring break."

The wind is the most likely culprit behind cancellations.

"Because of the powder-based

pyrotechnics and propane explosions, we won't start a show if it's gusting more than 15 miles an hour," Lauve said. "If the wind starts swirling, we cancel — or limit the fireworks."

Buccaneer Bay holds 2½ million gallons of water and, for the most part, is 6 feet deep. There's a 40-foot-deep hole where the British ship sinks and a 14-foot pool where the sailors dive overboard. Because of the watery roles, each actor has three changes of clothes; only the pirate captain gets to stay dry during a performance.

Other backstage secrets: The British captain survives to rule another day by donning a scuba mask just as he slips beneath the surface, his descent carefully monitored on video screens.

And two of the British sailors are women.

JUDITH MORGAN is a travel writer based in La Jolla

A128

TIC 1847



Orange County Register May 13,  
OCR 5/13 B4 1994

# ITT Sheraton planning resort on Vegas Strip

**ENTERTAINMENT:** The \$750 million Desert Kingdom will have 3,500 rooms.

Reuters

**LAS VEGAS** — In a city where nothing succeeds like excess, ITT Corp. on Thursday unveiled its long-awaited plans to build a \$750 million, 3,500-room ITT Sheraton hotel and casino resort, the Desert Kingdom.

It was the second major hotel and casino project announced in Las Vegas this week.

Gaming-industry analysts said the new projects, which will add 6,500 hotel rooms to the city's current stable of 69,889 rooms, is a sign of the continued strength of Las Vegas, despite the proliferation of gaming in other parts of the United States.

The ITT Sheraton resort will be located on 34 acres just south of the Sheraton Desert Inn Resort & Casino, which the company bought in June from investor Kirk Kerkorian's Tracinda Corp. for \$160 million. The Desert Inn may be expanded at some point. On Wednesday, Mirage Resorts Inc. and Gold Strike Resorts said

they would jointly build a \$250 million, 3,000-room hotel aimed at the mainstream tourist.

Both new projects will include nongaming entertainment, part of the increasing trend in Las Vegas to attract families.

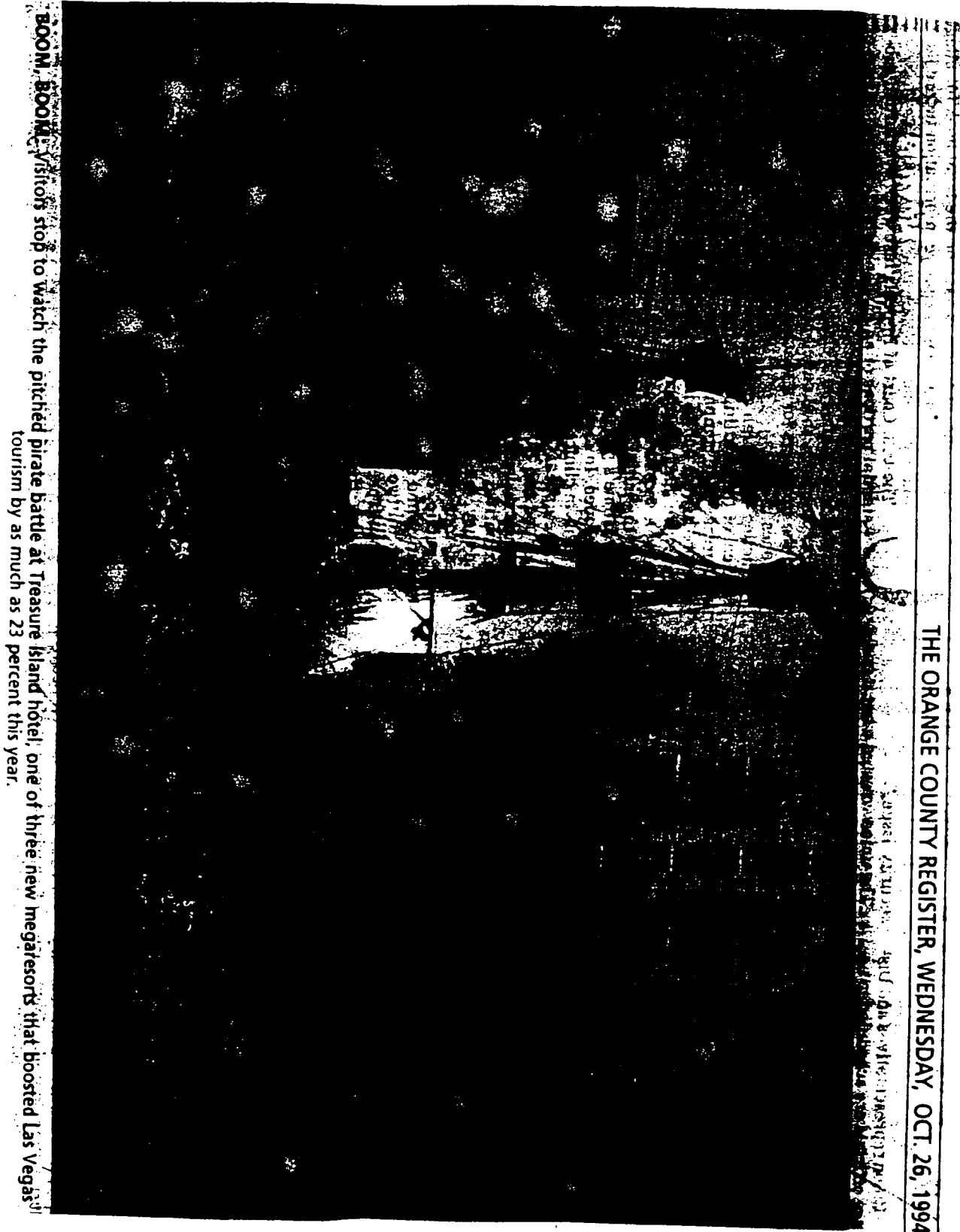
The new resorts follow on the heels of three new mega-hotels and casinos that opened last fall — the Luxor, Treasure Island and MGM Grand, which boasts 5,000 rooms and a theme park.

The ITT Sheraton resort will include a 135,000-square-foot casino along the famed Las Vegas Strip. It will have a desert motif depicting the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, Seven Cities of Gold, El Dorado and other legends.

ITT Sheraton said the Desert Kingdom resort will front 900 feet along the Strip, where the major casinos are located.

Construction of the new resort is set to begin in July with completion scheduled for the first quarter of 1997, the company said.

The new hotel will offer standard rooms of 450 square feet, along with 300 suites. Standard room rates will average \$140 per night.



**BOOM, BOOM!** Visitors stop to watch the pitched pirate battle at Treasure Island hotel, one of three new megaresorts that boosted Las Vegas tourism by as much as 23 percent this year.

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 26, 1994

# LAS VEGAS: City's three new megaresorts build on family-friendly image

FROM 1

market. It is a ladder of appeal, ranging from \$3.99 lunch buffets to Austrian crystal chandeliers.

► The granddaddy of family entertainment is Circus Circus, opened in 1968, where modest rooms go for \$36 a night, and the approach has been stamped on Circus Circus Enterprises' other properties, the Luxor and Excalibur hotels.

► The hotelier determined to keep the excitement level high is Steve Wynn, owner of the Mirage, Treasure Island and Golden Nugget in Las Vegas. Earlier this month Wynn announced another megaresort, to be built on the site of the old Dunes hotel and golf course. Groundbreaking is tentatively set for the spring.

Wynn generally is credited with giving Las Vegas the marketing push from casino curiosity to resort destination over the past decade. He is on the side of "I want the moms and dads."

► At the new lion-studded MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park, a supporter of upscale family trade, listen to the thinking that went into its 32-acre theme park: "That park would probably not work in any other environment," said Ira West, president of Duell Corp. in West Los Angeles, which conceived, designed and managed construction of the park. "Our aim was not to take people and keep them 8-10 hours and then have them collapse in their hotel room."

"The casino people said they wanted guests to come and gam-

ble and wanted them in the park maybe 3-4 hours."

► On the high end are hotels such as Caesar's Palace and the Las Vegas Hilton, which hopes to solidify its adult gaming image by building three penthouse suites that will cost \$40 million and be marketed to only the highest of high rollers in the world—a group of fewer than 500 people.

► Some older properties are spilling up to keep up. At the venerable Flamingo Hilton, General Manager Bill Bigelow is overseeing a \$130 million expansion, including timeshare suites, 2,000 palm trees and a ballroom, and homing in on the big-company, incentive sales market.

For all the talk about families, rest assured, California, that the heart of Las Vegas tourism still beats on a playing card.

"The notion that Las Vegas is a kid's place is way overdone," said Gary Gregg, president of the Las Vegas Hilton, which considers itself a "family friendly," but high-end adult casino. It has a youth hotel for child care.

"We are marketing Las Vegas as a full resort destination, a complete destination, for a family unit, couples or singles," said Rob Dondero, account supervisor, R&R Advertising, which handles the visitor bureau account.

Risks lie ahead for both California and Las Vegas tourism. Nevada gaming executives worry about everything from children displacing gamblers on airplane seats (recent headline: "McCartan Airport sees sleep-

## THE NUMBERS

Number of visitors	29 million*
1994	29 million*
1993	23.5 million
1992	21.9 million
1991	21.3 million
1990	20.3 million
1989	18.1 million
Source: Las Vegas Convention and Visitor Authority	

Visitor dollar contribution	Amount spent on gaming and hotels
1994	\$18 billion to \$20 billion*
1993	\$15.1 billion
1992	\$14.7 billion
1991	\$14.3 billion
1990	\$14.0 billion
1989	\$11.9 billion
*Projected	
Source: Las Vegas Convention and Visitor Authority	

1994 Monthly gaming revenue	only, Clark County
January	\$476,019,000
February	433,560,000
March	279,546
April	462,168
May	449,740
June	394,106
July	474,171
Source: Nevada Gaming Control Board	

climb in flights, passengers. But convention authority bosses ask: Are families stealing seats from gamblers?") to a decline in the average amount a visitor spends gambling.

"This year they got them here. Next year is going to be spent trying to get them to gamble more," said Joe Milanowski, director, USA Capital Management Group in Las Vegas, told the Las Vegas Business Press.

neighbor to the east, particularly in creating some Las Vegas-style excitement.

"What's carrying it now is a sheer volume of people putting a little bit in."

Others contend that as long as visitor counts stay in double-digit increases, the city should fare well.

Bottom line: "We don't know yet if family-friendly will work," Schwer said.

The same is said of California's outlook, where any ongoing impact from Las Vegas "depends very very much on how the public responds to (the new Las Vegas and) if they feel there is value there," Pointon said. He defended California: "Frankly, some of the reports we've heard is that they just do not compete at all with the major California attractions in sophistication... or investment. I just don't believe long-term when the (family) customer really understands difference in quality that they will be happy with a Vegas experience compared with what California has to offer." About 100 million tourists visit California every year, the final 1994 numbers should show a slight increase from 1993.

California, in the meantime, could learn a few lessons from its

To the good, California has some juice in the pipeline: Disneyland's Indiana Jones ride (at a reported \$50 million cost) is set to open next spring and a new themed water park, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor, will open in summer 1995 adjacent to Magic Mountain in Valencia. A Lego theme park is proposed for northern San Diego County and Disney's proposed Westcot development in Anaheim is still in the wings.

Perhaps most encouraging for California—in what could develop into a tourism showdown with Nevada—is that the state only has one task to concentrate on: Attract tourists to an established, top-drawer family-destination state.

Las Vegas has given itself three difficult assignments: Attract gamblers, attract family visitors, and persuade parents to gamble more.

What are the odds?

Cathy Taylor is the Register business columnist. Her column appears Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and on Infoline at (714) 550-4636, category 2214. You can reach her at (714) 953-7946.

OAKLAND TRIBUNE

OAKLAND, CA  
DAILY 122,000

THURSDAY

MAY 26 1994

BURRELLE'S

454  
bmac

F3

**Tourism**

**Las Vegas figures up:** The opening of three mega-resorts and a nationwide media blitz are credited with boosting Las Vegas' tourism count by 27.3 percent for the first quarter of 1994. The opening of the Luxor, Treasure Island and MGM Grand in the final quarter of 1993 added more than 10,000 hotel rooms to the city's inventory.

*You can reach the business desk at the Alameda Newspaper Group by calling (510) 416-4810. Our fax number is (510) 416-4850.*

OAKLAND TRIBUNE

OAKLAND, CA  
SUNDAY 78,049

MAR 19 1995

BURRELLE'S

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# DESERT STAR RISING

4926 BR miracle (pc)  
Californians lured by lower costs  
and better



FRONT PAGE

By David R. Berkowitz  
STAFF WRITER

LAS VEGAS

**R**EALTOR Ed House wheels his dark green Toyota Camry out of the crowded parking lot at the world's largest hotel, thinking that the Seattle couple he just dropped off probably going to buy a new home.

Today, How Las Vegas thrived while the nation battled a recession

A133

TIC 2255

It's a busy month for real estate agents in the Town That Never Sleeps, and House is on his way to pick up another couple, this one from California.

Fed up with layoffs, high property taxes, a tight job market and a slow pace of recovery from recession, thousands of Californians are relocating to Las Vegas.

In fact, Las Vegas has become the fastest growing metropolitan region in the United States, expanding dramatically at a time when neighboring California and

the rest of the nation were struggling to emerge from recession.

"We get a ton of disgruntled Californians here who just want out," House said.

Some of those Californians are heading to the desert city to retire. But most of them are going in search of work, hoping that a new job and the area's lower cost of living will help improve their living standards.

In Las Vegas, they're finding an atmosphere of economic excitement that many Bay Area residents will remember from the 1980s, when defense spending led to huge Help Wanted sections in local newspapers.

More affordable housing prices, thriving tourism, the absence of state taxes and a generous supply of hotel, casino and other jobs now have made Las Vegas an at-

tractive place to live for many people.

Since 1993, three glitzy mega-resorts have opened along the Las Vegas Strip creating 16,000 new jobs and untold economic benefits.

The emerald-glass encased MGM Grand Hotel & Theme Park, the world's largest hotel, hired about 7,500 people; the pirate-themed Treasure Island took on 4,300 workers; and the pyramid-shaped Luxor, with its golden sphinx and light beam to heaven, also employed about 4,300.

**I**T DOESN'T STOP there. In the next two years, hoteliers have announced plans to spend \$1.7 billion on three more mega-resorts that will add 8,000 rooms to the projected 89,345 already in Las Vegas.

Downtown casino owners are stringing \$75 million worth of

are building a new, integrated hotel and casino system between their large casinos.

All of this change has brought tourists streaming to town. Last year, more than 28.2 million visitors — 56 percent more than in 1989 — spent \$15.7 billion in the city's hotels, casinos and convention centers.

But locals know that what's happening on the Las Vegas Strip is only part of a much larger pat-

Please see Vegas, A-9

■ Reno checks growth.

A-9

■ Vegas thrives on uncommon themes for success.

Business Day

# Vegas: Where it's all happening now

Continued from A-1

tern of growth taking place throughout southern Nevada.

Since 1985, Clark County — where Las Vegas is located — has added about 210,000 jobs, and the area has nearly doubled in population to 1.03 million residents, according to the Center for Business and Economic Research the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

By contrast, during the same decade, the East Bay added just 93,740 jobs, or 11.7 percent more, while its population climbed 13 percent to 2.1 million people, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments.

The reason for the contrast is clear: Bay Area living has become too expensive for many people while the Las Vegas area is still affordable.

## Californians in flight

In Nevada, there are no state taxes. A mid-priced home in Clark County costs \$128,900, or roughly

If the price of a mid-priced Bay Area house. And the overall cost of living is generally lower.

There are plenty of service jobs, particularly for food servers, bartenders, cards dealers and other workers who receive tips.

And when you aren't working, there is plenty to do; from gambling and taking in the stage shows to hiking in Red Rock Canyon, boating and fishing at Lake Mead and snow skiing 45 minutes away in Lee Canyon.

Last year, 24,251 Californians moved to Clark County, accounting for 40.4 percent of all relocations there, according to drivers' license records at the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles.

## High salaries rare

About one-third of all relocations to Nevada come from California, most of them from the San Fernando Valley, said Keith Schwer, director of the business and economic research center at UNLV.

Las Vegas is not utopia, though. Jobs at higher pay levels are rare. "Somebody making \$40,000 a year in Las Vegas is pretty much living high off the hog," said real estate agent Steven Lum, who moved to Las Vegas from Hawaii and co-founded No Ka Oi Realty. "If you're a single person, you can afford to live very well here."

## Tale of the economic tape

Las Vegas (located in Clark County) and the Bay Area

POPULATION — 1985 (■) vs. 1995 (■) % CHANGE

Clark County	583,754	1,032,161*	+76.8%
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East Bay	1,896,450	2,142,650	+13.0%
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TOTAL JOBS — 1985 (■) vs. 1995 (■)

Clark County	246,635	454,778*	+84.4%
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East Bay	796,700	890,440	+11.7%
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MEDIAN SINGLE FAMILY HOME PRICE — 1985 (■) vs. 1995 (■)

Clark County	\$74,000	\$128,900	+74.2%
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East Bay	\$145,130	\$260,330**	+79.4%
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\*Projected

\*\*Based on median price for 1994

Sources: Center for Business and Economic Research; Association of Bay Area Governments; the University of Nevada at Las Vegas; Greater Las Vegas Association of Realtors; California Association of Realtors

For that kind of savings, he's willing to endure a little weather.

"I look at this house as a good investment," said Finn, 40. "I don't think you can beat the climate or quality of living in Las Vegas. It could be a little cooler I suppose. But it doesn't bother you as much because everything here is air conditioned."

Finn lives on the outskirts of Las Vegas in a district that is still coming together. Half-completed roads, dusty construction sites and "Coming Soon" signs abound, much as they did in San Joaquin County six years ago.

In fact, at a time when neighboring California's housing market has been moderately improving, the Las Vegas area has become one of the hottest construction zones in the nation.

Last year, developers took out 25,304 permits to build single-family and multi-family homes in Clark County, up 32.4 percent from 1993, according to the business research center at UNLV.

#### California builders dash in

Not surprisingly, home builders from California were key participants in the Las Vegas building boom, entering the market as activity slowed down at home.

Kaufman & Broad, Inco Homes, Koll Real Estate Group and Taylor Woodrow Homes were among the busiest contractors in Clark County last year.

"In the 1980s, California was fine," said Jay Moss, president of Kaufman & Broad-Nevada. "But in the '90s, there are other places we need to go to grow. Las Vegas is a natural extension because Southern California has such ties to it."

Builders aren't the only California companies betting on Las Vegas.

Money magazine last year named Las Vegas the fourth best place in the nation to start a new business based on its population, job growth (No. 1 nationwide), per capita income, growth in average earnings and growth in the number of proprietors (also No. 1 nationwide).

#### Regulations spurred others

And while there has been no massive migration, Nevada's tax advantages and lower payroll costs convinced some larger California businesses, frustrated with the Golden State's cumbersome laws and regulations, to relocate.

Paccar Inc. of Bellevue, Wash., will close its truck parts plant in Newark this spring, throwing most of its 35 employees out of work when it moves into the 130,000-square-foot facility it built in Las Vegas.

Company officials blamed California's regulatory process, but some employees are convinced the primary reason for the move is that the firm will be paying lower wages in Nevada.

"Economics is driving this more than anything else," acknowledged Steve Buckner, a spokesman for Paccar, which is a big parts supplier for Peterbilt Motors Co. and Grand Auto Supply.

Over-regulation was what prompted another big business move from California to southern Nevada.

This month, Household International, which owns Household Credit Services, will set up a 128,000-square-foot credit card collection operation in Las Vegas, where it will hire 350 to 400 people at first and will eventually employ 1,000.

An angry Joe Saunders, president of the 9-year-old company, said all of those workers would have come from Monterey County, if not for

The desert climate also can be tough, with July high temperatures hovering near 105 degrees Fahrenheit and winter winds whipping up blinding dust clouds. But new residents, young and old, don't seem to mind.

Barry Finn, an airline pilot from Concord, bought a new 3,000-square-foot house last year in the upscale Sun City neighborhood of Las Vegas for about \$200,000, or roughly half the cost of a comparable house in the East Bay.



California laws that cap the amount banks can charge customers for late payments or exceeding their credit limits.

"They are not pro-credit card in California and, as a result, we are subject to a lot of litigation," said Household's Saunders, who employs about 3,600 people nationwide. "While we still will be an employer in Salinas, we could have been a much bigger employer there had it not been for this situation. The 1,000 jobs that are going to Nevada would have been in California."

Wells Fargo Bank executives expressed similar irritation with California fee limits for its decision to build a credit card center in Phoenix, Ariz., a move affecting about 130 of 1,300 workers at a Wells Fargo operation in Concord.

The bank had briefly considered Las Vegas for the new operation.

Tim Carlson, executive director of the commission on economic development, said over-regulation is a common grievance among business people he's met in California.

He's been jotting down the complaints he hears and is using them as a primer for what not to do in the state of Nevada, he said.

#### Fumbled opportunities

Carlson predicts California will lose plenty of business opportunities from Mexico because of Proposition 187, the controversial voter-approved measure aimed at curbing illegal immigration to the state.

As California fumbles such opportunities, Carlson says his state is ready to pick them up and tuck them away.

"We learned from California," he said. "We learned how people react in certain situations, like to business restrictions and restraints. We try not to do any of that. That's one of the reasons we've been so successful."

*Tomorrow: How Las Vegas will cope as growth taxes its sparse water resource.*

## Opportunities

Top 10 jobs in Las Vegas  
1991-1996

OCCUPATION	ANNUAL OPENINGS
Food server	1,791
Cashier	1,291
Dining Room/Bar	1,181
Food Prep	1,147
Blackjack dealer	1,129
Retail sales	1,123
Maid/room cleaner	1,007
Janitorial	905
Gaming change person	765
Guard	717

Source: Nevada Employment Security Department

OAKLAND TRIBUNE

OAKLAND, CA  
SATURDAY 146,456

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**Barefoot gambler wins big**

Casino magnate Steve Wynn usually wins when gamblers lose. Now he stands to profit from the story, as well as the money, of an elderly man who parlayed \$400 into \$1.3 million during several days at Wynn's Treasure Island Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas — then lost a big chunk of it. Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts Inc., Treasure Island's parent company, reportedly signed a deal with the unidentified high-stakes player for the movie rights to his story. The casino wouldn't identify the man, believed to be in his 80s. He was dubbed "Shoeless Joe" because he gambled one day in bare feet.

FROM WIRE REPORTS

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## SOUND CHECK

AUGUST 1994

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49263R by Mark Frink



## CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

While in Las Vegas for April's NSCA convention, *Mix* product editor George Petersen and I took in the Cirque du Soleil show at the new Treasure Island hotel/casino.

The Cirque is internationally renowned for innovative theatrical productions, and *Mystere* is the largest Cirque du Soleil production in North America. It features a cast of 78 outrageously costumed performing artists, including acrobats, clowns, actors, comedians, singers and a ten-piece orchestra



**Top: Acrobatic performers**  
**Right: Sound designer Jonathan Deans at console**  
**Left: Theater and seats, in top corner**



multiple elements in the production is to constantly give the audience just a little too much, with attention being drawn from one focal point to the next. Throughout the show we were amazed and amused, and by the end we felt that this show alone made the trip to Las Vegas worthwhile.

Sound designer Jonathan

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 135

A139

FROM PAGE 132. CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Deans took on the challenge of providing an audio system capable of enhancing this visually stunning program. Deans, a veteran of Broadway and other high-level Las Vegas productions, has been working with the Cirque du Soleil organization for the past several years and provided sound design for the 1992 world tour. "I had contributed technical assistance on a Cirque production some years ago," he explains. "Subsequently, I viewed a touring production and was hooked. I had never seen anything quite like it. The emotion and satisfaction the show evokes is incredible—it's the type of production that prompted me to work with live performing arts in the first place."

Cirque du Soleil productions, Deans notes, are an extension of

musicals, pushing the concept much further. The challenge is to integrate musical art with stunning visual art. "When you see people flying through the air, you want to create a musical environment to go with it, to enhance it," he says. "You strive to create a kind of feel where nothing is rooted, so when the audience is sitting in the auditorium, they are totally involved rather than just sitting back and watching."

Probably best described as a combination of circus tent and showroom, the theater is acoustically live and brightly lit. The audience can see and hear themselves, and this creates an atmosphere of excitement, which feeds the performers. This philosophy stands in sharp contrast to traditional showrooms, which tend to be dimly lit and acoustically dead, so performers can't

generally hear the audience.

"This room is spatial, and rather than working against that, we work with it and make the sound spatial and create an atmosphere of ambient sound," Deans says. "We use the natural acoustics of the room, its curves and angles, rather than working against them. You might say we have a palette and can select colors to paint a picture of sound, using the technology available to us."

Silence and dynamics are used to great effect, and the fundamental idea of the design is distributed sound with high headroom. The system can jar the audience, grab its attention, and then suddenly become almost silent. "We've created a system where sound pressure levels can go way beyond the threshold of pain, but that's not at all the idea," Deans says. "We

generally run peaks of 100 to 105 dB, but the audience can become uneasy if you hold it at 105 dB for too long." A surround concept bathes the listening areas in sound, coming from front, top and behind. A "bad" seat receives signal from at least three speakers; a "good" seat benefits from five to six speakers.

The *Mystere* house system comprises an unusual distributed system of a variety of Electro-

Voice loudspeakers powered by Crown Macro-Tech amplifiers. Loudspeakers are located within the set, overhead and behind the audience. The closest loudspeaker to the audience is about 50 feet away—a key is keeping the focus down on the stage while creating a full surround effect. "Many times in auditoriums you don't get a true full surround effect," Deans notes. "Seats are often too close to the stage or out of proximity of surround speakers. This is why

we've placed an emphasis on a good deal of speakers in the middle of the theater, not just the back."

The stage area highlights an innovative approach to loudspeaker selection and placement. Four EV HP9040 horns with DH1A drivers are suspended at each corner of the main stage backdrop, called the "sky," which is basically a large awning or roof made of triangular truss sections and dressed with a colorful fabric design. The massive element rotates from vertical to horizontal, as well as up and down (via hydraulics) throughout the show. The horns are connected to the backdrop's framework by custom Duracraft brackets that allow them to also vertically rotate so that they are always perpendicular to the stage and are thus always firing at the audience. Cabling runs up the arm shafts of the sky into terminal blocks, which then feed signal to the horns with a light, flexible cable that is replaced each week due to heavy wear.

Two HP9040 horns are mounted beneath the top step on small stairways on each side of the stage, and an EV MTL-2 is positioned discretely to the side of the stage, acting as both stage monitor and low-frequency supplier for the horns. The low-frequency sound to accompany the six stage horns is all submixed through a Rane mixer located in the electronics room several hundred feet away, then routed to the MTL-2. "The idea of the sky and step speakers is to pull the focus toward the stage when it's desired," Deans explains. "With the design of the room, loudspeakers can't be placed close enough to match things like the actors' dialog. It could be disorienting to the audience."

Six EV MTH-2 (mid-high) loudspeakers and four MTL-2 loudspeakers are positioned in a circular grid above the center of the room. The loudspeakers are positioned in a "U" shape around the grid matching the shape of the audience, with

## LIVE SOUND

None of them firing directly down at the stage. There is also an outer loudspeaker arc in the ceiling, where things are a bit more complicated. Several EV DML-1152A loudspeakers, on time delay, are angled to send sound toward the back of the theater, and six accompanying EV MTL-4 low-frequency loudspeakers fire straight down. Six more DML-1152As provide surround sound for the front half of the auditorium.

On the back wall, several more DML-1152As provide surround to the back half of the auditorium. Six additional subwoofers solidify the extreme low frequencies throughout the entire room. "Electro-Voice loudspeakers were the predominant choice in this project for several reasons," Deans says. "They generate the necessary output for a demanding application like this, and the company also offers the range of speakers that we needed."

A combination of Crown Macro-Tech MA-1200s and MA-2400s provide clean power with plenty of headroom. The MA-2400s power the lows and mids of the MT-2 and MT-4 concert systems, with MA-1200s used primarily for the high frequencies of the MTs and the Delta-Max speakers. In cases where fuller bass is desired from certain DML systems, MA-2400s are employed. With their greater output, the MA-2400s add a little more dynamic and dimension.

There are a variety of audio tricks throughout the show. One example is a clown's golf cart that drives around the stage and through the audience in the cross-aisle. The golf cart includes a battery-powered speaker and amplifier getting a wireless feed and creating interesting opportunities. "We can produce things like the realistic sound of a dog chasing the cart," Deans explains. "At one point in the show, we even cut off the main system and send the entire

orchestra mix to the cart speaker as it drives through the audience. It's a wild effect."

The ten-piece band/orchestra is split between two platforms located above each side of the stage. All instruments except violin and percussion (with 26 microphone channels) are electronic, with direct inputs. The musicians are able to tailor their own mix, which is fed directly to headphones.

In one part of the show, drummers in harnesses playing huge Taiko drums drop in from the ceiling over the audience. A delay problem is created in attempting to get them in sync with the orchestra. Special click tracks are fed through a delay to the drummers via Vega wireless IFB systems. "The click track greatly reduces the amount of time that the drummers could be off," Deans says. "Just listening to the orchestra in real time would cause delays of up to 150 milliseconds or more. With the click, we're able to take the delay

## LIVE SOUND

down to 50 milliseconds or less, which is perfectly acceptable."

House sound engineer Kim Sandholt adds a bit of the percussion to the click track using the submix capabilities of the Midas XL3 console. The 40-channel XL3, with a 16-channel extender, allows convenient mixing of 56 inputs to 16 outputs. "The EQ section of the console is quite responsive," Deans says. "The board is also quite versatile. It's like a cross between a house and monitor console, and that's the way we use it. We're able to dial in a matrix on each channel as to where we want sound to go as a group."

The Midas XL3 house console's capabilities are greatly enhanced by the Level Control System, an innovative package created by Deans that takes the outputs of the Midas and directs them. An integrated hardware and software package, it allows control and programming of levels and effects from a Macintosh

computer. Cues can be triggered manually or via SMPTE, with crossfades moving smoothly from scene to scene. One feature used in the show, called "SpaceNodes Spatialization," allows the engineer to precisely distribute or pan sound to create wild and complicated effects that are repeatable.

A set of control points—nodes corresponding to physical locations in the listening area—are mapped in the LCS software. Nodes are either speakers, groups of speakers or silent spots. With silent spots placed on the edges of the listening area, sounds automatically fade out as they move away from the audience. SpaceNodes can also provide proportional reverb, by dedicating one or more of the nodes as reverb sends and bringing the reverb back into the LCS through the console.

Using the mouse, sound can be drawn to pan in three dimensions—in a circular, swirling motion to do anything imagin-

able. These scenes can be written, stored and then automatically cued at the proper time within the show. Each output features a number of signal processing devices with presets activated by the LCS, including BSS parametric Varicurves and 804s, as well as Drawmer compressor/limiters. Lexicon 300 and PCM70 reverbs are also tied into the LCS, where their MIDI information is stored and called up scene by scene, or song by song.

Despite the collection of advanced audio tools, Deans still relies heavily upon an ancient standard for final system setting and tuning: his ears. "All of the effects, changes and delays still must be tailored especially for the show, and the best way to do that is to listen," he says. "There would be no point to any of this if it didn't sound good." ■

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MERCURY-REGISTER

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BURRELLE'S

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# Chico man wins big at slot machine

By Todd Bishop

SPECIAL TO THE MERCURY-REGISTER

CHICO — Life is a row of cherries for Dennis Morris, a Chico man who won more than \$209,000 playing the nickel slots last month in Las Vegas.

He was pumping coins July 28 into a progressive machine at the Treasure Island Casino when it

paid off.

"I was just pushing buttons and all of a sudden, bango, it hit," said Morris, a door salesman who was celebrating his 25th wedding anniversary with his wife, Shirley.

In the mayhem that followed, he didn't even notice which slot symbols had lined up.

"It happened so fast, with so many people around me, I didn't

have time to look what was on there," he said.

The prize has changed Morris' gambling philosophy. "Before I thought it was just a hoax. Now I think it's more possible."

He gambles in Reno once every few months. His family gave the trip to Las Vegas as an anniversary present.

What's next for the 200 thousand dollar man? Unpaid

bills, and a visit to the accountant for some advice.

The progressive slot network from which Morris won his cash is linked through 127 Nevada casinos. The jackpot builds on a \$200,000 base.

Though it has been a few weeks, Morris is still having a hard time believing he won. "It will set in when the check is cashed," he said.



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WEDNESDAY  
JUL 20 1994

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## Dunes tower demolished in Las Vegas

<sup>4926 BR</sup>  
LAS VEGAS — The last remnant of the famed Dunes Hotel-Casino was blown into oblivion today.

The lone remaining 17-story tower of the star-crossed resort was demolished in a pre-dawn implosion that reverberated along the Las Vegas Strip.

Today's low-key event was in stark contrast with a fiery exit of the Dunes' 24-story north tower last Oct. 27 — an event witnessed by tens of thousands of people who jammed the Strip, and millions who watched around the world.

This morning's show drew an estimated 3,000 curious to the sleepy Strip, while others watched from windows of resorts surrounding the old Dunes property.

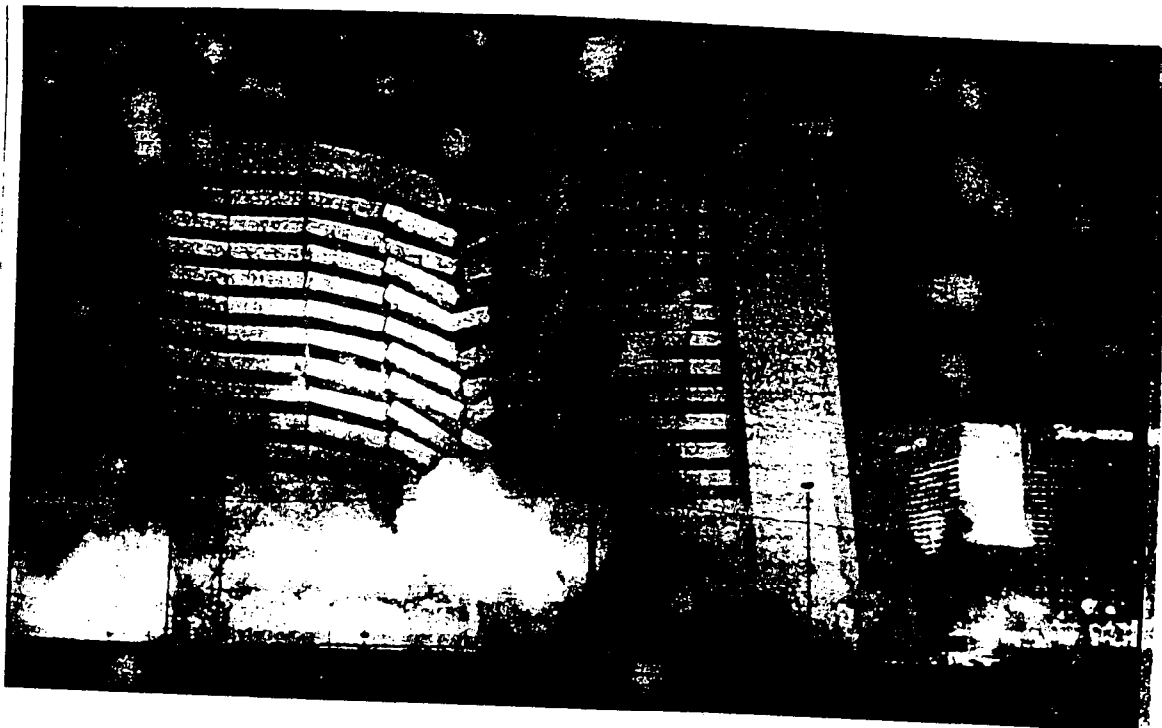
Workers sounded a siren just seconds before the detonation, then a loud series of explosions echoed along the Strip and the tower folded inward, settling into a 30-foot pile of rubble in 4.5 seconds.

PRESS-ENTERPRISE

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The Associated Press

The 17-story tower of the old Dunes Hotel-Casino begins to crumple yesterday.

## Piece of Vegas history comes down

The Associated Press

492602

**LAS VEGAS**  
A piece of Las Vegas history went out with a bang when demolition experts imploded the last remaining tower at the star-crossed Dunes resort.

A series of sharp blasts reverberated along the Las Vegas Strip as 315 charges of dynamite brought down the 17-story tower, clearing the way for two new Mirage resorts on the 163-acre site.

Yesterday's shot was devoid of the pizzazz that accompanied an earlier implosion a half-block away.

A 24-story Dunes tower was imploded Oct. 27 in a fiery spectacle that drew tens of thousands of people to the Strip and was watched by millions around the world.

An estimated 3,000 people gathered on the Strip

for yesterday's 4 a.m. blast, while others watched from hotel rooms surrounding the area.

The implosion marks the final chapter in the checkered history of the famed resort.

The hotel opened May 23, 1955, on what was then the south end of the Las Vegas Strip.

In 1975, St. Louis attorney Morris Shenker took control of the property. Shenker was the lawyer for Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa and many alleged mob figures, bringing the Dunes under the close scrutiny of state gaming officials.

In 1985, the Dunes' parent company filed for bankruptcy. Two years later, Japanese industrialist Masao Nangaku bought the tottering resort for \$157 million. He sold the property five years later to Mirage Resorts for \$75 million. The Dunes closed on Jan. 26, 1993.

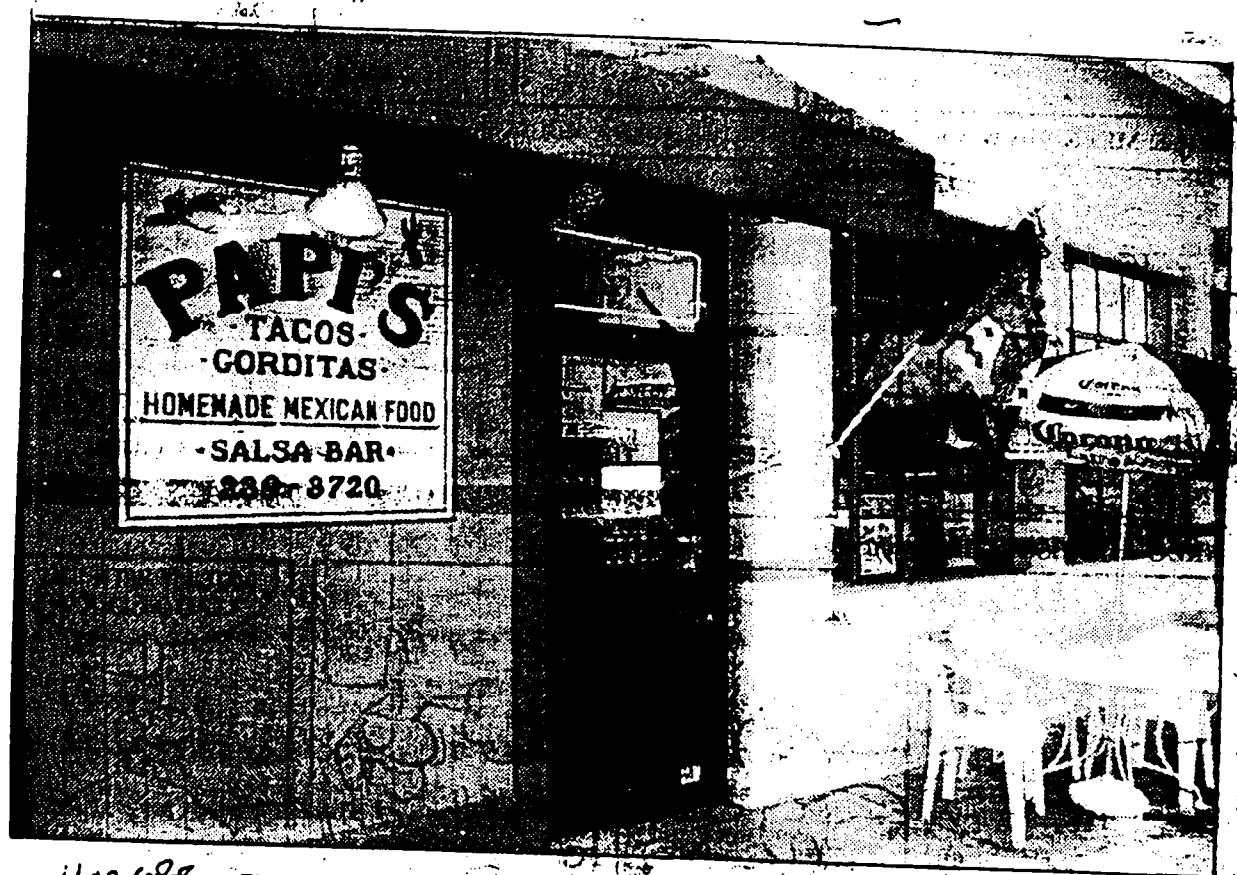
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FRIDAY  
JUL 22 1994

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*Harrell*

This is Papi's, as the sign says located in the Pine Street Plaza.

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TIC 2107

By Joe Benson  
The Daily Press

Planet Jupiter was punched out this week like George Foreman in his next prize fight. All in all, it was not a pretty sight — fiery plumes of ammonia, sulphur and that nasty hydrogen sulfide atmosphere.

It must be tough on Jovian sinuses, too. The stench probably makes the memory of the now burned out meat packing plant in Paso Robles seem like a picnic by comparison, though, maybe not. On Jupiter, I've been told, the saying goes "It ain't L.A. — but it's home."

And to think about those poor Jovians fleeing from the southern hemisphere of Jupiter during its big tourist season because of a comet with 21 pieces the size of Yosemite National Park "hitting home." Major bumper humphooos ois ois ois. I hear that beings on Jupiter escape the searing, sooty, swirling smog of their toxic planet by vacationing at exactly the same time — ending up at the same overcrowded, overpriced Jupiter resorts each year.

Just like we Earthlings now well into the same ritual!

It's been one big sky show this week, with moon landing remembrances, Space Shuttle newts and salamanders begging for stress disability and Jupiter hot-rock bashing.

What a galaxy! What a solar system!

There are assorted pictures scattered about showing life on Jupiter by the exclusive "Daily Press Jupiter Cam" set up in Jim Heggarty's backyard.

If I am invited to go to Jupiter, I beg Mayor Macklin to NOT second this nomination!

Send Steve Martin, instead! I don't speak Jupiter-ese.

Speaking of Mexican food — and we were speaking of this week's headlines that screamed that eating Mexican food was akin to eating a stick of butter and that it has more fat than a billy goat. I say "hog wash" and shove that salsa bowl over here, please.

In honor of all this, my pal John invited me to lunch Wednesday at a nifty Mexican "El Restaurant-o" in the Pine Street Plaza just off 13th Street. I'd not been in "Papi's" before, so I say "What the hay?" and went inside — looking like a gringo who speaks Espanol like Ricky Ricardo spoke "Bob-a-Loooooo!"

I didn't know that John speaks fluid Spanish. I don't even speak transmission fluid, let alone Spanish — and I know I should. I had not thought that the letter "J" is not pronounced in Espanol, as in "Jose" or "Joaquin." These words and zillions of others start out with the letter "H" instead. (I will learn this through my "Hooked on Phonics" course soon.)

Frankly, the only words I know in Spanish are Enchilada, Burrito, Tostada and, at times, "Taco Bell."

On the other hand, Andre, (or "Andy" for short) is one of the two great cooks along with Felix "El Gato" ("The Cat") at Papi's who put together the best tasting Mexican food I ever had (and I've been had a lot in my time!)

Andre/Andy doesn't speak more than a lick of English (except, I think, "Hi, how are you? Fine? Hope.") and I felt, well, kind of goofy sitting there nodding and laughing like I knew and understood what he was saying with great verve and apparent Mexican rejoicing and pride.

John told me that I had smiled and applauded a guy who just recited the entire Fortune 500 companies in reverse numerical order, interspersing his commentary with phrases like "Amigo, you are sure goofy" or "Jose, you should be living in space instead of taking up space."

So, I went for the big guns. Out comes a picture of the planet Jupiter that I was carrying around. John reminded us that it was in this very newspaper, so no wonder I was toting it around. One never knows when someone might want to see a picture of Jupiter at lunch, I figure.

Suddenly, cook extraordinaire, Andy, reacted as if a live eight-foot western diamondback rattler from Shandon had been dropped on the his restaurant's table. He dashed to the cassette player and put on "Marty Robbins Greatest Hits" as fast as anyone I ever hoped to meet.

Strange custom for a Spanish speaking cook who sees Jupiter in fright and plays Marty Robbins music to calm down. Strange, but funny.

I was impressed. John was impressed and Felix was

laughing until I was fearful that he would rupture a artery.

Marty Robbins was turned up LOUD. Real LOUD!

Other patrons just sat there in dumbfounded amazement. Why they were staring at me with blank looks is beside me.

Andre/Andy returned to the table. John had distanced himself to the soft drink dispenser and the first word out of the cook's mouth (rather loud) was "HOO-PITER!"

Now, I know that means "I am about to become dead meat" in most any lingo, el gringo.

"HOO-PITER! HOO-PITER!" he kept shouting. I was nodding and smiling and clapping to Marty Robbins like I knew what he was talking about. This man seemed in need of serious help, I figured, or he was in ecstasy seeing a picture of "Hoo-piter" and hearing the late Marty Robbins singing about "El Paso."

I looked around to see just what Andy was talking about. He may have meant "Hoola Hoop" for all I know.

John laughed and remarked that this gent wanted the straight scoop on "Hoo-piter" and wanted me to tell him about it right out of the newspaper. So, I did the second dumbest thing I could do to try and make a favorable impression. Since my laughing and cackling hadn't done the trick, maybe this age old secret would.

I SLOOOOWLY SPOKE REAL LOOOOUD AND SAID THAT JUPITER HAD BEEN HIT BY BIG ROCKS!

He was standing not two feet away, but you would think that I was shouting at someone all the way to City Park.

Never do this with people - especially the elderly - the hard of hearing or those who speak Spanish.

I am a language disadvantaged, among other things. Its not a real comfortable feeling.

To emphasize the point, I pounded my fist into the opposite hand for 21 times (the number of comet fragments) and made a gut wrenching sound that came out like "Pow! Pow! Pow!"

This only proceeded to scare the living bejabbers out of our friend, Andre/Andy.

I don't know Spanish - he

doesn't know. "Pow! Pow! Pow!" Sorry about that.

Hesta thought that I meant to - beat the tar out of him - which I had not meant.

Friend, John, rushed over and calmly says something in Spanish that I didn't understand and I just sat there feeling like planet "Hoopiter."

The Huevos Rancheros and Torta Ahogada were now ready and delicious. I near buried myself in lunch to avoid further linguistic embarrassment.

Things calmed down when John drew a little alien space creature on the top of my newspaper, and, like some diplomatic interpreter, told me - "Mr. Grasp-of-the-English-Language" - and our friends, Andre and Felix, that four-foot tall aliens from "Hoopiter" are going to come to Earth and land in Paso Robles in a short period of time. "Don't do that, John" implored, "or I will tie your tongue in the shape of a bow-tie." He continued, anyway.

Andy believed him. I could tell by the endless shriek that sounding like a soccer announcer, shouting "GOOOOAAALLL!" for six minutes, non-stop, not even for a breath.

When John told him that he had been an astronaut in 1942 - all in Spanish, mind you, I knew to eat lunch fast before we were tossed out on our "Ay! Carumbas."

Imagine, being 86'ed (as they say in the tavern trade) out of a fine Mexican restaurant in Paso Robles - at lunchtime.

Go figure.

# Friday Feature: 'Jumpin' Jupiter!



Felix "the Cat" of Papi's

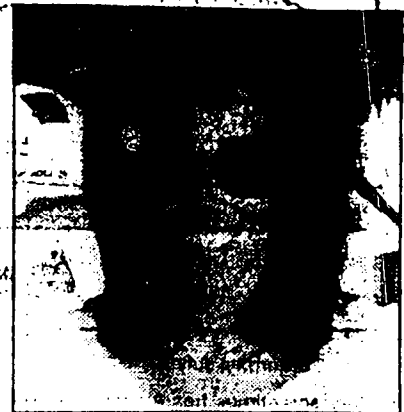


Andre or Andy of Papi's

What nice people. What patience. What fun. What a disadvantage not knowing any foreign language.

What nonsense going to lunch with John who is part Mexican, part Irish and part ding-dong.

I also work with John, or did, until he reads this.

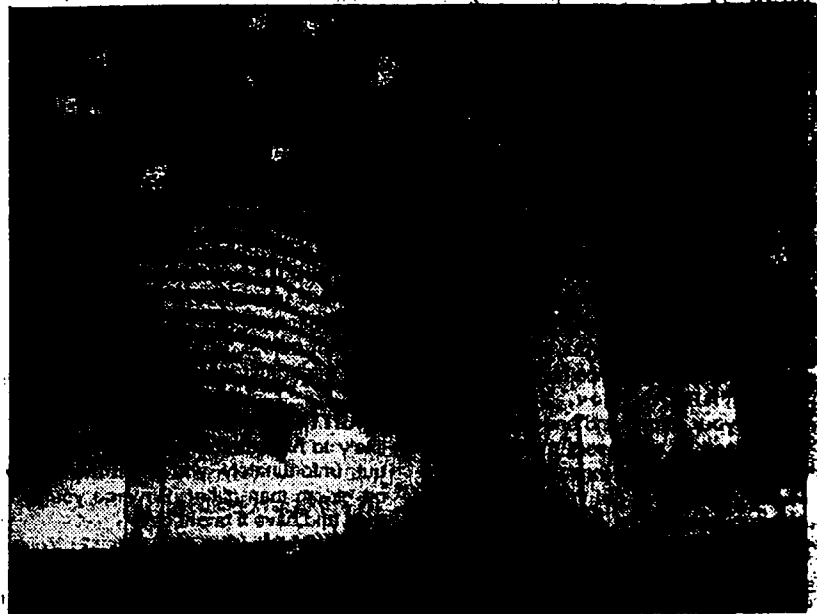


The "Hoo-piter Cam" picked up this amazing sight from Jupiter. Doesn't she look like a ringo for Heidi Fleiss? Yes, we think she does. Unbelievable but true!

Stop by and say "Salute!" to Felix and Andre/Andy for me. Then watch the fun begin.

Have an El Great-o, Week-end-o, Amigos and Amigo-et-tes!

Ole! (More salsa, please!)



A spectacular photo of Jupiter's "Dooms Hotel" that was smashed to bits by comet fragments. No one was injured, miraculously. Everyone was next door at what appears to be the "Flamingo Hilton" to see Wayne Newton's show. The hotel looks "strikingly" similar to the demolished Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas, doesn't it?

Daily Press (LA)

Dec 16, 1994

BURRELLE'S

# Las Vegas EXPLODES

No matter how many times you see Las Vegas, it never ceases to mesmerize. Illusionists have been working their wizardry on this place for the last half century, and finally are outdoing themselves. If you haven't made the jaunt for awhile, you'll be surprised to find a Boomtown.

Story by Sandra Carpenter

A151

TIC 2169

No matter how many times you see Las Vegas, it never ceases to mesmerize. Illusionists have been working their wizardry on this place for the last half century, and finally are outdoing themselves. If you haven't made the jaunt for awhile, you'll be surprised to find a Boomtown.

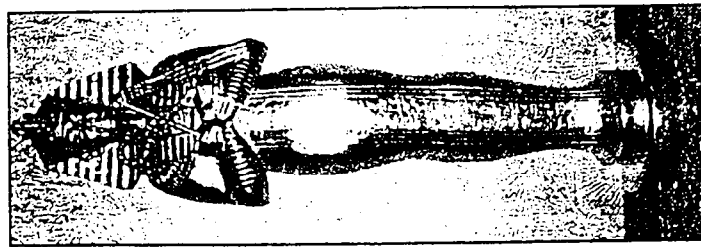
Literally, Boomtown has sprung up on the west side of town in the guise of a new resort especially designed to draw RV owners. Though we stayed at its six-month-old casino hotel, just across the back lot were hundreds of spaces, mostly filled, with the latest in campers. With its own swimming pool and spa, as well as clubhouse, it certainly looked appealing with the purple desert mountains as a backdrop.

An Old West theme gave the interior designers of the casino a lot to work with, and they took the ball and ran with it. From the moment you stroll through those doors you'll think you've taken a step back in time to the gold rush days of the 1800s, days of brash hospitality and old-fashioned fun. "Cash, Courtesy and Kindness" as a motto wasn't a bad idea either...where else in Las Vegas do you hear those words?

November was Roy Rogers Month at Boomtown, with Dusty Rogers playing there for three days in the lounge to set the mood. Well-known acts always perform nightly in a colorful western show at Rattlesnake Ricky's where the Lounge Lizards revel. Boomtown also offers the Opera House Theatre. This huge room, originally planned as a 600-seat dinner theater, is being remodeled into a sprightly new nightclub, with a big dance floor and steak house. The innovations are intended to meet the enormous demand at Boomtown for more top-rate entertainment, dining and dancing facilities.

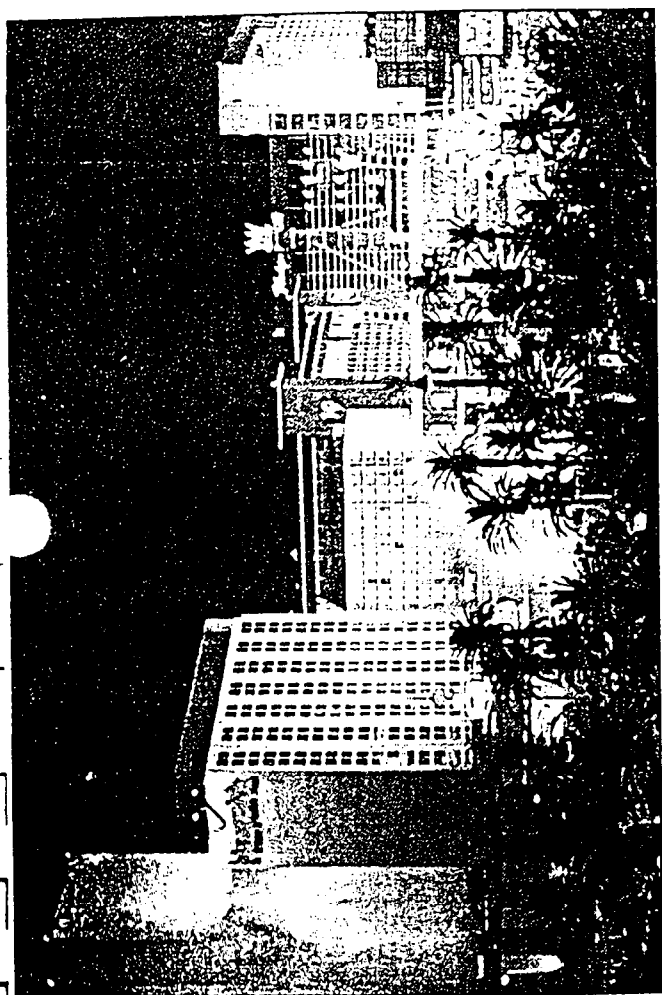
Still, if you are anything like me, you love those buffets. The Chuckwagon Buffet gives you "Three Squares a Day, the Western Way." Here, as in all the major Vegas hotels, a fantastic variety of popular food awaits the guest. A showy assortment of Old West specialties are set alongside a diversity of traditional American chow. Such features as a chili and soup bar, BBQ chicken and ribs, seafood, Chinese, Mexican and a dessert wagon entice gamblers. And all for \$4.95 at lunchtime.

Before you leave Boomtown to drive on down the strip, stop at one of Las Vegas' more unique attractions that has proven to be full of fun. "Pan For Gold" provides participants with a pan of sand and shows you how to sluice in the water trough. Just as in the Old West, gold nuggets filter to the pan's bottom. They're removed and placed in a souvenir vial of water to take home. Yes, everyone strikes gold for \$3.



A mummy at the Luxor





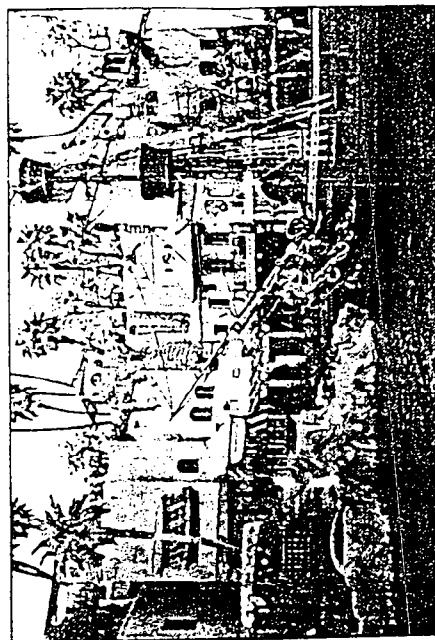
At night, the Las Vegas skyline can be seen for hundreds of miles Bill Price/Daily Press

Today the city has outdone itself when it comes to family entertainment. That worn phrase "entertainment capital of the world" takes on a whole new meaning in the mid-'90s. Casino owners have created entire theme parks, shopping malls, multiple restaurants and fascinating family pleasure products inside their ornate gambling palaces. New casinos have some of the old standbys scrambling to compete.

Sure, Circus Circus still has a large midway for the kids where they'll be entertained for hours, but have you seen the miniature "Disneyland" at MGM Grand Adventures? This, the largest hotel in the world, has outdone itself with rides and shows that

could fill an entire afternoon. Excalibur offers a 7:30 p.m. show with knights in shining armor, as well as a matinee, "Super Dogs," where dogs perform tricks.

Siegfried & Roy remain in their long-term tiger show at the Mirage, but have you seen Treasure Island? For pirate lovers, Treasure Island has a production with cannons firing and a ship sinking right on the street, daily



The Treasure Island Resort is a pirate's paradise Sandra Carpenter

from 4 p.m. to 10, every hour and a half. Naturally, the pirates always win. The brand new pyramid-shaped Luxor offers an indoor Nile River ride and a full-scale copy of King Tut's tomb. A beacon shooting up into the night stars will grab your attention from the boulevard. Here you'll journey down the Nile as you recount 4,000 years of Egyptian history. This river, however, is only 3,000 feet long and takes only about 20 minutes to traverse.

If you need a relaxing break which the entire family can enjoy, stop at the Omnimax Theater at Caesars Palace. Here you can lay back in recliner seats and watch Yellowstone come alive on a 57-foot screen above your head.

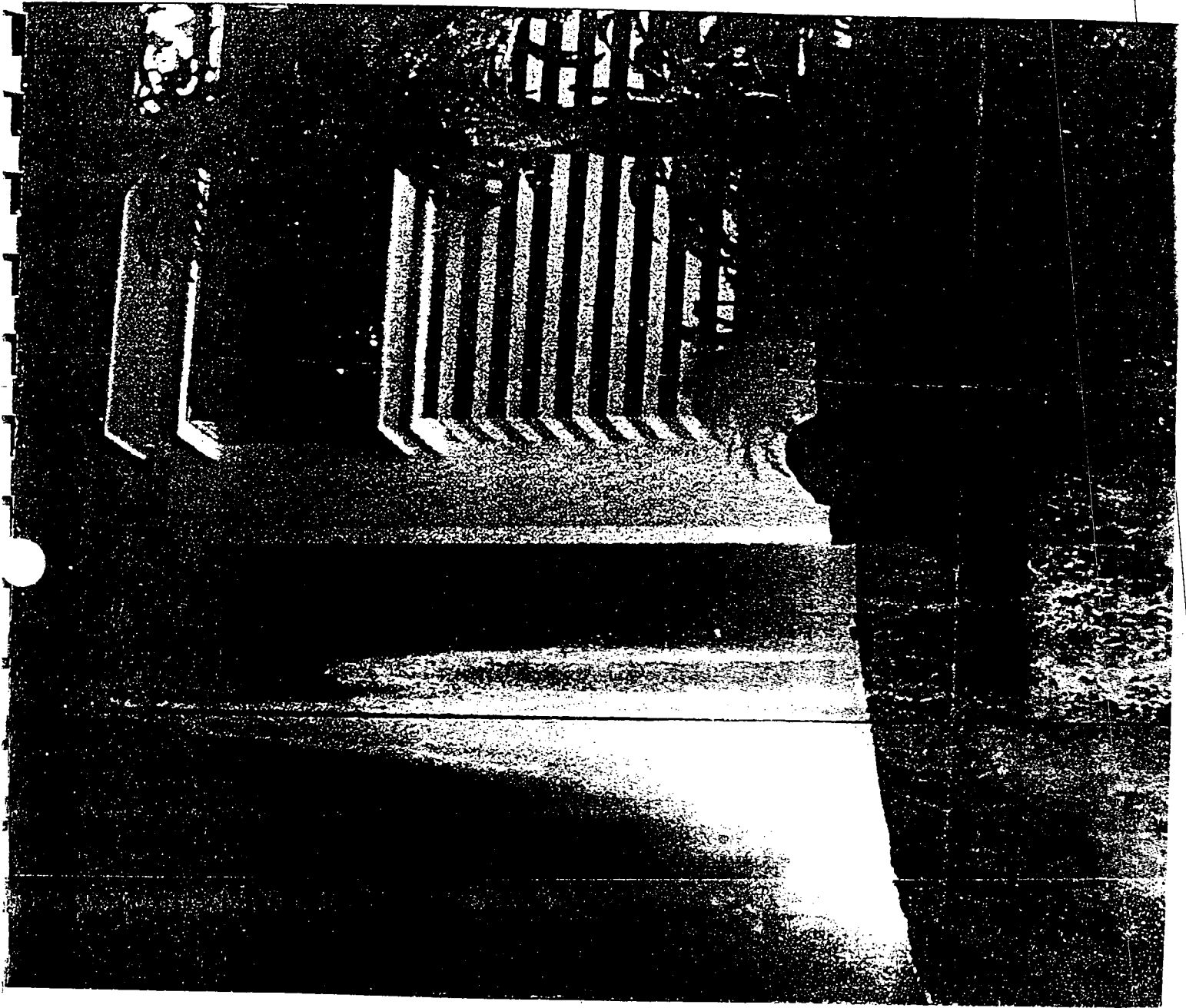
Certainly, there's still the slots, and always the bare dancing girls in all their glory, along with the customary trek to see Hoover Dam doing its thing, but there are NEW attractions on the horizon this time around. Don't miss them!

For more information, contact the Las Vegas Visitors Bureau at 702-892-0711.

*Sandra Carpenter is a regular contributor to The Weekender. Her last article, about Riverside's Mission Inn, appeared on Nov. 25.*



*Sandra Carpenter*  
Emerald City has become reality at the MGM Grand Hotel



A155

TIC 2173

HISPANOS UNIDOS

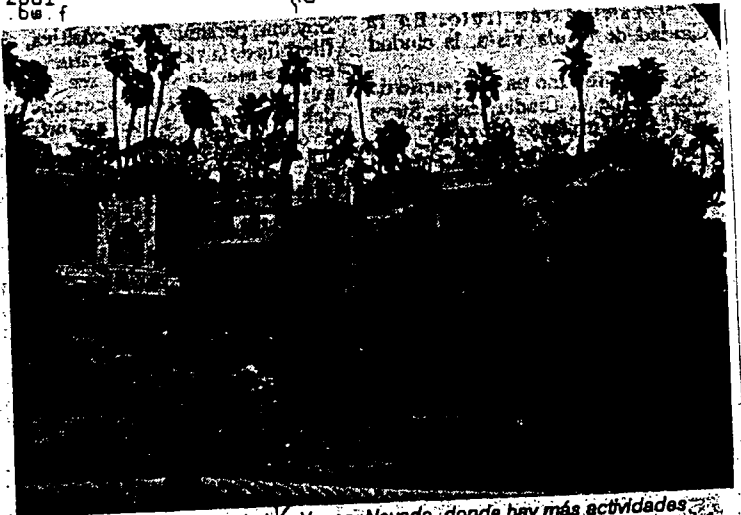
ESCONDIDO, CA  
WEEKLY 15,000

OCT 28 1994

BURRELLE'S

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Treasure Island Casino de Las Vegas, Nevada, donde hay más actividades  
para los niños. Localizado en el sur de Las Vegas Blvd.

4926 R FRONT PAGE

A156

TIC 2131

MEETINGS CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 1994

BURRELLE'S

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/ Treasure Island at the Mirage  
will offer meeting planners a special winter package Nov. 27-Jan. 19, Sunday through Thursday. In addition to reduced rates, spa passes and buffet breakfasts are included. 4926BR

A157

TIC 2132

DESERT SUN

PALM SPRINGS, CA  
DAILY & SUNDAY 48,115

SUNDAY

DEC 11 1994

BURRELLE'S

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bmc.

### In Las Vegas

WINTER RATES: Enjoy the pirate's life at Treasure Island (800-944-7444) for only \$39 per night or the splendor of The Mirage (800-627-6667) for \$55 through Dec. 22. The special rate is available from Sunday through Thursday based on single or double occupancy.

More Las Vegas/C2

A158

TIC 2168

SANTA BARBARA, CA  
WEEKLY 40,000

DEC 21 1994

1922 BURRELLE'S HW  
D.K.**CLOSE ESCAPES**

By Cynthia Wisenhart

 4-9-26 BR  
**Cirque du Soleil Lights Up Las Vegas**


From the first moment when a giant wiggly-nosed, fat-bellied jabberwocky-type thing teeters through the aisles, one of two things happens. If you have never seen Cirque du Soleil, you may worry a little. What's next—will you be plucked from anonymity to have your popcorn (or your date) stolen by an Einstein-coiffed clown? Will an eight-foot-tall ladybug sit on your lap?

But, if you are familiar with the unique joy of Cirque, even as you giggle at pre-show antics, you start to feel the shiver—the stage is dappled in magical colors and promise; overhead in the tangle of rigging, five Taiko drums wait silently, 80 feet up. Then the drums are lowering, flogged with passion by five beautiful sirens, hair flying, biceps tense. The electric fiddle calls from stage right, the singer winds up her vibrato, and *Mystère* is off, like some neo-tribal cross between *Blade Runner* and Disneyland.

A159

TIC 2174



Cirque du Soleil's *Mystère* (above). Guests share the fun of *Treasure Island* and the glitz of the *Mirage*.



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT &  
SPECIFIER NEWS

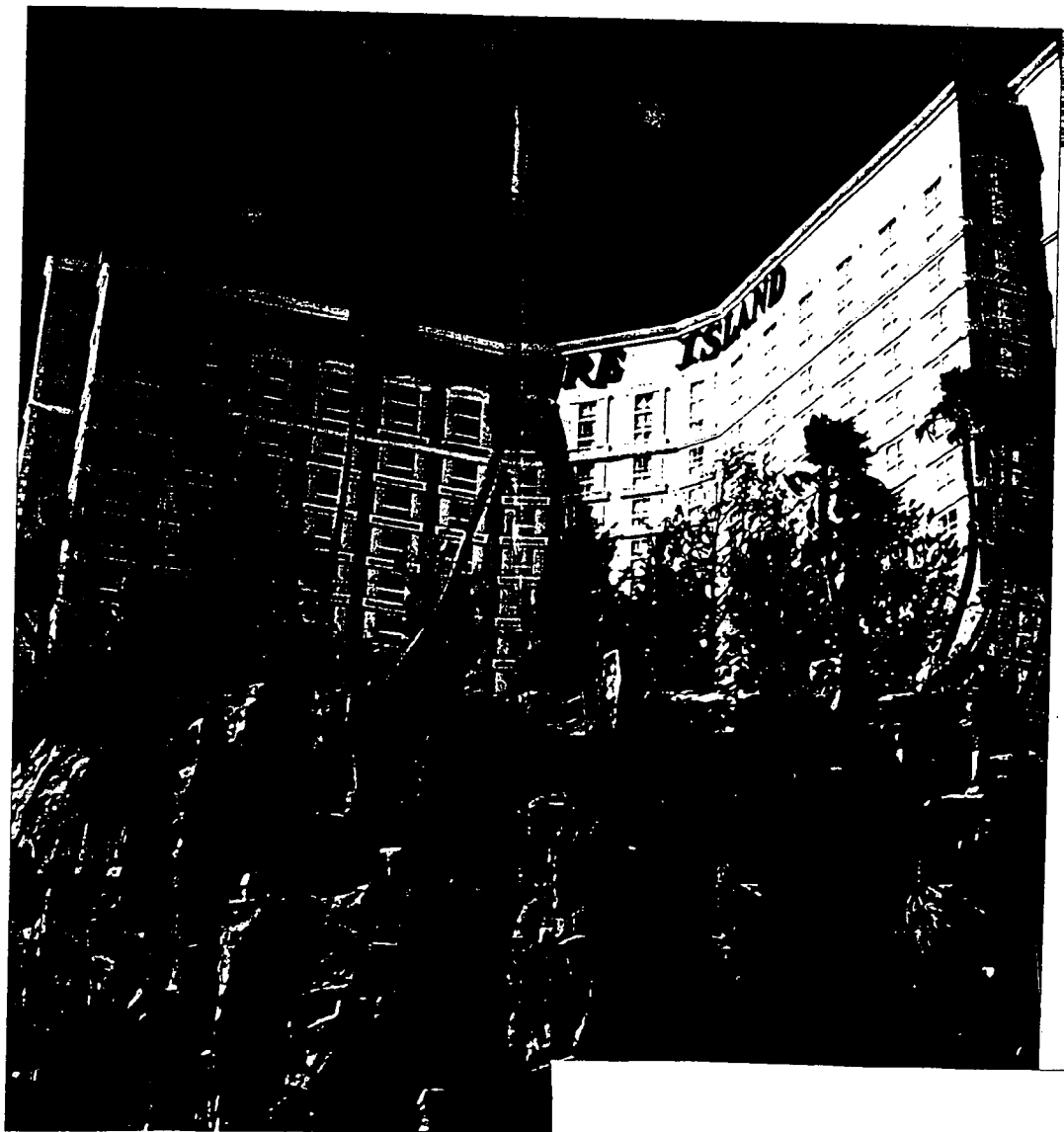
SANTA ANA, CA  
MONTHLY \$5,500

JANUARY 1995

BURRELLE'S

# THE MIRAGE OF BUCCANEER BAY

BY ROCCO CAMPANOZZI, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT  
LIFESCAPES, INC.



A161

TIC 2202

S

teve Wynn, C.E.O. of Mirage Resorts, Inc., had a vision to create a caribbean setting for Treasure Island, his family-oriented resort casino located in Las Vegas. Lifescapes, Inc., was retained as the project Landscape Architect to help bring this vision into reality. The firm's responsibility was to design the landscape environment for this truly unique project, however it turned out to be more involved than what we know as "traditional" design. It involved a thorough entertainment-oriented theatrical "set design."

The "main event" entry to the property is through the middle of Buccaneer Bay, a pirate village designed by the Jerde Partnership. Buccaneer Bay is the "stage" for a (mock) naval battle between a pirate ship and a British frigate, where as Steve Wynn says, "the pirates always win!". The landscape design was an integral part of the "stage" as it reinforced the thematic character of this fantasy



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT & SPECTATOR NEWS



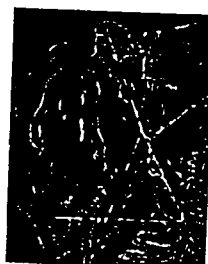
cut. This process results in a feeling that visitors were gently placed into the environment, instead of imposed on it. An example where this technique is being applied is the proposed restaurant at Muju Resort in Korea. The one-story restaurant proposes that the natural grade come up onto the side and over the top of the facility so it looks like it is part of the natural environment. The building "emerges" from the mountain, blending beautifully with its surroundings. On this particular project, areas where land will be disrupted, large quantities of plant materials will be planted back onto the disturbed areas to appear as if it had always been that way. Some of the new native vegetation will be as high as 60' tall.

Another example of minimizing the disturbance of the natural setting is at the Snowmass Ski Area in Colorado, where Design Workshop worked with the Aspen Skiing Company to prepare expansion plans for the Burnt Mountain area. The proposed trails passed through one of the last significant elk migration corridors in the Snowmass Valley. With the firm's expertise, ski trails and base facilities were all sited to preserve the migration corridor and enhance the elk habitat. Without a thorough understanding of the development's impacts on the wildlife, facilities and trails may have significantly impacted the elk migration patterns, reducing the biological diversity of the species and ultimately endangering the survival of these animals.

#### BASE AREA AND VILLAGE DESIGN

In base area design, several issues need to be considered to achieve environmentally responsive design. Access and transportation, the location of skier facilities, including hotels and restaurants, housing, and summertime recreational facilities all emerge out of the final

development program. At Muju Resort, the plan encourages the use of mass transit and minimizes the need for automobiles. Nancy Locke, Landscape Architect for the project, says that early plans call for a monorail as the means of mass transit. The base village design focuses designing to a pedestrian scale to increase walking. Design Workshop closely examines walking distances, understanding how far a person will walk before they tire, even in ski boots. They also include the design of pedestrian walkways and trails, bicycle trails, and cross country ski trails to create alternative connections through the village center.

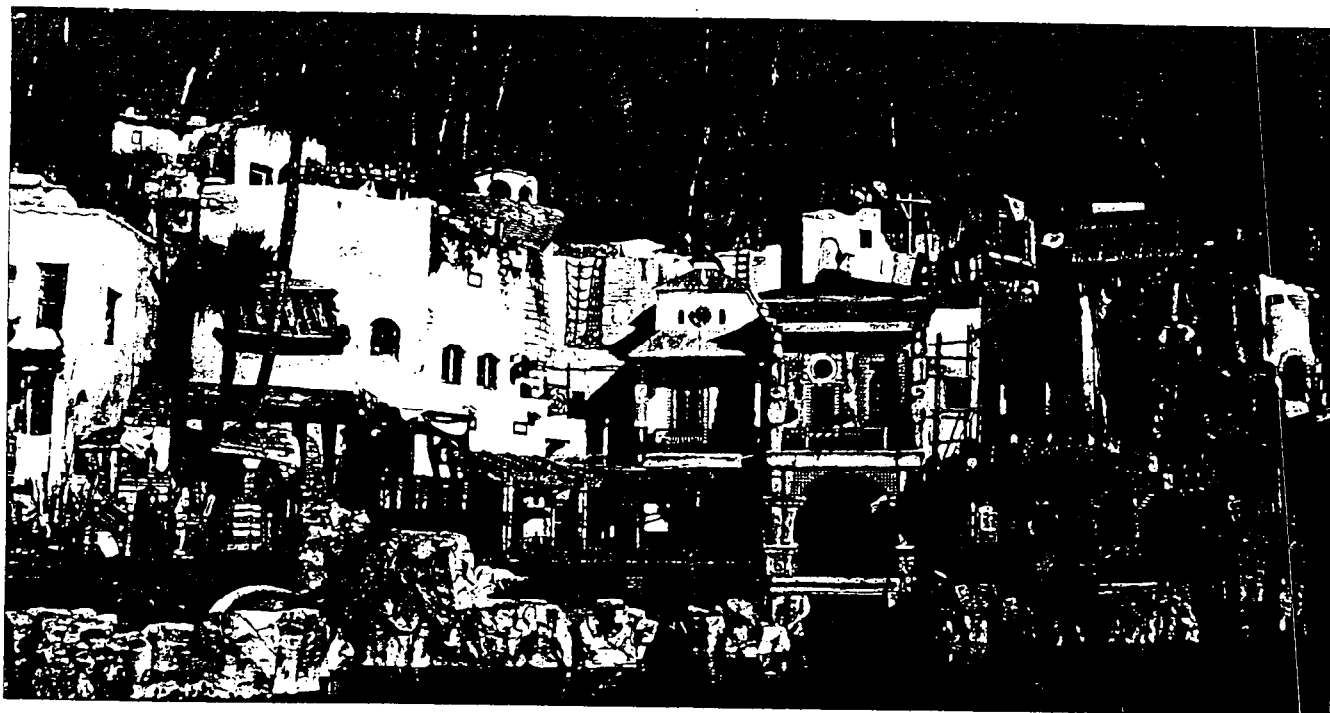


TOP: A BREATHTAKING VIEW OF KANANASKIS VILLAGE OF ALBERTA, CANADA. MIDDLE: THIS COMPUTER SIMULATION OF COPPER MOUNTAIN WAS USED TO INVESTIGATE DESIGN OPTIONS WITHIN THE AREA. BELOW: COMPUTERS ARE BECOMING THE NORM. THESE GRAPHICS OF THE SNOWMASS SKI RESORT SHOW IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LANDSCAPE AND SKI TRAILS.

At Park Avenue in South Lake Tahoe, CA, the firm developed a transit program which includes an intermodal transportation center to allow a connection between the public transportation system and access to the mountain via a new proposed gondola to Heavenly Ski Area. Not only will this allow people from outside the immediate area to have direct access to the mountain, but it will also offer 3,000 hotel rooms with a direct walking connection to skiing and summer access to the mountain.

It is the best case scenario for a design firm such as Design Workshop to be brought into these resort projects at the initial stage to address tourism development from a regional perspective. Each location has its own unique virtues and challenges. Communities should approach resort and tourism development by first gaining a clear understanding of the impacts on the region. There are no simple solutions. It is essential to address all aspects of resort development concurrently to better respond to the environmental challenges while at the same time creating the best possible resort experience.

L.A.S.N.



caribbean pirate village. In addition to enhancing the whimsical character of the pirate village, the landscape also provided foreground to properly compose the village with the 31 story hotel tower beyond. The foreground was achieved by planting areas that were designed and installed along the edge of the rooftop all around Buccaneer Bay. High intensity lights behind the palms made them glow magnificently. In order to insure that the landscape was properly lit, Lifescapes worked closely with theatrical lighting designers David Hersey Associates (who also provided the lighting design for the Mirage.) The lighting for the landscape had to be in concert with the actual "show" event lighting as well.

Major components of the landscape design which helped to create the setting of a windswept caribbean village were the "tornado palms"- bent and twisted Mexican fan palms secured from White Tank Palms (see photo). Several hundred "tornado palms" were strategically placed in the landscape areas along with screening, understory and accent plantings including Aleppo pine, Japanese privet, and Crape myrtle trees. The "tornado palms" were actually bent and twisted as the result of being blown over by a tornado that touched down in the nursery fields where they were being grown. Lifescapes' Roger Voettiner was responsible for the planting design of Treasure Island and also located all the "tornado palms" at the nursery. According to Roger, "there are only a handful of people with Steve Wynn's level of vision. I feel very fortunate that we at Lifescapes were able to help him realize his vision for Treasure Island."

A tremendous coordination effort was required between all the design consultants involved with the project. There were many unusual design considerations that had to be worked out during the construction drawing phase of the project as well. The weights of the planting areas had to be calculated so that the structural engineer could design the required supporting structures. Clearances

between the "tornado palms" and all the architectural elements in the village, the British frigate that moved in front of the landscaped cliffs and the pyrotechnic effects all had to be worked out.



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS DREW UPON THEATRICAL SET DESIGN TECHNIQUES IN PLANNING THE MANY VIEWS OF BUCCANEER BAY. REAL "TORNADO PALMS," ARTIFICIAL ROCK, AND CREATIVE FRAMING SET THE STAGE FOR THE "MAIN EVENT" A MOCK NAVAL BATTLE BETWEEN A PIRATE SHIP AND A BRITISH FRIGATE, WHERE (ADJACENT PAGE, BOTTOM) "THE PIRATES ALWAYS WIN!"

The construction phase of the project was yet another challenge for Lifescapes. The schedule was very fast paced and required close coordination between Marnell Corrao Associates, the general contractor, Botanical Specialties, the landscape contractor and numerous other specialty trades involved in the construction of Buccaneer Bay and the pirate show. Roger Voettiner was closely involved with the various contractors during construction in order to help insure that implementation of the original design was achieved and that the technical details were followed.

Treasure Island required LA's to blend traditional landscape architectural design skills, such as planting design, with

several new aspects of design like theatrical set design and thematic rockwork design. After working on the project for almost two years and following its development from inception to installation, Lifescapes' project Landscape Architect Rocco Campanozzi said "it was a rewarding experience to watch the pirate show for the first time and see what an important part the landscape played in the show."

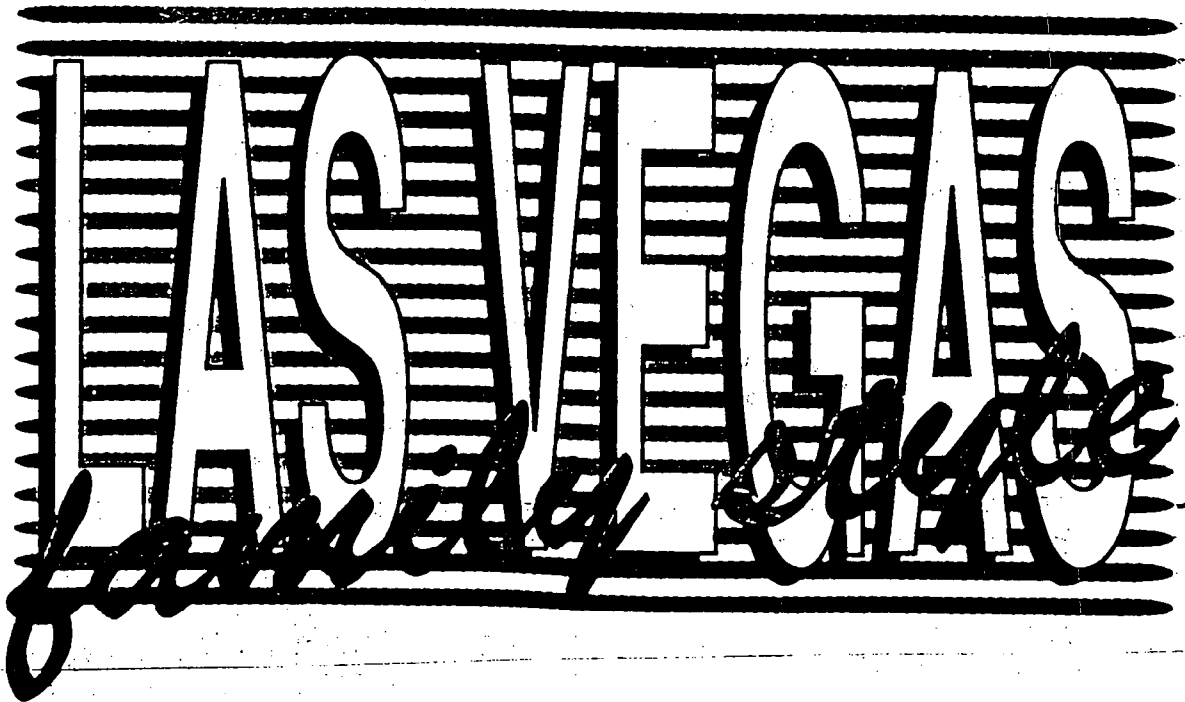
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MERCED SUN-STAR

MERCED, CA  
DAILY 21,500

FRIDAY  
FEB 24 1995

408 BURRELLE'S JC  
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By GARY H. SMART  
*Sun-Star Correspondent*

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The world-famous Las Vegas Strip can be a commotion of showgoers, a blur of bright lights, a whirl of all-star stage entertainment, and a crush of grown-ups gambling at green tables and metal machines.

A165

TIC 2214

But wait a minute. Now, there's plenty of room for children, teen-agers and entire families. A myriad of outdoor and indoor activities is available to attract those of all ages — including fun zones, theme parks, circus acts, wading and swimming pools, spaces for go-carts and roller skating, petting zoos, and even mock gunfights and hangings.

To be sure, the Vegas of old still exists. Twenty-four hours a day there's the spinning of roulette wheels, clanging pay-offs of slot machines, deceiving

speed of blackjack dealers and suspenseful clicks of dice headed for bounces off crap table walls.

That image still stands, but ever-surprising Las Vegas, long an irresistible attraction for adult gamblers, is now rolling out the welcome mat for those too young to enter the casinos.

And Vegas is doing it the best way it knows how — the big way.

In the last three months of 1993 three new gigantic resorts were opened — the \$450 million, 2,900-room pirate-oriented Treasure Island resort, the \$375 million, 2,526-room pyramid-shaped Luxor, and the \$1 billion, 5,004-room lion-fronted MGM Grand. The self-named "Entertainment Capital of the World" is becoming a family attraction of first rank, still with plenty of gambling opportunities for adults.

"We're targeting families for sure," says Ron Garrett, director of Circus Circus, which started it all.

"Las Vegas used to have very little for kids to do. Now there is a lot, and we want to expose families to the fun they can have here."

The move to lure families rather than just high rollers began in 1974 when a gaming executive named William Bennett assumed operation of Circus Circus. He amazed almost everyone when he introduced such happenings as trapeze artists flying above the gambling tables, circus acts to thrill the kids and a carnival-style atmosphere that even adults found fascinating.

Circus Circus hasn't stopped expanding its family attractions. The circus acts, running free from 11 a.m. to midnight daily, have been joined by a new

Adventuredome, which includes Grand Slam Canyon, a five-acre theme park. Here visitors to the climate-controlled arena are transported through tunnels, grottos, and a 68-foot waterfall on the Canyon Blaster, the country's only indoor double loop corkscrew roller coaster.

Add to this the fact that Grand Slam Canyon keeps increasing its real estate. The newest rides include Sand Pirates, an authentic reproduction of a 16th century Spanish ship that takes customers sailing on the seas. Drifter is a balloon ferris wheel that whirls with a panoramic view of the dome. There's also a crazy bus ride that ends with a surprise twist, and a play area for children.

The glory and grandeur, but not the decline, of ancient Rome can be re-lived at Caesar's Palace, not a recent mega-resort, but a forerunner of activities other than gambling. After jumping aboard a Peoplemover, riders find themselves in the midst of The World of Caesar, complete with detailed miniatures, and a 3-D video projection. The marble statues actually talk.

Caesar's Palace also contains a huge and spectacular shopping center, The Forum Shops, where you can browse and buy to your heart's content among more than 70 specialty retailers and restaurants.

A new entry to the eating scene is a restaurant aptly named Planet Hollywood, named for the town that has long played a major role at Nevada resorts, especially the Las Vegas Strip.

Owned as a partnership by Demi Moore and her husband Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Sylvester Stallone, the colorful restaurant melds food, fun and entertainment within a tinsel-town atmosphere.

The restaurant's opening was

a festive occasion featuring Stallone and Schwarzenegger arriving on horse drawn chariots, Steven Seagal on the back of an elephant, and a slew of more ordinary limousines.

Artifacts displayed in the restaurant include the black, slinky dress bought for Demi Moore by Robert Redford in the movie "Indecent Proposal." The scene took place in, where else, Las Vegas. Also featured is the robe Warren Beatty donned in "Bugsy," and the suit Tom Cruise wore while counting cards with Dustin Hoffman in "Rainman."

Topping this all off, the moon mobile from the James Bond film "Diamonds are Forever" is suspended from the ceiling as a reminder of actual Bond scenes shot in the desert surrounding Las Vegas.

The largest of the large casino hotel resorts, or rather a castle-hotel, is the Excalibur, more of an entertainment emporium than a gambling parlor.

It's got all the necessary royal accoutrements — four 28-story towers, over-sized turrets, battlements, a moat and drawbridge. Most of its staff are dressed in medieval costumes, and the hotel's 7,000 parking spaces are protected by mounted security guards.

In addition to sexy showgirls, guests and visitors are also likely to be mingling with Merlin the Magician and King Arthur's knights who often joust on horseback. Not to mention an assortment of jugglers, singers, and sword dancers.

Just the names of the Excalibur's restaurants suggest the fanciful early England variety of dining available. There's Lance-A-Lotta Pasta, Oktoberfest, RoundTable Buffet, Sherwood Forest Cafe, Sir Galahad's, The Camelot, and three snack bars, Robin Hood's, Little John's, and Hansel and Gretel's.

For children and teen-agers whose parents have not yet taken them to Yellowstone National Park, the Mirage Hotel offers a volcano eruption that explodes at shorter intervals than Old Faithful, although admittedly in a more artificial atmosphere.

It's also free to watch the faked-up volcano blast off every 15 minutes at night. Quite a light show for the young and young-at-heart. Traditionalists and nature lovers, however, might well be offended by the extravagance of it all.

But if anything, Las Vegas thrives on extravagance.

The antics of dolphins seem to thrill children, and at the Mirage Hotel dolphins cavort in a marine facility holding about one million gallons of man-made sea water and coral reefs. A fun diversion for the young ones.

Wet n' Wild water park is located right in the midst of vintage Vegas casino hotels on the Strip. The 26-acre oasis features a wave pool, a circular river, hydro tubes, slides and rapids, and a separated section designed to keep small children occupied.

The Lied Discovery Children's Museum at 833 Las Vegas Blvd. N., offers 100 hands-on exhibits on science, humanities and the arts that both teach and entertain.

In an everyday living section, children can choose a job, earn a paycheck, deposit savings in a bank and buy groceries. Another section allows them to use wheelchairs and crutches, and to feel what it would be like to be blind or deaf.

The new Las Vegas hotels appear to be flourishing, but there are also many family activities available outside of but not far from Las Vegas.

A (See LAS VEGAS, page D2)

# Las Vegas: A new lake forming

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(From page D1)

Cosmo World Corp., a multinational company based in Tokyo, is financing Silver canyon, a \$600 million project that includes 2,500 homes, 45 golf courses, teaching facilities, and an Associated Tennis Professional complex housing 16 tennis courts in a 2,500-seat stadium. The gambling connection won't be downplayed with construction of a 700-room casino resort.

There's also a new body of water, Lake Las Vegas. Located in nearby Henderson, the resort was created by completion of a 4,600-foot-long earthen dam rising 18 stories. A \$3 billion complex will be built beside the three-acre lake.

Later are planned eight resort hotels, five golf courses, commercial and retail centers, and 225 acres of residential development. So with such places as Lake Las Vegas, the city and area is not just attracting families to the resort hotels. It's inviting them to live and play there permanently.

The Las Vegas area also offers several side-trips of interest to both gamblers and non-gamblers. Some natural attractions contain elements of illusion and imagination, just as Vegas does.

One park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas, Red Rock Canyon, casts a flaming red appearance, due to iron oxide in the soil. Also, fingers of rock point to the sky and can appear to be on fire. Even more aptly named, Valley of the Fire east of Las Vegas exhibits the same mirage-like scene.

The major attraction close by Las Vegas but not part of it is Hoover Dam. Built during the Depression by a mass of men looking for work, the dam is as high as a 70-story building and thicker than the length of two football fields. It also was constructed with 4.4 million cubic yards of cement — enough

to form a two-way highway from San Francisco to New York.

The dam holds in Lake Mead, the largest man-made reservoir in the hemisphere. Each year more than six million people use Lake Mead for fishing, boating, water skiing and camping. Striped bass, bluegill, crappie and catfish abound in its waters, and there are nine major marinas to launch from. Campers can choose from among 1,500 spaces.

As has been said, everything in and around Las Vegas seems over-sized. But the biggest whopper of them all is still to come.

Two major gaming companies recently announced plans to build a resort called New York, New York, containing a 28 story hotel and towering replicas of the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, the Chrysler Building, and a 200-foot-tall roller coaster careening through the 18-acre property.

Visitors actually will feel like they're in Manhattan, but without the noise, dirt and traffic.

"We will recreate the best of New York, the part Frank Sinatra sings about," Robert Maxey, president and chief

executive of MGM Grand Inc. said at a news conference.

"We will transport visitors to New York through the most famous skyline in the world."

Somehow it seems only fitting that the "Entertainment Capital of the World," while creating its own fantasy skyline, should top it with the world's most famous one. A perfect but surely not final touch to a new Las Vegas being designed with just about everything to attract almost everyone. 6

TIC 2217



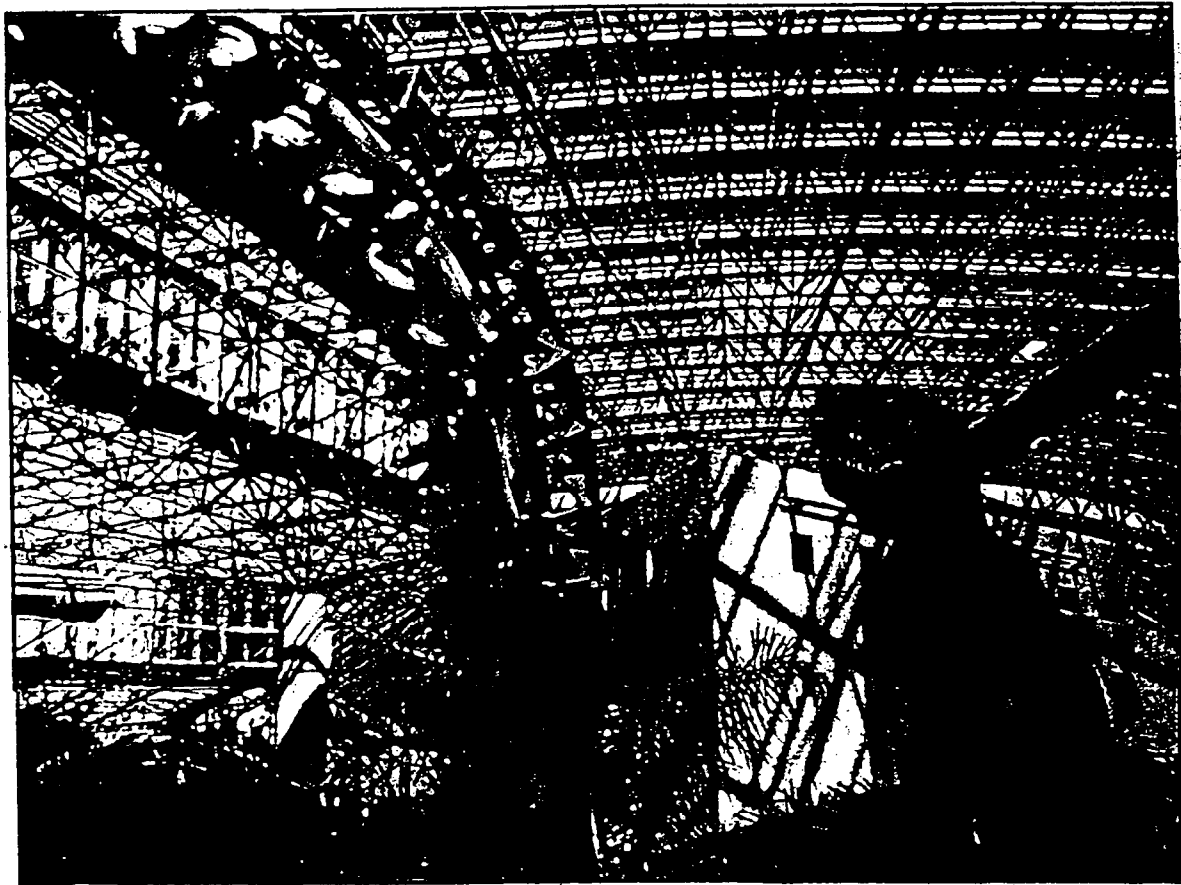


Photo courtesy of Gary H. Smart

MGM Grand's Emerald City brings back the characters from the "Wizard of Oz."

TIC 2218

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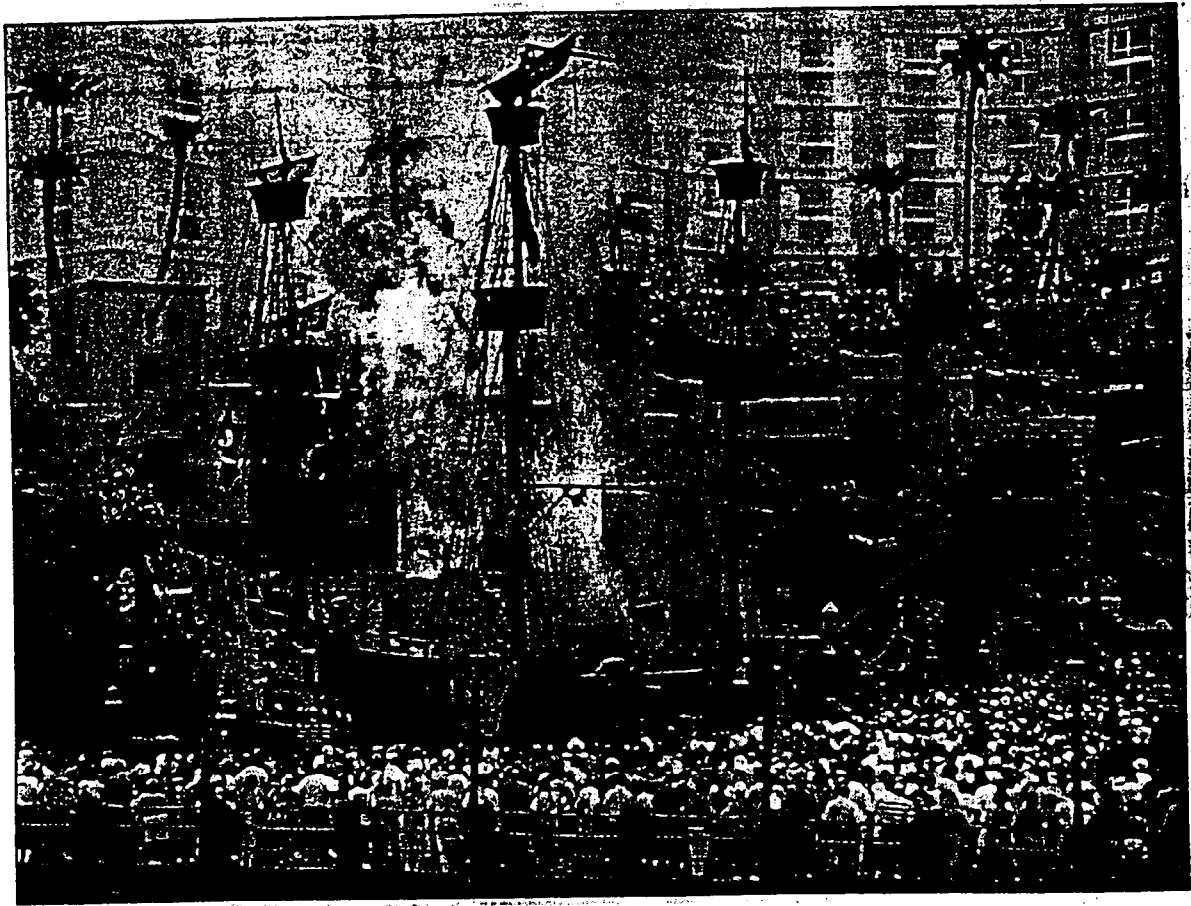
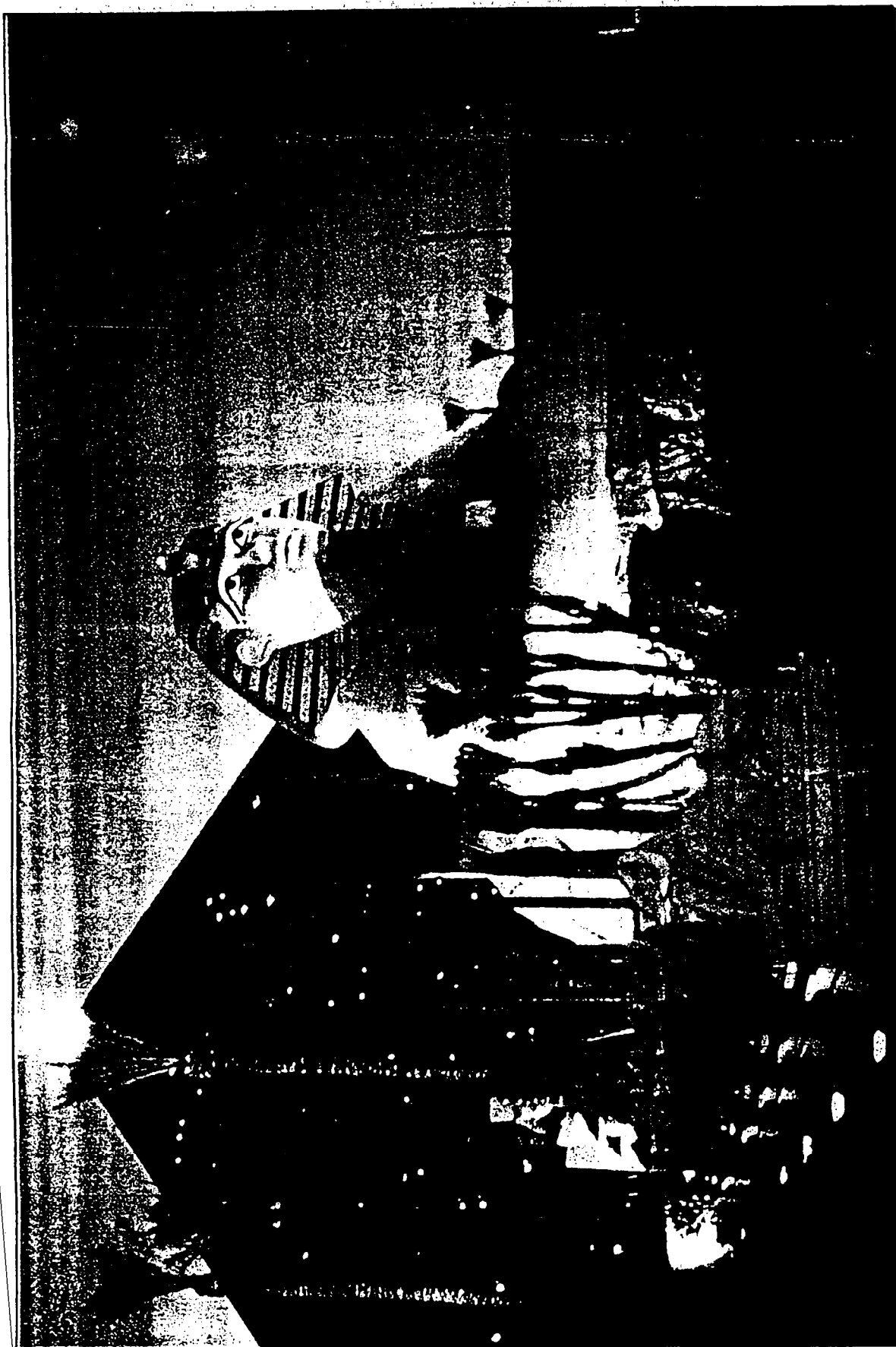


Photo courtesy of Gary H. Smart

A pirate battle, complete with tall wooden ships on fire, is a regular feature at the Treasure Island Mirage resort.

TIC 2219

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TIC 2220

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## COVER STORY

# Take a break

Nation's hot spot for spring break?  
No contest. The Southland *rules*

By **JULIE FARREN**

The Sun

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**N**o homework. No worries.  
To students in the  
Southland and across the  
country, that can only  
mean one thing.

### SPRING BREAK.

No two words are sweeter. They  
mean a week of partying, relaxing and  
forgetting about classes and grades.

Of course, choosing a site to celebrate  
spring break can be tough for students,  
especially here in the Southland, where  
there are so many choices.

Although Palm Springs was the rage  
for many years, the city now discourages  
spring revelers, instead welcoming fami-  
lies to its SunFest '95, an arts and crafts  
street fair that will take place the two  
weeks before Easter.

TIC 2273

## Lake Havasu

For students, the happening spots now are Lake Havasu and the Colorado River, on the eastern edge of San Bernardino County.

Lake Havasu, which is approximately four-and-one-half hours from San Bernardino, is the new "in" spot for students.

Just ask Lt. Muri Shaver, a San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department watch commander assigned to the Colorado River station. "They actually come from all over the country," Shaver says.

Or ask anyone who watches MTV, which has been doing on-location features at Lake Havasu for most of the month.

Since spring break is held at different times for different schools, Lake Havasu has been playing host to students since early-March and will continue to cook through Easter weekend.

There are plenty of opportunities for recreational boating and water skiing here. Students also can swim, go parasailing or windsurf along the river.

Actually, the mighty Colorado River extends all the way from Colorado down into Mexico, but some of the most popular sites for spring revelry happen to be concentrated at the eastern edge of San Bernardino County, including Needles and Topock Gorge as well as Lake Havasu.

Topock Gorge, south of the I-40 bridge across the Colorado River, is an ideal spot for canoeing.

The Parker Strip, below the Parker Dam at the bottom end of Lake Havasu, is an ideal site for personal water craft and boating.

Space is restricted on busy days, but there's no lack of fun.

Houseboats on the lake are one of the most popular options for students, but they are booked well in advance of spring break.

Celebrities and bands have joined the action this year, and MTV has been on the scene to film such features as "Beauty and the Beach," a coed beauty pageant with audience participation.

One show featuring actor Stephen Baldwin and the group Flaming Lips, along with throngs of spring revelers, was hosted by MTV host and actor Pauly Shore.

## Catalina Island

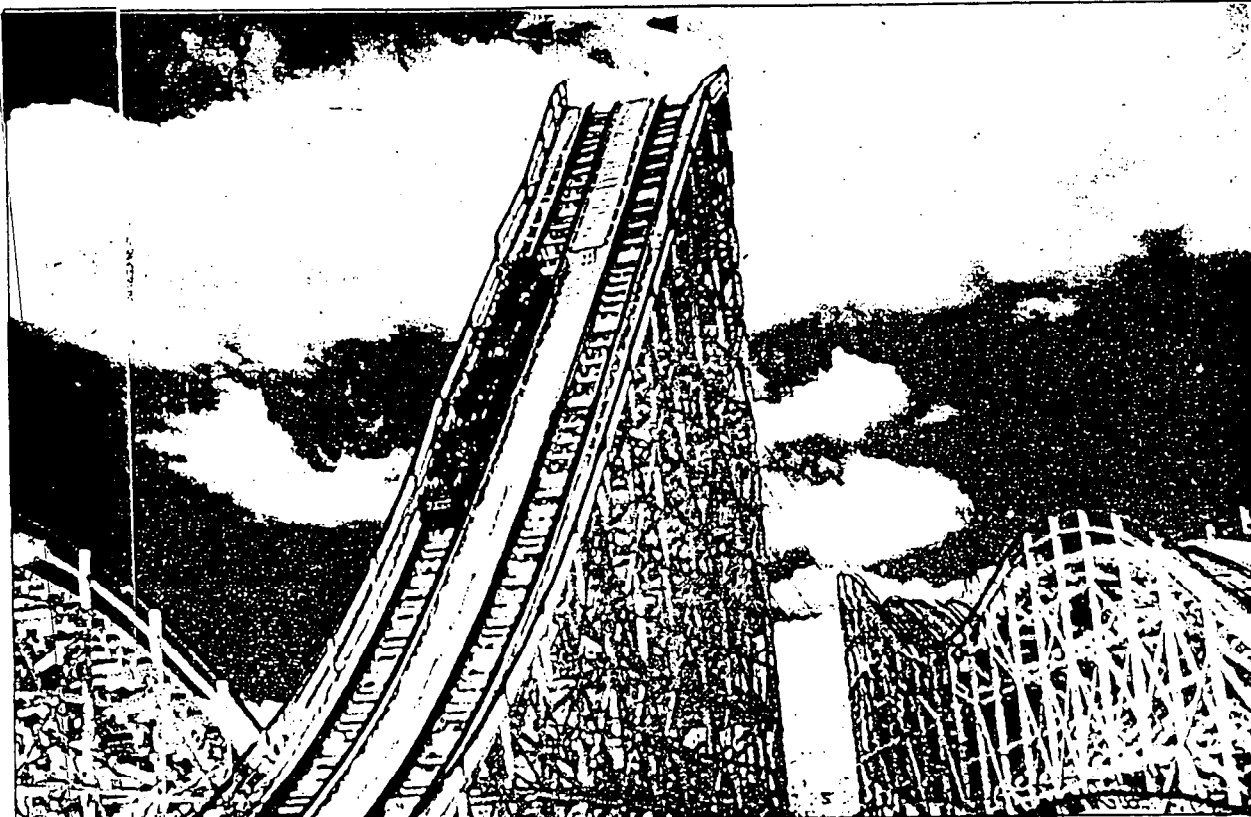
Havasu and the river aren't the Southland's only hot spots for spring break.

A number of students from the University of Redlands, for example, are planning trips to Catalina Island during their break this week.

Several island companies offer opportunities for diving and snorkeling, and parasailing is another option.

For students who like to stay high and dry, walking and biking are good bets on Catalina. Want to see the sights without working up a sweat? Rent a golf cart and take off.

Students won't have to worry about getting enough to eat or drink on Catalina. Eateries and watering holes abound.



Some students will visit Magic Mountain and other Southland theme parks for spring break thrills and chills.

And there are many gift and specialty shops on the island, where it's easy to lighten the load on that wallet.

### Las Vegas

Other students are putting their money on Las Vegas this year.

David Heiss, 22, a senior at the University of Redlands, is heading there this weekend with five friends. They'll rendezvous with more friends who are already there.

Among the group's plans is a visit to the new Hard Rock Hotel, which features rock music, even in the elevators, and lots of rock 'n' roll memorabilia.

"I'm a hard rock fan and this is some-

thing I want to see," said Heiss.

The native of Maine said there's nothing that compares to Vegas back home, and though he's been to the gambling mecca many times, he never gets bored.

"It's a neat place to go and hang out," said Heiss. "It's an exciting city to go visit for a few days."

Vegas also is in the cards for 19-year-old Betty Austin, a sophomore at Victor Valley College. She and a friend plan to spend three days there during the week of April 10.

Actually, they couldn't get rooms in Vegas itself. It was booked. So they'll stay in nearby Stateline and commute.

The casinos at night. The swimming

pool during the day. "Basically, we'll just party," Austin said.

They're looking forward to a good time this year. "Last year, we went to Palm Springs, but it was dead," she said.

### Grand Canyon

Some students choose family fun for their spring break. Graham Nystrom, 16, a sophomore at Redlands High School, is one of them. He'll be traveling to the Grand Canyon with his family.

Nystrom, his older brother and parents plan to spend five days there during the week of April 10. The canyon mule rides are among the items on the family's activity list.

Actually, Nystrom's dream spring



CityWalk at Universal Studios will draw plenty of spring breakers, thanks to its shops and restaurants.

break would involve some heavy relaxation in Hawaii, he said. "I wouldn't do anything, and I'd enjoy it."

### Day trips

Some students are opting for day trips rather than week-long activities.

Jose Romo, 20, a sophomore at Victor Valley College, and 10 of his friends plan to head for City Walk, the new complex of shops and restaurants outside Universal Studios.

"We went there one day and we only got to spend a couple of hours, but we enjoyed it," he said.

Eric Kuske, 20, a sophomore at Victor Valley College, will be riding high

during his spring break.

Kuske, along with 40 other young people from St. Joan of Arc Church in Victorville, plans to spend a day at Magic Mountain theme park in Valencia.

The youth group will travel by bus to the park for a day of riding rollercoasters such as Batman and Viper.

"Magic Mountain has the best rides," said Kuske.

The beach is calling many students.

Jaime Guggisberg, 17, a junior at Redlands High School, plans to spend her spring break at San Onofre State Beach, between San Clemente and Oceanside. Guggisberg is looking forward to "having fun and catching the sun rays," she said.

That's also the goal of Nate Smith, 17, a junior at Redlands High School, who plans to surf and spend time with his girlfriend at the coast between San Clemente and San Onofre State Beach.

"It's a lot of fun, and I get to work on my tan," he said.

For Wes Cullen, 16, a sophomore at the school, spring break will take place in Riverside.

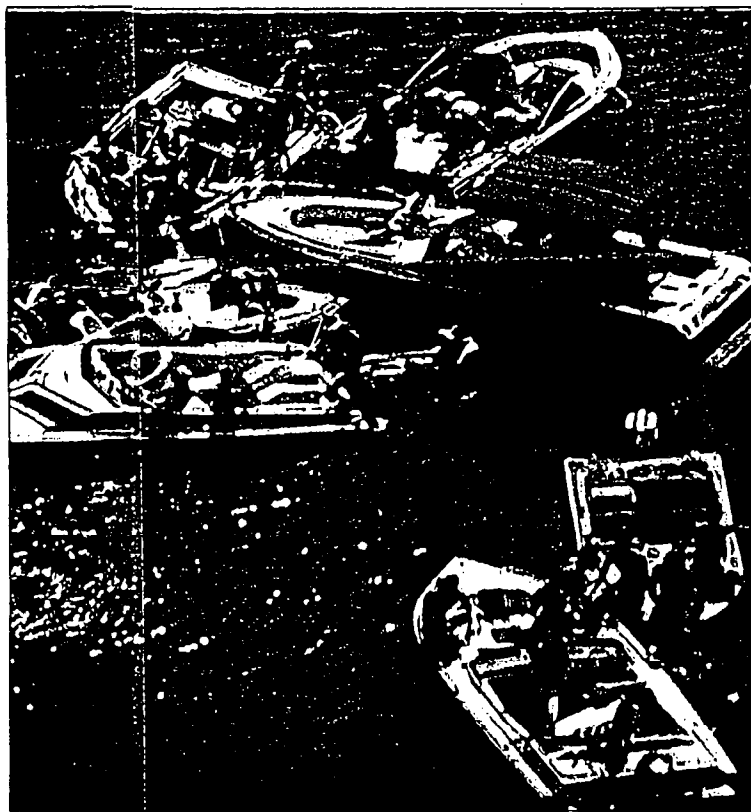
Cullen is on the Redlands High School baseball team, and the team is playing in a tournament for four days.

He doesn't mind the fact he won't be spending his vacation somewhere more exotic.

"As long as I don't have homework, it doesn't matter to me," he said.



Treasure Island is among the good bets in Las Vegas.



Boaters meet and mingle on the Colorado River.

TIC 2277





Spring break revelers line the beach at Lake Havasu.

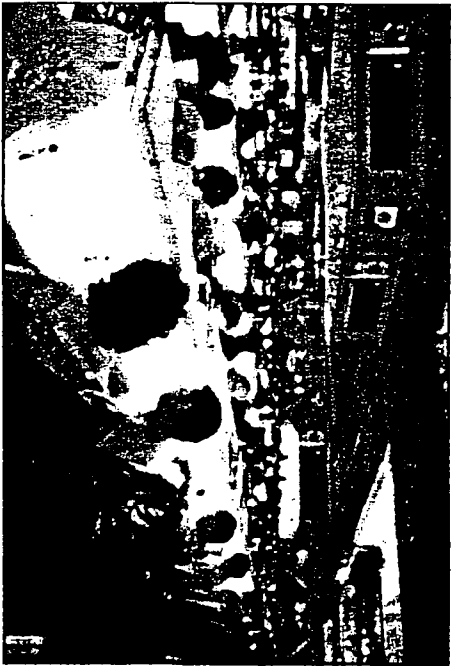
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## Cheap gambling

• **Bingo** — One of the cheapest ways to spend money in Las Vegas. Minimum session buy-ins range from \$3 to \$11 and sessions last about an hour. The two largest bingo halls are at the Showboat and at the Triple J Bingo Hall and Casino. Other large bingo halls are located at the Aladdin, Arizona Charlie's, Continental, Frontier, Gold Coast, Harrah's, Horseshoe, Jerry's Nugget, Palace Station and Santa Fe.

• **Penny slot machines** — You can still find them at Little Caesar's and Silver City on the Strip and at the Plaza, Western and Gold Spike downtown. Can you win at them? Probably not, although in 1986 one person hit a world record of \$95,172.50 at the Western.

By Pattie Leipert  
Staff Writer

**A** weekend trip to Las Vegas is pretty much a yearly event for those of us who reside in Southern California. You throw some clothes in a suitcase, gas up the car and within five hours (four and a half on a good day) you're in Sin City, gambling capital of the Western United States.

Of course, it helps if you've also packed lots of greenbacks in that suitcase. Vegas is a lot more fun if you have unlimited funds for gambling. But you don't have to mortgage the farm to have a good time. Even if you're on a budget of say \$200 for the weekend, Las Vegas can be loads of fun. Really.

Deals and bargains abound, and with a little preplanning you can have it all and still come home with change in your pocket.

The first tip to doing Vegas on the cheap is: Leave the kids at home! Although in recent years Las Vegas has redefined itself to attract more families, these themed attractions are expensive, and it is nearly impossible to avoid spending a small fortune trying to keep the kiddies entertained. Enough said.

➤ See Vegas, Page E-6

# Vegas

► From Page E-5

## Lodging

If you're not flying into McCarran Airport, the biggest expense in Las Vegas will be for lodging. Room rates can range from \$20 to \$200 a night depending on location and time of year.

To get the best deals, stay away from Las Vegas during holidays and when major sporting events are planned. Though weekend nights typically are more pricey than a Sunday-through-Thursday stay, a good rate can be found with a little searching.

Anthony Curtis, author of "Bargain City: Booking, Betting, and Beating the New Las Vegas" (Huntington Press) recommends setting aside an hour to call between 15 to 20 hotels/casinos to compare their rates. "It doesn't cost anything because casino reservation numbers are all toll-free," he says, "and at the end of the hour, you're be an expert."

If you play your cards right you might even be able to snag a free room in one of the better casinos.

## The catch?

You have to join the casino's slot club. Activate your slot card by gambling a little in the casino.

You don't have to be a big spender to qualify for the slot-club deals. Quarter slots and \$2 tables will do the trick. To increase your odds, spread your action around and join slot clubs at several different casinos. You will be rewarded with discount, coupons, priority bookings and free-room offers.

## If you go

For information on lodging, call the Las Vegas Tourist Bureau at (800) 522-8665. For a free copy of an entertainment guide, call the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce at (702) 735-1616. For a free coupon book, call the Nevada Department of Tourism at (800) NEVADA-8.

After you've nailed down your room for say \$50 a night, that leaves you with \$150 left for gambling, entertainment and food for two days. Don't worry, it can be done.

## Food

Even if you're down to your last dollar, you won't go hungry in Las Vegas. Food is probably the best deal the city has to offer. All-you-can-eat buffets are everywhere. But the best of the bunch feature not only low prices but long lines as well.

Arrive early or late to avoid the wait. If you time it right, you can turn a late breakfast into an early lunch, thereby stretching one meal into two and saving the extra bucks for gambling. Buffet prices range from \$2.29 to \$29.95 and as with price, quality can vary. Be wary of all-you-can-eat seafood buffets and low-priced meals advertised on marquee. To eat even cheaper, check the local newspapers as soon as you arrive for two-for-one offers and discounts.

You can drink for free in Las Vegas. Most casinos offer free alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages while you are gambling.

## Entertainment

For a good time in Vegas — cheap — you'll have to stay away from the top shows. No Siegfried & Roy, no Cirque du Soleil, no headliners. Instead, check out the casino lounge acts. Though big-name performers are rare, lounge acts remain one of the best entertainment values on the strip. At most you'll find no cover charge and no minimum drink purchase. Most casinos also offer reasonably priced novelty acts for under \$10. This often includes not only a show but drinks as well (The American Superstars Show at the Luxor is a good example. For \$8 you get a high-energy superstar impersonator show and two drinks to boot).

The Treasure Island pirate show is one of many entertainment freebies you won't want to miss. It takes place five times a night in front of Treasure Island Hotel and Casino. Standing room fills up early so arrive at least 20 minutes before showtime. Stop in at the Forum Shops Mall at Caesar's Palace to watch the Festival Fountain — another freebie. This must-see attraction takes place on the hour and features Roman gods, laser lights and stereo sound. People watching is always an entertaining way to spend some time — it doesn't cost anything and in Vegas, there's always plenty of interesting people to watch.

## Gambling

Keeping gambling losses in check will be the biggest challenge

facing the budget-conscious Vegas visitor. Curtis offers advice for those keeping a close eye on their pocket books: "Set a daily gambling loss limit and stick to it."

Limiting yourself to between \$35 to \$40 a day puts the big-buck tables off limits. But you don't have to be a high roller to have a good time. One-dollar tables can still be found at many strip casinos and at some downtown casinos. Nickel slots are plentiful and large payouts are not unheard of. Any winnings you make on the slots or at the tables can be reinvested into your betting budget, upping your daily gambling limit.

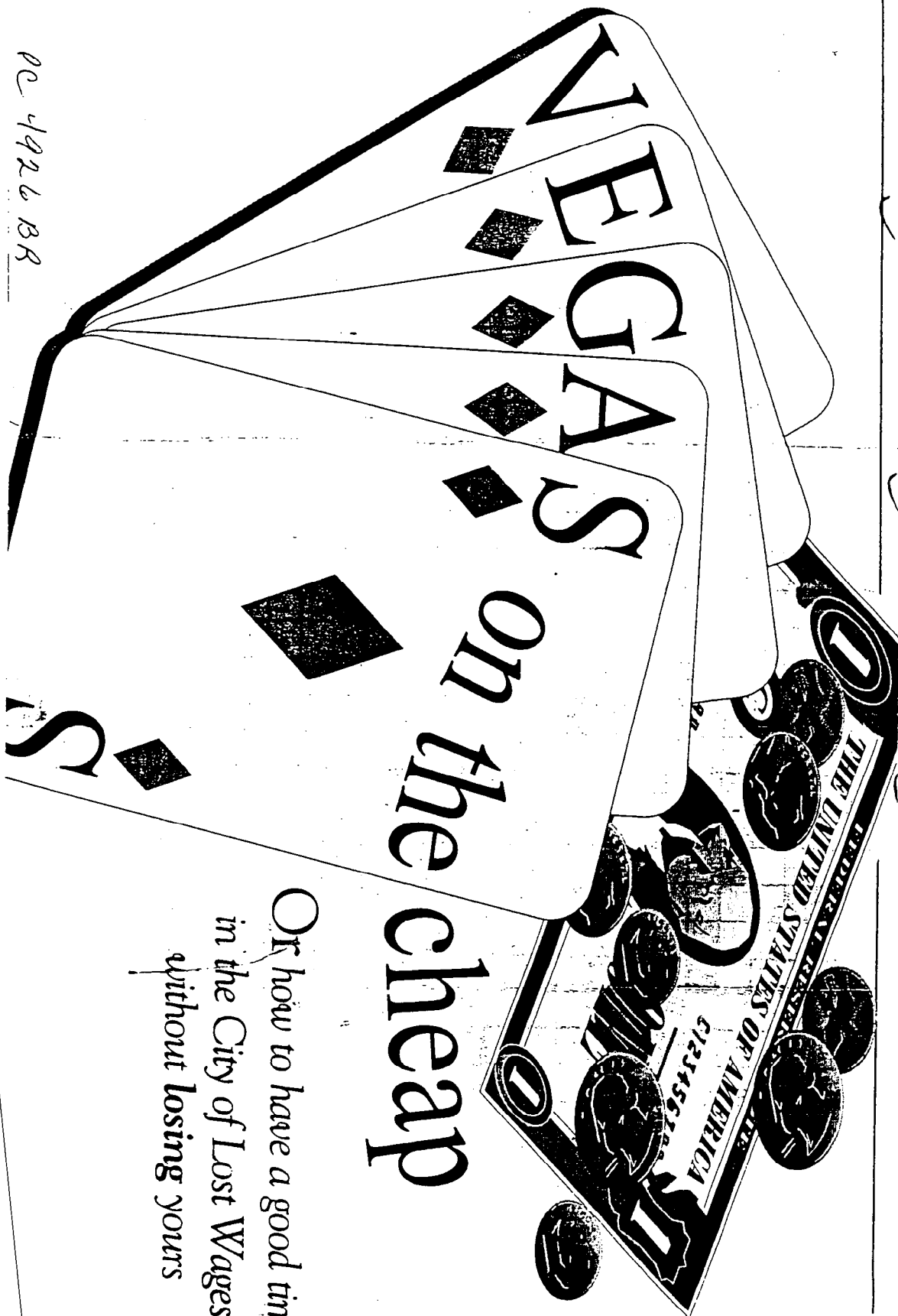
Bingo is a good way to spend some gambling time without spending a lot of money. You can play for an hour and spend about \$6 — and you might win the \$100 jackpot. At \$1 a game, Keno is another slow way to lose money in Vegas.

When every penny counts, you can still find penny slots at some casinos on the strip and downtown. It's unlikely you'll win the big pot but at 3 to 5 cents a pull, it will take you eight hours to spend \$25.

And, finally, a word about where to gamble: the strip or downtown?

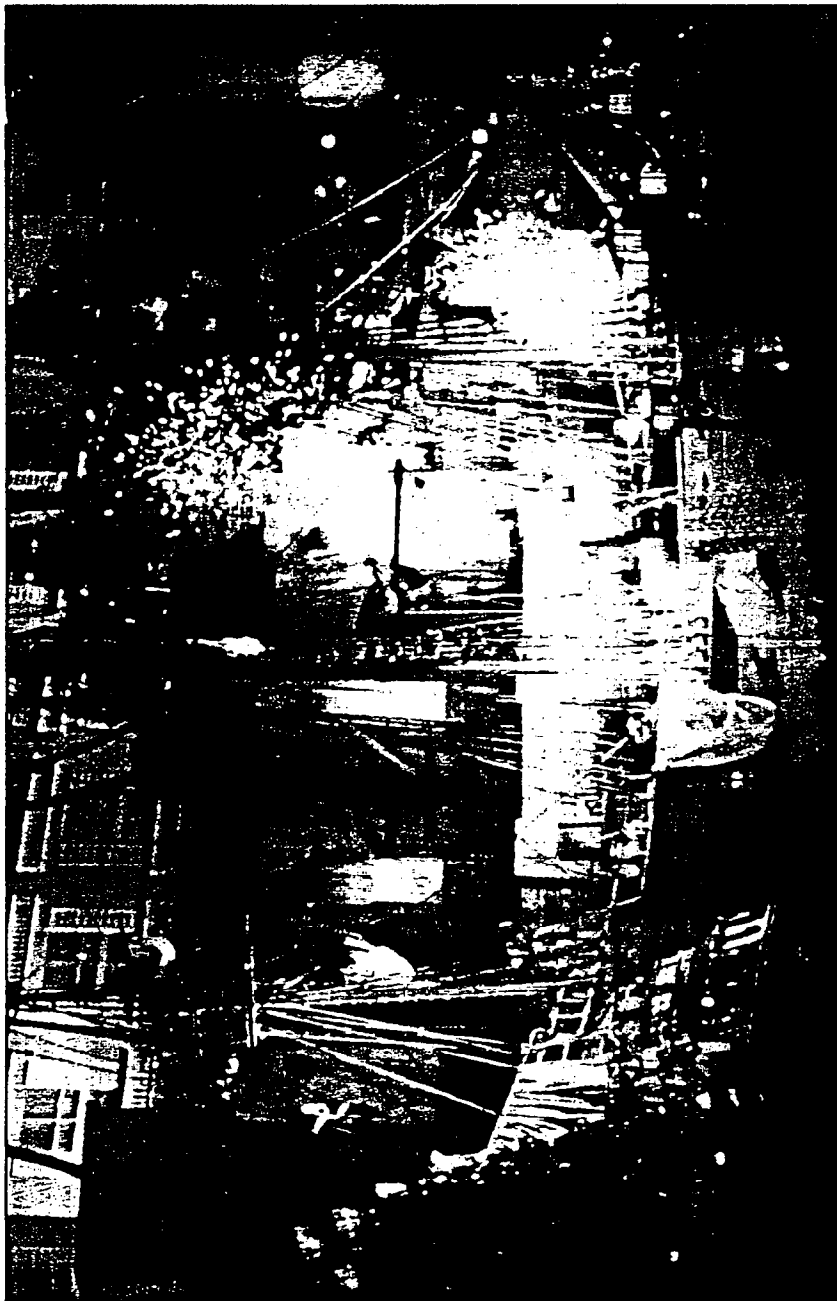
Again, Curtis offers advice for those looking for the loosest slots, highest payouts and best odds. When comparing Las Vegas casinos, "bigger is definitely better," Curtis said. "Don't fall for the myth that the smaller mom-and-pop joints are looser. It's economically impossible."

By sticking to your budget, and with Lady Luck on your side, you may find yourself leaving Las Vegas with money in your pocket. Even if it's only enough for burgers at Bun Boy in Baker.



# VEGAS on the cheap

Or how to have a good time  
in the City of Lost Wages  
without losing yours



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TIC 2288

10 PERCENT

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## TRAVEL

### HONEYMOON IN VEGAS

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Straight people can marry  
at drive-up windows, but  
what about us? MARIA  
DE LA O and DAVID THORPE  
search for chapels of  
gay love (and more).

**W**E MEET BETSY AND CAROL AT Victoria's Chapel (2800 West Sahara Avenue), located in a strip mall across from the Palace Station casino. Both women are robust Las Vegas locals, drivers for the city's public transit system, who have decided to tie the knot. From a nearby formal wear shop they have obtained fabric swatches that somehow mix fuchsia and eggplant, and they have already picked their music—a mix of country (overly popular in Vegas) and women's music (Meg Christianson). The *pièce de résistance* will be an Olivia honeymoon cruise to Alaska. All they need is a venue

Literally translated, Las Vegas means "fertile plains," perhaps a reference to the dangerously high speeds at which heterosexuals can marry, beat a path back to their motel rooms, and, well, fertilize. The name also captures the way this desert town overflows with lush consumer excess. Provided that your numbers are hot at the roulette table, it's a land where you can buy or do just about anything your heart desires, 24 hours a day. It's no wonder that

Vegas is recognized as a world capital of kitsch. As such, it won't disappoint that particular gay sensibility. But can we do more than mock? Can we also marry?

Although we meet Betsy and Carol by chance, it's no accident that we have ended up at Victoria's. Out of 26 chapels in Vegas, Victoria's is one of a paltry two options available to same-sex couples, excluding the local chapter of the Metropolitan Community Church. But two is still more than Vegas had a year ago, which may indicate that some chapel directors are getting ready to capitalize on a same-sex wedding boom.

In the year since she opened Victoria's, owner Monique Beals has arranged about 100 same-sex marriages, which represents—appropriately enough—about 10

**Can we talk about  
gay marriage?  
Frank Marino (as  
Joan Rivers), star  
of the drag show  
La Cage, strikes a  
pose on the Strip.  
Although Vegas is  
definitely "4"  
queens, queens  
who want to marry  
is another story.**

percent of her business. Beals says that she never considered *not* performing same-sex ceremonies and has aimed marketing at gays and lesbians ever since she opened her chapel doors. Although her suggestions to Betsy and Carol are a tad straight for their

taste, Beals's interest in providing an atmosphere where the two women will feel comfortable seems genuine. She overflows with anecdotes about lesbian and gay couples she's already helped marry, and proudly displays photos and a file containing information on appropriate wedding accessories, like plastic same-sex-couple cake decorations and pink-triangle wedding rings (also

## TRAVEL



Wedding nightlife: an exchange of rings at Victoria's Chapel (*left*). Afterward, celebrate with club kids at the Cave (*top*), or dine at Vegas's only gay restaurant, Vicious Rumors (*bottom*). Opposite page: a drag queen and her city beckon.

available from the Shocking Gray catalog, 800-788-4729).

Beals's competition is the wedding chapel at Treasure Island (3300 Las Vegas Boulevard). Treasure Island, as its name suggests, is one of the growing ranks of

Vegas mega-hotels dedicated to inoffensive, family-oriented themes. As such, it features one of the best free shows in town. Every 90 minutes throughout the afternoon and evening, two dozen more-or-less hunky actors stage a mock sea battle between a





ragged pirate ship and a smart British vessel. The English man-of-war sails through the hotel's lagoon, blasts the pirate ship, takes a hit, and sinks into the water. A truly exciting show, it beats the "exploding" volcano next door at the Mirage hands down.

Thankfully, the hotel's two wedding chapels have been spared pirate decorating touches. Whereas Victoria's has an authentically relaxed, if unglamorous, atmosphere, the Treasure Island chapels are more like Vegas itself: gaudy but impeccably

orchestrated. The wedding planners are well made-up, well coifed, and well tailored in matching suit-skirt outfits that complement the pinkish decor. Photos of adoring heterosexual couples are displayed on the walls; piped-in music by artists like Sade

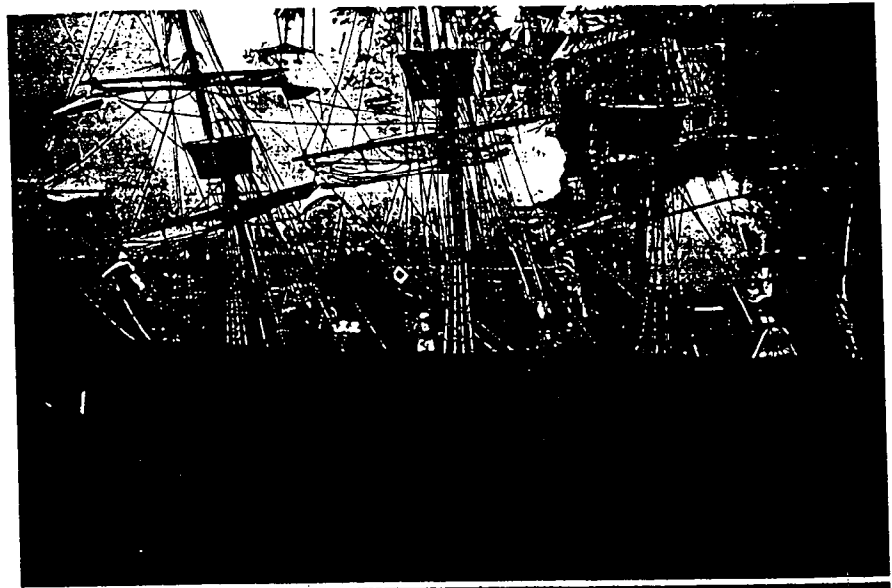
and Kenny G create an ostensibly romantic mood. All your wedding needs are taken care of: a glass case in the lobby features last-minute wedding gifts and accessories; discreetly placed cameras inside the chapels can videotape the proceedings for posterity; staff photographers work out of an in-house studio.

The high-haired chapel director, Tina Ercole, is a native Las Vegas and twenty-something M.B.A. who patiently outlines how Treasure Island became the first and only hotel in Vegas to offer same-sex marriage ceremonies. A few months after the hotel opened in October 1993, two men from the Midwest called the chapel and requested a wedding ceremony. They told Ercole they frequently visited Vegas and had tried unsuccessfully to get married each time they visited. Although she hadn't anticipated the demand for gay marriages, she convinced hotel management to let her arrange the ceremony. Since that first wedding, she guesses that about 35 same-sex ceremonies have been performed at the hotel chapels.

Is Ercole an activist in a fuchsia suit and a Moschino belt? Not exactly. "People should think of [gay marriage] as business," she says. "They think of the moral and philosophical aspects, which don't belong in business." This doesn't explain why neither Treasure Island nor Victoria's mentions same-sex marriage ceremonies in its wedding brochures or advertisements, but Ercole dutifully takes the suggestion down on a post-it note; Beals says she's making a separate (but equal) brochure for same-sex ceremonies.

Should you decide to get hitched at Treasure Island or Victoria's, you don't necessarily need a big honeymoon package to prove that you're in love (although it can't hurt). There are plenty of hokey but romantic options: Watch the sunset from the top of Caesar's Palace, take a helicopter ride over the city, or follow the typical advice of locals and get away from Vegas altogether. Suggested day trips include picnics at Red Rock—an amazing geological formation outside of town—and hiking or skiing at Mount Charleston, a popular resort about a 45-minute drive away.

If you're looking for something a bit

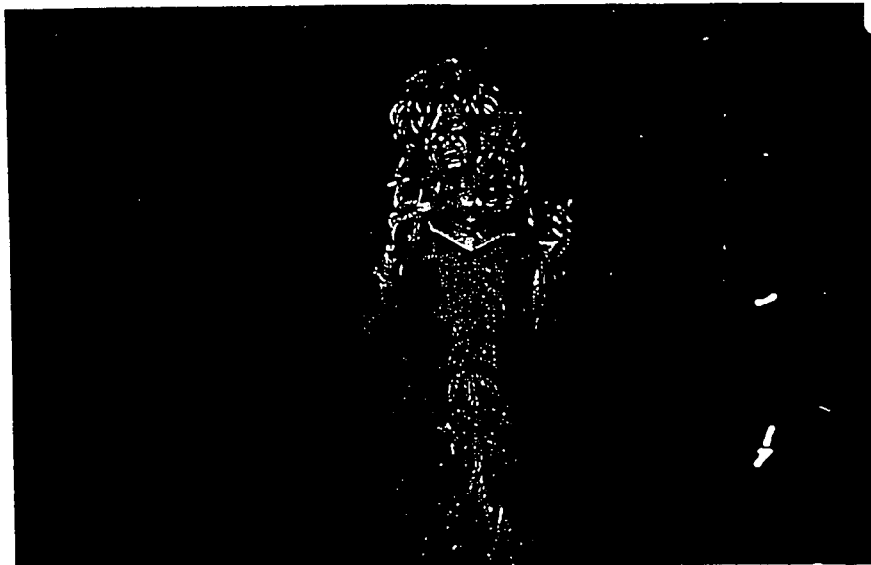


more sedentary, then stop in at one of the newest gay establishments in town. It's a restaurant called Vicious Rumors (6330 Windy Street) that, despite its name, provides a fairly intimate and potentially amorous setting for dinner. The only gay restaurant in Vegas, it attracts both women and men with its white tablecloths, candlelit dining, tuxedoed waiters, and friendly piano bar. It's a bit pricey by Vegas standards (entrees average \$20), especially since the food is somewhat disappointing (too much iceberg lettuce).

Vegas is also home to 15 or so gay and lesbian bars; of those, there are a few to note. The best bet for dancing is Gipsy (4605 Paradise Road); it's smallish and run-of-the-mill, but the music's good and the energy is

**Water works: the genuinely thrilling pirate battle at Treasure Island (top) and the Caesar's Palace Trevi Fountain (bottom).**

positive. Or try the much freakier Cave (5740 W. Charleston Blvd), designed to live up to its name. If you get the urge to two-step, Backstreet (5012 South Arville Road) is the place to be: The dance floor is bordered by a wooden fence and the ceiling features not a disco ball, but a disco saddle. A handful of women mingle comfortably at most of these establishments, but for a mostly young and multiracial lesbo vibe, hit Curves (4633 Paradise Road), next to Gipsy. Vegas's other women's bar, Faces (701 East Stewart Avenue) is patronized by an older, shit-kickin' crowd.



Boy/gin: Kenny Kerr, jaded star of *Boylesque*, got his start impersonating Barbra Streisand at the tender age of 16.

## D/R A G R A C E

According to one Las Vegas native and travel agent, "People who want to be actors move to New York or L.A.; people who want to be drag queens move to Las Vegas." *Boylesque* and the cagily titled *La Cage* (the show has little to do with the hit Broadway musical *La Cage Aux Folles*) are the gaudy twin pillars of the Vegas queen scene. Since the shows share many of the same jokes and pay homage to the same divas (Cher, Barbra, Tina, etc.), we compiled an essential guide to their differences:

### LA CAGE

**Price:** \$16.95  
**Location:** The Riviera  
**Number of host's incarnations:** 1 (Joan Rivers)  
**Number of host's gown changes:** 19  
**Flaw:** The show relies on one gay joke too many.  
**Flawless:** Logan Walker's inspired impersonation of Judy Garland singing "Over the Rainbow"  
**For the boys:** Walker bares a barrel chest in a later number  
**For the girls:** Luscious (real) show-girls in most numbers  
**Memorably vulgar line:** "Siegfried and Roy have 27 white tigers. That's a lot of pussy for two gay men."  
**Most Unflattering Impersonation:** Obese Madonna  
**Insider analysis:** "Our show is considerably more modern. *Boylesque* is

### BOYLESQUE

**Price:** \$17.95  
**Location:** The Sahara  
**Number of host's incarnations:** 3 (Barbra, Cher, Herself)  
**Number of host's gown changes:** 8  
**Flaw:** A clueless audience can kill the show  
**Flawless:** When host Kenny Kerr reads the audience, he makes Sandra Bernhard look sweet  
**For the boys:** Fair to excellent beefcake means no dull moments  
**For the girls:** Gay men making fools of themselves  
**Memorably vulgar line:** "Did you all come on the same bus? I should be handing out fucking Bingo cards."  
**Most Unflattering Impersonation:** Obese Cher  
**Insider analysis:** "La Cage is strict about what the host can do. Kenny

## TRAVEL

hotel casinos, it is a world unto itself. Once you go in, it's almost impossible to find your way out. While you're lost, try to find **Cleopatra's Barge**, a floating bar with cheesy lounge acts and waitresses in Cleopatra costumes. Or try the **Forum Shops**, Caesar's indoor shopping mall, where the streets of ancient Rome are lined with fashionable establishments like Armani and Planet Hollywood. The dome-like ceiling gives the illusion of a cloud-streaked sky; ranges of light and dark recreate an entire diurnal cycle every 20 minutes. A fantastic replica of the Trevi Fountain stands at the end of the promenade, and classical statues played by actors who periodically come to life line the walls above the town square.

If something intimate is more your style, check out the **Las Vegas Private Bed & Breakfast** (702-384-1129). What, after all, could be more Vegas than being hosted by proprietor Ole Borresen, who was Liberace's chef during the last years of his life? He makes an excellent breakfast too, though he is a bit heavy on the meat. (Tell him in advance what you don't consume.) Although most guests here are men, women are welcome.

Borresen's house is conveniently located in Huntridge, a quiet residential neighborhood a couple of miles from the Strip. Although the walls of the B&B (a converted suburban house) aren't lined with rhinestones, the owner's spoiled but sweet white poodle adds a touch of glamour to the surroundings. And, as Borresen is originally from Denmark, his house suggests a kind of old-world, European atmosphere where one could imagine Liberace in a somber mood. There are fireplaces, red velvet curtains with gold fringe, glass lamps, crystal bowls, and dark antique furnishings. There are even a few animal pelts hanging on the wall. In the secluded backyard, where nude sunbathing is encouraged, there's a swimming pool and an aviary filled with beautiful red and green parrots.

If you're interested in taking a trip further down memory-of-Liberace lane, Borresen's home is just an appetizer. For the main course, check out the **Liberace Museum** (Liberace Plaza, 1775 East Tropicana

What if you couldn't care less about romance or nightlife? What if all you really want is classic Vegas kitsch? Elvis *may* be dead and Bob Stupak's sci-fi-inspired Vegas World casino shut down last winter, but there is still plenty to satisfy your craving for camp. There's the

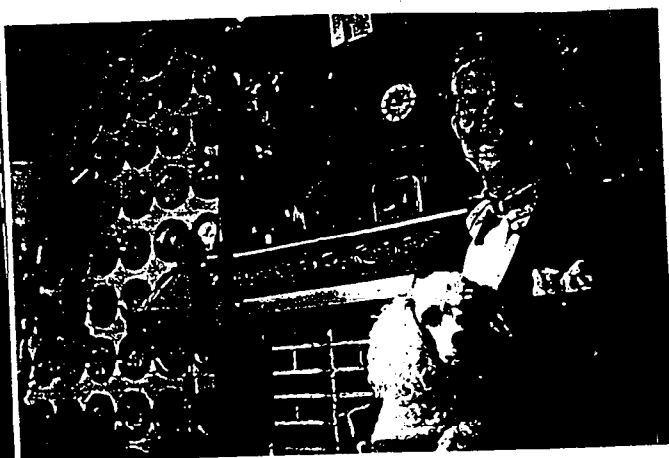
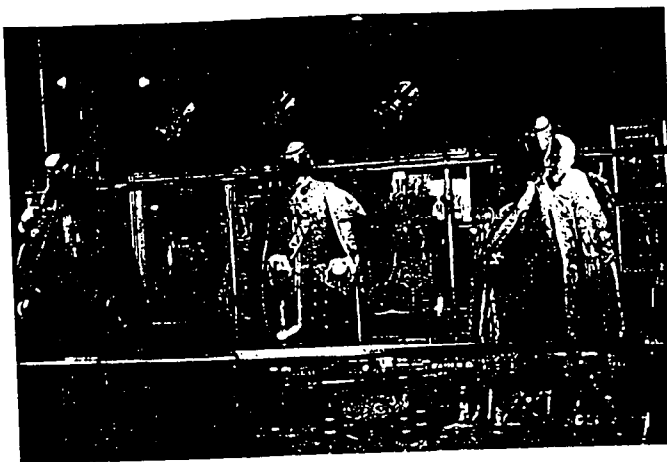
**World's Largest Gift Shop** (2460 South Las Vegas Boulevard), white tigers lolling about their Taj Mahal habitat at the Mir-

**age** (3400 South Las Vegas Boulevard), and plenty of drag and celebrity impersonator shows, not to mention the heirs to Liberace's queenly throne, Siegfried and Roy.

With its mirrored bedroom ceilings and the occasional bare-chested gladiator or scantily clad Trojan woman wandering by, **Caesar's Palace** (3570 South Las Vegas Boulevard) is an excellent blend of kitsch and luxury. Like the rest of the mammoth

**Proud Mary: a Tina Turner impersonator from the Boylesque drag revue shakes a tail feather.**





located in a strip mall, along with a religious bookstore and a gay bar called Goodtimes, which hops on Monday nights (think liquor bust). Three separate locations in the small house Mr. Showmanship's collections of dazzling jewelry, one-of-a-kind antiques, million-dollar costumes, and classic Rolls-Royces. Highlights include an ornately inlaid desk that once belonged to Czar Nicholas II and the largest rhinestone in the world, worth \$50,000 and weighing in at

23 kilograms.

Amid extensive personal photos and press clippings, there is no indication of Liberace's homosexuality or his AIDS-related death. The senior citizens who run the place shy away from these topics, and the general mood

**Libby's legacy: the awe-inspiring Liberace Museum (left) and Ole Borresen, Liberace's former chef and owner of the Las Vegas B&B (right).**

here reflects the fact that the Liberace Museum is the third most-visited tourist attraction in town—in typical Vegas fashion, the museum seems to attract mostly retired heterosexual couples. But over by the Blackglama minks and words-can't-do-it-justice hot pants outfit, you're bound to see two gay men or women tittering gleefully. Maybe they've just come from Victoria's Chapel, and they're about to beat a path back to their motel.

DAILY NEWS

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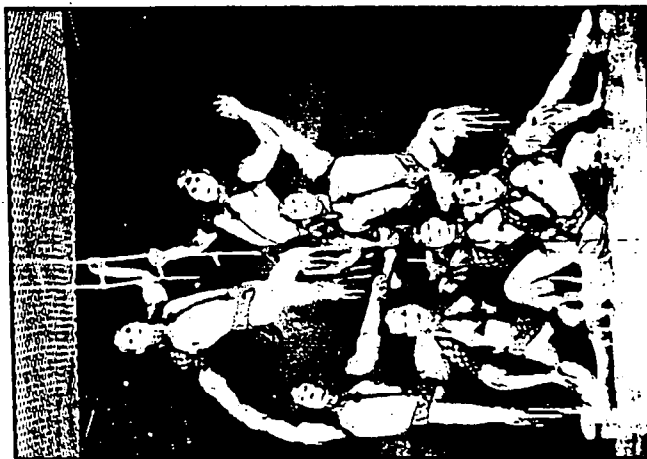
# Cirque du Soleil

by 424 BR

It is performance art without boundaries. Ballet without gravity. It is theater without actors. It is Mystere at Treasure Island in Las Vegas, the surrealistic celebration of music, dance, acrobatics and comedy from the artists who hold the patent on imagination-bending. Cirque du Soleil.

On July 4, Mystere will showcase some of its most breathtaking performances from its world-renowned Las Vegas show at Treasure Island at the magnificent Rose Bowl in Pasadena during Celebration USA. Not only will the world's most celebrated acrobatic performers dazzle audiences with the precision of Chinese poles and mesmerizing ballet on the teeter board and trampoline, they will thrill them with the haunting sounds of Japanese Taiko drums to the background of stage and aerial fireworks in a special presentation that will defy the imagination.

Developed over a two-year period in both Montreal and Las Vegas, Mystere debuted



at Treasure Island on Dec. 25, 1993 and has received overwhelming reviews by critics and audiences alike. By bringing its

A See CIRQUE DU SOLEIL, Page 15

## CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Continued from page 3 A

original brand of performance art to the "Entertainment Capital of the World." Cirque du Soleil has raised the entertainment expectations of Las Vegas to an unchallenged level.

Cirque du Soleil began 11 years ago with a band of off-beat public performers, stilt-walkers, fire-eaters and mimes performing along the streets of Quebec City. Today, Cirque du Soleil blankets the world from inside

the Big Top, with touring productions in North America, Europe and Asia, and Mystere.

And yet, as this loose-knit clan of artistic visionaries has grown into a global, performing-arts theater company, Cirque du Soleil has managed to keep the spirit and inventiveness of those street performers alive in every

Cirque du Soleil performance. Perhaps because Cirque has never lost sight of the simple mission laid out by founding president Guy Laliberte.

"We are," he says, "merchants of happiness."

The international success of Cirque du Soleil was born right here in Southern California. In

1987, Cirque du Soleil ventured outside of its friendly Canadian confines for the first time, presenting "Cirque Reinvente" in Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Monica. Of course, the performances drew rave reviews and the rest is, as they say, history.

Since Southern California is

the birthplace of Cirque du Soleil's international success and the major market for their "Mystere" show at the Treasure Island Resort in Las Vegas, their performance at Celebration USA has very special meaning and has been dedicated and donated to the victims of the April 19, Oklahoma bombing.

STAR-NEWS

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Continued from page 3

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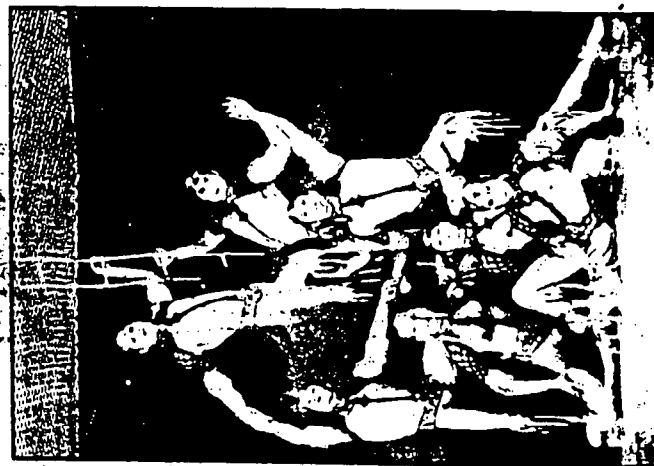
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# Las Vegas transformed \$307 into family vacation spot

By Robert Macy  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**I**N the early '50s, when I was a boy, my family stopped by Las Vegas on a vacation trip and my father tried to show my brother and me the inside of one of the town's famous casinos.

"Get the hell out of here with those kids," barked a security guard.

That incident has often come to mind in my 17 years as a reporter covering the evolution of this gambling capital.

Departed mobster Bugsy Siegel would blanch at the idea, but Las Vegas — once touted as a "Disneyland for adults" — has spent big bucks to transform itself into a family-friendly vacation destination.

When other areas began getting into gambling in a big way, Las Vegas began to broaden its tourism base. No longer just a cluster of casinos, Las Vegas today has an array of attractions for all ages.

"Las Vegas is a lot cheaper than Orlando (home of Disney World)," says Imre Buru of Austin, Texas, pushing a stroller through a crowded shopping arcade at The Mirage Hotel.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**HIGH ROLLER** coasters at the top of Stratosphere Hotel soars over the Las Vegas strip.

TIC 2454

Casino. "We anticipate our two-week vacation will be \$1,000 cheaper than Orlando."

At the Circus Circus resort, room rates range from \$29 a night to \$89 a night. On the high end is Caesars Palace, where the rates range from \$109 to \$279 for a standard room.

Buru, his wife, Gabriella, and their three daughters — ages 4, 3, and 11 months — are among a growing number of families invading what was once "adults only" turf.

And 15 years ago, Las Vegas was a boring place for kids. There were swimming pools, a few skimpy arcades and one hotel carnival midway arcade. That was the extent of the youth fare.

"As a kid growing up in Los Angeles, I used to hate coming to Las Vegas," says Alan Feldman, now vice president for public relations at Mirage Resorts Inc. "I'd spend my time just sitting around the pool. We have turned around the notion that there is nothing for kids to do."

While hotel officials want to broaden their child-friendly visitor base, but they don't want kids in casinos.

"It concerns us when we see people bring children through a casino," Feldman says. "Children don't belong in casinos."

New attractions range from theme parks to pirate battles, dolphin and white tiger habitats, Star Trek and Atlantis attractions and interactive game venues.

With 105,000 hotel rooms, and an additional 20,000 under construction, families are finding the attractions — and the room rates — to their liking.

That's not quite what Siegel envisioned in 1946 when he built the Flamingo Hotel-Casino on a patch of road that would become

the Las Vegas Strip. Cost overruns that angered his mob pals led to his execution-style slaying the following year.

Las Vegas remained true to its past for the next 27 years, enticing gamblers with swanky hotels, chattering casinos, marquee entertainers and idyllic weather.

People under 21 who trickled in were banned from the gaming areas (a state law that remains in place today) and found Las Vegas anything but an E-ticket attraction.

That began to change in 1974 when longtime gaming figures William Bennett and William Pennington bought a struggling resort called Circus Circus. They converted one floor of the tent-shaped structure to a carnival midway and, voila, the city's first family-friendly hotel.

In 1989, Steve Wynn opened the Mirage Hotel-Casino, signing illusionists Siegfried and Roy to perform in their own theater. The hotel features a volcano that erupts several times nightly, a giant dolphin habitat and the Secret Garden of Siegfried and Roy, which features rare white lions and tigers raised by the entertainers. Mirage spent \$35 million on just the habitat and Secret Garden.

In 1990, Circus Circus opened the medieval-themed Excalibur Hotel-Casino which features a dinner show with knights jousting on horseback. There's also a popular carnival midway.

Next came Wet 'n' Wild, with a sprawling water park next to the Sahara Hotel.

In 1993, three major megaresorts opened.

First was the pyramid-shaped Luxor, adjacent to Excalibur, which features Egyptian lore

and a giant interactive game complex.

Then came Treasure Island, a pirate-themed hotel owned by Mirage and featuring a spectacular sea battle several times nightly between a giant pirate ship and a British frigate.

The pirate battle cost \$35 million and draws thousands of viewers nightly. There is no charge, but pick your spot early for the best viewing.

The \$1 billion MGM Grand Hotel-Casino opened in December 1993, with the MGM Grand Adventures — the city's first full-fledged theme park.

About the same time, Circus Circus opened Grand Slam Canyon, a giant dome featuring a wide array of rides and games.

Today the Canyon draws about 2 million visitors a year, according to Glenn Schaeffer, president and chief financial officer of Circus Circus Enterprises Inc.

In 1997, MGM and partner Primadonna Resorts opened New York-New York Hotel-Casino, which replicates the Manhattan skyline and some of its top attractions, was opened in 1997. Included are a giant Coney Island-style game arcade and a roller coaster that encircles the resort.

The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace features expensive clothing boutiques and "Atlantis," an eight-stories high attraction with animatronic figures telling the famous sea legend. Included is a 50,000-gallon aquarium featuring 650 exotic fish, and an Imax 3-D ride, "Race for Atlantis." The Forum Shops draws some 20 million visitors annually.

In January, the Las Vegas Hilton opened a \$70 million Star Trek attraction, featuring memorabilia for trekkie faithful and an interactive ride into the 24th century.

William Bennett, who now owns the Sahara Hotel, has opened Sahara Speedworld, where drivers of all ages take the wheel of a three-quarter-Indy car in a race simulator.

At the Monte Carlo Hotel-Casino, magician Lance Burd headlines a show that is a big family draw.

Mirage's newest resort, the \$1.6 billion Bellagio, will include a \$35 million water extravaganza on a lake in front of the property when it opens in October. It will also be free to the public.

Las Vegas visitors are surprised at the growing number of attractions.

"There's a lot more stuff for kids to do," Buru says. "It's not just gambling anymore. There are so many things to see and do."

Richard Morales of El Paso, Texas, agrees.

"I was definitely surprised," he says, exiting the Secret Garden area at The Mirage with his wife, Diana, and their 13-year-old daughter. "I never dreamed there would be so much to do."

Mario and Rebecca Ramirez of Albuquerque, N.M., said it was the first time they had brought their daughters, ages 8 and 15, to the city.

"I'd have never thought there were so many attractions," Ramirez says. "And I think vacation here is cheaper, too."

Schaeffer said he believes Las Vegas is growing as a family destination "because the entertainment market is growing."

"While Las Vegas is family friendly, it's still an adult market," Schaeffer says. "The family market is a subset of the tourism market."

Some of the family attractions

ns in Las Vegas:

**MIRAGE HOTEL:** A 54-foot volcano erupts several times nightly in front. Free. Dolphin habitat and Secret Garden of Siegfried & Roy feature rare white lions and tigers raised by the illusionists. Cost \$10, free for children 10 and under when accompanied by an adult. Siegfried & Roy stage show features great illusions and staging, white lions and tigers. At \$89.35, it's the most expensive show in town, but many say the best.

**MGM GRAND HOTEL:** Grand Adventures Theme Park features 10 major attractions, three theaters and six themed areas. Cost \$12 for 11 and older, \$10 for ages 2-10, includes unlimited rides and shows. Partridge Family sibling David Cassidy stars in "EFX," a high-energy stage show with outstanding special effects. Cost \$45 and \$63.64; \$31.82 for children 5-12.

**TREASURE ISLAND HOTEL:** Spectacular nightly pirate battles every 90 minutes front of the resort. No charge.

"Mystere," considered the most artistic and challenging show in Las Vegas, \$69.85 adults, \$34.84 children 12 and under.

**CIRCUS CIRCUS HOTEL:** Pioneer in family entertainment features carnival midway and Grand Slam Canyon, a domed five-acre theme park featuring a roller coaster and numerous rides and game. Unlimited ride passes from \$11.95 to \$15.95. Children under 33 inches tall admitted free.

**CAESARS PALACE:** Forum Shops at Caesars, billed as the shopping wonder of the world. Includes Race for Atlantis Imax 3-D motion simulator ride, \$9.50 adults, \$6.75 children. Omnimax Theater, \$7 admission. Caesars Magical Empire, underground quality dining with tableside magic, \$60-70.

**FREMONT STREET EXPERIENCE:** Downtown's \$70 million light and sound extravaganza featuring 2 million lights. Free.

**FLAMINGO HILTON:** "The Great Radio City Spectacular" features the Radio City Rockettes, dinner shows from \$40.87, late show \$36.32.

**RIO SUITE HOTEL:** "Masquerade Show in the Sky" features elaborate floats and Mardi Gras characters performing nightly. Free. Popular Danny Gans show, \$60.

**LAS VEGAS HILTON:** Star Trek attraction, features memorabilia from TV shows and movies, plus 22-minute journey aboard the Starship Enterprise. Cost \$14.95.

**SAHARA HOTEL:** Sahara Speedworld, virtual reality, three-quarter scale simulated Indy-style racing, interactive games and two 3-D theatres. General admission \$3, \$8 for racing.

**GAMEWORKS:** Next to MGM Grand, features more than 250 games of all types.

**WORLD OF COCA-COLA:** World's largest Coke bottle, theater, memorabilia museum. \$2, children 5 and under free.

**STRATOSPHERE HOTEL:** 1,149-foot tower topped by two rides, a roller-coaster encircling the top and the Big Shot, which rockets riders 160 feet upward from the launch site. Cost \$6 tower, \$6 Big Shot, \$5 roller coaster.

**WET 'n' WILD:** Water theme park, \$23.95 for ages 10 and older, \$17.95 ages 3-9, children under 3 free.

**EXCALIBUR HOTEL:** Carnival arcade and King Arthur's Court, medieval-themed dinner show with jousting knights on horseback. \$29.95.

**LUXOR HOTEL:** Egyptian-themed interactive attraction, \$6; Imax 3D Theatre, \$8.50.

**MONTE CARLO HOTEL:** Magician Lance Burton, whose show caters to families, \$34.95.

**IMPERIAL PALACE:** Legends in Concert features imper-



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**ANTONIO VALLES, 2, his father Eddie and brother Tyson greet pirate Warrick Price outside the Treasure Island hotel.**

sonators of 1960s music legends. Price \$29.50, children 12 and under half price.

**LAS VEGAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY:** Open year-round with more than 20 race tracks featuring events ranging from NASCAR to hot rods.

**INFORMATION:** The Las

Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority can provide additional information. Write LVCVA, Las Vegas Convention Center, 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nev. 89109-9096, Attn: Visitor Center. Phone (702) 892-7575. Web address: LASVEGAS24 HOURS.COM.

## TRAVELAGE WEST

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WEEKLY 38,200

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### A DEAL TO TREASURE

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Treasure Island in Las Vegas is offering two getaway packages through Feb. 5.

The two-night Winter Escape plan features a stay in deluxe accommodations; two buffet breakfasts, buffet dinner and one complimentary cocktail per person, in addition to a pass to use the Treasure Island Spa facilities.

The price is \$79 per person, double.

The Winter Romance plan includes a two-night stay in either a Caribbean or Buccaneer Bay Suite; a bottle of champagne upon arrival; breakfast in bed; nightly turn-down service and a Treasure Island photo keepsake. In addition, the package includes the use of the Treasure Island Spa, including sauna, Jacuzzi and exercise facilities.

The plan is priced at \$119 per person for the Caribbean Suite or \$189 per person for a Buccaneer Bay Suite.

Participants of either plan also may opt to buy tickets to Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere" for \$69.85 per person.

For more information or to make reservations, agents can call Treasure Island at 800-944-7444.

TIC 2359

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# WEST TOP OF THE WEEK

## ALASKA FERRY RESUMES SERVICE

The Alaska Marine Highway System resumed regular ferry service between Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and Ketchikan, Alaska, after a five-month suspension over fishing rights.

The state ferry service through the Inside Passage between British Columbia and Alaska carries tens of thousands of travelers to the 49th state each year.

During the five-month suspension, the only major southern port through which these travelers could enter Alaska's Inside Passage was Bellingham, Wash.

## Hawaii Future Looks Flat

The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau forecasts a flat year at best for 1998 arrivals, following a slight increase in 1997.

The bureau expects growth in the U.S. market of up to 2 percent and marginal growth from Japan, but not enough to offset tourism declines stemming from turmoil in other parts of Asia.

The forecast is based on a November survey of 350 North American travel agents, and agents and wholesalers in Japan.

## Carlson Eyes SF Hotel

Carlson Hospitality Worldwide, which recently took ownership of Regent Hotels International, confirmed it is talking with the owner of the historic Southern Pacific building at One Market St. in San Francisco about transforming the office building into a 400-room hotel.

It would be Regent's second U.S. property after the Beverly Wilshire in Los Angeles.

## Reno Goes to Atlanta

Reno Air starts daily nonstop service from Reno, Nev., to Atlanta Feb. 26.

The flight leaves at 10:35 p.m. from Reno, arriving in Atlanta at 5:50 a.m. From Atlanta, the flight will leave at 6:30 a.m. and arrive in Reno at 8:25 a.m.

## LA Sheraton Grande Sold

CapStar Hotel Co. completed the acquisition of the 469-room Sheraton Grande Hotel in downtown Los Angeles from

Metropolitan Life Insurance and will spend \$6 million renovating it.

Major improvements include renovating the property's exterior and completely refurbishing more than half of the hotel rooms.

## Oregon Asian Celebration

This year's Oregon Asian Celebration is set for Feb. 15-16 at the Lane County Convention Center in Eugene.

The event features ceremonial performances, crafts, martial arts, drumming and other cultural events. Admission is \$4 and children ages 12 and under are admitted free. It runs from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days.

For a program guide, call 541-682-5310.

## Steinbeck Birthday Bash

The John Steinbeck Birthday Celebration, featuring symposiums on the writer's life and tours of his local haunts, is set for Feb. 27, 28 and March 1 in Salinas and Monterey, Calif.

Some events are free and some, including bus tours, cost up to \$45. Reservations are required for most events.

Call 408-372-8512.

## Amtrak Companion Deal

Amtrak is bringing back its free companion fares in California.

The free fares program gives customers who buy a one-way or roundtrip ticket between Jan. 12 and March 15 on selected trains a free companion ticket for the same itinerary.

Sample one-way fares include Sacramento-San Jose,

\$16; San Diego-Los Angeles, \$20, and San Diego-Santa Barbara, \$23.

The offer is valid seven days per week on California short-distance trains only and connecting Amtrak Thruway Motorcoaches. Travel must be completed by March 15.

## 50% Off Rooms in Hawaii

Hawaiian Hotels & Resorts is discounting standard rates 50 percent when clients pay with a Visa card for stays through Dec. 23.

The company has four resorts: the Kahana Beach Condominium Hotel and Royal Lahaina Resort on Maui, the Kauai Coconut Beach Resort and the Royal Kona Resort on the Big Island.

Call 800-222-5642.

## Treasure Island Package

Treasure Island at the Mirage in Las Vegas has two two-night packages for couples good through Feb. 5.

The Winter Escape package is \$79 per person, double, and includes two nights' accommodations, two buffet breakfasts, one buffet dinner for two and a pass to the Treasure Island Spa.

The Winter Romance package is \$119 per person for a Caribbean Suite or \$189 per person for a Buccaneer Suite and includes a bottle of champagne, breakfast room service for two and a pass to the spa.

Call 800-944-7444.

## Phoenician's April Rate

The Phoenician hotel in Scottsdale, Ariz., is offering a single or double occupancy rate of \$390 per night with a three-night minimum stay from April 5-14.

Children ages 17 and under stay free with a maximum of two per room. And the property has a kids program that offers duck feeding, games, arts and crafts and a game arcade.

Call 800-888-5254.

## Squaw Valley Ski Deal

The Resort at Squaw Creek, located between Truckee and Lake Tahoe, Calif., has two seasonwide ski packages that allow clients to exchange lift tickets for food and activities credits if the weather is bad or if they choose not to ski.

The Deluxe Extended Vacation package offers three nights' accommodations, two lift tickets per person to nearby Squaw Valley USA and daily breakfast.

Sundays through Thursdays the price is \$399 per person, double, or \$499 on the weekends.

Four and seven-night packages also are available.

The Two Night Ski Weekend Getaway offers two nights' accommodations, two lift tickets per person and daily breakfast. Only available on select weekends, it is priced at \$359 per person, double.

Call 800-327-3353.

### YOUR MEXICO TOUR OPERATOR

## Mazatlan

# Torre Tropicana Hotel

Just 15 minutes from the airport and in the heart of the Zona Dorada, this fantastic beach vacation offers everything you need. Rooms are all air conditioned with phone, tv and balconies with magnificent views. 4 day/3 night packages from:

LAX	SFO	SEA/PDX
<b>\$289</b>	<b>\$374</b>	<b>\$414</b>

Valid 1/12/98-4/19/98. Prices are pp based on dbl occ., include hotel and taxes, m/v in/airfare and transfers. Does not include govt taxes of up to \$51.03 pp. Price may vary by departure date. Subject to change without notice. CST 201702-4

Call for details 800-426-4570



# Winners' Circle

Money Flows Freely in the City That Never Sleeps



## Treasure Island

Donald DeArman of Bakersfield, Calif., was playing a Red, White and Blue slot machine at Treasure Island when fortune smiled on him. DeArman will be cruising in 1998 with a new Lexus SC300. "I said to my wife 'I'm going to win this Lexus' and I just walked up and there it was," he said with confidence. Now that's a happy new year.

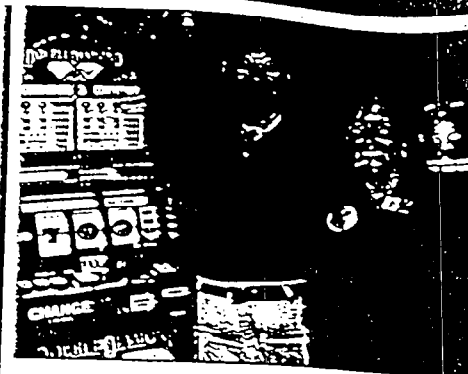


## Texas Station

They say everything is bigger in Texas, and Leonard Heaton would probably agree. Heaton won \$50,000 at the Texas Station on a reversible royals machine.

## Imperial Palace

Father knows best is usually true, except for James Murphy of Lake Elsinore, Calif. After much coaxing Murphy's father passed, and James decided to try a certain Imperial Palace slot machine. He won \$12,500.



## Stratosphere

Lucky Las Vegas Jeff Feldman hit another jackpot at Stratosphere. Feldman's most recent win paid him a whopping \$64,000. Stratosphere must be his lucky place. In one month Feldman won a total of \$303,000.



## Sam's Town

Douglas Moyer's first time at Sam's Town won't be his last. "I'll be back," promised Moyer after he won a 1997 Saturn and \$1,059. He plans to pay some bills with the new found money.



## Rio

How much would you pay for a new Ford Mustang? Mark Shosted of Salt Lake City spent only \$3 at a Rio Rich & Famous slot machine for his Mustang. Shosted is definitely driving back to Utah in style.

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WEEKLY 38,200  
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Call 800-944-7444.

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## TRAVELAGE WEST

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

WEEKLY 38,200

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### ESCAPE PLAN

Through Aug. 13, Treasure Island in Las Vegas welcomes clients with a two-night Escape to Adventure getaway.

The package includes deluxe accommodations, two

Through Aug. 13, Treasure Island is offering clients a two-night Escape to Adventure getaway package, and travel agents can receive special rates during the same time period. At right is the resort's Mutiny Bay entertainment center.



buffet breakfasts, a buffet dinner and a cocktail for \$89 per person, double, including tax.

Clients also have the option of purchasing tickets to Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere," which features music, dance, acrobatics and comedy, for \$63.50 per person, plus tax.

Also for the same dates, the

resort is offering a travel agent rate of \$45 per room, per night, single or double, plus tax.

The rate is available to all Airlines Reporting Corp.-approved agents, who must present an International Air Transport Association or ARC card upon arrival.

An additional charge of \$10 for triple occupancy and \$20 for quad occupancy will apply.

For reservations or more details, call Treasure Island at 800-944-7444, or visit the property's web site at

[<http://www.treasureisland.com>].

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**deal** me in

**Las Vegas or**

8307

## **Disneyland? Split decision**

*Before I Deal: One of the more frequently asked questions in my mail bag is: "Should I bring my family to Las Vegas?" I thought I would repeat this column for those who haven't had a chance to read it.*

Dear Mark,

We are deciding to make a family trip to either Las Vegas or Disneyland. We have three children all under the age of eight. I would like to know your recommendations and experiences (good/bad).  
Elise G. Tulsa, OK

Elise, if you're looking for total family entertainment, take your family to Disneyland. Don't get me wrong, I LOVE Las Vegas - just not as a family destination. Because it's only fair that you get a second opinion, let me bring in my expert on such matters - the biggest Las Vegas promoter I know. No, it's not Steve Wynn, it's my 10-year-old son Nick.

Mark: All right, Nick, tell my readers your choice for a vacation - Disneyland or Las Vegas?

Nick: Las Vegas! It's rad.

Mark: Come on, it's not for kids. We were there on a Tuesday during a school break and I could count all the families I saw on one hand. (Note: Before you write in to call me a numskull and point out that during the school year we shouldn't expect kids, we were at Disneyland the following two days and it was swarming with families.)

Nick: That just means we have the whole place to ourselves.

Mark: Okay, name some of the things you thought were "rad."

Nick: The Luxor arcade. The coolest I've ever seen.

Mark: In two hours, you spent more in quarters than a Disneyland Passport costs for the day.

Nick: We both liked that pirate stuff at the Treasure Island Casino.

Mark: The pyrotechnics and the pirate ship battle were good, but don't forget we waited for an hour so we could view it from the front,



**mark pilarski**

and you complained you were being squished to death. Plus it only lasted five minutes.

**Nick:** I've got something, big guy. I can't wait to go on that roller coaster on that tall building.

**Mark:** I'm drawing the line here, Nick. No way am I going to allow you to get on a roller coaster that's 1,149 feet in the air. Wait till you're 18, or better yet, 21. Case closed.

**Nick:** Chicken!

**Mark:** And another thing about the Stratosphere tower roller coaster...

**Nick:** Baww, baww, baww, baww, baww. Anyway, I thought the amusement park at the MGM was way cool.

**Mark:** Remember, though, we were there in the off season, not the summer, when the temperatures rise to over 110 degrees, there are long lines and you're limited to just 12 rides. It's overpriced, no matter what they charge. (Currently, you must be over 48 inches tall to go on any of the rides.)

**Nick:** You have to admit, Dad, the MGM building is awesome. All the buildings are.

**Mark:** You mean I've got a future architect in the family? NOT! You just wanted a \$20 souvenir from each location.

**Nick:** Well, at least they offer you something to do once you're inside.

**Mark:** Whether it's visiting dinosaurs at Circus Circus or viewing the Emerald Forest in the MGM, cha-ching, cha-ching, everything cost bucks. Very little is free. And all the walking to and from, I've got blisters....

**Nick:** You're whining!

**Mark:** True, but I don't know what's worse. Blisters from all the concrete, or our taxi bill for two days: \$148.

**Nick:** Well, I know something the big guy really liked—the buffets.

**Mark:** Guilty as charged.

**Nick:** And when I went on stage during Lance Burton's Magic Show, not once, but twice!

**Mark:** Nick, you couldn't find a prouder father. Of course, not everyone scores front row, center seats and has a son with the best "pick me" handwave in his fourth grade class. Let's take a break, Nick.

Elise, the "Sin City" element of Las Vegas is still alive and well, so don't expect Vegas to be the "Orlando of the West." Example: I took a solitary walk between the Flamingo Hilton and the Luxor, — about one mile — and I was approached 47 times and handed four-color brochures of fantasy girls, willing and able, to make my visit to Las Vegas worth...use your imagination. With my wife and Nick in tow, I was only approached by nine handbill distributors. On the plus side, 38 distributors respected the institution of the family, but the visual effects remained. Those circulars are scattered all over the sidewalk.

Since our trip to Lost Wages the Clark County Commission approved a ban on the passing out of handbills in Las Vegas. The ban is targeted primarily at the aggressive peddlers (smut-ters) on the Las Vegas Strip who force-feed fliers, most of which contain sexually explicit ads for call girl services, on unwilling tourists as they stroll by. The ban also affects businesses that hand out ads in front of their stores along the strip.

Those needing their carnal obsessions attended to in Sin City will still find arousal circulars at newspaper stands which are exempt, as are non-commercial enterprises.

**Nick:** I'm back. Any other questions Dad?

**Mark:** Sure, one more, Nick. Your final word on Las Vegas.

**Nick:** When can we go again?

**Mark:** My final thought,

April 1 -

Elise. Baby strollers and high rollers don't mix.

Before I Shuffle: Total expenditures for two days in Las Vegas: \$739. Disneyland: \$466. This part is directed at the gaming industry. Guess how much I gambled (total)

when our family went to Las Vegas? \$20. And when the "Nickster" doesn't go? Let's just say, MORE! Your "family theme" idea is way off the mark.

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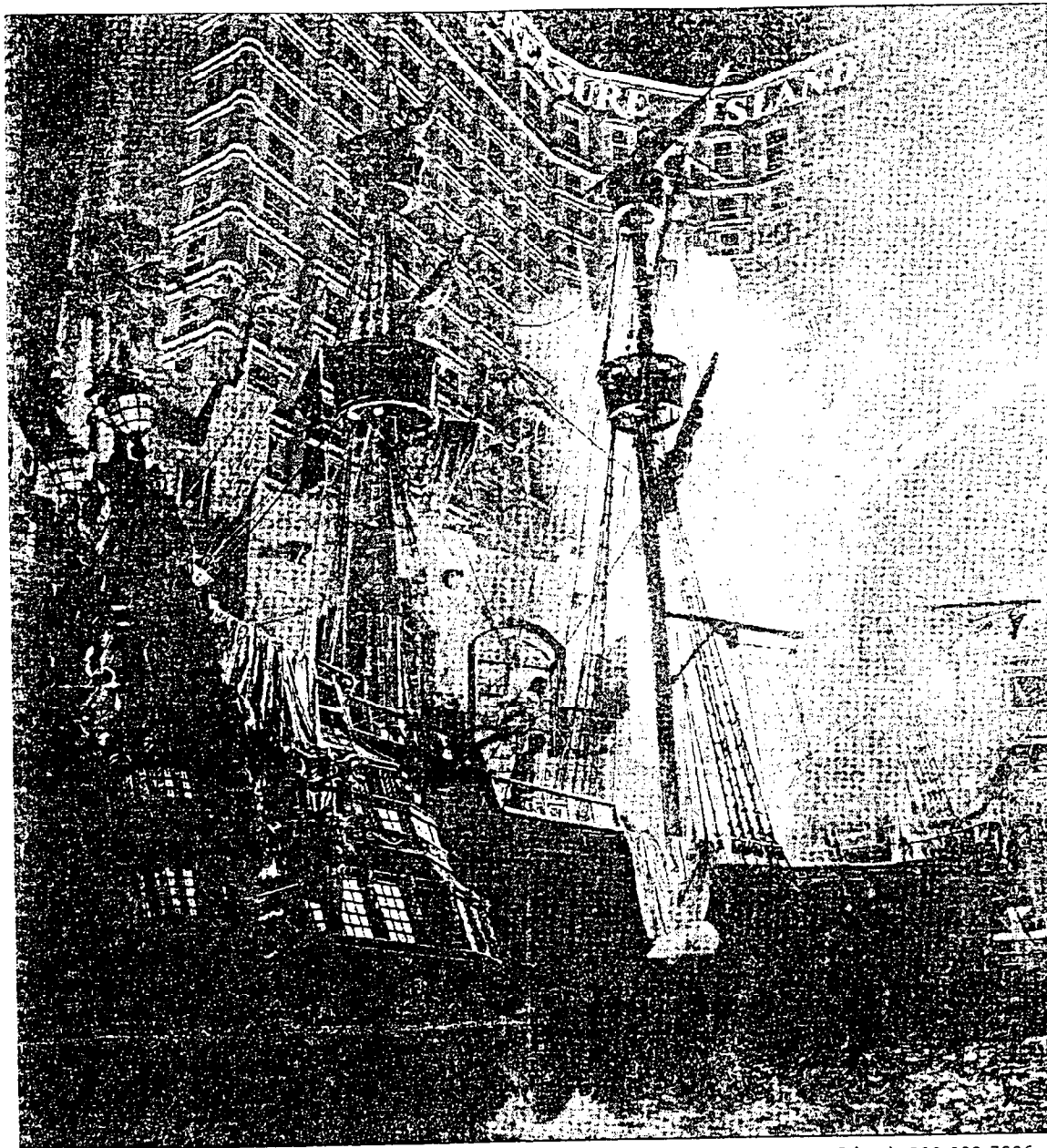
*Email your questions to  
winners@winner.com*



BUPRELLE'S

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For more information about the sea battle and Cirque du Soleil's 'Mystere,' call Treasure Island, 800-288-7206.

## Just turn in at the roaring cannons and burning ships

With ghost-like regularity, an epic eight-minute pyrotechnic sea battle erupts every 90 minutes between 4 and 11:30 p.m., seven days a week, in front of Treasure Island on the Las Vegas Strip.

TIC 2398

How the free spectacle unfolds:  
In a pirate village on Buccaneer Bay, amid crashing waves and chattering sea gulls, pirates unload stolen booty from their ship, the Hispaniola. Suddenly, a British frigate, the HMS Britannia, steals around the corner, and the British captain orders the pirates to surrender.

"In the name of His Royal Britannic Majesty, King of England, I order you brigands to lay down your arms and receive a boarding party!"

But instead of surrendering, the pirates scramble to their battle posts, and their captain answers with contempt: "The only thing we'll receive is your stores, valuables and whatever rum ye might have on board, ye

son of a footman's goat!"

The Britannia's warning shot splashes off the Hispaniola's bow. The pirates fire back, punching a hole in the Britannia's topsail.

A four-shot British barrage wrecks the Hispaniola's deck and brings down the main mast, crow's nest and lookout. Soon only the pirate captain remains on the ship, and he refuses to surrender. One more British blast hits the pirates' ammunition store. Three immense explosions send fire and smoke billowing.

Desperately, the pirate captain swings on a rope to the bow, grabs a smoldering fuse and in a last-ditch effort lights his remaining cannon.

The charge hits the Britannia's gunpowder storage area, and a fierce explosion devastates this once-majestic vessel. Officers and men jump overboard, but the captain stands proudly as he goes down with his ship - before your very eyes.



MODESTO BEE

MODESTO, CA  
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# Why 'Sin City' calls itself family-friendly

By Garth Stapley **\$307**  
Bee staff writer

**LAS VEGAS — Disclaimer:**  
This list is by no means complete. I'm including only the things our young family had time to do and see in three days. We'd heard and read about so many more worthwhile family attractions which we just couldn't fit in, like the MGM Grand Adventures theme park.

Also, you won't find high-priced shows like Cirque du Soleil or Siegfried & Roy here, since this is about budget vacations. So if you want a comprehensive tour guide, buy one or call the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, (702) 892-0711.

On the other hand, the good thing about this list is, it's more honest than professional tour guides.

■ **Excalibur's Magic Motion Machine** — This 48-seat simulator dazzles with visual effects and sound. They have four different rides at \$3 apiece. The space race was a bit much for my 5-year-old, who came out rather green about the gills; call (702) 597-7777.

Just outside Excalibur is a moat, the venue of a fiery confrontation between a huge but fake-looking dragon venturing from a lair under the bridge and a robotic Merlin the Magician. The fire-breathing and

small pyrotechnics may startle young-uns, but everyone else finds it pretty campy. It's a good thing this one's short and free.

■ **Caesars Palace Forum Shops** — You'll swear you're strolling through an ancient Roman village in spring, thanks to arched ceilings painted sky-blue with clouds and special lighting, plus fountains, columns and piazzas. About 70 stores and restaurants.

The really cool thing was the free animatronic "Atlantis" show in a village square, where statues come alive every hour, on the hour and shoot fire and smoke. It's by a 50,000-gallon salt water aquarium. There was supposed to be another statue show in another square but they canceled it when we were there because a vandal had knocked off the head of the main statue; (702) 893-4800.

Also at Caesars ...

■ **Omnimax Theatre** — Apparently, there are a few huge IMAX theaters on the strip. We went to this one and saw "Everest," taking you over icefalls, across chasms and to the summit. The avalanche was the best part. They have a second show, "The Living Sea." Cost: \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under 12. They made us pay for our 2-year-old but not our 1-year-old; (702) 731-7900.

■ **Mirage Dolphin Habitat** —

TIC 2446

Ordinarily, you pay \$10 and see this along with the Secret Garden of Siegfried & Roy's white tigers and other exotic animals. But, we went on Wednesday, the only day the garden is closed, so we paid \$5 and saw the dolphins only.

You get a nifty tour with underwater viewing, and you can watch eight bottle-nosed dolphins working with their trainers. Call for times, (702) 791-7111.

■ **Manhattan Express at New York-New York** — I'm not big on roller coasters, but my wife, Cathy, is, so I played carnival games with the kids while she went. And she raved and raved.

You pay \$6 and catch it inside the casino-midway, climb a 203-foot lift and get ready for an array of turns, loops, even a 540-degree spiral.

Personally, I loved the sedate stroll through a re-creation of a picturesque corner of the Big Apple, with narrow streets, all inside; (702) 740-6969.

■ **Circus Circus** — I can't believe I'm writing this, but they have this cat show in the center ring when they're not doing circus acts. Have you ever seen a cat actually do something you told it to do? It's quite amusing. All shows are free, 11 a.m. to midnight; (702) 734-0410.

Circus Circus was the biggest thing when we passed through Las Vegas nine years ago, but now it ranks among the littlest. Much better, in our opinion, is the adjacent ...

■ **Grand Slam Canyon Theme Park** — A corkscrew roller coaster, a flume ride, a 90-foot waterfall, animated, roaring dinosaurs, laser tag, arcade — all under an enclosed, five-acre, climate-controlled dome. It's free to walk around and see the wonders, but you pay to do anything more; (702) 794-3939.

■ **Buccaneer Bay at Treasure Island** — I'll be honest, we didn't

see this one because the wind came up and they said it was too dangerous for the pirate actors to perform. But our friends say the full-scale, explosive battle is full of action and dazzling pyrotechnics sure to please kids and their parents.

Shows are every 90 minutes from 4 to 11:30 p.m., every day. Free; (702) 894-7111.

■ **MGM'S Rainforest Cafe** — Our kids delighted at exotic birds cawing and elephants spraying droplets, gorillas frolicking and leopards lurking, all under a real-looking tropical forest canopy. And we didn't eat there! If you don't have time for a meal, just stroll by and watch for awhile; (702) 893-4800.

• • •  
The next three join to make part of the Showcase Entertainment & Shopping Center next to MGM Grand:

■ **The World of Coca-Cola** — Pay \$2, go on a short tour, watch a real soda jerk making old-time Coke by mixing syrup and soda water. At the end comes the real treat: You get to taste a couple of dozen different, funky sodas marketed in different countries around the world, like South Korea, Zimbabwe and Brazil.

You can drink as much as you want, which of course means you'll soon be sick as a dog. I was.

■ **M&M World** — They say it's the only store of its kind, with dozens of character dispensers and other merchandise. My wife bought a bunch of candies in colors you can't get anywhere else, like black and gray and mauve and chartreuse and gold. Free to enter.

■ **Ethel M Chocolates** — It's definitely worth the price: free. This company apparently owns M&Ms, but the Ethel M side isn't much more than a large candy store. They do give you a free piece of chocolate. The better tour is at the real plant in Henderson (see below).

• • •  
For a break from the Strip, drive a few short miles to Henderson to take in the following factory tours:

■ **Cranberry World West** — No, they don't grow cranberries in the desert. They truck in juice to this Ocean Spray plant for processing and redistribution to western states. The free tour is interesting, the sampling even better.

You'll get to taste chocolate-covered cranberries and a bunch of hard-to-find juice flavors, like cranberry-apricot and cranberry-mango and cranberry-lime. The cranberry fudge isn't free, but it's delicious; (702) 566-7160. In the same industrial park is ...

■ **Famous Brands International Marshmallows** — We got to see all the machinery in this plant, but not in action because it was down for repairs that day. They still gave us free samples at the end; (702) 564-3878.

On your way back to the Strip, be sure to stop at ...

■ **Ethel M Chocolates Factory and Cactus Garden** — Don't ask how the two relate. Just enjoy the free samples. The tour isn't as informative nor as long as Hershey's in Oakdale, but Ethel M did give us samples of what we watched them make, plus more at the end; (702) 733-2500.

• • •  
Other than the Henderson factories, we wandered off the Strip only for the following two attractions, both quite worthwhile:

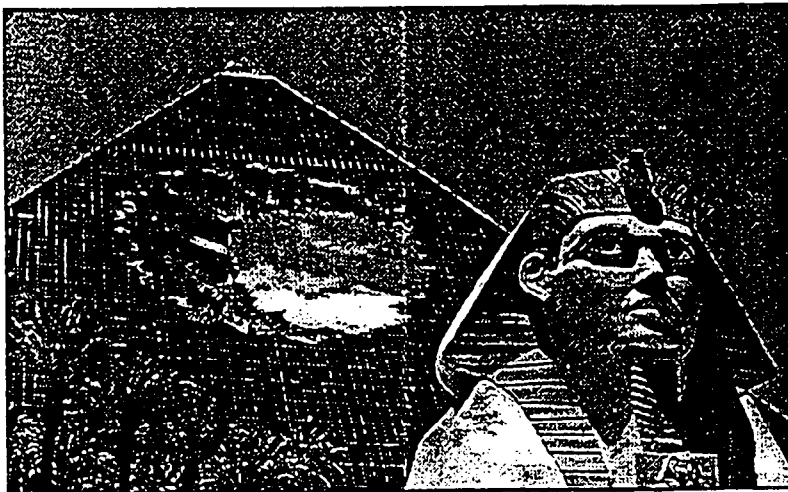
■ **Masquerade Show in the Sky at The Rio** — High above a cavernous casino, walls open and Mardi Gras floats sail slowly out on ceiling tracks. Dancers, singers, musicians, jesters — it's truly a treat, and it's free.

They toss plenty of cheap necklaces, which delight the kids. We snagged a spot on a second-floor balcony by showing up a half-hour early. Shows every two hours from 2 p.m. through midnight, except Wednesdays when they take a break; (702) 252-7776.

■ **Fremont Street Experience** — The drive through "old" Las Vegas' wedding chapel-lined

streets and seedy clubs is worth it to see this unique downtown promenade. Be sure to go after dark, to see one or more spectacular light and sound shows. They come alive through more than two million lights arching over the entire four-block walk, blocked off to traffic, and run on the hour through 11 p.m., midnight on Fridays; (702) 678-5777.

Bee staff writer Garth Stapley can be reached at 578-2390.



The Associated Press

Typically, that isn't a meteor hole in the Luxor hotel-casino; it's a vinyl overlay put there to promote the movie 'Armageddon.'

MEGA SCENE

PALM SPRINGS, CA  
24 TIMES/YEAR

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BURRELLE'S

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**Las Vegas, Mesquite,  
Laughlin & Primm  
Shows**

7606177 p.55

Arizona Charlies - 740 S. Decatur Blvd  
• See Also Concerts

**Bally's**

• Jubilee - Sun. - Thurs. 8pm; Tues.-Thurs.  
& Sat. Add 11 pm show; Dark Fri. - \$50  
incl tax - (702) 739-4567

• See Also Concerts

**Boardwalk-Holiday Inn**

• Mr. Dixie Dooley's World of the Unreal  
Magic Show - A Magic show for all ages,  
including Houdini's legendary "Walking  
Through a Brick Wall" Illusion - Tues.-  
Sun. 4pm & 5:30, \$8.95+tax (5.00+tax  
child under 12) - (702) 730-3194

• The Dream King w/ Trent Carlini - As  
close as you can get to Elvis, the King of  
Rock 'n Roll - Tues.-Sun. 8:30pm; \$19.95  
+ tax (under 12 free) - (702) 730-3194

• The Boardwalk Comedy Club - (Closing  
Feb 3, 1998) Two to Three Comedians  
Nightly - Tues.-Sun. 9:00pm; \$12.95+tax  
(incl. one drink) - (702) 730-3194

• The Lighthouse Disco - Lighthouse  
Lounge - Tues.-Sun. - no cover charge  
Booftown - 3333 Blue Diamond Rd

• South of the West; Song and Dance Revue  
- Tues.-Sun. 3pm & 5pm Bourbon Street

• "Laffs Vegas Tonight" - Tues.-Sun.  
8:30pm & 10:30 p.m. - (702) 737-7200

**Caesars Palace**

• Omnimax Theatre - "Thrill Ride - The  
Science of Fun" - Using the full effect of  
large format, omnimax film, this new ulti-  
mate ride film puts every member of the  
audience in the front seat of some of the  
wildest rides ever created while teaching  
the scientific process behind the making  
of the rides. Starting with a 17th century  
wooden ice slide and progressing through  
modern motion simulator rides and even  
to a simulated ride on the Stratosphere's Big  
Shot and Busch Garden's Kumba and Montu  
roller coasters. - Every 70 minutes: 2pm-  
10:10pm (2:00, 3:10, 4:20, 5:30, 6:40, 7:50,  
9:00, 10:10) Sun-Thurs; additional shows  
11:40am, 11:20pm & 12:50pm, Fri-Sat - \$5-  
\$7 - (702) 731-7333 - 800-445-4544

• "Caesars Magical Empire" - dining,  
magic acts and catacombs!, 4:30 p.m. -  
11:30 p.m., \$65-\$75 for dinner perfor-  
mances. Free guided tours every 15 min-  
utes, 11am-4pm starting from the Magical  
Empire entrance.

• Race for Atlantis - the first IMAX 3D  
motion simulator thrill ride in a high-tech,  
high-res computer generated animation for-  
mat. Combines an Atlantis themed environ-  
ment with a stunning chariot race through  
the legendary kingdom. \$9.50 adults, \$6.75  
under 12 or over 55; \$8 residents)

• See Also Concerts

Continental - 4100 Paradise Rd (and

#### Flamingo)

- "Heatwave" - A high energy dance show starring Karin Denise. 10pm Tues.-Sat.; Tues.-Wed. add 8pm show; Fri-Sat add Mid-night show. 8pm shows are covered, 10pm and Midnight shows are topless, \$19.95 plus tax. Jukebox Theatre. (702) 597-5970
- Club Continental (2nd floor) - Featuring America's Lounge King: Cook E. Jarr every Fri-Sat in May - 737-5555
- Debbie Reynold Hotel, Casino & Movie Museum - 305 Convention Center Dr
- Debbie Reynolds Show - Dancers and Impressionists imitate famous stars - Mon-Fri 7:30pm; \$39.95 (incl. two drinks)
- The Kenny Kerr Show - 10:00pm Tues.-Sat. + 7:30pm Sat., \$21.95 incl tax - (702) 733-2243
- The Michael Larocca Show - 8:30pm Tues.-Sat., \$14.95 incl tax - (702) 734-0711
- Edgewater - Laughlin
- Kokopelli's Lounge - 4/28-5/3: Danny Gale; 5/5-5/17: Wild at Heart; 5/19-5/31: Soul'd Out; 6/2-6/14: Cornell Gunter's Coasters; 6/16-6/28: Perfect Choice
- Excalibur
- King Arthurs's Tournament - Nightly 6 & 8:30 pm - Dinner show: \$29.95 include dinner, tax, and gratuity- (702) 597-7600
- An Evening in Vienna (formerly: Symphony in White) - Royal Lipizzaner Stallions - Thur.-Tues. 2pm; Sat.-Sun. add noon show too - \$7.95, \$5.95 Srs and Children under 12 - 597-7777

#### Flamingo Hilton

- The Great Radio City Spectacular w/ the Rockettes - Sat-Thurs two times each evening 7:45 pm (dinner show \$44-\$6+tax) & 10:30 pm (cocktail show \$36 +tax) except Fri. (702) 733-3333
- Forever Plaid - 50's & 60's Review - Nightly 7:30 & 10pm Except Mon. - \$19.95 + tax (702) 733-3333
- Gold Coast
- A Musical Tribute to Patsy Cline - starring Sharon Haynes and the world famous Jordanaires. 8pm, 1998 dates: 3/11-3/29; 4/17-5/24; 6/3-7/4; 7/15-8/2; 8/19-9/20; 9/30-11/15
- Sorta Dixie Jazz Band - Mon.-Fri. noon-6 pm, NC - (702) 367-7111
- Tropical Splash - Live Music, Fri.-Sat., 11pm-3am (\$5.00 cover incl. 1 drink)
- Larry Taylor D.J. (Big Band & Pop) - Sundays 1pm-5pm; Tuesdays 7:30pm-11:30pm - (702) 367-7111 - \$5.00
- East Lounge - 9pm-3am (Dark Monday) 10/14-10/26: Jukebox Saturday Nite; 10/28-11/2: Phlash
- West Lounge - 9pm-3am Sun, Mon, Thurs, Fri & Sat 10pm-4am (Dark Tues & Wed) - 10/16-10/27: Robi Turner/Stolen Faces
- West Lounge (indefinite) - Karaoke - Tues 8pm-1am
- See Also Concerts
- Golden Nugget
- Country Fever - Country Singer Impersonators - Nightly 7:00 & 9:45pm except Fri. - (702) 386-8100 - \$25.00, Includes munchies and a pitcher.
- The Doveiko Aerialists - Stars of the Moscow Circus - On the Fremont Street Experience Promenade - Monday-Saturday 4:30pm, 5:30pm, 6:30pm, 7:30pm, Free

Admission, Info: (702) 385-7111.

#### Harrah's

- Spellbound - Nightly 7:30 & 10pm except Sun. - \$34.95+tax/tip, incl. 1 drink - (702) 369-5111 or (702) 369-5222 (info)
- An Evening at The Improv - Various Comedians - Tues.-Sun. 8 & 10:30pm - \$15.35 - (702) 369-5111 or (702) 369-5000

#### Imperial Palace

- Legends in Concert - Famous Singer/Actor Impersonators - Nightly 7:30pm & 10:30pm except Sun. - \$29.50 incl. 2 drinks (Children under 12: \$14.75) - (702) 794-3261 or (800) 351-7400x5
- Hawaiian Luau and Polynesian Revue - a colorful music and dance revue that captures the heart of Hawaii - Tues & Thurs. ONLY. 7:00pm - \$24.95 incl. Hawaii dinner buffet - (702) 794-3261 or (800) 351-7400x5

#### Las Vegas Hilton

- Starlight Express - Final show: Nov. 30, 1997 - Sat.-Thur. 7:30; on Tues., Thurs., Sat. & Sun. Add 10:30 show - \$21.25-\$49.50 - 1-800-STARLIGHT or (702) 732-5755
- Maxim - 160 E Flamingo Ave
- Comedy Magic - w/Nick Lewin - Mon.-Sat. 1pm & 3pm - \$8.25+tax/tip - \$10.25+tax/tip(w/ buffet) - 731-4300
- Comedy Max - Changing Comedians - Nightly 7:00 & 9 pm - \$13.90+tax/tip(cocktail show) - \$17.45(buffet show)+tax/tip - 731-4300
- Guys Will Be Dolls - a female impersonator revue, Nightly. at 8 & 10 p.m., (begins 6/9/96) (price not released yet) 734-8550

#### MGM Grand

- EFX - The \$40 million special effects extravaganza! Starring David Cassidy. Many shows sold out; Tues-Sat at 7:30 & 10:30 - \$64+tax / (children 5-12: 32+tax) - (702) 891-7870 or (702) 891-7777;

#### The Mirage

• Siegfried & Roy - Fri.-Tues. at 7:30 & 11pm (Dark: 11/25-12/24) - \$89.35 Incl 2 drinks & a souvenir program - (702) 792-7777

• See Also Concerts

#### The Monte Carlo

• Lance Burton - Tues.-Sat. 7:30pm & 10:30pm - \$34.95-\$39.95 incl tax, (702) 730-7000 or 800-311-8999

#### New York-New York

• Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance - Tues.-Wed. & Fri.-Sat. 7:30pm & 10:30pm; Thurs. 9pm - \$50-\$60, (702) 740-6815

#### O'Sheas

• More Magic w/ Valentine Vox - Tues.-Sat. at 11:30, 1:30, 3:00, and 4:30 - \$9.95 for adults and \$3.00 for children (Incl 1 drink and pass to museum) - (702) 737-1343

#### Orleans

• Bourbon Street Cabaret - •Orleans Parade Band (Vocals/Strolling Jazz Quarter) - Indefinite: Dark Sat/Sun  
• See Also Under Concerts - (702) 365-7075  
Rio Suites Hotel & Casino - 3700 W Flamingo  
• Danny Gans: "Man of Many Voices" Wednesday - Sunday 8p.m., \$60 includes 2 drinks, 252-7776

#### Riviera

• An Evening at La Cage w/ Frank Marino - Nightly 7:30pm & 9:30 pm except Tues. - \$22.86 (Incl 2 drinks) - \$28.36 (VIP) -

(702) 794-9301 or (702) 794-9433

• Crazy Girls - Topless Revue - Nightly 8:30 & 10:30pm, except Mon., Add Mid-night show on Saturdays, \$21.36-26.16 - (702) 794-9433

• Riviera Comedy Club - Nightly 8 & 10 pm; Fri. & Sat. 11:45pm also - \$14.95-24.00+tax/tip, Incls 2 drink (702) 794-9433  
• Splash II, Voyage of a Lifetime - Nightly 7:30pm (family show) & 10:30 pm (adult show) - \$39.50-\$49.50+tax, incls 1 drink - (702) 477-5274 or 794-9433

#### Sahara Hotel

• Ticketing: 702-737-2111  
• See Concerts

#### Sam's Town

• Sunset Stampede - daily 2:00pm, 6:00pm, 8:00pm & 10:00pm, Free Laser Light and Water Spectacular

#### San Remo

• Showgirls of Magic w/ Magician Kevin James - Tues.-Sun. 8pm (family show) & 10:30pm (adult show), \$19.95+tax; incl 1 drink - (702) 597-6028 or (702) 739-9000  
Santa Fe - 4949 North Rancho Drive

• Ticketing and/or Info: 702-658-4900  
• See Concerts

#### Sheraton Desert Inn

• Ticketing: 702-733-4566  
• See Concerts

#### Stardust

• Enter the Night (currently starring Dorothy Hamill Thru 8/30) - Tues., Weds., Thurs., & Sat. 7:30pm & 10:30pm; Sun. & Mon. 8pm - \$39.85, Incl. tax, one drink & tip - (702) 732-6325 (ticket office) or (702) 732-6111

#### Stratosphere

• "American Superstars" - Nightly 7 & 10p.m., except Thur., \$22.95 + tax, 16.95 children under 12, 380-7711

• Viva Las Vegas - An Exciting Afternoon Revue - Daily 2pm & 4pm, dark Sun., \$10+tax, (702) 380-7711 or 380-7777

• Tap Dogs - Six Men, rock n Roll & Tap dancing... - Tues.-Sun. 8:00pm & 10:00pm, \$24.95+tax, (702) 380-7711

• Bobby Dickerson - Tues.-Sat. 8pm-1am - Top of the World Lounge (In the tower)

#### Treasure Island

• Buccaneer Bay Battle - Entertaining for the whole family. Watch the British battle the pirates and cannonball the outdoor bay to smithereens! - FREE - Sun-Thurs: 4:00pm, 5:30pm, 7:00pm, 8:30pm, 10:00pm; Fri-Sat: 4:00pm, 5:30pm, 7:00pm, 8:30pm, 10:00pm, 11:30pm  
• Mystère (Cirque du Soleil) - Wed.-Sun 7:30pm & 10:30pm; Certain Dates Excepted - \$69.85 (Children under 12: half price) - (702) 894-7722 or (702) 894-7111 or (702) 392-1999

#### Tropicana

• Comedy Stop - Changing Comedians - Nightly 8 & 10:30pm - \$14.30 Incl 2 drinks - (702) 739-2714 or (702) 739-2358

• Folies Bergere - Nightly 8pm & 10:30pm Except Thurs - \$45-55 (Dinner) + tax; Incl 2 drinks - (702) 739-2411

• The Illusionary Magic of Rick Thomas - Showtimes 2pm & 4pm, Except Fridays, \$12.95-17.95 Westward Ho •Hurray America - (Currently starring Marty Allen and Karon Kate)- Nightly except Wed &

Sat. - \$12.95 + tax; - (702) 731-2900

### Concerts/Performances/ Headliners

- Sep 17-Oct 15 - David Copperfield - Caesars Palace
- Sep 27-Oct 10 - Righteous Brothers - Orleans, \$36.95&up+ tax, 8pm
- October 6 - Maynard Ferguson - Riviera
- October 9 - John Berry - Sunset Station
- Oct 9-Oct 11 - Don Rickles - Sheraton Desert Inn
- October 10 - Alabama - Las Vegas Hilton
- October 10 - Blackhawk - Sunset Station
- Oct 13-Oct 18 - Neil Sedaka - Orleans, \$29.95+ tax, 7pm
- October 16 - Celine Dion - "Let's Talk About Love" Tour - Thomas & Mack Arena, 7:30 p.m., \$36.25, \$46.25, \$56.25, \$76.25, \$101.25
- Oct 23-Oct 24 - World Class Rockers - Maxim
- Oct 23-Oct 24 - Jackie "The Joke Man" Martling - Riviera
- Oct 23-Oct 25 - Golden Boys Frankie Avalon, Fabian, Bobby Rydell - Orleans, \$44.95&up + tax, 7pm
- Oct 27-Nov 1 - Smothers Brothers - Orleans, \$24.95+ tax, 7pm
- Oct 29-Nov 1 - Rita Rudner - Sheraton Desert Inn
- Oct 29-Nov 1 - Legends of Motown - Marvelettes, Temptations, Mary Wilson -

#### Caesars Palace

- Oct 29-Nov 4 - Anne Murray - Bally's
- November 3 - David Benoit - Riviera
- Nov 6-Nov 7 - Tommy Davidson - Riviera
- Nov 12-Nov 15 - Huey Lewis & The News - Caesars Palace
- Nov 14 - Kansas - Maxim
- Nov 16-Nov 19 - The X-Rated Fantasy Revue - Riviera
- Nov 20-Nov 22 - Drew Carey - Caesars Palace
- Nov 21 - Doug Kershaw - CasaBlanca, (Mequite, NV), FREE, 7pm & 9pm
- Dec 4-Dec 6 - Bryan White - Sheraton Desert Inn
- December 7 - David Kersh - Palace Station
- December 9 - Tracy Byrd - Boulder Station
- December 10 - Tracy Adkins - Sunset Station
- Dec 10-Dec 12 - Charlie Daniels Band - Sheraton Desert Inn
- Dec 10-Dec 13 - Clint Black - Caesars Palace
- Dec 11-Dec 13 - River Dance - MGM Grand
- Dec 31-Jan 2 - Peter Frampton - Maxim

#### Coming Events

- Oct 6-Oct 11 - Jaycee State Fair - Cashman Field Center
- Oct 10 - World Championship Chili Cookoff - Fremont Street Experience
- Oct 10-Oct 11 - Supercross US Open - MGM Grand Gardens
- Nov 7-April 15, 1999 - Treasures of Russia - The Largest collection of Russian History ever to be exhibited in the United States, the famed Romanov-dynasty treasures are to be exhibited - The Rio Suite Hotel & Casino, adm. \$7-\$12

TIC 2483

## SECURITY SALES

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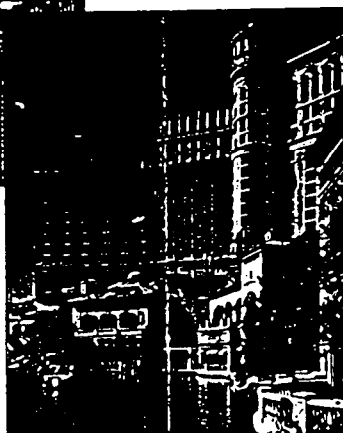
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# Vegas Vibrates With Excitement



*The famous Las Vegas Strip overwhelms visitors with spectacular lights, entertainment and gambling galore.*

Las Vegas is a one-of-a-kind experience. Get a grip on some of the things to see and do during your visit to Nevada's crown jewel.



*The Bellagio offers Mediterranean-style elegance and houses a gallery of fine art.*

**P** By Scott Goldfine

icture yourself in a lush, tropical setting, relaxing on a sandy-white beach and soaking up the rays while being soothed by the sound of crystal-clear waves as they gently brush against the shore.

Are you in Hawaii? Perhaps Florida? The Caribbean? Wrong! You're in Las Vegas!

Forget the Pacific and Atlantic. There's a brand-new coast and it's inland at the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino, which is set to open its doors, and beach, this March. It's the latest in the stream of spectacular multimillion-dollar, theme hotel/casinos in the City of Lights.

TIC 2508

A216



Another fancy new hotel is the Bellagio Resort, which creates an elegant European ambience and features more than a thousand soaring fountains that flow into a centrally located lake. The Bellagio boasts a gallery of fine art with original works by Monet, van Gogh, Picasso and many others.



*Spectators assemble in droves for the flashy pyrotechnics of Treasure Island's Buccaneer Bay.*

Excalibur is among the established hotel/casinos that should not be missed. The medieval-theme hotel features "King Arthur's Tournament," an original musical production adapted from the legend of King Arthur. It includes real jousting and sword fighting.

You'll be exclaiming, "Shiver me timbers!" when you get a load of the barrage of cannon and musket fire at Treasure Island. A pyrotechnic battle takes place every 90 minutes in the hotel's Buccaneer Bay.

Experience geological fury at The Mirage, where a 54-foot volcano erupts and spews smoke and fire 100 feet above the lagoons below. Other Mirage attractions include Dolphin Habi-

tat, White Tiger Habitat and Siegfried & Roy.

Take a bite out of the Big Apple without ever venturing east of the Colorado River at the New York-New York Hotel and Casino. Besides recreating downtown Manhattan, the facility offers the entertainment of Michael Flatley's "Lord of the Dance."

Step right up for family fun at Circus Circus, the world's largest permanent circus. The center stage is highlighted by world-renowned live circus acts performing free everyday.

All hail the Moody Blues, who will be in concert at Caesar's Palace March 3-7. The famous Roman-decorated hotel/casino's Circus Maximus Showroom will also feature the sounds of country superstar Wynonna March 10-14.

The mysteries of the pyramids await visitors at the Egyptian-theme Luxor Hotel and Casino. The Luxor's attractions include IMAX® 3D theater, a realistic motion theater, Sega VirtualLand, and The Tomb and Museum of King Tutankhamun.

Thrill-seekers will not want to miss the Big Shot acceleration ride and High Roller roller coaster at the Stratosphere.

The High Roller is the world's highest roller coaster, starting 909 feet above the ground.

Other fun attractions include Hard Rock Café, Liberace Museum, Guinness World of Records Museum and Planet Hollywood.

Points of interest away from the clamor of slot machines include: Hoover Dam; Bonnie Springs/Old Nevada; Red Rock Canyon and Kyle Ranch.

There's definitely no shortage of things to do in Las Vegas. The city's much-publicized no-response policy for alarms clearly hasn't carried over to leisure, where its responsiveness to the escapist desires of tourists is unsurpassed. Oh yes, there's also gambling.

For more information, visit the Las Vegas Leisure Guide Web site at [www.pcap.com](http://www.pcap.com). Photographs were provided courtesy of the Las Vegas News Bureau.



*About 30 miles south of Las Vegas, Hoover Dam is a wondrous architectural achievement that features tours daily.*

## ANTELOPE VALLEY PRESS

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For information on hotel reservations, room rates or special events, call the hotel directly. Although the Valley Press attempts to give its readers the most up-to-date information available, this information is subject to change.

■ **BALLY'S** — George Carlin, through March 3; "Jubilee," indefinitely (dark Friday). (702) 739-4567.

■ **BELLAGIO** — Cirque du Soleil's "O" (dark Wednesday, Thursday). (702) 693-7722.

■ **BOOMTOWN** — Nightly shows. (702) 263-7277 or (800) 588-7711.

■ **BOULDER STATION** — (702) 432-7777.

■ **BUFFALO BILL'S** — Carolee's Comedy Club, each



**RUN AWAY WITH THE CIRCUS** — "Mystere," a show by the human acrobatic circus that is Cirque du Soleil, is running at Treasure Island in Las Vegas.

TIC 2512

A218

TRI-VALLEY HERALD  
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SUNDAY 30,426  
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# Loving Las Vegas

## Pleasures of the Strip lure Bay Area weekend travelers

Stories by Chad Jones  
STAFF WRITER

**L**AS VEGAS used to be a Rat Pack den of iniquity, a squalid desert haven for high rollers, inebriated newlyweds and Elvis fanatics. A lot has changed in the half century since Bugsy Siegel erected the Sands Casino at the southern tip of Nevada. Las Vegas is the newly renovated playground of the West, home of exploding volcanoes, lush resorts, swashbuckling pirate ships, high-class circuses, roller coasters, Broadway shows, fine art and — here's the magic ingredient — fun for the whole family.

Folks from the Bay Area, like most urban centers on the West Coast, are more and more drawn to the new-and-improved Las Vegas, and for good reason. There's something for everybody on the Strip these days, from the deluxe environs of the new Bellagio hotel complete with Picasso and van Gogh paintings, to the shimmering pleasures of not one, but two, superb Cirque du Soleil shows.

Only an hour and 15 minutes away by plane, Vegas offers a viable weekend getaway for Bay Area dwellers of all ages in need of a little high-powered sensory overload.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority tracks visitors to the city and reports that in 1997, nearly 1 million came from the Bay Area alone. That figure is expected to increase by 25 to 30 percent when 1998 statistics are compiled.

There are lots of good reasons make a weekend dash to Vegas. Heck, some people still go there to gamble. But perhaps the best reason to journey through the surreal Vegas landscape — where Egyptian pyramids, the New York skyline, and an under-construction Eiffel Tower rise from sagebrush — is to see the kind of theater you can't see anywhere else.

A219

TIC 2520

Please see Las Vegas, LIVING-4

# Vegas: Bay Area drawn to playground of the West

Continued from LIVING-1

Las Vegas is all about razzle dazzle, and that's just what the big casino productions offer. Of the hot-ticket shows now running, the two best are from Cirque du Soleil. The newly revamped "EFX" at the MGM Grand starring Tommy Tune is also fun in a cheesy, old-fashioned Vegas way.

## Highbrow circus

Beloved in the Bay Area, where Cirque has been erecting its tent for the last decade, this Montreal-based troupe has two permanent attractions in Las Vegas: "Mystere," which opened in 1993 at Treasure Island, and "O" at Bellagio, which opened last October.

"Mystere" is more like the Cirque shows we've seen here in Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco: colorful circus acrobatics infused with live music and heart-stopping skill.

"O" on the other hand, is a complete original. It is everything we've come to associate with Cirque and then some. All of the acts occur entirely in, on and over water. Take the beauty, grace and daring of any Cirque spectacle and multiply it by 10. That will give you some idea of the power and spectacle of "O."

That's not to take anything away from "Mystere," which is the more affordable of the two shows (if you can call nearly \$70 affordable) and the one that will probably intrigue children the most.

## Crafty clowns

At 90 minutes, "Mystere" is nonstop enjoyment. Even before the show has officially started, clown Benny Le Grand wanders around the Treasure Island Theater and plays tricks on audience members trying to find their seats.

The clowns in "Mystere" are a real highlight. Especially fun is Francois Dupuis as a big — no, make that enormous — baby. Dupuis pops up intermittently throughout the show, gurgling, cooing and crying his way through some hilarious stunts involving a giant rubber ball, a precipitous crawl along a plank high above the stage and a random member of the audience he likes to call "papa."

Director Franco Dragone has been at the helm of all Cirque du Soleil shows, and what he has created in "Mystere" is sort of a greatest hits package incorporating the best acts from past shows with new costumes, sets and music by Rene Dupere and Benoit Jutras.

Among the returning acts is Mikhail Matorin and his aerial cube. First seen in "Alegria," Matorin is suspended from a rope and swung around the auditorium as he performs in and around the framework of a giant metal box. Because the Treasure Island Theater is bigger than the tent used on the road, Matorin is lifted even higher off the stage and his act is even more breathtaking.

Another favorite, this one from "Saltimbanco," is the

bungee trapeze act. Six women execute an aerial ballet as they jump from trapeze swings high above the stage and bounce through the air on bungee chords attached to their waists.

As beautiful as it is, this is one of those acts that appears too dangerous to watch without peeping through your fingers — just in case.

## Pole land

The amazing, gravity-defying pole jumpers that have been seen in past shows are back with a new and improved act that involves a small troupe of jumpers doing their thing on a tower made of poles. A larger troupe of 20 costumed acrobats fills the back of the stage and does a simultaneous pole-jumping act of its own.

Before it's over, "Mystere" hauls out two astonishing muscle men brothers, a corps of rousing Taiko drummers, a squad of gymnastic seesaw jumpers and trampoline bouncers, an aerial high bar act that looks like a gold-medal competition from the Olympics in the year 2084 and a giant inflatable sea snail that brings the finale to a rousing close.

The great accomplishment of "Mystere" is that it stops just short of being overwhelming.

## Leaving for Las Vegas

Getting to Las Vegas from the Bay Area is as easy as calling up any of the major airlines and booking a ticket. Access from all Bay Area airports — Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco — is constant, and some of the carriers even offer package deals that include airfare, accommodations and a rental car.

Recent round-trip airfare from the Bay to Vegas has run around \$200, but that price varies according to seasonal demand.

For discount room reservations, a good option is Las Vegas Hotel Reservation Services. Call (800) 728-4106. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority also has a reservations department: Call (800) 332-5333 Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information about Las Vegas attractions, activities and tours, contact the Las Vegas Visitor Information Center at (702) 892-7575.

For folks hooked up to the Internet, all Vegas arrangements can be made with the click of a mouse at [www.lasvegas.com](http://www.lasvegas.com). This comprehensive site allows you to book rooms at the most popular hotels, arrange show tickets,

organize tours to nearby Hoover Dam or the Grand Canyon and make dinner reservations at the eatery of your choice.

Other good online options are [www.lasvegas24hours.com](http://www.lasvegas24hours.com), sponsored by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce site, [www.lvchamber.com](http://www.lvchamber.com). Both sites offer abundant consumer and travel information.

## The shows

### "Mystere" at Treasure Island

■ Shows are at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. nightly except Monday and Tuesday

■ Tickets are \$69.85

■ Call (800) 392-1999

### "O" at the Bellagio

■ Shows are at 7:30 and 11 p.m. nightly except Wednesday and Thursday

■ Tickets are \$100 and \$90

■ Call (888) 488-7111

### "EFX" at the MGM Grand

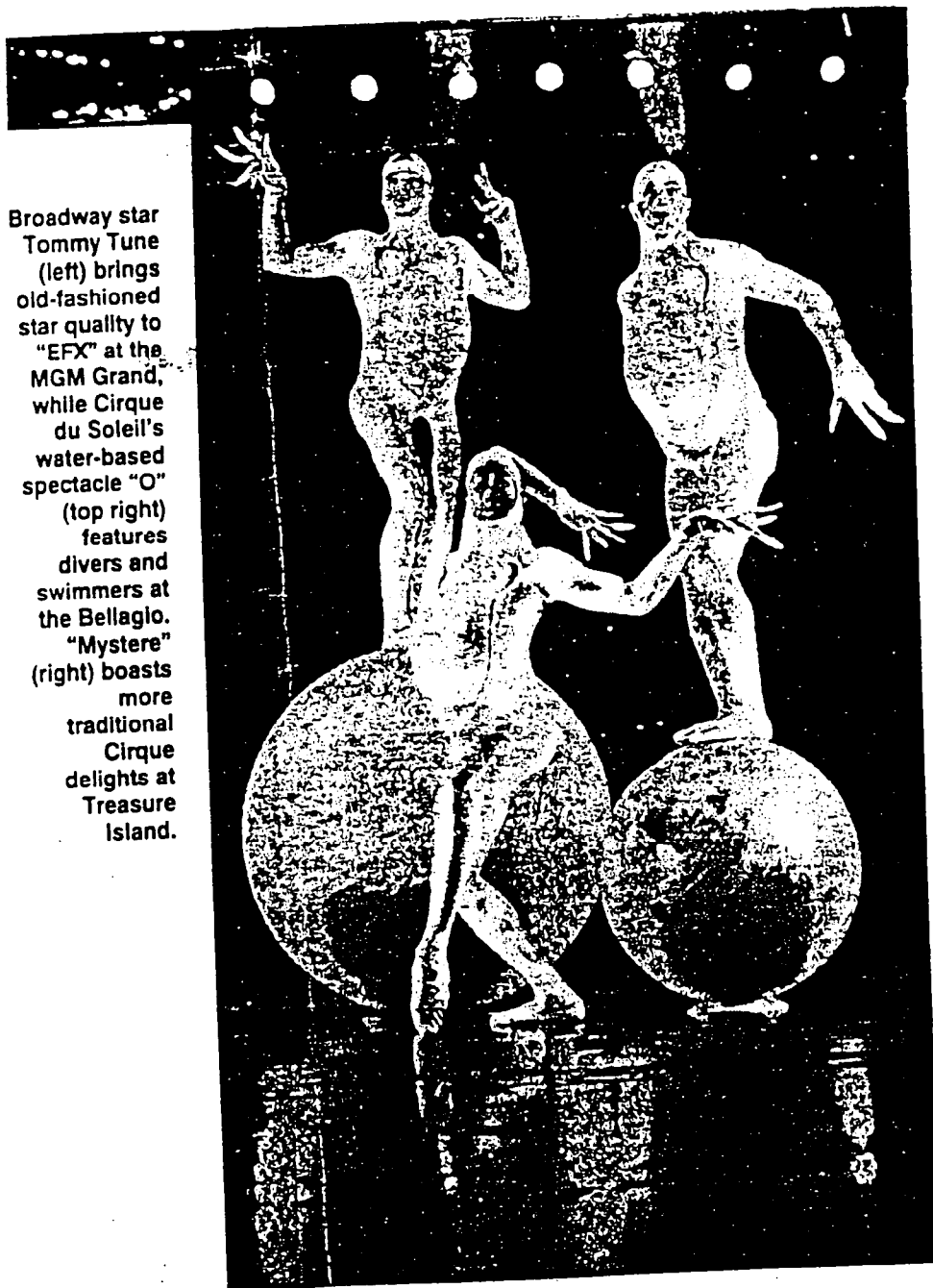
■ Shows are at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. nightly except Sunday and Monday

■ Tickets are \$70 and \$49.50 and \$35 for children ages 5 to 12

■ Call (800) 929-1111

All three shows are family friendly and are probably best for kids ages 5 and older.

Broadway star  
Tommy Tune  
(left) brings  
old-fashioned  
star quality to  
"EFX" at the  
MGM Grand,  
while Cirque  
du Soleil's  
water-based  
spectacle "O"  
(top right)  
features  
divers and  
swimmers at  
the Bellagio.  
"Mystere"  
(right) boasts  
more  
traditional  
Cirque  
delights at  
Treasure  
Island.



HOW TO GET THERE, AND WHAT TO DO, SEE LIVE

MESA TRIBUNE

MESA, AZ  
DAILY & SUNDAY 50,745

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# Companion recounts many gambling trips

By Kirk Mitchell

Tribune writer

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FRONT PAGE

She saw him exult when winnings piled high. She saw him weep when they vanished.

Many knew Judge Stephen Mirretti in his black robe at Tempe City Court. Donna Farar knew him in a playground of pulsing lights and big money.

Farar said she was Mirretti's companion on frequent jet hops to Las Vegas. She was greeted by limousines and ushered into plush hotels. And she was with the judge when he played blackjack with a studied eye.

Today, Mirretti is caught in a rolling stew of state probes. He resigned suddenly Feb. 3, citing health and family reasons, and his court records were seized.

Investigators are combing through those records to determine if any court funds made their way to the Vegas Strip.

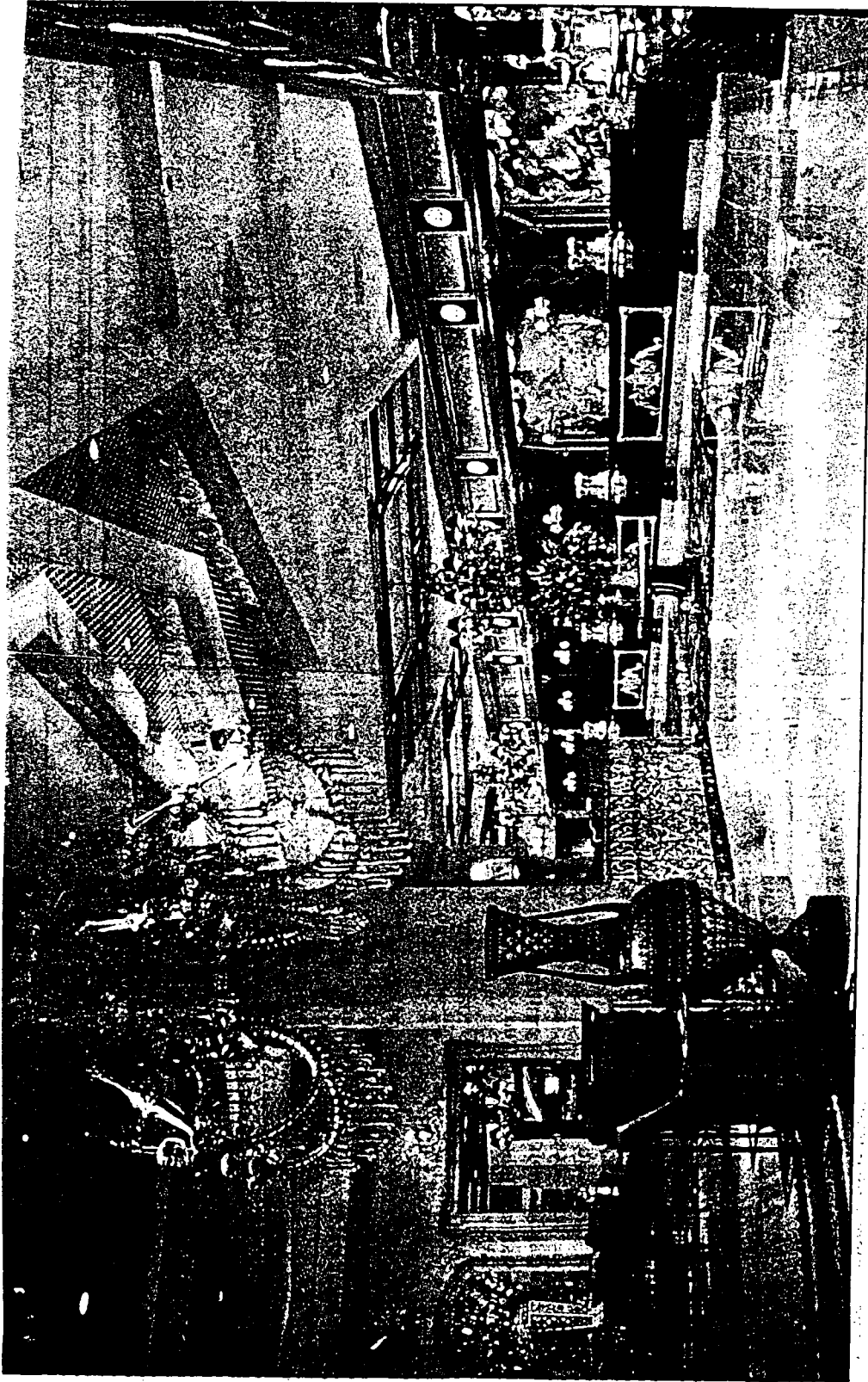
Farar doesn't know. But perhaps no one is better suited to describe the judge's other life. Farar, an attractive Scottsdale attorney who specializes in divorce law, said she and the judge were close friends.

She first met the judge — who lives with his ailing wife in Tempe — when considering an investment in a Virginia-based soda bottling operation called Consumer's

Please see Mirretti / A7

TIC 1818

A223



Judge Stephen Mirretti liked to spend time at the Treasure Island resort during his alleged gambling trips.

TIC 1819



# Mirretti

From page A1

Choice Inc. Farar wanted to know Mirretti's opinion of the company and he persuaded her to invest in the firm that promised regular dividends, she said.

She invested \$10,000. Her parents also invested \$40,000.

But when the dividend checks stopped coming, Farar called Mirretti. He promised to see what he could do to solve the problem, she said. It was hopeless.

The founder of Consumer's Choice, ex-convict John Sabatino, was paying dividends from early investors with money he got from later investors. Sabatino pleaded guilty to wire fraud in U.S. District Court and awaits an April 21 sentencing.

## Mutual legal consultations

Farar and Mirretti became friends as they consulted each other on their legal remedies, Farar said.

Eventually, Mirretti invited Farar to create a business of their own, but she never was told the nature of the business.

That was early October.

During the next three months, Mirretti would log 20 hours and 47 minutes on the phone in 176 calls to Farar that are documented on city phone bills from the judge's mobile and two office phones.

Mirretti first invited Farar to

Las Vegas on Oct. 10 for a meeting with two potential business associates.

The trip included a two-bedroom suite with a Jacuzzi, French doors and two bathrooms, apparently compliments of the Mirage Hotel.

A chauffeur in a bronze limousine met Mirretti and Farar at the airport.

The driver knew Mirretti, a big tipper, and they talked like old friends, Farar said.

One chauffeur, whose home phone was on Mirretti's calling log, remembers the judge fondly.

"He's one hell of a gentleman," Don Storer said. "He's not like the average guy I drive in the limo."

## A familiar figure in Vegas

Mirretti evoked similar emotions from nearly every casino worker Farar met. Dealers, bellhops and cashiers all seemed to know the judge well, she said. "They seemed genuinely fond of him. Steve was fun to be with."

That night, the judge's business associates called to say they couldn't meet for dinner, so Mirretti took Farar to the casino.

The judge deposited checks in his account for about \$35,000 at the cashier's cage and got a marker for that amount, she recalled.

In this and future trips, Mirretti picked a blackjack table and asked that the minimum wagering limit for the table be raised from \$25 to \$500, Farar said.

**Judge Stephen Mirretti is 'one hell of a gentleman. He's not like the average guy I drive in the limo.'**

— Don Storer  
chauffeur

The judge liked to play alone and high stakes drove other players from his table, she said.

Mirretti traded his marker for \$1,000 and \$500 chips. When the dealer had trouble computing Mirretti's winnings, the judge politely told him to think of \$500 as if it was \$5, the math is nearly the same.

The judge put the dealer at ease with stories of his marathon runs, bungee jumps, skydiving and kickboxing, Farar said. Win or lose, he always thanked the dealer for a game.

That first stay in Las Vegas was cut short after four hours when Mirretti got an emergency call. His wife, Anne, was in premature labor.

According to Mirretti's court mobile phone bill, four phone calls were made that night from Las Vegas between 12:17 and 1:20 a.m. to Scottsdale Memorial Hospital.

## Judge made weekday jaunts

During the months that followed, Farar said she accompanied Mirretti on several trips to Las Vegas, usually in the middle of the week. It was a time when a city audit was uncovering numerous problems in court operations.

Many of the same problems were identified three years earlier but never corrected by Mirretti.

Farar said she didn't think it strange Mirretti left work so frequently, because he told her he was on vacation or personal leave.

Even then, he would sometimes use his mobile phone to call his secretary Edith Ross from the casino, Farar said. According to Mirretti's cellular phone bills, the judge made seven calls from Las Vegas to the court in 1993.

#### **Gambling 'commando raids'**

The judge once told Farar on one of their "commando raids" to Las Vegas that he was missing a boring judge's meeting. Commando raid was his term for getting in and out of Vegas quick, she said.

On a given day, Farar said she and the judge would catch an early-morning flight to Las Vegas, spend an hour playing cards at Treasure Island or the Mirage, go shopping, eat lunch, catch a flight and be home by 5 p.m., Farar said.

Farar remembers once stuffing 40 hologrammed gambling chips worth \$5,000 each in her denim jacket and going to dinner.

"It didn't make me nervous," Farar said. "It was kind of funny cruising around with that kind of negotiable material in my pocket."

During that time, Farar was leaving a law firm and setting up



A227

TIC 1822

**'Mirretti was dismayed, distraught and angry with himself. He was overwhelmed by the amount he was behind. He didn't feel like he could make it up.'**

— Donna Farar  
Scottsdale attorney

her own practice in Scottsdale.

The frequent trips consumed a lot of time. The discussions about possible business deals led nowhere.

Her last trip to Las Vegas convinced her to get out.

During that trip, on Dec. 30 and 31, Farar saw a Mirretti she hadn't seen before. It upset her.

#### **Cards turn cold; losses mount**

Unlike previous trips, she said Mirretti remained anchored at the blackjack tables for hour after hour. Even when he grew tired and couldn't concentrate, he kept playing, placing higher valued chips into play than usual and losing his temper with dealers, she said.

He was losing big. He started with about \$200,000 and when he lost that amount he had another \$200,000 wired in.

Eventually he had placed into account more than \$800,000 and was down to a few hundred thousand and late on New Year's Eve, the second day of nearly nonstop gambling, she said.

In a restaurant, Mirretti calculated his losses on a napkin, Farar said. He wept silently.

He was dismayed, distraught and angry with himself," she said. "He was overwhelmed by the amount he was behind. He didn't feel like he could make it

#### **Farar denies blowing whistle**

Farar said she argued with the judge about whether he had become a compulsive gambler. She also tried to buoy him. She told him he was still a judge and had a job, but Mirretti seemed inconsolable, she recalled.

"They don't let judges lose that kind of money and keep your job," she remembered him saying.

Mirretti returned to the tables, and Farar could not watch.

She sat and thought how her plans for a new practice were detoured, and decided she would never return with the judge to Las Vegas again.

About two hours later, Farar was summoned by a loud speaker to Mirretti's table. She found a crush of people and a wall of checkered \$5,000 chips before him totalling \$500,000.

Mirretti was on a roll and the judge wanted Farar to share the moment.

But after that trip Farar kept her promise to herself. She has only been in contact with Mirretti infrequently, she said.

A month after that roller coaster day, Mirretti quit his job as presiding judge.

The Arizona Supreme Court took control of the court the following day and began an audit of court operations, and the state Attorney General's Office began a parallel criminal investigation of Mirretti's court activities.

Farar said investigators have queried her about the judge but denies a rumor that she blew the whistle on Mirretti and caused an investigation of his office.

Mirretti was out of state and could not be reached for comment.

TEMPE DAILY NEWS TRIBUNE

TEMPE, AZ  
SUNDAY 11,594

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# Companion recounts many gambling trips

By Kirk Mitchell  
Tribune writer

FRONT PAGE

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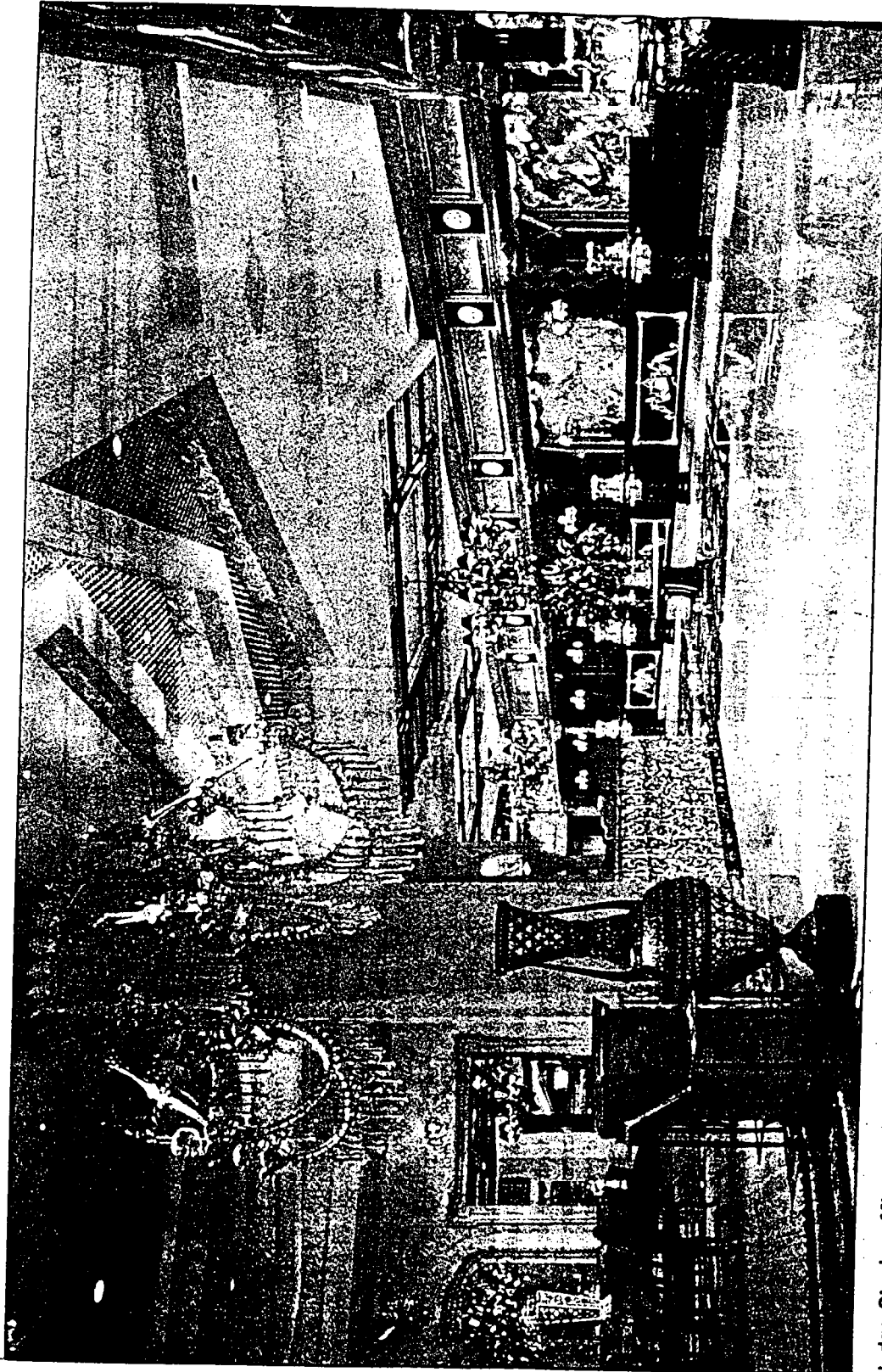
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Please see Mirretti / A7

A229

TIC 1824



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A230

TIC 1825

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From page A1

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Farar remembers once stuffing 40 hologrammed gambling chips worth \$5,000 each in her denim jacket and going to dinner.

"It didn't make me nervous," Farar said. "It was kind of fun, cruising around with that kind of negotiable material in my pocket."

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TIC 1828

A233

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He was losing big. He started with about \$200,000 and when he lost that amount he had another \$200,000 wired in.

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In a restaurant, Mirretti calculated his losses on a napkin, Farar said. He wept silently.

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"They don't let judges lose that kind of money and keep your job," she remembered him saying.

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A month after that roller coaster day, Mirretti quit his job as presiding judge.

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CHANDLER ARIZONAN TRIBUNE

CHANDLER, AZ  
DAILY & SUNDAY 8,740

SUNDAY

APR 3 1994

BURRELLE'S

# Companion recounts many gambling trips

By Kirk Mitchell  
Tribune writer

FRONT PAGE

She saw him exult when winnings piled high. She saw him weep when they vanished.

Many knew Judge Stephen Mirretti in his black robe at Tempe City Court. Donna Farar knew him in a playground of pulsing lights and big money.

Farar said she was Mirretti's companion on frequent jet hops to Las Vegas. She was greeted by limousines and ushered into plush hotels. And she was with the judge when he played blackjack with a studied eye.

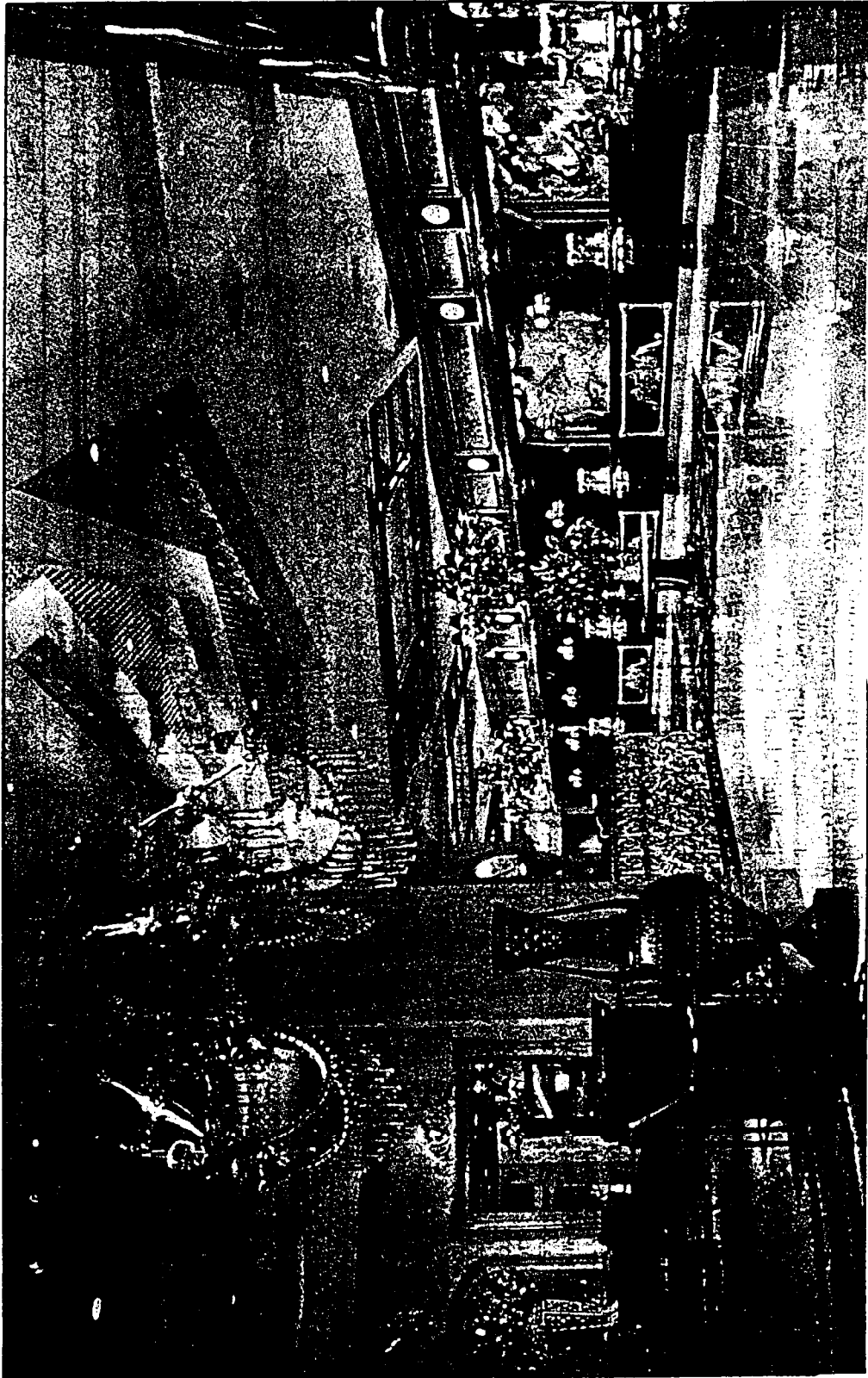
Today, Mirretti is caught in a roiling stew of state probes. He resigned suddenly Feb. 3, citing health and family reasons, and his court records were seized.

Investigators are combing through those records to determine if any court funds made their way to the Vegas Strip.

Farar doesn't know. But perhaps no one is better suited to describe the judge's other life. Farar, an attractive Scottsdale attorney who specializes in divorce law, said she and the judge were close friends.

She first met the judge — who lives with his ailing wife in Tempe — when considering an investment in a Virginia-based soda bottling operation called Consumer's

Please see Mirretti / A7



Judge Stephen Mirretti liked to spend time at the Treasure Island resort during his alleged gambling trips.

A236

TIC 1831

## Mirretti

From page A1

Choice Inc. Farar wanted to know Mirretti's opinion of the company and he persuaded her to invest in the firm that promised regular dividends, she said.

She invested \$10,000. Her parents also invested \$40,000.

But when the dividend checks stopped coming, Farar called Mirretti. He promised to see what he could do to solve the problem, she said. It was hopeless.

The founder of Consumer's Choice, ex-convict John Sabatino, was paying dividends from early investors with money he got from later investors. Sabatino pleaded guilty to wire fraud in U.S. District Court and awaits an April 21 sentencing.

### Mutual legal consultations

Farar and Mirretti became friends as they consulted each other on their legal remedies, Farar said.

Eventually, Mirretti invited Farar to create a business of their own, but she never was told the nature of the business.

That was early October.

During the next three months, Mirretti would log 20 hours and 47 minutes on the phone in 176 calls to Farar that are documented on city phone bills from the judge's mobile and two office phones.

Mirretti first invited Farar to

Las Vegas on Oct. 10 for a meeting with two potential business associates.

The trip included a two-bedroom suite with a Jacuzzi, French doors and two bathrooms, apparently compliments of the Mirage Hotel.

A chauffeur in a bronze limousine met Mirretti and Farar at the airport.

The driver knew Mirretti, a big tipper, and they talked like old friends, Farar said.

One chauffeur, whose home phone was on Mirretti's calling log, remembers the judge fondly.

"He's one hell of a gentleman," Don Storer said. "He's not like the average guy I drive in the limo."

### A familiar figure in Vegas

Mirretti evoked similar emotions from nearly every casino worker Farar met. Dealers, bellhops and cashiers all seemed to know the judge well, she said. "They seemed genuinely fond of him. Steve was fun to be with."

That night, the judge's business associates called to say they couldn't meet for dinner, so Mirretti took Farar to the casino.

The judge deposited checks in his account for about \$35,000 at the cashier's cage and got a marker for that amount, she recalled.

In this and future trips, Mirretti picked a blackjack table and asked that the minimum wagering limit for the table be raised from \$25 to \$500, Farar said.

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chauffeur

The judge liked to play alone and high stakes drove other players from his table, she said.

Mirretti traded his marker for \$1,000 and \$500 chips. When the dealer had trouble computing Mirretti's winnings, the judge politely told him to think of \$500 as if it was \$5, the math is nearly the same.

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A240

TIC 1835



ARIZONA DAILY STAR

TUCSON, AZ  
SUNDAY 174,793

AUG 14 1994

BURRELLE'S

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# LAS VEGAS SPLITS ITS BETS

## Chips are on gaming and megaresorts

By Lee Foster  
© 1994

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**T**wo opposing rationales now wrestle for the soul of Las Vegas.

Will this city remain the premier gambling capital, as it has been? Or will Las Vegas evolve into a predominantly family-travel destination, emphasizing entertainment?

Can the two identities exist side by side? With the opening of three new megaresorts - Luxor, MGM Grand and Treasure Island - Las Vegas is changing rapidly.

The premise of Las Vegas is at stake. Long heralded as a "value capital," Las Vegas could offer inexpensive rooms and food because the average room made a \$60 to \$90 "gaming contribution" each day to hotel revenues. With that premise in mind, what will happen when airplane seats are occupied by children rather than "gamers"? (Most locals favor "gaming" as the high-tone word for gambling.)

Will the gamers (gamblers) be able to get airline seats to Las Vegas, especially in summer, when kids are out of school and traveling with Dad and Mom? With the legal age for gambling at 21, and with an increasing number of children occupying the rooms, what will happen to the average "gaming contribution" per room?

Will prices be forced to rise sharply? Will consumers then rebel? Will gamers resent the new "family entertainment" tone of Las Vegas and long for the naughty old days? Will these gamers gradually fade away?

No one in Nevada wants this to happen because this \$3 billion industry produces the tax revenue for half the state budget.

Though the future will answer these questions, the first season of the new resorts, winter 1993-94, showed Las Vegas to be extremely resilient. Thousands of new rooms were added, but customers continued to pack the hotels at extraordinary occupancy rates, in the 90th percentiles. About 140,000 visitors a day come to Las Vegas.

Each of the three new megaresorts emphasizes family entertainment. Treasure Island presents a free outdoor show in which a British frigate engages a pirate ship in a cannon duel. At the final moment, the pirates sink the British with a lucky shot. The battle takes place on Buccaneer

Bay, a specially created sea with 2.5 million gallons of water.

Luxor, a 30-story pyramid-shaped hotel, offers an entertainment floor that, unusual for Vegas, can be accessed without going through the gaming area. Luxor presents its own theme ride based on King Tut's tomb. There's a movie show adventure, a sort of "Indiana Jones" excursion, plus a boat trip on the River Nile. The sphinx in front of the Luxor puts on a laser-from-the-eyes light show nightly. A beam of light from the pyramid shines 15 miles into space.

MGM Grand includes an adjacent theme park, a sort of mini-Disneyland, complete with rides, entertainers and different geographic areas. At 5,005 rooms, it is said to be the world's largest hotel.

Beyond the major new megaresorts, there are

also other resorts with spectacle appeal for the family. For example, at Caesars Palace, the marble statues come to life and talk. Kids find this intriguing. Adult joke: Caesars is where the statues come to life and talk to you even before you've had a few drinks.

Next door, the Mirage boasts a volcano with periodic eruptions. Special effects color the water lava-red and flames dance along the flanks of the volcano.

The two top shows in town, Cirque de Soleil and Siegfried and Roy, also appeal to all ages. Cirque de Soleil is an imaginative dance and acrobatic show that puts the audience close to the performers. It is difficult to pinpoint in words just what Cirque de Soleil is about, unless one said "the wonder of life" or "the delight of dance." Seldom does an audience member see a performance so original, so lacking in derivative elements.

Siegfried and Roy are master illusionists, two of the finest magicians in the world. Their show has a flair also for dance and spectacle. Siegfried and Roy feature their trademark white tigers and black pumas, plus sleight of hand at its most skillful. In one trick an elephant disappears.

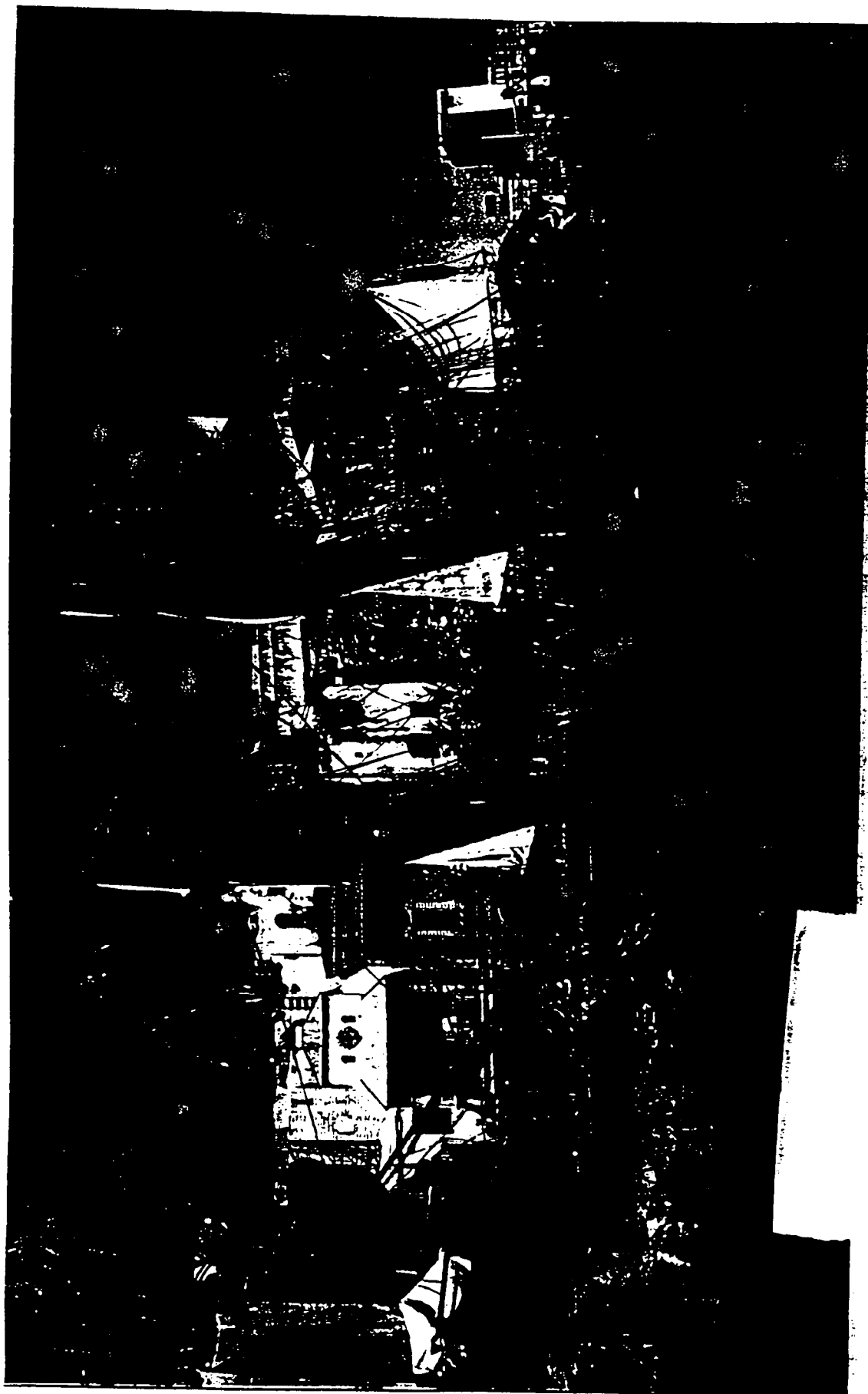
Some observers thought that Las Vegas would suffer when every Indian reservation and riverboat, it seems, opened up gambling casinos. However, just the opposite may be the long-term effect.

Twenty states now have some form of casino

See VEGAS, Page 84

A241

TIC 1996



A242

TIC 1997

# Vegas<sub>6</sub>

Continued from Page 1H

gambling. Of the 50 states, 48 have some type of gambling. These small-time operations may, in fact, become feeders to Las Vegas, exposing large segments of the public to gambling. That public will go to Las Vegas when it graduates to big-time gaming and entertainment.

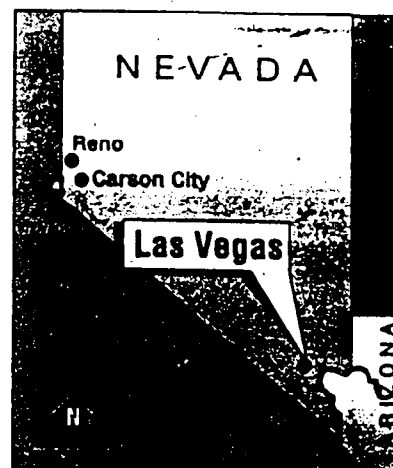
Such are the paradoxes of Las Vegas, a masterpiece of illusion, built on two man-made artifices: impounded water and gaming laws. Know also that the illusion will become more complete in future years.

As the new megaresorts have

gone up on the Strip, away from downtown, the downtown casinos along Fremont Street have languished. Gambling revenues have declined. The downtown response will be the creation of a new Fremont Street Experience, due to be finished in 1995, and a \$300 million, 1,500-room hotel-casino called New York-New York, set for completion in 1996.

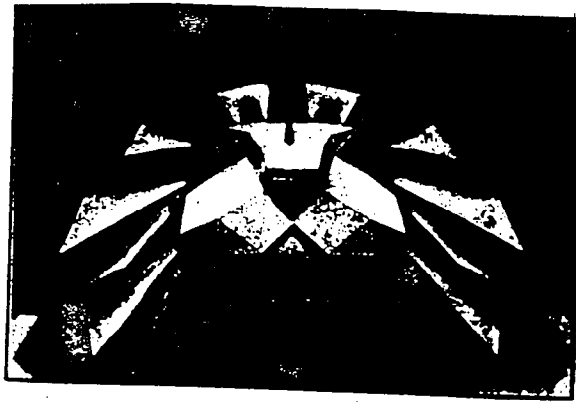
Plans call for a 28-story hotel with towering replicas of Miss Liberty and famous skyscrapers, and a 200-foot-high roller coaster winding through the property. The two companies involved are Primadonna Resorts and MGM Grand Inc.

In addition, Fremont Street will be enclosed with a barrel vault. A state-of-the-art light



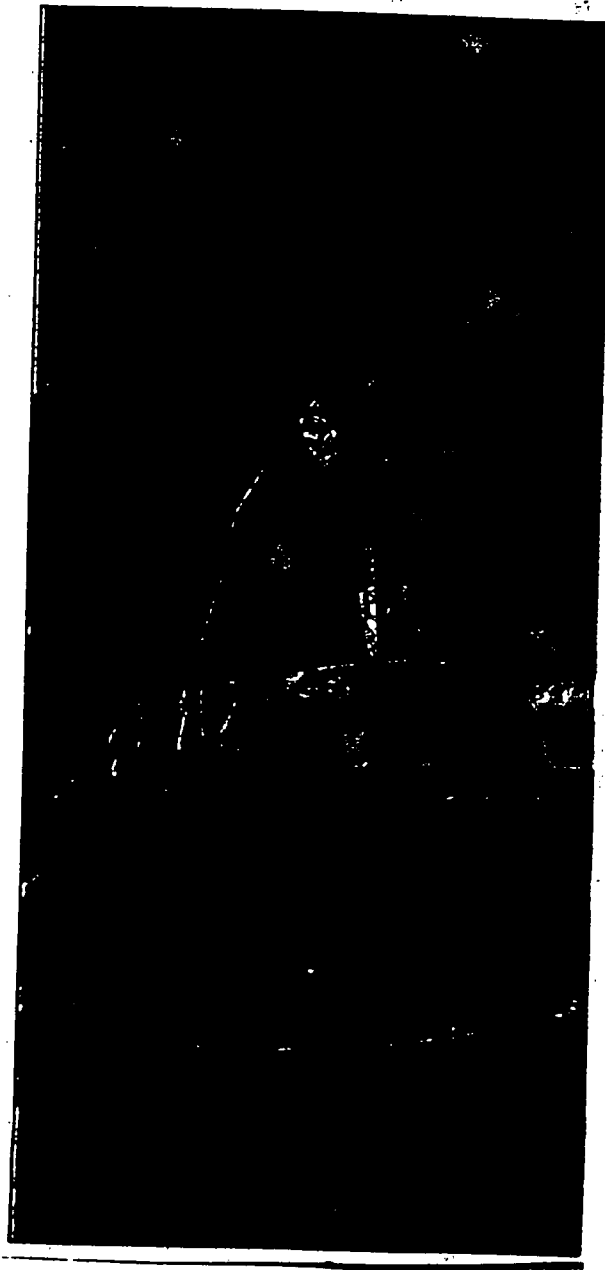
Judy Margolis, The Arizona Daily Star

show will entertain visitors. Stay tuned for a description in 1995 of the full special effects. 3



Photos by Lee Foster

The new megaresorts in Las Vegas are Treasure Island, top, where you can see a cannon duel between ancient sailing ships on a 2.5 million-gallon sea; the MGM Grand, above, whose theme park has been called a mini-Disneyland; and Luxor, below, featuring a theme ride based on King Tut's tomb.



A244

TIC 1999

TUESDAY  
SEP 27 1994

BURRELLE'S

# Vegas didn't bet on flood of children

## Nongambler deluge stirs debate over family push

By Michael A. Hiltzik  
Los Angeles Times

4926BR

FROM PAGE

**D** Las Vegas still remembers the day he came face to face with his city's new image as a family resort. It was at the old MGM Grand Hotel, where he almost tripped over a woman changing her infant's dirty diaper on the casino floor.

"It was one of those yucky ones, and I had to see the whole thing," he says.

What makes the incident particularly pungent is that Luey is president and chief operating officer of Bally's Las Vegas, a neighboring casino trying desperately to hold the line against this year's influx of Vegas vacationers with children.

But Bally's may be trying to turn back the tide.

Las Vegas is likely to see a record 29 million visitors this year. An unprecedentedly high percentage will be children, hauled off to what used to be known as America's Sin City by parents dazzled by nationwide hype positioning Las Vegas as the country's newest family resort.

See ■ VEGAS, Page A7



TIC 2035

A246

## VEGAS

From A

The impact was visible all summer, as the fabled Las Vegas Strip was awash in youngsters.

They thronged the walkway in front of the new Treasure Island resort three times a night to watch an elaborate, live pirate battle; ogled dolphins and white tigers at the neighboring Mirage; and dropped thousands of dollars worth of quarters into state-of-the-art video games at the new Luxor and MGM Grand.

But the one thing they were not permitted to do was gamble, and therein lies a key reason the family resort idea is generating perhaps the most important debate about Las Vegas' future since Bugsy Siegel built the original Flamingo hotel-casino in 1946.

"To me it seems funny that we're going after a market for whom the biggest activity in town is illegal," says John Schibrowsky, an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who has studied the economics of the phenomenon.

### Hotels crowded

Phenomenal it is: Hotel occupancy rates in town have been running higher than 98 percent, despite the addition of about 10,000 new rooms in nine months.

"When you look at the numbers of people traveling to a casino destination in America, they're popping," says Glenn Schaeffer, the former president of Circus Circus Enterprises who is a partner in Gold Strike Casinos, which is planning a new family friendly resort for the Las Vegas Strip.

For now, at least, the city's resort planners seem to have found a formula to appeal to many visitors too young to gamble.

"It's awesome," said Randy

Dickenson, 13, of Chicago after an hour's play at the Luxor's vast, two-story video arcade. (He estimated he spent about \$15 pumping quarters into Mortal Kombat II and virtual-reality combat games.)

But Schibrowsky and others argue Vegas is so dazzled by the near-term success of its family promotion that it has not focused on the problems a radical change in tourist demographics would bring to the city.

### Losing loss leaders

For one thing, the traditional practice of using rooms, restaurants and even air fares as loss leaders to get customers to the playing floor will have to be reconsidered if the number of rooms occupied by nongamblers continues to rise.

That in turn will cut into Las Vegas' price advantage over such more-established family resorts as Orlando.

"This town was built on cheap rooms and cheap meals to get people to gamble," says Dean Harrold, a senior vice president of Bally's. "Are (family customers) playing as much in the casinos? No, they're not. And if you can't make the money in the casino, you're going to have to make it up in the room rate."

The family market also means not only parents changing diapers in the casino but an apparent increase in gambling violations by minors.

Last month, the State Gaming Board issued the first citation to a Strip casino — ironically Bally's, which discourages family business — for allowing a minor to gamble. (The 19-year-old lost more than \$6,200 in three hours of blackjack.)

Keeping children and gambling

devices apart is not made easier by one of the axioms of modern casino design — that slot machines should be located along the routes of heaviest foot traffic.

Since those generally are the paths between, say, the video arcade and the room elevators, underage visitors inevitably confront temptation.

### Tempting for kids

"Word of mouth and common sense tell you that if you put them in harm's way, some kids are going to reach in their pockets and plunk down their paper-route money," DuCharme says.

Accordingly, accommodating families may mean redesigning casinos to keep children off the floor, better swimming pools and other amenities to give them more to do and acquiring more expertise in nongaming attractions.

Some casino executives fear that repositioning this town as a family resort could alienate its traditional clientele of serious gamblers without significantly expanding the total market.

Executives at the Las Vegas Hilton, the city's premier convention hotel and a Mecca for high rollers, say they are getting more business from customers who resent having to gamble elsewhere with a lot of children around.

Still, some say rising competition for gambling dollars across the country leaves Las Vegas no choice but to position itself as more than a gambling venue.

While casino gambling once was permitted only in Nevada and Atlantic City, N.J., 21 states have legalized full-range casinos and virtually all the largest metropolitan areas are within 200 miles of slot-machine and table-game play.

NOVEMBER 1994

BURRELLE'S



## Las Vegas

### The New Family Playground

TEXT BY MICHAEL DIXON

202038 R 27

Everything they say about Las Vegas is true.

The Nevada playground is dazzling and depressing, opulent and vulgar, fascinating, fun and frenzied. And it's about the best family entertainment package this side of Disneyland. Surprised? So was I.

I didn't used to like Las Vegas. I found it dirty, loud and garish with hefty midwestern women in muumuus sitting for hours in front of quarter slot machines, a cigarette dangling from their mouths, while their husbands pinched the cocktail girls and tried their hand at Blackjack.

Well, that's the way it was.

And it's not that you won't see this same cast of characters staking out their territory today. But you have to look hard to find them. This is a new Las Vegas. It looks new, it feels new. And one by one, the casinos and hotels are new.

Real people live in Las Vegas and raise children. And more and more of America's families with their children are coming to Las Vegas to play—about twenty-three-million people each year.

Why would a family pack up the Explorer and head for Sin City? Because Las Vegas has seen the economic light. With Atlantic City on the East Coast competing for gambling dollars, and



Performed by Cirque du Soleil at Treasure Island, *Mystere* is one of Las Vegas' most delightful family offerings.

Disneyland, Sea World and Six Flags Over Everything attracting families, the writing was on the wall: Keep gambling as a base, but separate it from the rest of the entertainment, and create an environment where Mom can feel okay walking the kids to the nearest pyramid, pirate ship, volcano, or Canyon Blaster—"the only double-loop, double corkscrew indoor roller coaster in the U.S."

Make no mistake. Gambling is still the main source of revenue in Vegas, and the gaming rooms are spacious and well organized. You don't know how to play roulette? Each casino offers "practice tables," where you can sit in and receive instruction on the best way to play each game. You may still lose all your money, but you'll feel

a little better about it.

As a matter of fact, Las Vegas owes its very beginnings to chance. Although in prehistoric times the area was full of marshes and alive with vegetation, as the earth changed, water was trapped underground, and the searing Mojave Desert stood as a barrier to all but the most adventurous.

Then, in 1829, a Mexican trader named Antonio Armijo was leading sixty men along the Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. His scout, Rafael Rivera, left the party to explore, and

within two weeks became the first non-Native American to discover the Las Vegas Valley with its endless supply of spring water. That was the beginning.

It was the Mormons who built the first adobe structures in Las Vegas. Part of the old Mormon Fort, abandoned in 1858, can still be seen today at the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard North and Washington Avenue.

The settlement became a staging area for the California Gold Rush. The railroads came, and with them came gambling. In a single day, May 15, 1905, the Union Pacific auctioned off 1,200 lots in what is known today as "Glitter Gulch." The city was founded.

But gambling was short lived. In 1910 a Nevada law was passed that was so strict it not only forbade gaming, it

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

even prohibited the western custom of flipping a coin for the price of a drink. *The Nevada State Journal* in Reno reported: "Stilled forever is the click of the roulette wheel, the rattle of dice and the swish of cards."

"Forever" lasted less than three weeks. Underground gambling flourished, and in 1931 the legislature gave up, and legal gaming was restored.

The "strip," the stretch of hotels and casinos along the two-lane road into town from Los Angeles, began to evolve in the 1940s, and mobster Bugsy Siegel built the Flamingo Hotel.

Blacks were not welcome in Las Vegas in the 1950s. In fact, black entertainers including Nat "King" Cole were not welcome in the casinos, and were required to live off-property when performing in the show rooms. As a result, the Moulin Rouge opened in 1955, specifically to accommodate Vegas' growing black population.

The big production shows, which continue to characterize Las Vegas as an entertainment mecca, had their beginning in the late 1950s, when the Stardust Hotel imported the Lido de

Paris, and the Dunes debuted Minsky's Follies—the first time topless showgirls performed on the Strip. And that was the image that characterized Las Vegas for most of us: big shows, big girls, lots of gambling, smoke and booze.

Today, it's not like that.

"Mega-resorts," which began when Circus Circus opened a tent-like casino with midway games and rides for the kids, today offer everything from pirate ships doing battle (the pirates

ful, try *Carque du Soleil*, which offers a special show called *Mystere at Treasure Island*).

Illusionists Siegfried and Roy are on a permanent contract at the Mirage (the hotel built the stage to the performers' specifications), and each night, as part of their act, they do battle with a mechanical dragon several stories high.

If you like the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber, get tickets to *Starlight Express*. Webber wrote this fantasy musical for his children, but the story of the competition between train engines will please everybody. The musical is performed entirely on roller skates, with ramps extend-

ing throughout the theater to carry the performers as they race through the audience. The theater at the Hilton was gutted and completely rebuilt for this permanent show. It's well worth the ticket.

Then, of course, there's the pyramid and sphinx of the Luxor, where you cruise the Nile to get to your room, and there are chariot races for your amusement and a video palace for the

*This is a new Las Vegas.  
It looks new it feels new.*

win), to a volcano that erupts every fifteen minutes, and a replica of the Titanic that sinks on cue every night.

For those who come looking for stars, the marquees regularly announce the likes of Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, Diana Ross and Wayne Newton. And of course the cane can is still danced nightly in the Follies Bergere at the Tropicana. But if you're looking for something different and truly wonder-





kids. Speaking of kids, you won't easily get them away from the new, two-billion-dollar, five-acre, non-gaming Grand Slam Canyon amusement park. And I could go on and on.

So, how does today's family of four do Vegas? If it's your first time, start with a package deal. Both America West and Southwest Airlines have them. The packages include both airfare and rooms; prices vary with the level of accommodation. America West, for example, offers rooms at the Luxor, Excalibur, MGM Grand and Caesar's Palace, among others. Southwest Airlines includes the Mirage (Treasure Island) and Hilton, as well.

These are smart buys. The airlines buy blocks of rooms and can discount

*And if you're a  
real gambler?  
There's no blood  
test and no wait-  
ing period for a  
marriage license  
in Las Vegas.*

their own airfare, so you win. For instance, on Southwest Airlines—depending on the time of year—you can get a package from Phoenix that includes round-trip airfare and two nights at the Luxor Hotel for around \$150 per person, double occupancy. America West will also throw in a coupon book offering discounts throughout the city. Many packages even include a rental car for the first twenty-four hours in Las Vegas. Check with your travel agent for exact prices and availability.

And if you're a real gambler?

There's no blood test and no waiting period for a marriage license in Las Vegas. And 7,217 of them are issued on average per month. An Elvis impersonator will even perform the ceremony at the Graceland Wedding Chapel.

What a town.

A249

TIC 2135

## EXHIBITOR TIMES

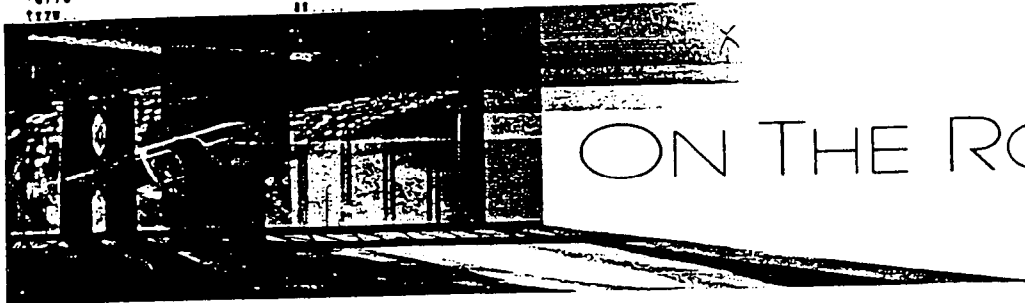
PHOENIX, AZ  
MONTHLY 15,000  
FEBRUARY 1999



**BURRELLE'S**

-6770  
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# ON THE ROAD

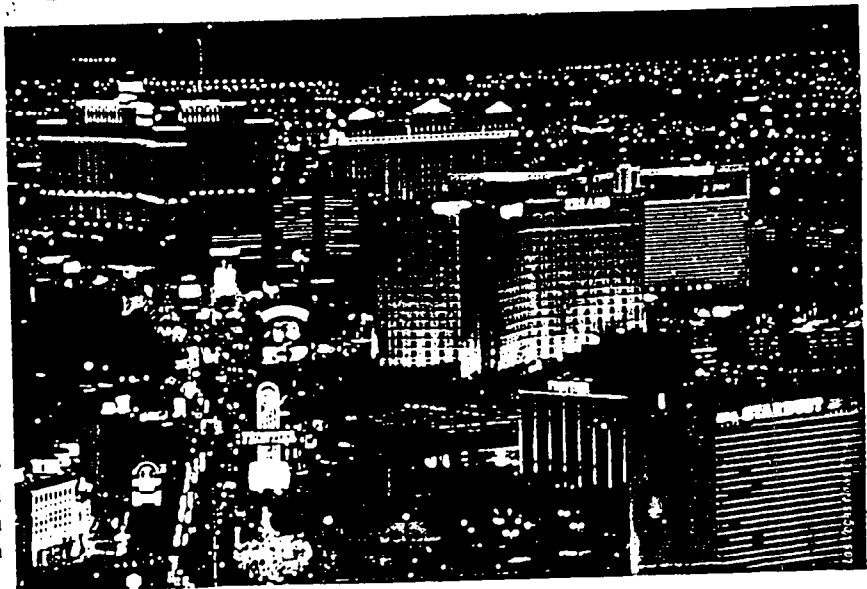
## Viva Las Vegas

One of the World's Most Popular Convention Cities Offers Endless Options for Entertainment and Excitement

by Shoshana Lorn

*5307P* *B-c 10/90*

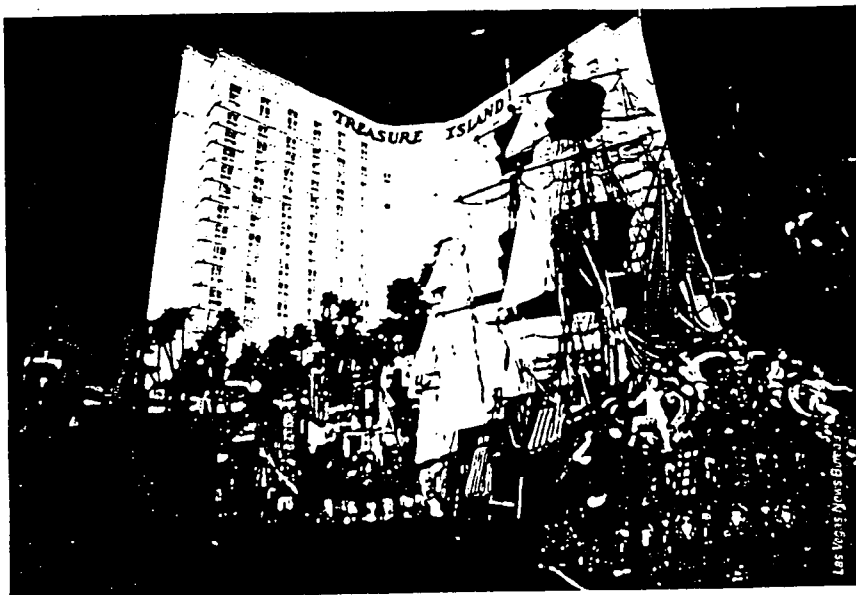
**B**ecause Las Vegas is one of the most popular convention destinations in the world, most exhibit managers will be visiting Las Vegas at least once a year if not more. This exciting city offers a wide variety of entertainment options for the convention attendee from gambling and shows to games, rides and activities for the entire family. According to the Marketing Research Department of the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (LVCA), in 1997 Las Vegas hosted 3,749 conventions with more than 3.5 million convention delegates. In 1997, more than 30 million people visited Las Vegas with an economic impact of \$25 billion.



Las Vegas offers a wide variety of entertainment options.

A250

TIC 2505



Guests witness swashbuckling pirate battles outside Treasure Island.

### Convention Center Update

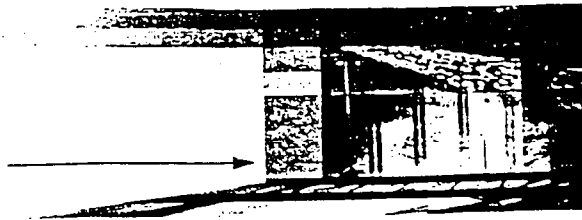
The Las Vegas Convention Center recently completed a major expansion, enlarging the facility to 1.9 million square feet including exhibit space, meeting rooms, concourses, shops and storage. The Las Vegas Convention Center has 12 exhibit halls totaling more than one million square feet. The Convention Center also has 107 meeting rooms with seating capacities up to 2,000.

The Las Vegas Convention Center offers several services including state-of-the-art telecommunications capabilities, complete food and beverage service, and some registration and housing services.

Many of the hotels offer meeting and convention facilities including the Sands and the MGM Grand.

### Hotel Happenings

In addition to gambling and entertain-



### Family Fun

Even with the gambling and entertainment that made Las Vegas famous, it has become a top destination for families. In recent years, several theme parks have opened in Las Vegas to



*The Bellagio is one of Las Vegas' newest and most lavish hotels.*

cater to the growing family market including the MGM Grand Hotel's outdoor theme park and the Adventuredome, a 5-acre indoor theme park with circus acts, rides and games at Circus Circus. Other amusement options include virtual reality rides, 3-D simulators including the new Star Trek: The Experience thrill ride at the Las Vegas Hilton and Ride to Atlantis at Caesars Palace.

Las Vegas also hosts an array of events for sports fans including boxing matches, collegiate games and golf tournaments. Additionally, the biggest stars of music, magic and comedy still come to Las Vegas to entertain. Some hotels have celebrated signature shows such as Siegfried & Roy and their white tigers at the Mirage, Lord of the Dance at New York, New York, EFX at the MGM Grand and the water-based Cirque de Soleil O show at the Bellagio.

Las Vegas offers exclusive shopping venues from the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace to the designer boutiques such as Prada and Hermes at the Bellagio. Right on the Las Vegas Strip is the Fashion Show Mall featuring major department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus and Macy's, as well as more than 140 shops.

In addition to its notorious bargain buffets, Las Vegas also has fine restaurants with celebrated chefs such as Wolfgang Puck and Emeril Lagasse.

Downtown Las Vegas is enjoying a revitalization including the Fremont Street Experience featuring spectacular light and sound shows.

Over the years, Las Vegas has evolved from an adult entertainment and gambling mecca to a city packed with fun for all ages. Whether you're in Las Vegas for pleasure or attending a trade show, you will never run out of things to do or places to see.

*Shoshana Leon is editor of Creative Expo Environments.*

Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority

(702) 892-0711

[www.lasvegas24hours.com](http://www.lasvegas24hours.com)

A252

TIC 2507

JUN 29 1994 June 29, 1994

BURRELLE'S



## Vegas spares no expense to appeal to inner child

**I**n just about every adult, a lot of "little kid" is still alive.

On a sizzling May morning in Las Vegas, Homer and I are proving that.

We're on the sidewalk in front of Treasure Island, a new fantasy hotel on the Strip. We're there with hundreds of other mostly adults (since school is not yet out). We're there to see the razzle-dazzle free battle in Buccaneer Bay, a man-made body of water between the hotel and the sidewalk big enough for two 90-foot long, 17th century, masted ships. The battle we adults came to see is between the good guys, HMS Royal Britannia, and the bad guys, the pirate ship Hispaniola. Despite this show being staged about every hour, we adults are there long before show time in order to crowd in for the best view.

But we aren't unhappy standing there in the torrid sun. We're ogling Treasure Island's full-sized pirate village.

And now we adults get as excited as little kids. Because sailing majestically into view is the Britannia. And what these Englishmen see as they come around the bend is the pirate

ship with pirates unloading booty. The English shout challenges; the pirates respond with curses. As we adults stand with mouths agape, cannon balls begin to fly. Some of the 30 stunt men, decked out in cocked hats, braided navy outfits, authentic pirate gear, are "wounded" and thrown into the water. And, now in disbelief, we adults see that the good guys will not win. The Royal Britannia begins to sink; the sailors dive into the water; the captain heroically stays on the burning ship — which, as we watch in astonishment, sinks to the bottom in this simulated bay between sidewalk and hotel.

But don't walk away. Wait a minute or two and up out of the water pops the Britannia, ready for the next show, the big cannon-ball hole in its side completely healed.

**I**f you thought we adults now were ready to take a nap after that strenuous battle, you're wrong. That little-kid essence spews forth again.

We now must see that statues that magically come to life and talk, at Caesars Palace. There in the Roman Forum, amongst stately columns and marble opulence, under a ceiling that resembles an honest-to-goodness cerulean sky, we listen to the statues talk. Here again this isn't an audience of little kids. We retirees crowd in for the best possible view of that free show.

So what to do now? It's time to take a trip down the 1,800-foot Nile river that flows through the lobby of the \$375 million Luxor hotel built in the shape of a black pyramid, with a 10-story Sphinx at the main entrance to its 2,526 rooms. If the boat ride past reconstituted

Egyptian temples doesn't entertain us little-kid adults, we'll watch the two full-size, talking camels in the Luxor lobby which must cause any camel tender to shake his head in concern.

**Z**oos may be primarily for kids but the Mirage is betting on the little-kid in adults to bring in crowds. In the hotel lobby they provide white tigers for the ogling, as spiffy as can be in their enormous glass-fronted home with private pool.

And if the adults can't tear themselves away from these rare and beautiful creatures, they can now wander through the Mirage

See **ROHSE** Page

# Rohse: adult entertainment

Continued from Page 1

with its rain forest, waterfalls and tropical foliage, or check out the glass-walled sea behind the registration desk. That aquarium contains hundreds of vari-sized brilliantly colored fish — and sharks — plus a diver that goes underwater to feed them.

And we can hardly wait for night to come, because then — every 15 minutes in front of Mirage — a 54-foot tall volcano spews smoke, fire and rumblings. Not lava, but at least flames, seem about to engulf the Strip, but no, they stop in time for all to be back to normal before the next show.

You might expect to see mostly kids visiting the Land of Oz at MGM Grand with its 5,005 rooms, which is more than any other hotel in the world. But here Homer and I and other retirees are predominant amongst visitors. Here in the Kansas

cornstalks we have nice conversations with the Tin Woodman, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Dorothy and Toto inside this glittery new facility.

**N**ow that it's dark, the really big shows get under way for which adults buy tickets weeks in advance. These offerings are astounding. Siegfried and Roy in their Mirage show, which features the white tigers, make an elephant disappear before your eyes. At Las Vegas Hilton's Starlite Express, actors are on roller skates in a musical story somewhat like the little engine that said "I think I can." Those actors zoom beside, around and through the audience at break-neck speed in a story as appealing to adults as an all-day sucker is to kids.

And at the Flamingo Hilton,

the "frozen brothers" act reminds us adults that man truly is remarkable. These three gymnasts perform in slow "frozen" motion doing unbelievable feats of strength, with unearthly lighting effects that turn them into statues of copper, blue ice or black lead.

At the other end of the scale there is the doggie show at Excalibur with tiny Tinker Bell as a star, plus a frisbie-catching canine that has the audience (more adults than kids) cheering as if they were an NBA audience.

Of course Vegas provides plenty of gaming devices and slots (including those that require \$500 per pull) but hotel owners aren't relying just on adults' love of money or a quick buck. They're relying on the fact that in most adults the little kid never dies.

ROGUE RIVER PRESS

ROGUE RIVER, OR  
WEEKLY 1.800

APR 26 1995

129 BURRELLE'S FZ  
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## Visit to Las Vegas is a whole new game

4926 BR  
By Sharon Goyer  
For The Rogue River Press

Pirates, treasure and sailing ships at battle on the water with cannon balls whizzing overhead; the acrid smell of smoke stings your nostrils and the flames from the battle heat the air; the pirates win and the English ship goes down with her captain saluting and slowly sinking into the water. Caught up in the excitement, you find yourself cheering along with the pirates at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas.

The new Las Vegas! Tremendous changes! Having not been to Las Vegas since the late seventies, it was barely recognizable when I was there two weeks ago. It has really been built up and I was glad to see that Las Vegas now caters to families instead of just the gambler.

At The Mirage hotel you can enjoy a magical evening with Siegfried and Roy. See the beautiful and rare white tigers. The foliage in this hotel is so beautiful, you feel as if you're walking through a lush tropical garden. The hotel also has a volcano that erupts every few minutes.

Another hotel that really stands out is the Luxor, which is shaped like an Egyptian pyramid, complete with a Sphinx. You can travel down the River Nile past murals illustrating the history of the ancient Egyptian empire.

The MGM is the world's largest hotel and casino and includes a 53-acre theme park. Travel back to the medieval time of King Arthur and stay at the Excalibur, which is shaped like a castle, complete with moat and fire-breathing dragon.

Las Vegas is the nation's top resort destination and truly the entertainment capital of the world. There are an abundance of superstars, Broadway musicals and live productions to enjoy. There are numerous and affordable buffets. Golfing is a year-round activity at this sunny-weather vacation spot.

Sparkling lights, excitement for all ages, "Viva Las Vegas!"

TIC 2308

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ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS

ST. PAUL, MN  
DAILY 206,844

THURSDAY

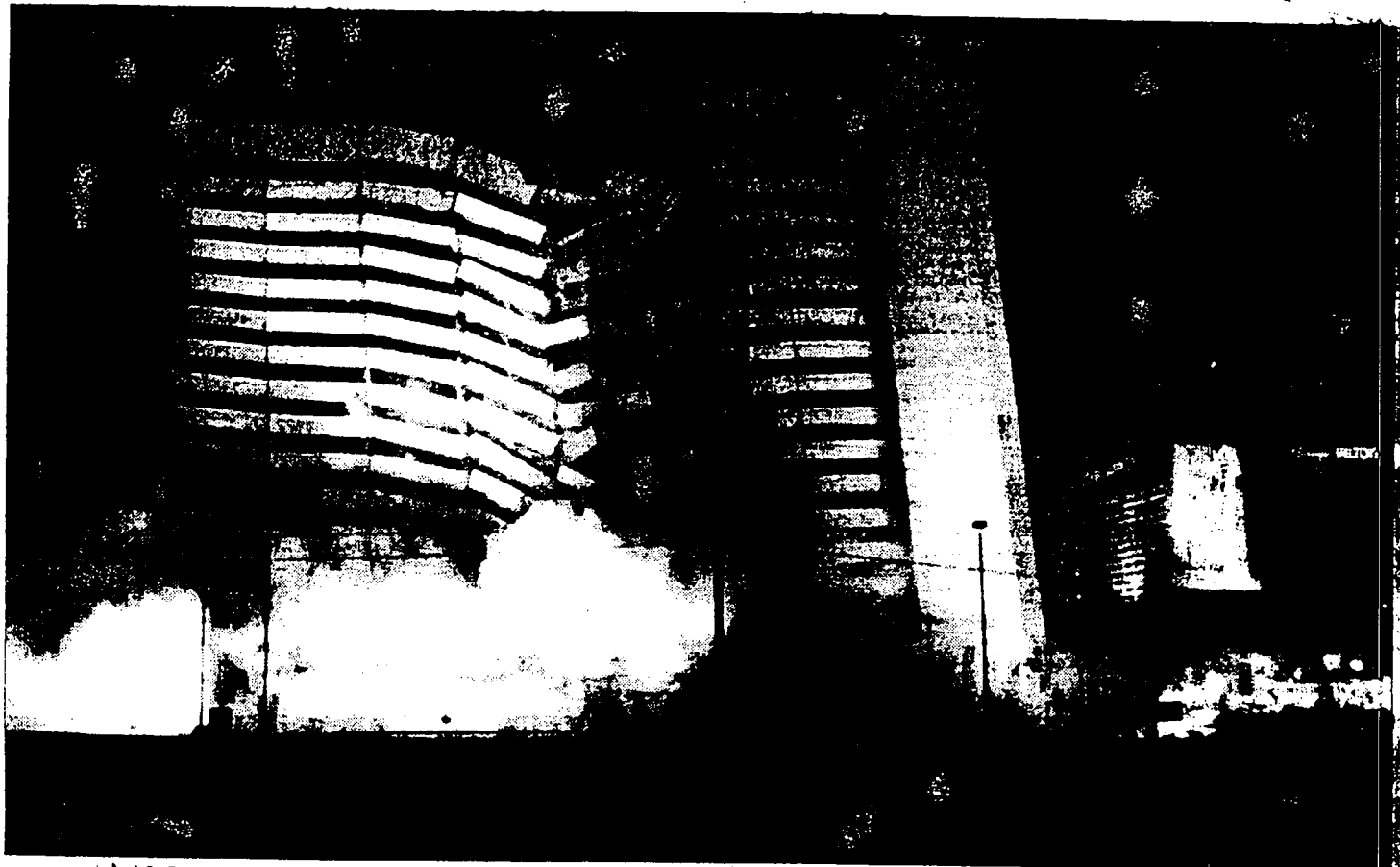
JUL 21 1994

BURRELLE'S

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## Dunes demolition



JOHN GURZINSKI/ ASSOCIATED PRESS

492602  
The 17-story tower of the old Dunes Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas begins to crumble during a noisy, dusty implosion before dawn Wednesday. The tower is being razed to make way for two new resorts.

TIC 2097

B1



# *Sun Country Airlines*

PC 4926BR  
July  
August  
1994



*Join Cypress  
Gardens For  
"Victorian  
Garden Party"*

*Disneyland  
In The  
Desert?*



*Las Vegas  
Visitors  
Guide*

TIC 1966

B2

From once having a reputation as "Sin City," in recent years Las Vegas has changed into a city that not only caters to families but one that actively seeks to attract and accommodate young people, a sort of "Disneyland in the Desert." It's now a city whose previously rumored ties to organized crime and reputation for an "anything goes" attitude have been tempered by the times and by the need to attract a different type of clientele than those who originally came to Las Vegas years ago.

The credit for being the first to move towards making Las Vegas a more family-oriented destination probably should go to Circus Circus, which opened in 1968 as the only gaming establishment in the world offering entertainment for all ages. Starting with a casino, a midway, and the world's largest permanent circus tent, the resort added a 400-room hotel in 1972. Now the hotel/casino complex has 2,793 rooms and last fall opened Grand Slam Canyon, a five-acre, climate controlled indoor amusement park.

Although Wet 'N Wild was also added in the years following the opening of Circus Circus, the next big bid for family business was the opening of Steve Wynn's Mirage in the fall of 1989. While not catering specifically to families with children, the Mirage's Dolphin Pool, volcano, shark-tank and tiger display certainly weren't constructed to attract the average high-roller.

After a lengthy building period, the Excalibur Hotel/Casino was opened to the public in 1990. At the time it was built, it was the largest hotel in the world, with 4,032 rooms. The big castle at Tropicana and the Strip was conceived and built by the Circus Circus people and provided visitors with an upscale midway, motion machine rides, and the excitement of "King Arthur's Tournament."

Soon the rush was on. Last year, Circus Circus's Luxor Hotel/Casino opened in October featuring a variety of entertainment and construction features aimed at a family clientele. In addition to the laser-eyed Sphinx at the entrance, a reproduction of King Tut's tomb, motion machine rides, and a barge tour, just seeing the structure itself is enough to stimulate the imagination.

Following the Luxor's opening by

SUN COUNTRY AIRLINES  
MAGAZINE

MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
BI-MONTHLY

JUL-AUG 1994

BURRELLE'S

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# Disneyland in the Desert?

or... *The Changing Face of Las Vegas*

Hotel Luxor  
Right: MGM Hotel

Below:  
Debbie Reynolds  
Hollywood Hotel

Below right:  
Treasure Island  
Buccaneer Bay



a couple of weeks was the opening of Treasure Island, next door to and connected to the Mirage. The outside of the resort is built to resemble the pirate village described in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, and every 90 minutes, the pirate ship Hispaniola and the frigate Britannia engage in a cannon duel. Inside, there is a state-of-the-art game arcade and retail boutiques, and a decor that continues the theme of the exterior.

Bringing the year to a grand conclusion, the billion-dollar, 5,005-room MGM Grand had its grand opening. In addition to the MGM lion at the entrance and the Emerald City that you pass through inside, the resort also uses animatronic figures from the *Wizard of Oz* story and other movie-themed artifacts in its decorative scheme. The 33-acre amusement park at the rear of the property features 12 major attractions, as well as shops, restaurants, and themed streets. The MGM Grand also has a midway for young people, three pools, tennis courts, and a "youth hotel."

Although Caesars Palace was built in 1966, the classic fountains, wonderful statuary, costumed employees and reproductions of artifacts from the Greco-Roman world still make it a must-see item for everyone who comes to Las Vegas. And the animatronic figures installed in the rotunda of the Fo-



rum Shops complex certainly appear to be aimed at entertaining families. In keeping with the expansive new mood in town, Caesars Palace recently announced that it plans to add a new \$25 million, eight-story themed complex that will be called "Caesars Magical Empire," that will open in 1995.

Visitors who have come to Las Vegas with their families will also probably want to see the collection of movie costumes and artifacts on display at the Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Hotel and Museum.

One of the reasons why Las Vegas is a great place to bring a family is the price of food. Probably nowhere can visitors eat as well for so little as they can in Las Vegas. Many of the hotels feature buffets that offer all you can eat for a fixed price. Not only is the fixed price low, but the variety of food offered at many buffets is far greater than that found in many full-scale restaurants, featuring as many as 45 food selections per meal.

Buffet prices vary, but an average is about \$2.50 for breakfast, \$3.50 for lunch, and \$4 to \$5 for dinner. Some

of eating inexpensively in Las Vegas is to have breakfast at one of a number of hotels who between 11 PM and 6 AM serve a full breakfast of eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast for less than a dollar.

And if you're hungry but want an elegant entree, the Overland Stage Cafe in the Fremont Hotel downtown, will serve you a dinner that includes two lobster tails and a succulent filet for just \$8.88.

If you plan to spend some time in Las Vegas, here is an odd assortment of facts that you may find useful or perhaps just...odd.

Because there is no blood test or waiting period, Las Vegas is probably the marriage capital of the U.S. More than 86,000 marriage licenses were issued by Clark County in 1993. From Monday through Thursday, the Marriage License Bureau in downtown Las Vegas is open until midnight, and is open continuously from 8 AM Friday until midnight on Sunday.

The Clark County School District is the 11th largest in the country, with 181 public schools. In addition, there are two community colleges and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

More than 23 million people visited Las Vegas last year, which is probably why the city has 13 of the 20 largest hotels in the world. It also has more hotel/motel rooms than any other city in the U.S. — 86,053 — with about 14,000 just at the intersection of Tropicana and the

resending more than 40 different faiths.

The average temperature annually in Las Vegas is actually only 66.3 degrees F. (19 C.). This, however didn't prevent it from reaching 117 F. one day in 1942. When the weather is hot in Las Vegas, it doesn't seem as hot as the same temperature would seem back home. Because of the low humidity, it seems okay, unless, of course, you're standing in the sun.

Annually, there are 211.5 clear days and 82.4 partly cloudy ones, so it's a great place to work on your tan.

The 726-foot high Hoover Dam nearby generates enough electricity to supply half a million homes for a year. Lake Mead, which was created when the dam was built, is a wonderful spot for outdoor recreation. The lake has a surface area of about 255 square miles and a 550 mile shoreline.

Entertainment, however, is still what attracts people to Las Vegas, and the biggest names in the business regularly play its showrooms. Additionally, the major hotel/casinos feature on-going shows that are taken for granted here but would be considered breathtaking events somewhere else. Consider for a moment that on a given night you can choose between watching:

Mounted knights from King Arthur's Court jousting nightly at the Excalibur.

Extravagant dance numbers, belly dancers, and a chariot race at the Luxor's "Winds of the Gods."

Siegfried and Roy as they battle a several-stories-high mechanical dragon on the stage of the Mirage Hotel/Casino.

Roller skaters zooming through and around an entranced audience at "Starlight Express," the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical at the Las Vegas Hilton.

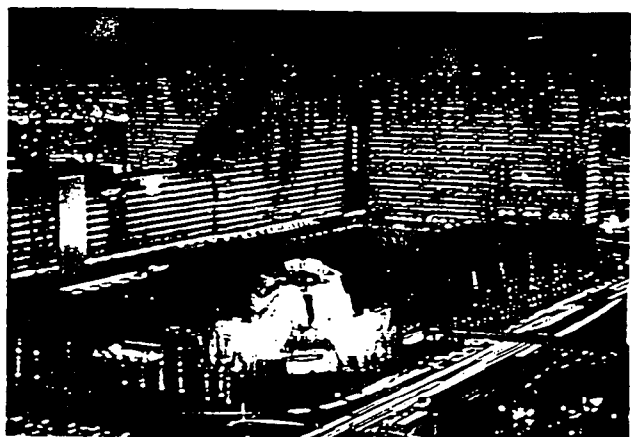
Can-can dancers at the Tropicana's fabled "Folies Bergere," as they perform seemingly impossible physical feats.

The Titanic sink on stage as just part of the multi-million dollar show "Jubilee!" at Bally's.

World Champion Magician Lance Burton's performance at the Hacienda, which may give you second thoughts about the existence of magic.

This is just a sampling of the major shows available in addition to all of the other singers, dancers, and entertainers that perform year round.

When Las Vegas began advertising itself as "The Entertainment Capital of the World" some years ago, it was no idle boast, as you can easily prove to yourself any night of the week while you're in town. →



places also offer champagne brunches. They cost a little more but Mom and Dad can have all the champagne they can drink.

At the Rio, the Carnival World Buffet offers diners Mexican, Brazilian, Chinese, and Italian specialties in addition to the standard American items.

The buffet at Circus Circus is one of the largest in Las Vegas, and their three serving lines handle between twelve and thirteen thousand people a day. The buffet at their sister property, Excalibur, also serves an average of 12,000 people a day. If you add in Excalibur's other dining rooms, however, the total number of diners they serve averages 750,000 a month.

In addition to buffets, another way

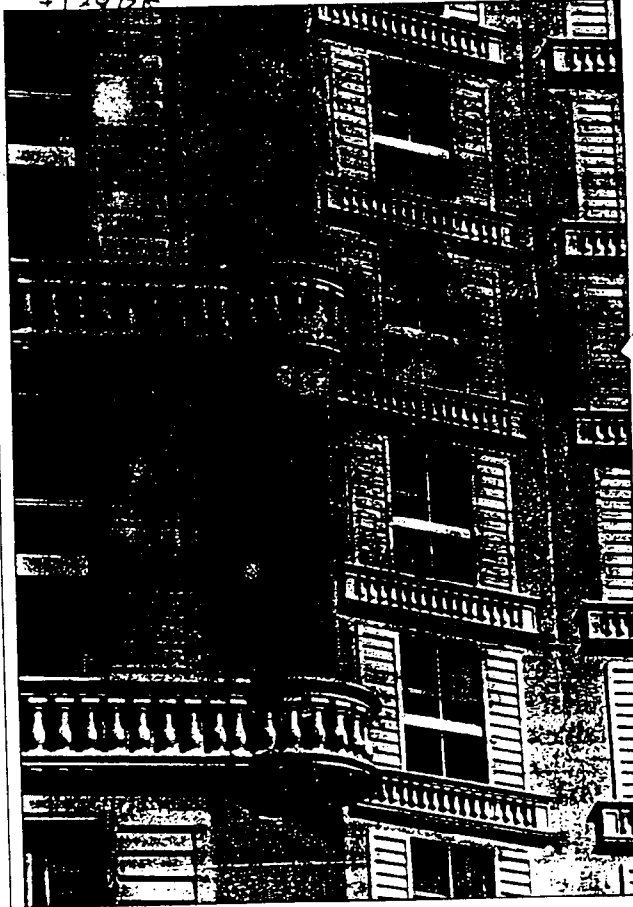
Strip.

There are 1,199 gaming licenses in Clark County, with 109,368 slot machines and 3,661 live table games. The casinos in Clark County won \$4,729,093,194 in 1993.

Although Las Vegas is only America's 80th largest city, McCarran Airport (2,820 acres) is about the same size as Houston's Intercontinental Airport, which serves America's fourth largest city. Sixty-four carriers use McCarran, which averages 689 flights daily. With over 22 million passengers last year, McCarran is the 15th busiest airport in the nation.

Las Vegas has about 500 churches and synagogues to meet the spiritual needs of both residents and visitors, rep-

CREATING THE ILLUSION  
OF TROPICAL SPLENDOR  
*At the Mirage's new complex*



The owners of the new \$300 million **Treasure Island Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada**, Mirage Corporation, designed their elaborate new attraction to have the appearance of an 18th Century Caribbean building. Part of achieving this architectural effect required special simulated balconies outside all windows on the facade ... 870 windows, to be exact. After rejecting 12 concepts due to failure to meet strict weight, load and cost requirements, the challenging fabrication contract was awarded to Treadway Industries of Phoenix, Arizona.

The company provided a simple solution to meet the casino's needs - use Futura's Styrothane system over computer cut Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) foam. According to Peter Brake of Treadway, "The other companies planned to use aluminum and didn't offer a good option for three-dimensional balconies. Our full figure foam sample coated with Styrothane and Styrotex is the system they fell in love with."

"The Futura structural urethane provide a tough, smooth uniform finish," he added. "This made the stone texture finish very easy to create. With Styrothane, we were able to complete the whole project in just three and a half months - that was way ahead of schedule. Styrothane was the only way to go!" (Styrothane is a fast-set, spray-applied urethane, and Styrotex, the top coat used at Treasure Island, is a textured, decorative architectural finish.)

**Write 502 on Reader Inquiry Card**  
Futura Coatings/Hazelwood, MO

RECREATION RESOURCES  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
9-TIMES/YEAR 51,000  
OCTOBER 1994  
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B5

TIC 2070

## RECREATION RESOURCES

MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
9-TIMES/YEAR \$1,000

JANUARY 1995

7850 BURRELLE'S MO  
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### HEIGHTEN THE *4926BR* SENSE OF ADVENTURE

#### *With Pioneer video equipment*

Visitors cast away everyday cares for adventure on the high seas at Treasure Island theme resort in Las Vegas, Nevada. To get guests in a jolly roger spirit, Treasure Island depends on Pioneer New Media Technologies audio and video equipment.

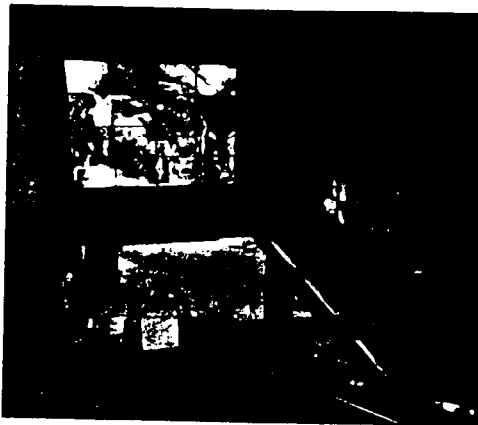
Five Pioneer CD Autochangers provide the entire hotel theme music that is also sent to The Mirage, a sister resort, via fiber optic feed. The lobby, casino, and pool areas, and other general spaces of both Treasure Island and The Mirage enjoy the background sounds of Brazilian and Reggae-style music. Treasure Island's gourmet restaurants have their own dedicated units for specialized theme music.

The completely automated system is linked through Macintosh software designed by Gefen Systems of Woodland Hills, California, and integrated by Acromedia of Los Angeles. Each CD Autochanger has a computer controller and all five are networked through a host Macintosh where global or individual changes can be executed.

As guests arrive through Treasure Island's major entrance, they are greeted by a 4' by 4' video wall featuring Pioneer Projection CUBE Technology and eight Pioneer LaserDisc Players as the video source. Self-promotional spots captivate visitors with the pirate theme.

Pioneer Projection CUBEs feature flat, non-reflective screens for a wider viewing angle and high visibility under a

variety of lighting conditions. Horizontal resolution is 800 lines, and even the corners are bright and distortion-free. Pioneer's RM-V2000A has a built-in circuit that electronically corrects any illumination problems before they become visible. Pioneer Projection CUBEs can be stacked vertically to any height with a near seam-



less image, providing all the impact of a movie screen for entertaining, informative, vivid images.

"Pioneer has the technology to create system solutions," said Paul Dempsey, vice president of Pioneer. "Sites like Treasure Island have found that our equipment is the highest quality, easy to operate, and can fulfill a variety of needs in fully-integrated systems."

Pioneer New Media Technologies represents a broad range of Pioneer products and systems for non-consumer and commercial entertainment environments.

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Saddle River, NJ

TIC 2206

TIC 2182

B7

STAR TRIBUNE

MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
SUNDAY 687,027

DEC 25 1994

BURRELLE'S

380 CLOS TO

Photos by  
Chris Weisch

Right: Las Vegas' lights burn just as brightly at Christmas as they do the rest of the year. Sassy Sally's is on Fremont St., otherwise known as Glitter Gulch, in Vegas' old downtown.



# CHRISTMAS IN LAS VEGAS

Tarnished tidings  
of comfort and joy  
from your friends  
in Glitter Gulch

4926BR  
Treasure

By John Windrow Staff Writer

### Las Vegas, Nev.

The tall, balding man in jeans and a sport shirt was on a roll at the craps table in the Horseshoe casino. Christmas Eve was bringing him luck.

Suddenly, fate proved fickle.

"We had a dynamite run and then the dice bounced up and hit the hand of the guy betting the 'don't pass' line at the other end of the table and came up a seven," he said. His voice welled with disappointment, chances missed, opportunities that might never come again. "He didn't even say he was sorry. He just grinned and picked up his money."

The croupier, a blond, horse-faced man, laughed and showed every tooth in his head. "There's no mistletoe," he said, dragging the dice back across the long green. "You blow your money and you won't even get kissed."

I spent last Dec. 24 and 25 in Las Vegas, the place where wallets go to die. Christmas memories will never be the same.

When I told people of my plans for the holidays, most of them would say something like, "How decadent. Who would want to spend Christmas in a casino?"

Nearly everybody, it turns out.

The hucksters and hypesters are pitching the City of Sin as the ultimate in family fun for the '90s. It appears to be working.

As soon as we arrived on the fabled strip, it was obvious that the town was jammed.

strels, fair maids and varlets.

Casinos, as glittering as they may be, all offer the same things and can only compete in the method of delivery. Therefore, depending on which roulette wheel you decide to haunt, your free cocktail will be delivered by some attractive person dressed as a wandering minstrel, pirate, Nubian slave, servant of the Pharaoh, circus acrobat or cowboy.

We felt like Munchkins walking between the huge paws of the MGM lion to enter the Yellow Brick Road and its many amusements. Dorothy, Toto and all their friends were there.

In the MGM, we wandered past various restaurants, through four casinos, a huge midway and then, after about a half a mile, an enormous theme park.

Many of the Vegas casinos have theme parks with river rides, roller coasters,

dinosaurs, space trips, spewing volcanos, showboats or entire villages teeming with games, entertainers, baubles and gewgaws. The Luxor even has a reproduction of King Tut's tomb. The Excalibur boasts what appeared to be an entire floor of video games for children. Not to mention Gargantuan buffets that could feed a lumberjack camp.

I, however, had not come to see the Tin Man or the Cowardly Lion. We headed along the strip to the older section of the city called downtown.

We passed the glittering marquees proclaiming the impending arrival of Sinatra, Streisand, Gladys Knight and the Bolshoi. Past Caesar's Palace where the

**LAS VEGAS Continued on page 8G**



ond-largest hotel, with more than 4,000 rooms. It was full. Across the street was the world's largest hotel, the MGM Grand and its enormous gimlet-eyed lion (more than 5,000 rooms). Next door was the Luxor with its 30-story gleaming pyramid (more than 2,500 rooms). Those three hotels at the south end of the strip employ about 15,000 people. Everything is on an epic scale.

The Excalibur, complete with drawbridge and moat, aspires to a Camelot motif. Its shining exterior bristles with spires and turrets. Employees are dressed as jesters, knights, squirrels, varlets, fair maids, minstrels, princesses, lords and ladies. However, to the jaded traveler these people all look like busboys, bellhops, bartenders, cocktail waitresses, parking lot attendants and desk clerks who are dressed up as jesters, min-

Inset: The Candlelight Wedding Chapel, where the Rev. John P. Levendiz, 81, was marrying couples last Christmas. "I feel Santa Claus represents something to little children but I also feel Santa Claus is a power and a force who affects adults as well," he said.

# Las Vegas/ Even today, 'everybody wants to gamble'

Continued from page 1G R

have moving sidewalks that propel people into the casino, but not out.

Outside the Mirage a Japanese lady was sticking her pretty head inside the red mouth of a giant tiger as her husband took her photo. The statue of the tiger's head was an advertisement for an animal act, Siegfried and Roy's rare Bengal tigers. The tigers themselves are on magnificent display behind a wall of glass upon entering the Mirage. As I watched them lounge about next to a glittering waterfall, I finally realized what a Minneapolis cocktail waitress had been referring to when she urged me to be sure and go see "Sigmund and Freud" while I was in Las Vegas.

People ganged about in droves outside Treasure Island casino awaiting a sea battle between a British frigate and a pirate ship, complete with cannon fire and clashing sabres. (The pirates always win, which seems an affront to the Queen.) "There's the best free act in town right here," our taxi driver said as we passed. "They line up before the shows like bees on a hive." This ship on the right comes sailing up and fires on the other one. Then they shoot cannons and fire back and forth until the first ship sinks. It keels over and sinks. Then this one pirate jumps up and says, "We got the best of you. Now come on inside and we'll take your money." The people line up to where you couldn't stir 'em with a stick.

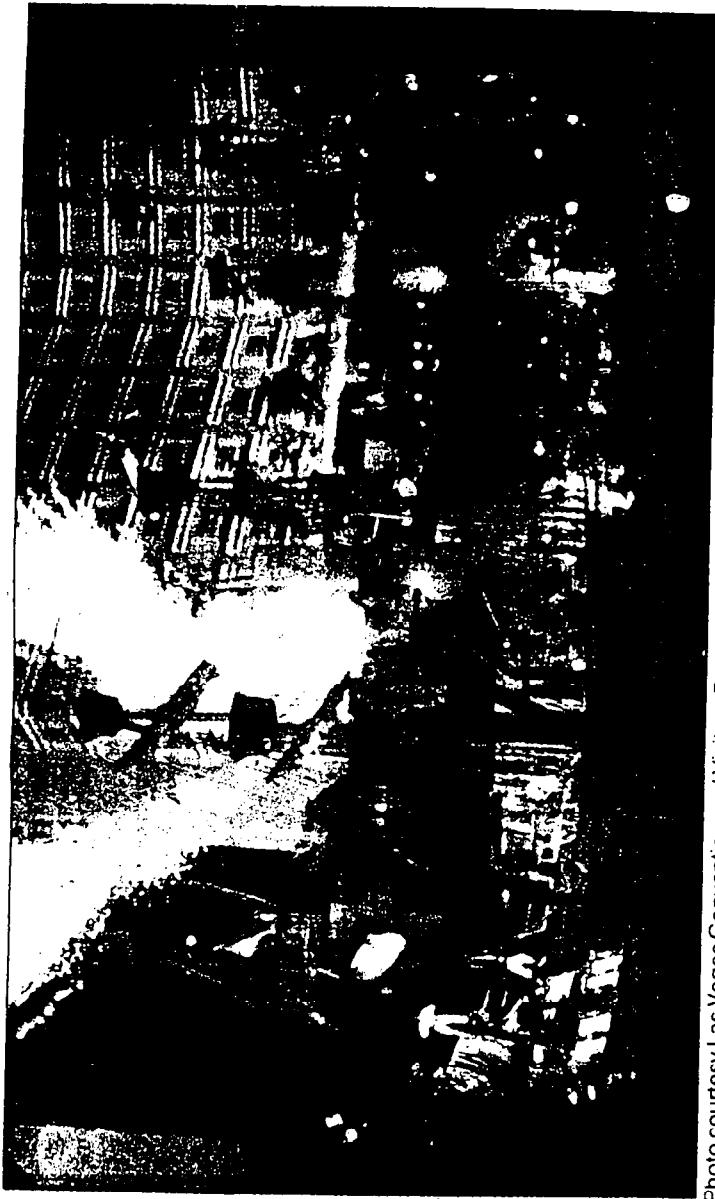


Photo courtesy Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau

The climactic battle outside Treasure Island Casino: "There's the best free act in town right there. They line up before the shows like bees on a hive."



The crap players were more animated. They mill about the tables, some to gamble, some to watch, to try to get a feel for a hot table, to sniff the air for the scent of luck. The players have a lean and hungry look as they watch the dice. The croupiers and slickmen are all jokers and jackdaws, carney types who sing their chants as the chips fall where they may.

"Who's on the crap 11? Get on the 11 with me. The field comes alive after five. Hard ways are the happy ways. Seven out, line down, pay the don'ts and the last come."

The pit bosses sit quietly by the tables, sleek, bald-headed men in suits and ties with bags under their eyes, whiskey webs on their cheeks and numbers clicking in their heads as they stack the chips, row upon row.

At one table, the shifts changed and the pit boss, who was merry and portly in the style of Santa Claus,

At the Plaza downtown, Vince Rosengarth, a retired Navy chief from San Diego, sat at the bar in jeans and cowboy hat sipping lite beer. Vince said he and his wife come to Vegas for the holidays now that their kids are grown. She gambles and he watches people. "You get a real variety," he said.

The people in front of the slots seemed to have a solitary obsession with pumping their money into the machines, scooping their hands into buckets of coins and watching the cherries and lucky 7's flash by. Some were in wheelchairs, chain-smoking cigarettes.

opened his arms wide and greeted us, one and all: "Before I go I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." A chorus of good cheer sped him on his way.

Down the street in the Golden Nugget, two blonde tykes, Crystal, 9, and Alan, 7, were perched in the potted palms as their mother, Leeann Bolke, and grandmother, Emeline Bolke, played the slots. The music system was pumping out "Noel, Noel," "Mom's in town [from California], and when she comes and visits we come to the casinos," Leeann said.

Crystal popped up to say that the best part of Christmas is "Grandma's visit and all the presents that Santa Claus brings with my Grandma."

At the bar, a hooker in a red leather miniskirt with a wide, red mouth practiced come-hither looks on men who passed by as the music system rang out with "Oh, tidings of comfort

and joy, comfort and joy."

At the Horseshoe casino, shift boss John Buchanan looked over the crowd and said, "It never closes, ever. Christmas Day is a little slower, with less families. Christmas Eve is usually very busy if it falls on a Friday."

Outside, the Rev. Roman Ledowicz of the Holy Ghost Church directed several of his charges who were asking people in the crowded street to donate money for the homeless. He said at Christmas people are a "little more jovial and generous and the contributions are larger." As for the families with kids, going by, the preacher said, "I don't think it's correct. Home is the place for Christmas."

In front of the Plaza, a man took a photo of his little girl in a Santa hat who was posing with one hand on her hip and the other gesturing Vanna White style to the huge neon signs behind her that advertised the

Golden Goose, the Horseshoe and the Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch.

As midnight approached, the Excalibur was a mob scene. People shouldered their way from the slots to the bar. A very small boy in his pajamas kicked at a man who nearly ran him down as he headed for the gaming tables. His mother quickly took him in tow.

Tran le, a Vietnamese-American from Fort Worth, Texas, was poring over the betting sheet at the open sports book while his wife, Mary, looked out for their four children, ages 11, 9, 7 and 2. Mary said she liked the Excalibur because of the game rooms for the kids. The kids liked it there too, she said. They planned to spend a week in Vegas before returning to Fort Worth to their car business. "Everybody wants to gamble," Tran said. Then he and Mary giggled merrily.

The noise from the gamblers, the running children, the slot machines, the croupiers calling out the numbers of the dice and the Christmas music seemed as if it would go on forever, as if Las Vegas could never be still.

But at 7:30 Christmas morning, things were quiet for a little while. At the casino bar a few people drank and played video poker. The carols and cigarette smoke hung languidly in the air. A woman with a baby in a stroller silently glided by. Things quickly picked up: by 9 people poured out of the elevators heading for the buffets. Among them was a family from Arizona, Doug, 30, Paula, 28, and their 8-year-old girl Alice, who was very impressed that Santa had found her in such a gigantic hotel. The Jolly Old Elf left her clothes and a bath set. "I think I heard a door open in the night," Doug said.

Like many of the family people in the casinos over the holidays Doug and Paula said they didn't much care for gambling. Paula said they came for "the family stuff," the rides, games and shows.

Doug called his first Christmas in Vegas "interesting." Alice gushed

that she loved it. Say you miss Grandpa," Paula said, aware that they were talking to the press.

Farther down the strip, down past the Elvis tour bus, past the world's loosest slots and the Crazy Girls floor show, sits the Candlelight Wedding Chapel. By mid-afternoon, the Rev. John P. Levendz, 81, who was dressed as Santa Claus, had married about 11 couples.

"Today is the first time I've married people dressed as Santa Claus," said Levendz, who has been marrying people at the chapel for 20 years. "I feel Santa Claus represents something to little children but I also feel Santa Claus is a power and a force who affects adults as well. Because in the final analysis they want attention from Santa Claus in the same way as a little boy or girl would want it."

Among the more futuristic attractions of Las Vegas is a monorail that runs between the Luxor and the Excalibur. Gliding along noiselessly, one has a view of snowy mountains in the cloud-flaked distance and all the glitter and baubles of the strip below. Lois, our driver and guide, cheerfully pointed out a burning taxi in the street as she chatted about the Wild Bill Country Music Saloon and a medieval banquet where one is "encouraged to eat with your fingers."

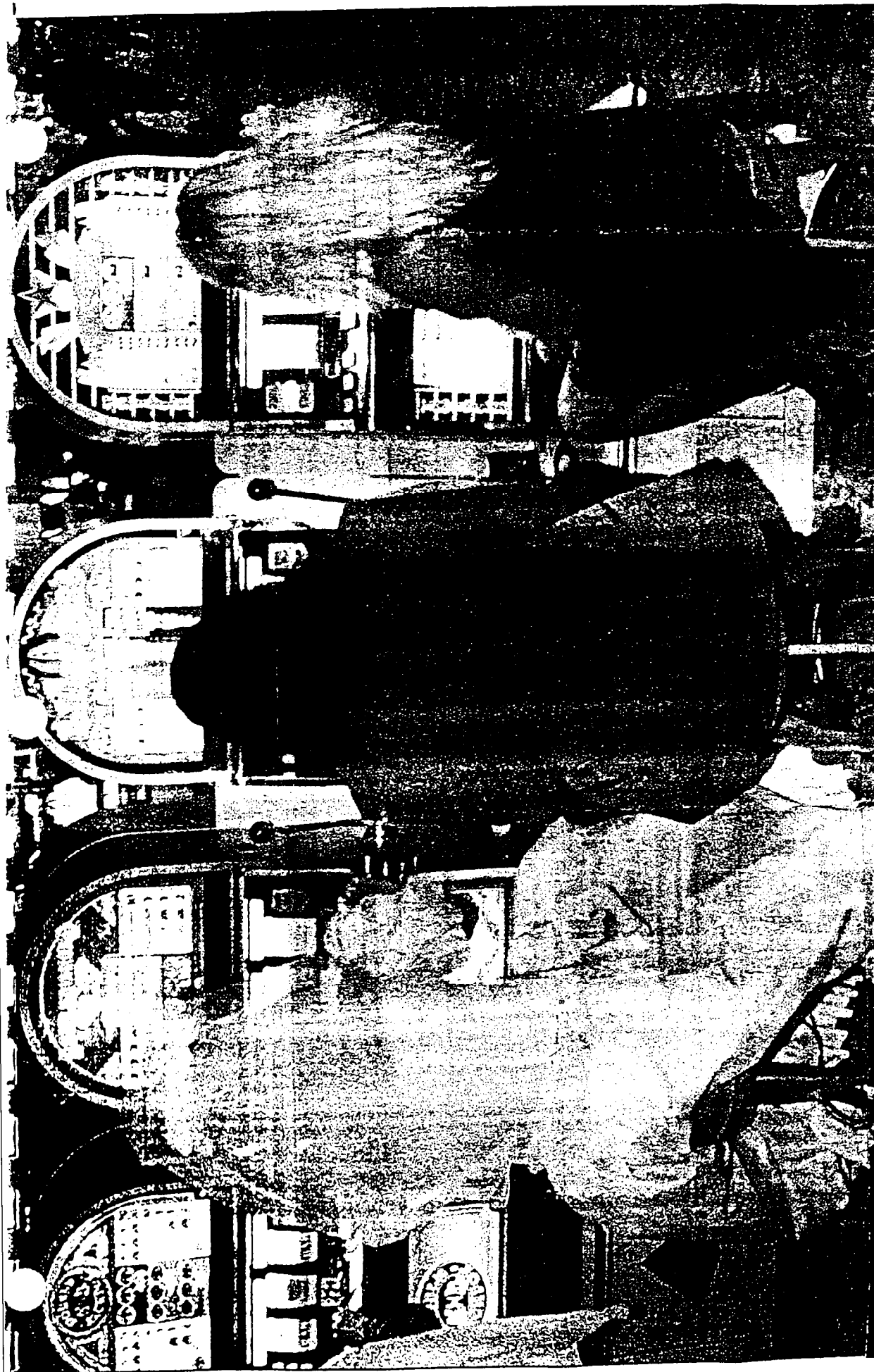
Lois moved to Vegas from Michigan. "I love Vegas," she said earnestly, as the sweeping gaudy turrets and towers of the Excalibur drew closer and closer. Then suddenly she said, "I think with Hollywood and all the hype these days, reality can't compete anymore. What do you think?"

She was right. Reality is for people who can't take Las Vegas.

### If you go

For free information on lodging and entertainment in Las Vegas, call the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce at (702) 735-1616.

John Windrow is a Star Tribune copy editor.



Above: Three friends, one of them recently wed, played the slots at the Luxor, one of Las Vegas' slick new casinos catering to families. The Luxor is shaped like a giant pyramid amid.

TIC 2187

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# ISLAND

**Treasure Island Casino & Bingo**

# Treasure Island Casino & Bingo Times

THE ACTION IS HOTTER HERE

VOLUME 7 JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1995

BUDDY HACKETT

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**PRA 02254**

**TRIPS GIVEN  
AWAY EVERY  
WEEKDAY  
IN JANUARY!**

It's January FREES! on the Island, all month long. January FREES! is our way of saying thank you to our best customers for playing where it's hot, on the Island. January 2nd through the 31st, we'll be giving out FREE hats, t-shirts, mugs & cash prizes all day and all night. And, at 7 p.m., every week-night during the FREES!, we'll draw for a trip for 2 to Las Vegas, including airfare and an exciting stay at the Treasure Island Hotel. Plus, \$500 cash to give your gaming a kick-start. Come out to the Island during January FREES! and get Island hot!

MAY 15 1994

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# VEGASWORLD

Reality takes  
a break at  
theme hotels

By Judith Morgan

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**S**ometime after 10 p.m. the thud of cannonballs shook my room at Treasure Island, a flamboyant new Las Vegas resort whose theme is loot and plunder. Flames flashed in the mirror as I edged to the window to watch those pesky pirates take another bottle-of-rum shot at the H.M.S. Britannia, below in Buccaneer Bay.

Seven times a day the foes engage in battle, the square-rigged British frigate sailing around Skull Point and demanding the surrender of the 80-foot pirate vessel Hispaniola. Seven times a day the Britannia sinks, her captain going down with the ship.

Thronged of onlookers cheer the spectacle from a broad plank walkway and bridge, where you actually feel the heat as the ships catch fire.

"The pirates always win," Jules Lauve, the hotel's entertainment director, told me. "After all, this is Las Vegas!"

Even if the battle is fixed, it's the best free show in town and, for my money, one of the two best at any price. The other winner, which also happens to play at Treasure Island, is the dazzling entertainment of Cirque de Soleil, the sly and sophisticated Montreal-based troupe of acrobats, jugglers and dervishes that performs twice nightly in a 1,500-seat theater.

During a recent visit to Las Vegas — my first in almost 20 years — surprises never ceased. Up front there was the push by a number of huge new hotels-cum-theme parks, led by the 5,005-room MGM Grand, the world's largest hotel and casino. The MGM Grand soars over the Las Vegas strip, its leonine figure forming the main entrance. It offers acres of slot machines and gambling tables and restaurants and theaters with Dorothy's trip to Oz one of its main themes. Water slides and other attractions add to the

Disneyesque family fun proportions.

The same holds true at Excalibur, where the make-believe and turreted Camelot takes on an Arthurian theme. Luxor, with a mammoth Sphinx head dominating the landscape, features an Egyptian theme. All of these structures are designed to lure families to the gambling capital with glitzy galleries of video games, pinball machines and electronically simulated rides.

Still, behind the scenes, I was even more amazed by the computer sleight of hand that manipulates the fantasies.

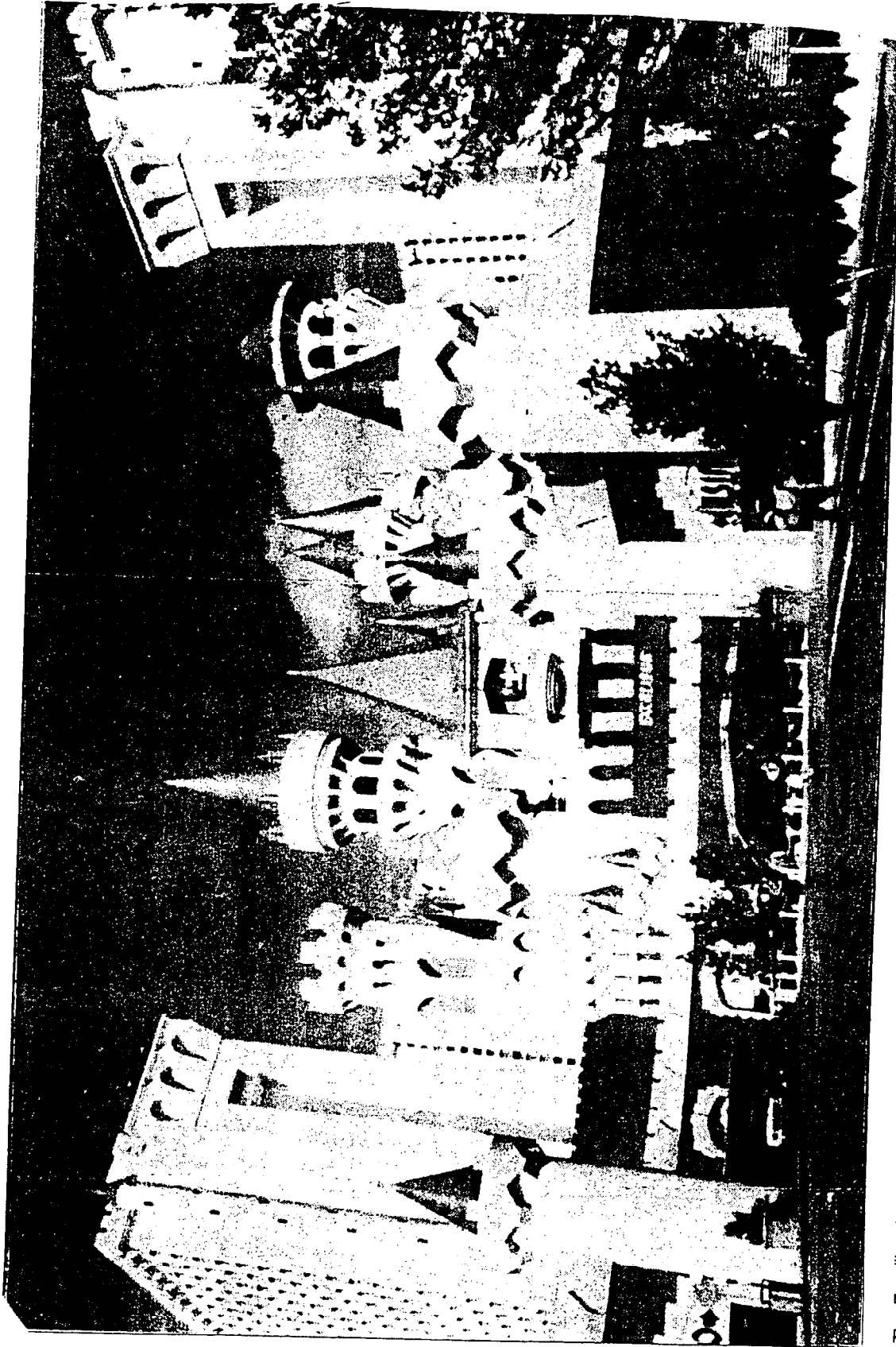
The battle in palm-ringed Buccaneer Bay, for example, involves 12 British seamen and a pirate crew of eight. (A thousand former stunt men, ushers, waiters

See Vegas page 9

HILL AND KNOWLTON

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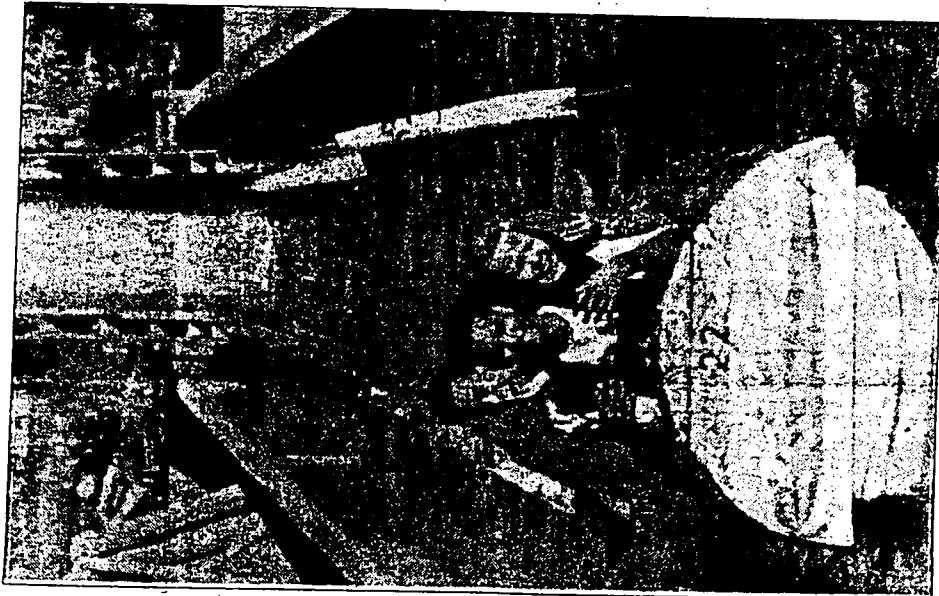


The Excalibur is one of many new theme hotels in Las Vegas. Owners hope the attractions draw more families to the Nevada gambling capital.

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File photos

The sphinx-like figure of King Tut (above) guards the pyramid of Luxor casino-hotel in Las Vegas. Visitors enjoy the log ride (left photo) at the MGM Grand theme park. The \$1 billion hotel-casino complex features a family entertainment area reached by walking past acres of slot machines and game tables. The MGM also bills itself as the largest hotel and casino with over 5,000 rooms.

## Vegas

Continued from page 7

and gymnasts applied for these physically demanding roles, and 200 auditioned.)

From control panels hidden within the stone and rip-rap Caribbean village around the lagoon, nine men and women handle the technical work — the shouts and screams, the pyrotechnic wizardry of flames and fireworks, the splintering of a tall mast.

The show can be stopped from backstage or by the captain of either ship, each of whom has a red emergency button. One evening the show was stopped when a tourist jumped into the water, Lauve said, "and it wasn't even spring break."

The wind is the most likely culprit behind cancellations.

"Because of the powder-based pyrotechnics and propane explosions, we won't start a show if it's gusting more than 15 mph," Lauve said. "If the

wind starts swirling, we cancel — or limit the fireworks."

Buccaneer Bay holds 2½ million gallons of water and, for the most part, is 6 feet deep. There's a 40-foot-deep hole where the British ship sinks and a 14-foot pool where the sailors dive overboard. Because of the watery roles, each actor has three changes of clothes; only the pirate captain gets to stay dry during a performance.

Other backstage secrets: The British captain survives to rule another day by donning a scuba mask just as he slips beneath the surface, his descent carefully monitored on video screens.

And two of the British sailors are girls.

Copley News Service

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SERVICE REPORTER

CHICAGO, IL  
MONTHLY 42,000

JUNE 1994

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**READY, AIM, FIRE!!!**

The British navel officers fire a cannon at the pirates' ship during the Battle of Buccaneer Bay. The battle rages six times daily at a new Las Vegas resort, Treasure Island at the Flamingo. The performance combines propane explosions, mechanical effects and live fire. Six Honeywell 7800 burner controllers control the burners around the ship.

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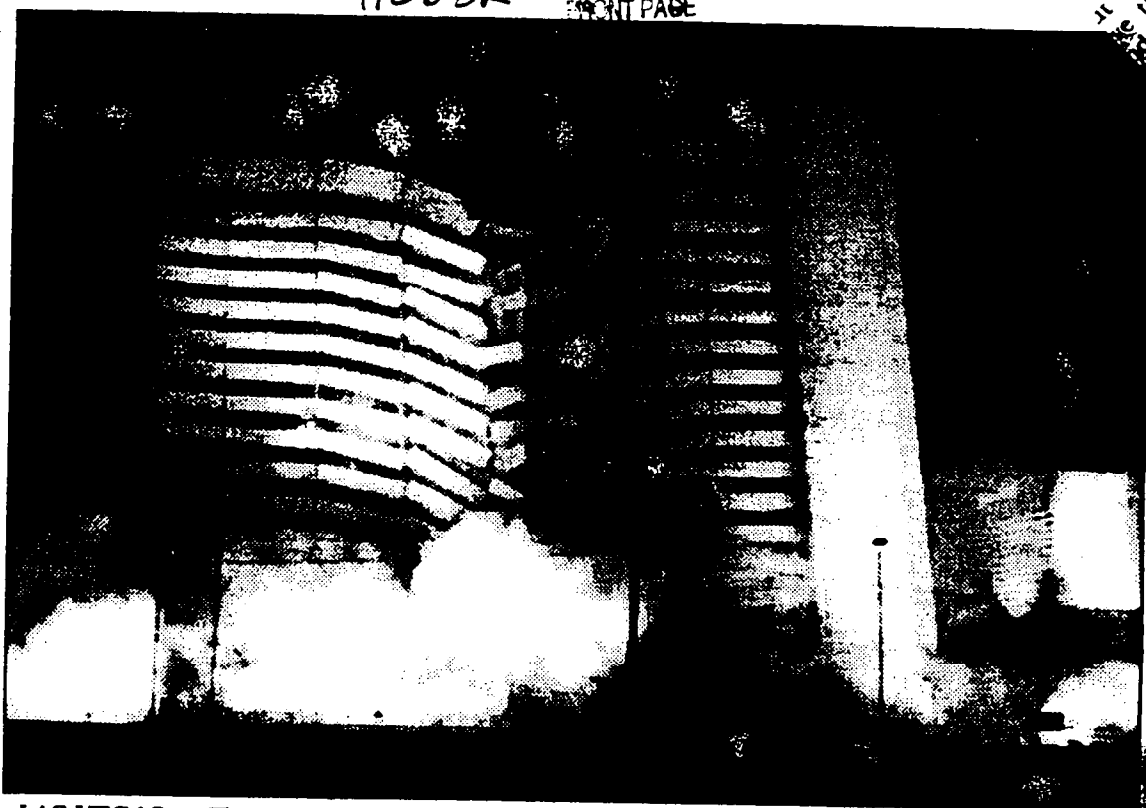
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FRONT PAGE



LAS VEGAS — The 17-story tower of the old Dunes Hotel-Casino is shown just before dawn Wednesday, as it begins to crumple during a noisy, dusty implosion. The tower is being razed to make way for two new resorts on the property. Another Dunes tower was imploded last October in a fiery spectacle that was shown around the world.

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CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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## Growing Las Vegas looks for a better deal

*The century-old fight for the West's scarce water supplies enters a new, more civilized, phase. First of a series.*

**By Hugh Dellios** 4936BR  
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

LAS VEGAS—The thousands of tourists and casino-hoppers floating each day down this city's famous Strip might be forgiven for not knowing that the desert gambling mecca is on the verge of a water crisis.

In these days of family fun in Las Vegas, water is as big a lure on the Strip as neon, craps tables and dancing girls.

It gushes from an artificial volcano, ripples beneath life-size sailing ships, pushes boats along a replica of the Nile River and distracts antsy children at huge water parks.

True to Las Vegas' unique brand of make-believe, it is all a mirage.

Expanding faster than any city

in the nation in a desert that receives only four inches of rain a year, Las Vegas is scheduled to drink up the last of its water rights within 20 years. At that point, officials warn, its casino-driven economy could be drained like a penniless player after a night at the slot machines.

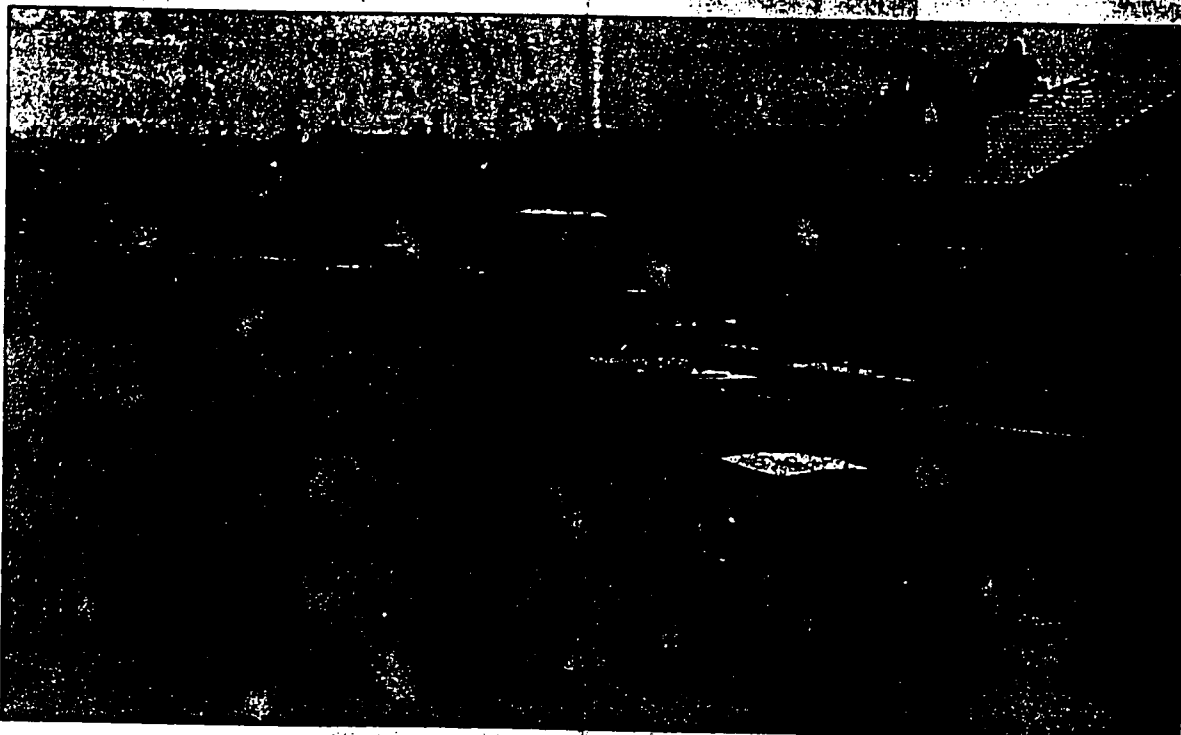
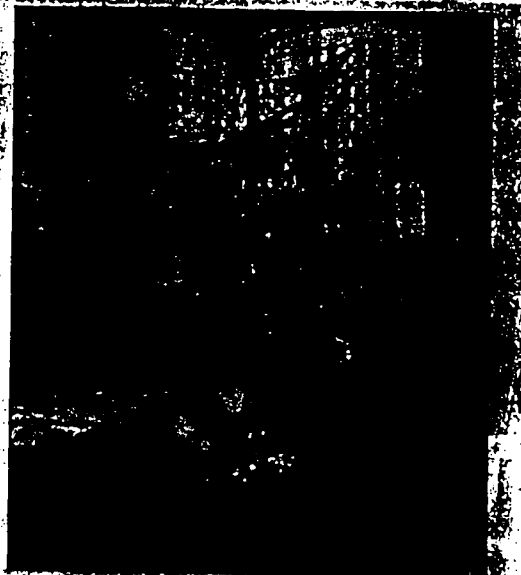
This sparkling city is on the front lines of a new era in the war for water in the West. The demand for water is rising apace

I SEE WATER, PAGE 12

## GROWING THIRST

FRONT PAGE

# Drop by drop, water worries collect in West



The sometimes profligate use of water belies the West's water crisis. Las Vegas has banned new artificial subdivision lakes like the one above. And officials of Treasure Island hotel point out that most of the water in the 2.5 million gallon Buccaneer Bay is recycled from guest room sinks and showers. AP photos

# Water

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with the region's growth in population. But for the most part, the glory days of dam building and harnessing the flow of nature are over.

In today's West—an increasingly urban and more environmentally sensitive place—the old strong-arm methods of apportioning water have given way to scavenging, skimping and bargaining to make water supplies stretch in a region where there never has been enough to go around.

But Las Vegas' water crisis also has opened the door for potentially unparalleled cooperation among the seven states that depend on the Colorado River for water. And it may yet lead to a new flexibility in rigid water laws crucial for the Sun Belt to continue developing in defiance of the desert upon which it is built.

"The growth has been beyond anybody's expectations, but it's our turn now," Nevada Gov. Bob Miller said. "Water is the thing people have been killing each other over for 100 years. I'm not suggesting it's any less volatile, but we're trying to be more civilized."

Since one-armed John Wesley Powell first explored the Colorado River in 1869, there have been doubts that enough water was available to satisfy all Americans' ambitions in the West. Its scarcity has made it the currency of life, death, power and wealth in the region.

Now, adding to natural scarcity are a new array of problems that could amount to a permanent, politically driven drought. They include environmental restrictions, budget concerns, Indian water-rights claims and increased competition for water between developing areas across the region.

"The West has grown from 16 million to 56 million since World War II. If we do it again in the next 50 years, we'd have an unacceptable situation," said Charles Wilkinson, a Colorado University law professor and leading critic of Western water practices.

"You can't just continue putting more Los Angeleses and Las Vegases out there. There's not enough water if you desire any sustainability with healthy rivers and healthy rural communities next to them. We're getting ourselves in real deep, and I think people are beginning to realize that."

Las Vegas may have the most acute problem but other areas also face possible water troubles. A recent report estimated that, unless water management is improved and political hurdles scaled, all of California could suffer chronic water shortfalls by 2020.

In Arizona, careful planning for the future growth of Phoenix and Tucson has been clouded by concerns over the cost of a federal pipeline to deliver the necessary water.

New Mexico discovered recently it had less groundwater than it once thought, complicating plans by Intel Corp., the world's largest computer chip manufacturer, to expand a plant near Albuquerque.

At the same time, Western boom towns such as Durango, Colo., are beginning to compete for the region's water to support their development as trendy recreation spots. But they are finding that budgetary and environmental concerns make it not so easy anymore to tap into streams running out of nearby mountains.

Promoters of the new urban West believe there is enough water for everyone if Westerners

learn to use it more wisely and efficiently. Their ranks include Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, a former water rights lawyer, and other Clinton administration officials who claim to represent the growing power of urbanites in the West and their demand for environmental safeguards and recreational opportunities.

Babbitt and others argue that, for the New West to prosper, water must be treated as a valuable commodity instead of something freely provided by the federal government to farmers and other users. Water thus would be used more efficiently, lessening the need to build more dams and pipelines.

With most Western water dedicated to irrigating crops, many say the new solution is to move the West's lifeblood from farm to city and across state lines, reusing it and leaving more of it in river channels.

"There's more than enough water. The problem is it's in the

wrong place at the wrong time," said Daniel Beard, chief of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, once the nation's great dam building agency. "We're at a very unique juncture in the history of Western water. We have to find ways to transfer the water to new users. You can't force 20 million people in the Los Angeles area to live under chronic shortages."

Others emphasize that arcane water laws, ancient disputes and a historic lack of cooperation pose formidable barriers. Some farmers will see less water for crops. But others will make a handsome profit selling water rights. Many vow to fight the new ways, meaning the West perhaps has not seen the last of the water wars that highlight its history.

All agree the future of the West could be a difficult one unless it is marked by fundamental changes in ways of thinking about water and how to manage it.

"What we do know is that over the next 10 to 20 years there is

enough water in the system [for all projected uses]," said Elizabeth Rieke, assistant interior secretary for water and science. "But over the next 50 years, we don't know."

The staggeringly expensive process of desalting the ocean may be the ultimate solution. But Wilkinson and others now call for a debate about controls on growth, a traditionally taboo topic not likely to gain many adherents anytime soon.

Critics of Las Vegas contend the city's current situation was caused by its own extravagance and bad habits. But as Nevada officials tell it, the state finds itself in trouble only because the city was a late bloomer.

At the edge of the Mojave Desert, Las Vegas sits practically on the banks of the Colorado River, the watering hole for seven Western states, parts of northern Mexico and nearly 25 million people. Just 30 miles to the east, the great Hoover Dam captures millions of gallons of the river's water in

Lake Mead, a boaters' and jet skiers' paradise.

But when federal and Western powerbrokers sat down in the 1920s to divvy up the Colorado's water, Las Vegas was little more than a small railroad stop. Its population at the turn of the century was 4,703. Gaming was not legalized in Nevada until 1931. Bugsy Siegel did not open the Flamingo hotel and casino until 1946, and hordes of gamblers did not arrive in earnest until after Havana's casinos closed in 1959 with the triumph of Fidel Castro's revolution.

At the time of the landmark regional agreement in 1928, not even Nevada officials saw the need for water in such a hot, barren area. As a result, California was allotted the lion's share of 4.4 million acre-feet per year, Arizona received 2.8 million acre-feet per year and empty Nevada received the smallest amount of the seven states, 300,000 acre-feet per year. (An acre-foot is equivalent to

326,000 gallons, enough to serve two average families for a year.

As the West has grown over the last 66 years, those precious river allotments have become etched in stone in what Westerners call "the Law of the River." They are jealously guarded and defended in court against any attempts to alter them. Thus today Las Vegas only can watch as torrents of water run through Hoover Dam on the way elsewhere.

"We're the only major city that sits on the Colorado River, and we can't touch it," said Patricia Mulroy, general manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. "Do you know how difficult it is to explain to people that there's no water as they're going out to water ski on Lake Mead?"

Las Vegas officials say the burgeoning city will exhaust its modest share of the Colorado by 2013. As more and more tourists and gamblers flock here from all over the world, the city is growing at a rate of more than 1,100 new residents a week.

From 1990 to 1992 alone, the city grew nearly 14 percent, to a population of 971,169 from 852,737, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In 1980 the city and environs had only 463,087 people.

The newcomers fill three shifts of casino and hotel jobs in a 24-hour town that never sleeps despite all the beds in its 93,000 hotel rooms. Officials say another 10,000 hotel rooms could be built within the next three years as the city steps up its attempts to lure family vacationers with fantasy settings and theme parks.

Hampering Las Vegas' attempt to find new water sources is its reputation as one of the world's biggest water wastrels. It consumes more than 300 gallons of water per person per day. By contrast, another desert city, Tucson, has adopted stringent conservation programs and consumes only 156 gallons per person per day.

The water menagerie along the Strip does not help, but even Las Vegas' most strident critics agree the casinos and hotels are not the main problem. More than 60 percent of the city's water goes for residential use, and the bulk of that overwaters lush green lawns on the city's blossoming West Side.

Where once rock and sand marked the city's edge, subdivisions now sprout with turf grass lawns, artificial lakes and names like The Lakes and Mariner's Cove. While city officials have banned new lakes, homeowners say the existing conceits make them forget they live in a desert.

"When I walk by and it's hot, I feel cool here," said Judy Pink, 41, who stopped to sit beside a pond in her subdivision while on her daily walk with her two dogs. The skin-care consultant moved to Las Vegas from Los Angeles after the January earthquake.

"In Arizona, there's no doubt you're in the desert. Here, there's definitely an image that you're not. With that big dam [and reservoir] out there, I don't know how Las Vegas could ever go dry," she said.

The sense that water is plentiful takes its most ironic turn in the 2.5-million-gallon Buccaneer Bay in front of the new Treasure Island hotel on the Strip, where actors dressed as pirates and royal sailors battle between two life-sized 19th Century sailing ships.

Hotel officials proudly note that most of the water is recycled from guestroom sinks and showers.

But another portion is pumped from groundwater threatening to flood the hotel's parking tunnels because of all the lawn-watering on the West Side. The ground-

## GROWING THIRST

### Colorado River Basin

The Colorado River Basin covers 244,000 square miles (about one-twelfth the area of the mainland United States) and is the only reliable source of surface water for nearly 25 million people and more than one million acres of farmland in the Southwest. The river is the most regulated in the nation, with its average flow of 15 million feet per year divided among seven states, 15 Indian tribes, and Mexico.

#### Current populations and projections

Population and projected increases among basin states, in millions.	Calif.	Ariz.	Colo.	Utah	N.M.	Nev.	Wyo.
1993	31.4	3.9	3.5	1.8	1.6	1.4	0.473
2020 projection	48.1	5.7	4.9	2.7	2.3	2.1	0.658

Rainfall	Calif.	Ariz.	Colo.	Utah	N.M.	Nev.	Wyo.
July 1, 1993 through June 30, 1994; in inches	14.6	14.1	11.1	9.9	10.7	8.9	5.5
Actual Normal	22.1	15.8	13.4	11.6	12.8	11.3	8.7

#### Key:

##### Colorado River water use and allotments

Preliminary 1992 reported water use; in percent

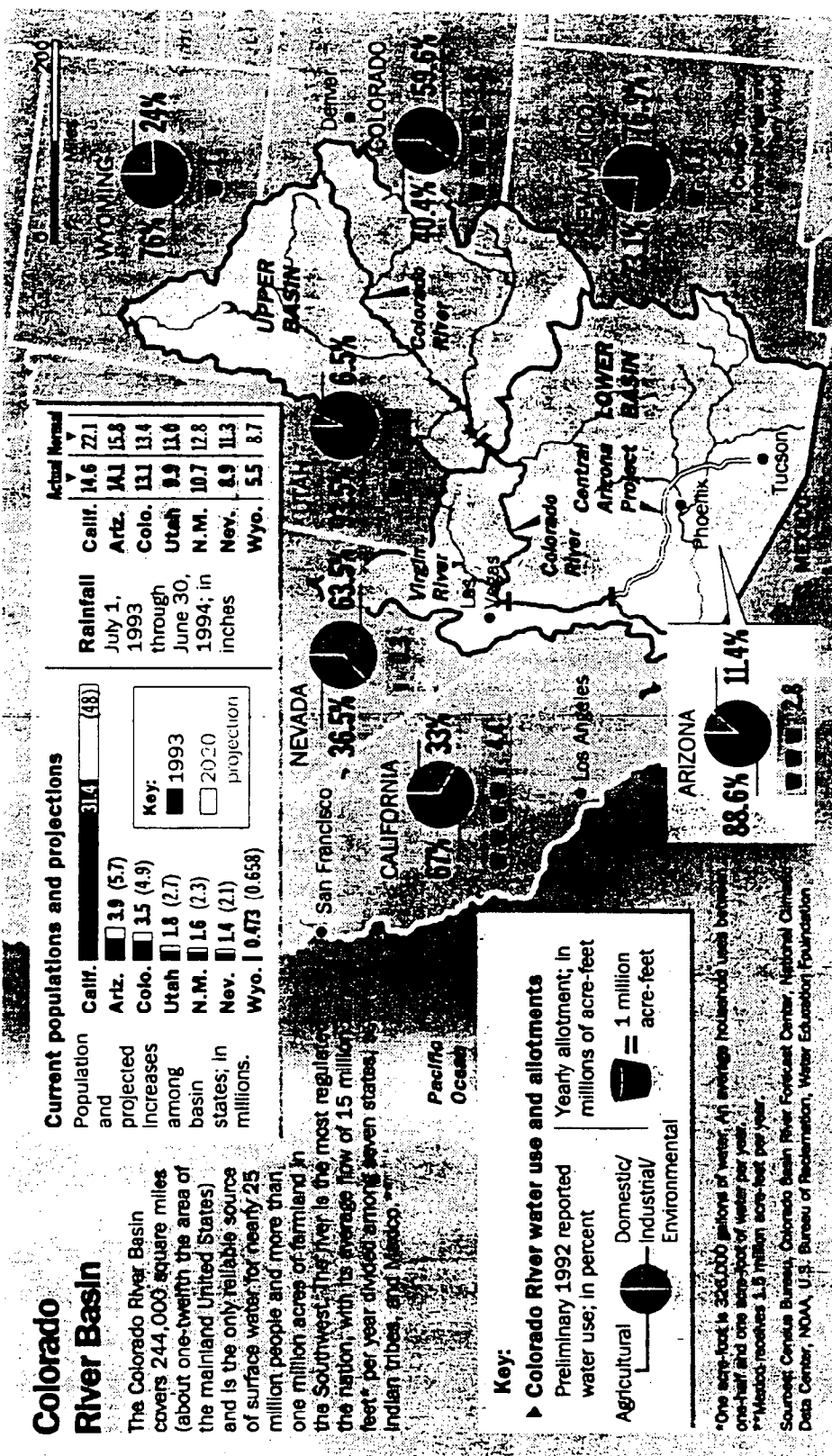
Agricultural Domestic/Industrial/Environmental

Yearly allotment; in millions of acre-feet

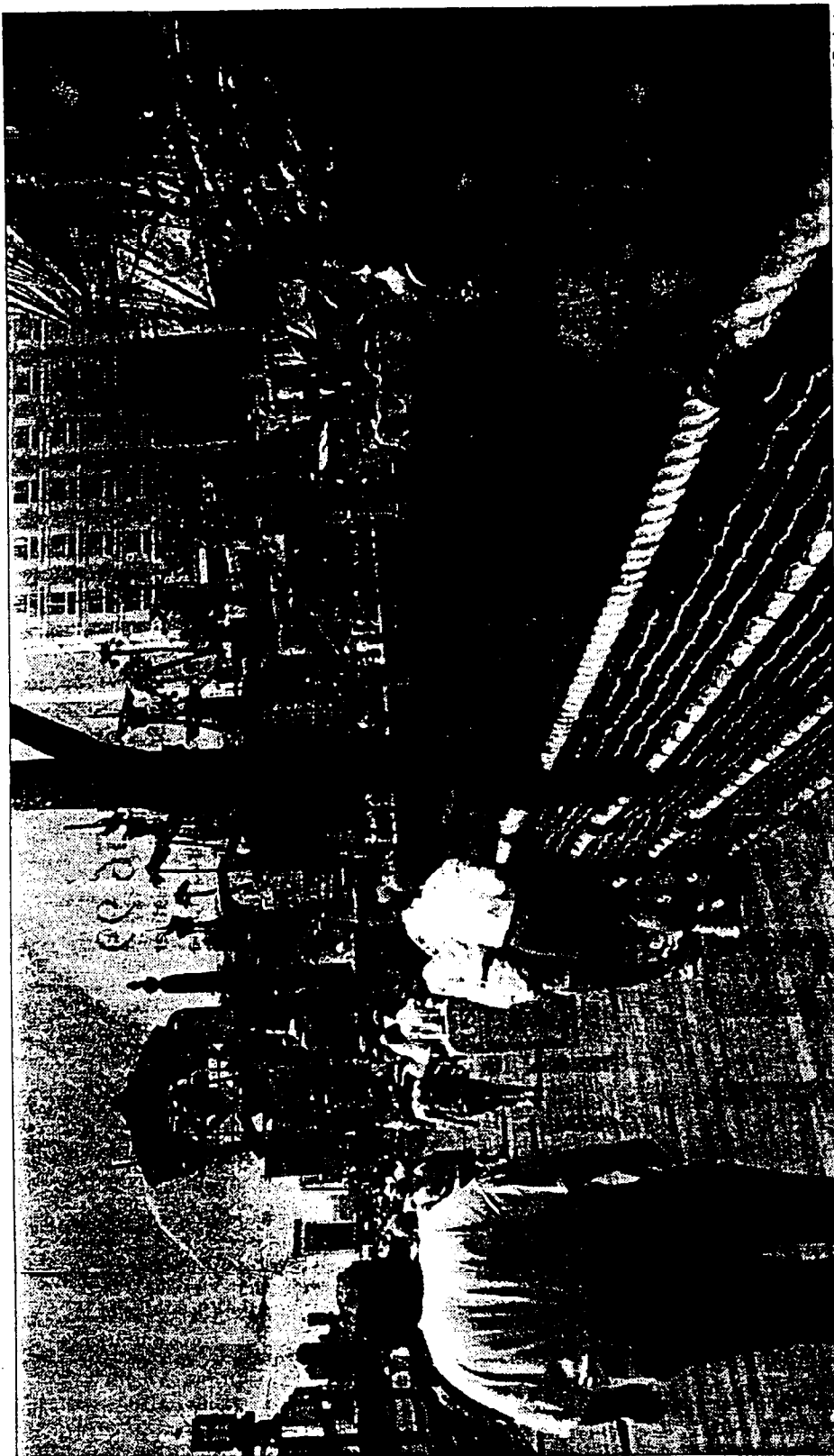
1 million acre-feet

\*One acre-foot is 326,000 gallons of water. An average household uses between one-half and one acre-foot of water per year.  
\*\*Mexico receives 1.9 million acre-feet per year.

Source: Census Bureau, Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Water Education Foundation





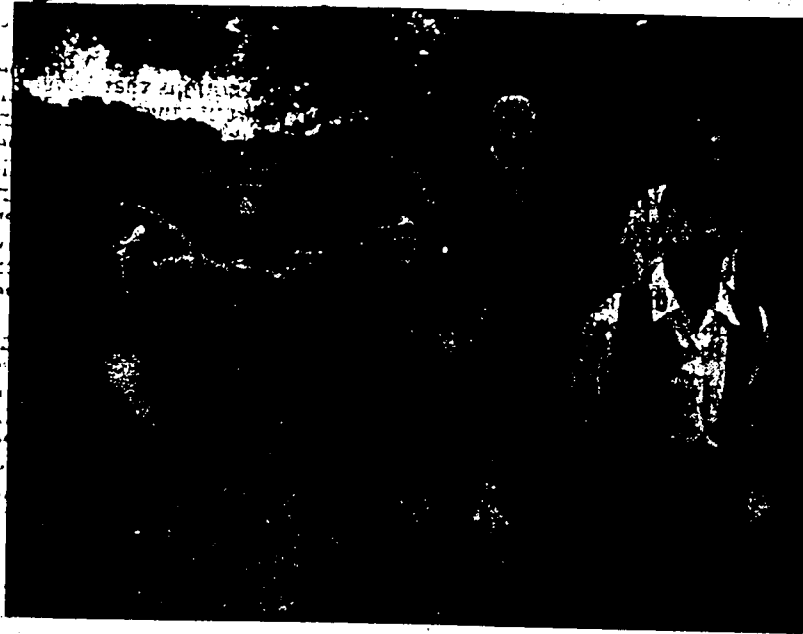


AP photo

Tourists watch pirates and sailors do battle on life-size sailing ships at Buccaneer Bay on the Strip in Las Vegas.

TIC 1981

## GROWING THIRST



AP photo

Assistant Interior Secretary Elizabeth Rieke (left) says there may not be enough water to meet Western requirements 50 years from now.

water is not fit for consumption.

"This is a desert," said Chris Brown, executive director of a Nevada community activist group called Citizen Alert. "The idea that everyone should have a lawn and a fountain in their backyard is nuts. People are using up to 12 times what they should be on their lawns. Essentially, we have people watering everyday, and during the day when it all evaporates."

Brown and other environmentalists contend that with enforcement of stringent conservation laws, Las Vegas' existing water source would stretch a lot further. Local water district officials have tried to discourage waste by raising rates up to 50 percent for big water users such as golf courses and municipal parks and threatening to fine abusers. But they say conservation will only stretch the city's supply until 2000.

With the crisis point approaching, Mulroy and her staff applied to the state in 1989 to tap into groundwater in 26 valleys in rural counties north of the city. They asked to lay \$1.5 billion of pipelines to ship 250,000 acre-feet of water a year to Las Vegas.

When the application became public, it created a furor in Nevada. Farmers, condemning the water waste in Las Vegas as a "Roman orgy," accused the city of trying to repeat Los Angeles' legendary water grab that dried up California's Owens Valley in the Sierra Nevada northeast of the

city. Environmentalists charged that the Nevada pumping would ruin trout streams and wilderness areas.

Hearings were scheduled, but wary Las Vegas officials recently put the groundwater proposal on the backburner. They filed an application with the state for permission to build a dam and pipeline project on the Virgin River that runs into the Colorado north of the city—an equally objectionable option for environmentalists who fear harm to the Virgin's ecosystem.

While the Virgin River decision is pending, Las Vegas officials hint that their real goal is to force a review of the law of the river, so they finally can take from the Colorado River water that shortsightedness denied them in the 1920s. Taking the water through existing pipelines to the Colorado would be far cheaper than building new ones to the Virgin River.

Only an agreement between all seven states and an act of Congress could change the nearly sacrosanct river law, a slim possibility. So Nevada officials have floated ideas such as long-term water leases or a "water bank" in which the states could store surplus water and sell it to each other. (Arizona and the four states in the upper Colorado basin—Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming—do not use their full allotments.)

Clinton administration officials

welcome the proposals and have announced their own plans for trying to "loosen the strings" of the river law without permanently taking away anyone's water, hoping to avoid another fruitless effort to forge agreement.

"What Nevada is doing, in the context of the discussions, is one of the most exciting things in Western water in half a century," said the Bureau of Reclamation's Beard.

More importantly, the Nevada water bank proposal was not rejected out of hand by Arizona and California, whose officials were angered when Las Vegas lobbied for a larger permanent share of the Colorado River and offered to buy water rights from private users in neighboring states. Proponents say the water bank proposal could end up providing more water for growing populations in both Nevada and California.

In Arizona, a water bank could provide money to pay back the federal government for the Central Arizona Project, a recently completed pipeline system from the Colorado. State officials count on the pipelines to supply growing Phoenix and Tucson in the future, but a plan for farmers to use it in the meantime has proven too expensive.

Another encouraging sign for

TIC 1982

Nevada is a recently approved pilot project in which Las Vegas and Los Angeles essentially purchase a small amount of Arizona farmers' unused groundwater. The deal was brokered by Nevada's Mulroy, who has become a prophet of water reform as chairman of a new group called the Western Urban Water Coalition.

Still, details on the water bank proposals remain to be worked out, and Arizona officials who fought California all the way into the 1960s to secure their share of the Colorado need to overcome years of suspicion. For their part, California officials vow to do whatever necessary to protect their share of the river's water.

"We thought we had the battle won in the 1960s, and now Nevada is talking about taking our water away from us," said Mark Killian, speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives. "Well, we feel we've paid our dues in preparing for our future, and Las Vegas is kind of a Johnny-come-lately."

Up against the wall, Las Vegas officials say they will push for an unprecedented agreement to keep their casinos flush and their lawns lush. Their only other option is an old-fashioned Western water war.

"Nothing was going to change until someone had a crisis," Mulroy said, "and Nevada had the crisis first."

**Next: New allies in the water wars.**

# TREASURE ISLAND

MYSTERY

The Adventure Festival

VILLA PARK ARGUS  
ELMHURST, IL 2,510  
2-TIMES/WEEK  
WEDNESDAY  
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ELMHURST PRESS  
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WOOD DALE PRESS  
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TIC 2036

EVILLE PRESS  
ELMHURST, IL 1,142  
2-TIMES/WEEK  
WEDNESDAY  
SEP 28 1994  
BURRELLE'S

49263R-3 Treasure Island

Inside:

The rebirth of Las Vegas  
Escape to Treasure Island  
Midwest riverboat roundup

October 1994 - Press Publications - Travel & Leisure Section

Author Robert Louis Stevenson couldn't dream up something this fantastic

# Treasure Island at the Mirage

Escape! Cover Story

TIC 2037



Treasure Island captures a sense of mystery and intrigue as depicted in Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel. Treasure Island represents the best of composite two picture view of Buccaneer Bay, where every 90 minutes, from mid-afternoon, until late evening, visitors are treated to an authentic sea battle

TIC 2038

B31



Susan B. Douglas/For Escapell  
the new breed of Las Vegas resorts where gaming and entertainment are blended into a total resort experience. Shown is a battle between the Hispaniola and the HMS Britannia. We won't tell you who wins, but you can be sure the battle is spectacular.

**L**AS VEGAS — One look at the massive marquee outside this towering hotel — with its haunting skull and menacing razor sharp daggers — and guests will immediately know that they are in store for an enchanting visit to an island filled with so many wonders that Robert Louis Stevenson, author of the classic adventure tale — "Treasure Island" — would have a hard time imagining such earthly delights.

Treasure Island opened its doors on Oct. 26, 1993, and is a sister property to the equally mesmeric Mirage, which is conveniently located next door and connected by a handy monorail system.

Indeed, Treasure Island at the Mirage — the newest jewel in the crown of Las Vegas hotel entrepreneur Stephen A. Wynn — is an idyllic pirate's village where guests can escape from the rigors of their daily routine and try their hand at the pirate life.

Treasure Island is built of pieces and parts of booty that the pirates have plundered from around the world. If you will, let's take a brief tour:

#### **Dramatic Island Entry**

The adventure of Treasure Island begins as Las Vegas Boulevard is transformed into a long wooden dock traversing the waters of Buccaneer Bay. As guests approach Treasure Island they find themselves transported to an 18th century bustling pirate village, highlighted by Buccaneer Bay village.

Buccaneer Bay village is a rich pirate's capital. When resting between travels over the Seven Seas, the pirates made their home at this bay village. All the businesses necessary to keep any city alive are replicated here — a foundry, a warehouse, a sail repair shop and any necessary commercial businesses. It is here, within the waters of Buccaneer Bay, the excitement begins.

#### **Sea Battle on the 'Strip'**

A British frigate, the HMS Britannia, steals around Skull Point and spies the pirate ship Hispaniola unloading its booty. The British challenge the pirates to surrender. Brazenly, the pirates refuse. A full-scale pyrotechnic war to the finish ensues, with huge masts snapping and plunging into the sea, buildings exploding into flames and sailors catapulting through the air.

Just as the pirates appear to be losing the battle, the pirate captain swings across the ship from the bow to the

stem, grabs a smoldering ember and lights the fuse on the final cannon. The fateful shot hits the Britannia dead center. The Britannia tilts to one side and slowly sinks into the waters below as the British captain stands defiantly on deck and goes down with his ship.

#### **Pirate Village — Interior**

Guests enter Treasure Island through Buccaneer Bay's main gate into a pirate village which serves as the town plaza and the hub of the resort's various attractions. Here, the 18th century has been faithfully reproduced, bringing to life the splendor of the pirate era.

The interior of the resort replicates a pirate city. Balconies line the walkways and lanterns illuminate what appear to be shadows of pirates moving through the rooms. Many of the railings and columns that line the Treasure Island walkways were taken from the Old World palaces they once graced.

#### **Fine Dining at the Island**

Treasure Island features two gourmet

And, it's worth noting, that if you happen to be dining — as Susan and I were — while a sea battle is blazing away outside your dining room window, the waiters encourage guests to get up and take a closer look.

Meanwhile, your food is kept warm with domed plate covers or even returned to the kitchen for safekeeping, so you don't have to worry about missing a bite or a battle!

#### **Family Dining at the Island**

Treasure Island also features more informal, relaxed dining experiences. These restaurants offer a variety of moderately priced choices for those with hearty appetites or those seeking a light snack.

**The Lookout Cafe** — Open 24 hours a day, this coffee shop gives guests the feeling they are dining under the hull of a man-o-war. Overlooking the lushly landscaped swimming pool, the Lookout Cafe offers a vast array of menu items including salads, sandwiches, all-

dining experiences in striking settings.

**The Plank** — Specializing in mesquite grilled seafood and steak, this pirate's library is warmly lit by wall sconces and chandeliers stolen by the pirates from around the world. The walls are lined with bookcases filled with old books and artifacts from the pirates' adventures on the Seven Seas.

The Plank features such sumptuous entrees as the Captain's Feast of broiled lobster, shrimp scampi and grilled scallops or The Edwardian combination of a succulent lamb chop and lobster tail.

**The Buccaneer Bay Club** — Located on the second level and overlooking Buccaneer Bay, each window in this intimate space overlooks the excitement of the battle below and the Las Vegas "Strip" beyond.

While enjoying the panoramic view, guests may indulge themselves with the Cornish Game Hen, the sauteed Chilean Sea Bass or the Shrimp Scampi saute.

American breakfasts, both lunch and dinner entrees and exotic desserts.

**The Black Spot Grille** — Designed as a sidewalk cafe, the Black Spot Grille overlooks the action of the casino as well as the bustle of the shopping promenade. This casual Italian atmosphere features a variety of pasta and salads.

**The Smuggler's Cantina** — For the pirate on the run, the Smuggler's Cantina provides a quick bite to eat featuring specialties from South of the Border. Located in the heart of the shopping promenade, the cantina serves lunch and dinner.

**The Treasure Island Buffet** — A variety of tempting delights is offered for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breakfast features American cuisine, while lunch and dinner are served in three separate settings, offering American, Italian or Chinese selections. The American Buffet is an "outdoor" dockside restaurant in New Orleans featuring shingled roofs and a cobblestone



floor. The second buffet is an Italian street scene offering both "indoor" and "outdoor" seating. The Chinese Buffet is completely "outdoors" as guests look through garden windows at the Hong Kong harbor as it was when the pirates lived in the 17th century.

**The Seven Seas Snack Bar** — For a lighter bite, the snack bar offers a variety of seafood selections, chowders, sandwiches and burgers. Breakfast is so available.

**Sweet Revenge** — Serving freshly made soft-serve ice cream, frozen yogurt and delicious sundaes, Sweet Revenge is sure to shiver ye timbers.

### **The Shopping Promenade**

From that forgotten toothbrush and a favorite magazine to designer fashions, stunning jewelry or exotic treasures from Morocco and around the world, Treasure Island offers a full complement of retail stores including:

**Damsels in Dis'Dress** — Women's contemporary sportswear and accessories;

**Captain Kids** — Children's logo merchandise, plush animals and toys;

**The Treasure Chest** — Watches, fine and fashion jewelry;

**Loot n' Booty** — Themed-logo merchandise, sundries and exotic Moroccan treasures;

**The Buccaneer Bay Shoppe** — Treasure Island logo merchandise;

**The Crow's Nest** — Treasure Island and Cirque du Soleil logo items.

### **Pirate's Life In Mutiny Bay**

For those who dare to try their hand at the pirate life, intrigue and merri-mingle in Mutiny Bay. Treasure Island's entertainment center offers an array of activities set in an atmosphere of drama, mystery and fantasy.

Designed as an ancient Moorish castle, Mutiny Bay features state-of-the-art video games, pinball and electronically simulated games. At the center of Mutiny Bay are the Midway games of skill, where hopeful pirates can try their luck and win treasures aplenty.

### **Magnifique Cirque du Soleil**

Cirque du Soleil brings entertainment in Las Vegas to an entirely new level of excitement. The world-renowned Montreal-based company has been creating innovative circus productions with dazzling theatricality since the birth of the company in 1984.

With the introduction of a captivating new show, "Mystere," Cirque du Soleil brings to Treasure Island a sense of creativity and imagination which are the ideal complement for the new resort.

"Mystere" features 70 artists from around the world, including acrobats, clowns, comedians, actors, singers and musicians. The spacious 1,500-seat showroom, Cirque's first year-round facility, was built specifically for this production.

If you happened to see Cirque du Soleil when the troupe was in Chicago last summer, then you've only seen a sliver of what the company is capable of doing.

"Mystere" is one of the finest productions I've ever had the pleasure of viewing — here or abroad. Antics on and off the stage keep the show running at a pirate's pace. Without a doubt, I'd have to rate the show four doubloons!

**Doubloon Saloon** — If guests are looking to dance the night away, the Doubloon Saloon, located in the heart of the casino, is the place to be.

The design inspiration was a cavern lavished by the plunder from pirate ships bound for the capitals of Europe.

Here, guests can enjoy the action of the lounge's state-of-the-art light and sound show or enjoy a cocktail at the bar. The Caribbean rhythms of the lively and energetic group Panama are featured daily.

### **The Treasure Island Casino**

No, I didn't forget the casino. Treasure Island's casino continues the tradition of extraordinary gaming rooms for which Mirage Resorts has become known.

The casino has the feel of an old Caribbean pirate's hideaway. Decorated in rich gold and white-washed tones, the casino is highlighted by treasure, plundered by the pirates from foreign lands and brought to their new home, Treasure Island.

Yes, you might come away empty handed. However, you'll have had such a wonderful time handing over your cash that you'll be smiling all the way to

■ TREASURE, Page 14

## Escapel Cover Story

### ■ TREASURE

from Page 13  
the change booth.

#### Rooms and Suites

The Treasure Island guest rooms — all 2,900 of them, including 212 suites in three 36-story towers — are traditionally decorated in soft earth tones.

Each room features floor-to-ceiling glass with a spectacular view of either the mountains, Buccaneer Bay and the "Strip," or the pool area.

The European fabrics were designed and manufactured specifically for Treasure Island and can be found nowhere else in the world. These fabrics combined with custom-woven lattice carpeting provide a traditional background for the bleached wood furnishings.

The guest rooms and suites convey a residential feeling for an added sense of comfort and relaxation. They are in fact among the most comfortable and user-friendly rooms that we've encountered on this or any other "Island."

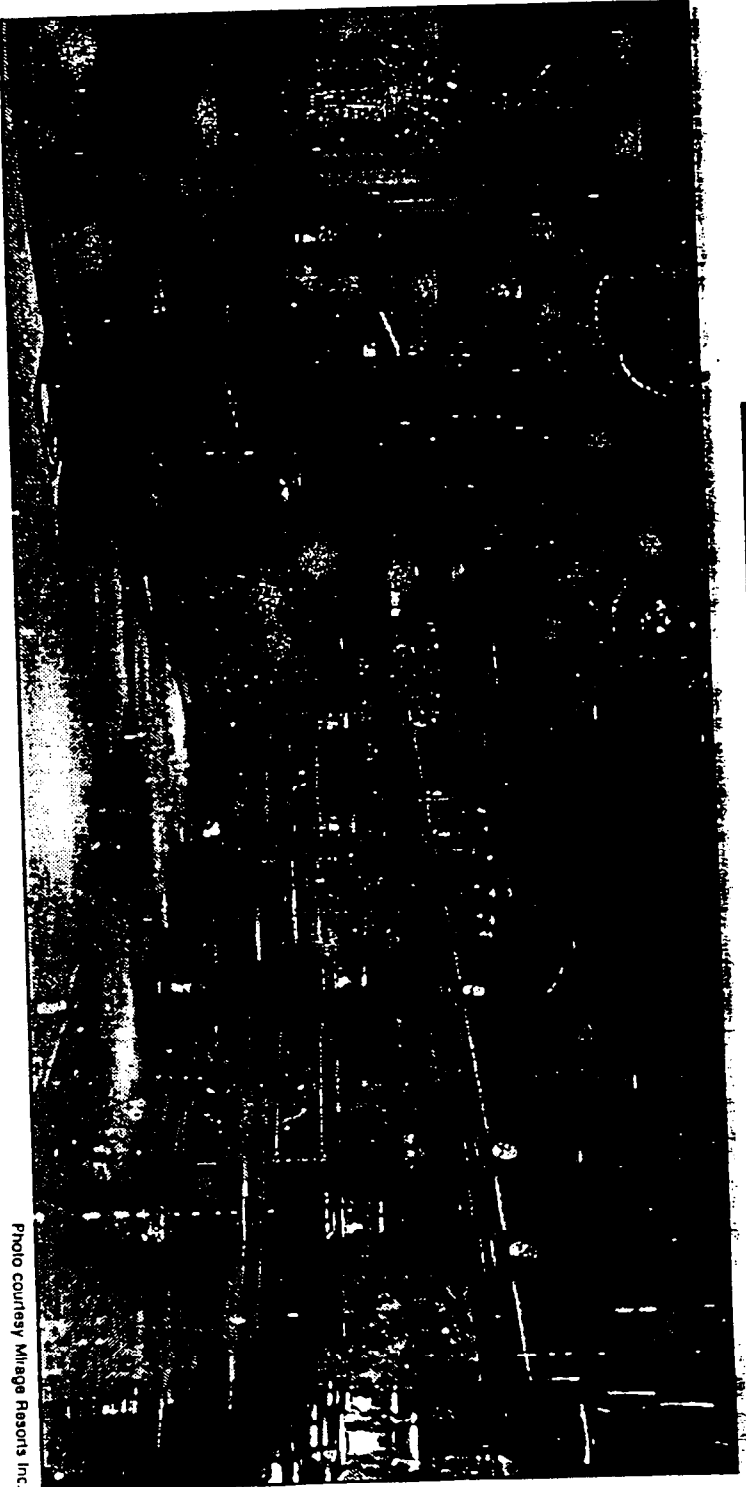


Photo courtesy Mileage Resorts Inc.

Upon checking in at the elegant Treasure Island, guests may choose to relax in Captain Morgan's Lounge. Here, elaborate chandeliers composed from the bones of those who dared to defy ancient pirates are finished in gold leaf and aged to give a sense of intrigue.

TIC 2042

operation in all phases of its design.

### Spa and Beauty Salon

Treasure Island's Spa and Beauty Salon offer guests the latest in fitness, health and beauty programs in a luxurious, elegant and relaxing environment.

Staffed by fitness experts, the health club features separate men's and women's facilities, a state-of-the-art exercise room, sauna, steam-bath, whirlpool and massages. The Beauty Salon offers a full complement of services including hair stylists, manicurists and aestheticians.

### Meetings, Conventions

Treasure Island offers business travelers a personalized setting in which to conduct business.

The resort's 18,000 square feet of convention space is conveniently located on the property's second floor, making it easily accessible from guest rooms, yet distinctly separate, from other activities.

Groups from five to 1,000 can be accommodated in this

flexible space.

### Getting to the Island

There are literally a dozen or more carriers with non-stop and connecting service to Las Vegas from Chicago. We shopped around and found a good buy on Phoenix based America West.

Our mid-morning, non-stop flight from Chicago's Midway Airport proved to be a pleasant surprise.

This was our first time on America West and we found the flight crew and ground personnel at check-in to be extremely capable.

And, one thing we noticed about Midway Airport staffers. They just seemed a bit friendlier and less stressed than their counterparts at O'Hare. It could have been my imagination, but I don't think so.

Flying time to Las Vegas was about 3 1/2 hours, although the time went by rather quickly. We checked out both the coach and first class sections on America West, and overall the carrier definitely has its act together.

While it might not be one of

"the big boys" such as American or United, you'd never be able to tell it. And, we wouldn't hesitate to book another America West flight.

### Island Reservations

Although we have no reservations in recommending Treasure Island, it does require reservations to stay there. Up-to-date information on availability can be obtained by calling 1-800-944-7444.

Nightly mid-week rates begin at \$59 for a standard room, double occupancy. Discounted packages and group rates are also available. It's best to check with a travel

agent who can readily supply room and flight information.

Don't be surprised if you come across a "sold out" sign on the entrance. Both Treasure Island and the Mirage have been running at a phenomenal occupancy rate of just under 100 percent during the past year.

Yes, they're that popular, and once you've been, you'll understand why the Mirage Resorts properties have developed such a faithful following since their opening.

Please excuse me, I believe I hear a cannon firing in the background. We must be under attack!

### The Wedding Chapels

Created in a traditional European style, the Treasure Island wedding chapels feature marble-lined altars and exquisite floral arrangements. One chapel seats 65 guests and the other 35.

Professional bridal consultants assigned to each wedding assist in all of the arrangements, including reception planning, formal wear rental and securing the officiant to perform the ceremony.

Photographic, video and floral needs can be met on site and any last minute accessory needs are available at the wedding boutique located within the wedding chapels.

And, if you are thinking that a wedding chapel, just because it's in a Las Vegas hotel, is going to be something less than fashionable, you couldn't be any further from the truth.

We happened to be touring the facility while a ceremony was about to take place, and it was really quite touching. You could tell that this was a class

TRAVELAGE - MID-AMERICA

CHICAGO, IL  
WEEKLY 21.000

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**ISLAND OF ROMANCE**

A two-night Winter Romance package at Treasure Island in Las Vegas runs Nov. 27-Jan. 19, Sunday through Thursday nights.

Included are champagne on arrival, breakfast in bed, admission to the hotel's spa and a photo keepsake. Cost is \$119-\$140 per person, double, depending on room type.

The package is subject to availability and is not available to meeting attendees or during the holidays.

Contact 800-944-7444 for individuals and 800-944-7711 for groups of 20 or more rooms.

TIC 2158

B37

COUNTRY SAMPLER  
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**Happy Trails**

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## BABY STROLLERS AND HIGH ROLLERS

*With battling frigates and sprawling amusement parks, new Las Vegas resorts are odds-on favorites for family vacations.*

**T**hink of Las Vegas as a fascinating, but basically harmless, beast with flashing eyes, a whirring roar, and grasping tentacles. It's America's fastest-growing city—nearly one million residents find its desert landscape with imported trees and exaggerated architecture irresistible. Another 25 million of us visit each year, lured by its neon blaze and honeyed promises of easy money.

Lately, this monster has been stirring. Three new mega-resorts—MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park, Luxor, and Treasure Island—have opened within the last year-and-a-half. All offer more than gambling, and all seem to welcome baby strollers as well as high rollers.

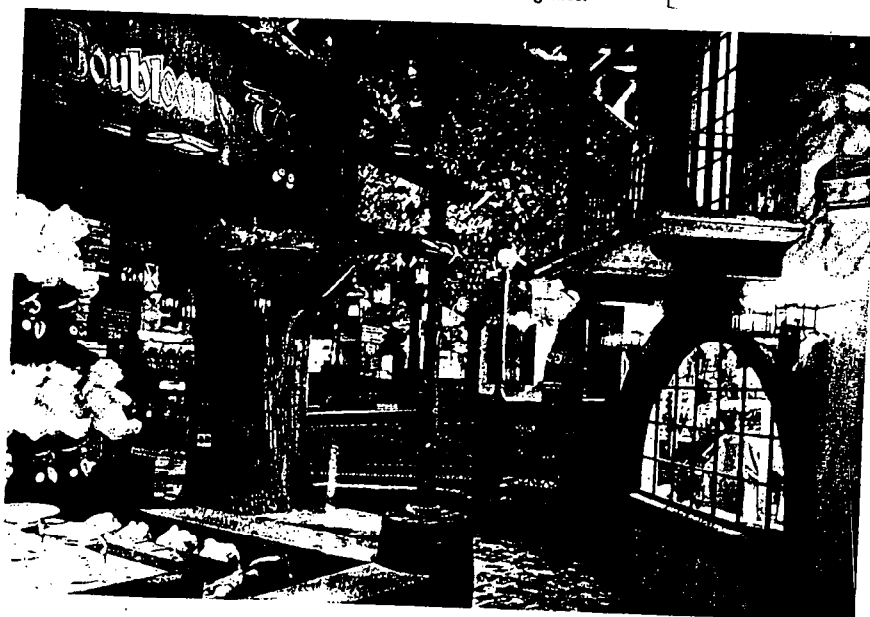
Theories abound about this latest incarnation. Some think the popularity of riverboat and reservation gambling has fostered competitive panic. Some say casinos are responding to the needs of business travelers who bring their families on trips to convention-heavy towns like Vegas. Others feel it's a scheme to inculcate the gaming instinct in wee visitors. But, demurs Mike Donahue, a spokesperson for the city, "The real intention is simply to make Las Vegas a more complete destination. People who have wanted to travel with their kids can now experience Las Vegas."

TIC 2193

B38



Clockwise, from top: a giant Sphinx guards Luxor, the Emerald City sparkles at MGM Grand, and Treasure Island's arcade promises fun and games.



Country Sampler's **WEST**

That's always been true, to a point. Since 1968, Circus Circus, a gambling resort featuring circus acts, has been entertaining the little ones while mom and dad trotted off to the slots.

Still, Las Vegas remains primarily a playground for adults; children are taboo on the gaming floors and in nightclubs. Some of the billed-for-kids shows feature scantily clad women, and sidewalk racks advertise girlie shows.



Warnings aside, here's a look at the new family-friendly Las Vegas:

In a town where the major properties feature lucky "7s" and "11s" in their phone numbers, *va gotta* have a gimmick. And, ever since the 1989 opening of the volcano erupting Mirage, gimmicks have spewed forth like so much volcanic ash. The biggest one of them all, so far, comes from MGM Grand (702-891-1111 or 800-929-1111), the world's largest hotel, with just over 5,000 rooms.

The theme at the Grand is movies (perhaps an unspoken apology by major shareholder Kirk Kerkorian, who broke film aficionados' hearts when he razed the old MGM back lots in the 1980s). The movies are alive, well, and rolling here. The feature attraction is "The Wizard of

Oz," with strolling characters and a seven-story recreation of the Emerald City, complete with green crystal spires and a yellow-brick road. Elsewhere on the property are movie sets, including a Casablanca scene, a New York street, an Asian village, Tumbleweed Gulch, and ... you get the moving picture.

Aside from its enormous casino—171,000 square feet guarded by an 88-foot replica of the MGM lion—and acres of rooms, the Grand boasts its own action park, Grand Adventures, populated by cartoons-come-to-life and enough heart-thumping rides to keep even the most restless kid amused. All rides and shows can be enjoyed for a daylong fee of \$15 for adults; \$10 for kids (guests receive some discounts).

The King Looney Youth Activity center features puzzles and puppets for your preschoolers, a mini pool table, Ping-Pong, and board games for older kids, an arts and crafts room, and a lounge area showing children's films.

When it's time to nosh, the choices are boundless. Kids will gravitate toward Nathan's Famous and Hildegard's Ice Cream Parlor. Adults will appreciate Wolfgang Puck's cafe, serving the famous Hollywood chef's signature pizza and pastas; Coyote Cafe's Southwestern menu has received accolades. Six other restaurants also await hungry hordes.

For a Hollywood-like take on the land of pharaohs, Luxor (702-262-4000 or 800-288-1000) is the place. Egyptomania is all the rage here, from the structure—a 30-

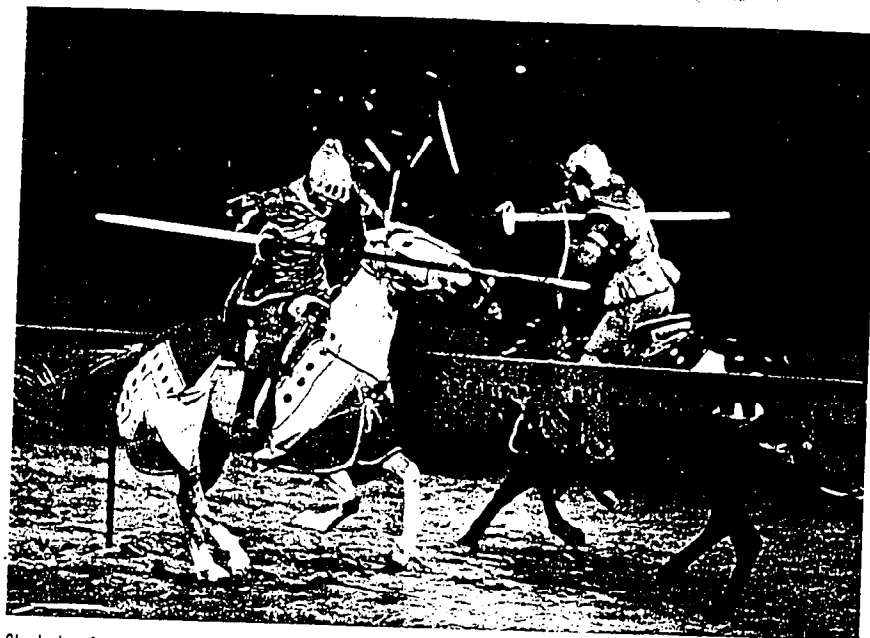
# Happy Trails



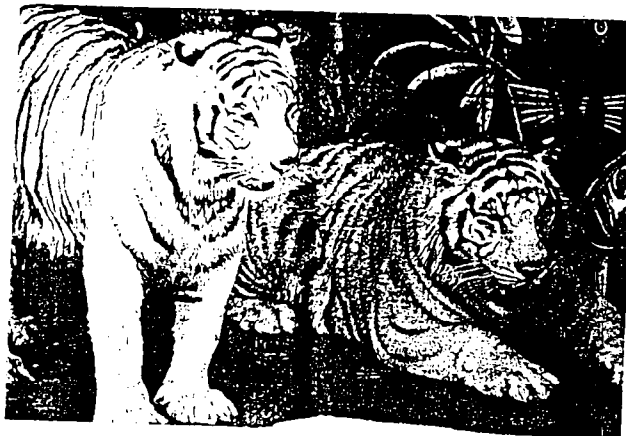
story pyramid that indelibly changes the skyline of the Strip—to the “River Nile” flowing quietly along the interior perimeter of the building. In the what-will-they-think-of-next department: a 10-story Sphinx with glowing laser-beam eyes mans the front entrance.

Among the rides here are the groovy “inclimators,” elevators that zoom and rock at a 39-degree angle along the sides of the pyramid. More traditional outlets for kids include Sega Virtualand, 18,000 square feet of high-tech entertainment created by the company whose video games have hypnotized legions of teens. Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid is a participatory adventure where razzle-dazzle special effects envelope those bold enough to enter. The detailed reproduction of King Tut’s tomb in the building’s basement will intrigue teens. A barge ride along the River Nile winds its way through catacombs and tunnels as it circles the gaming floor.

When you tire of walking like an Egyptian, seven themed restaurants are ready to serve you everything from French cuisine to Pacific Rim dishes. The Luxor is adjacent to Excalibur (702-597-7777 or 800-944-7444). This turreted extravaganza offers another trip back in time—to medieval England. There’s a Fantasy Lane, complete with craft booths, medieval games, gypsy carts, strolling costumed entertainers, and two 48-seat magic motion machines. The main attrac-



Clockwise, from top left: the skull-and-crossbones sign of Treasure Island beckons; knights joust at Excalibur’s King Arthur’s Tournament; the Mirage’s volcano lights up the night; kids convene in the King Looey Youth Activity Center at The MGM Grand; nightlife abounds inside the Luxor pyramid, and rare, white tigers lounge at the Mirage.



tion here is King Arthur’s Tournament, a rousing, jousting affair of honor and bravery, yours for \$29.95 per person, including a dinner feast.

For a battle of a different sort, try the pirate-themed **Treasure Island** (702-894-7111 or 800-944-7444), the latest entry from Stephen Wynn, founder of Mirage, the resort that started the whole more-than-just-gambling phase. Six times a day, a British frigate and a pirate ship scrimmage in a fiery cannon battle staged by 30 actors on full-scale ships sailing around Buccaneer Bay. Just about everything—except the gambling—stops when the battle ensues, with diners crowding around windows and children egging on their favorite rogue.

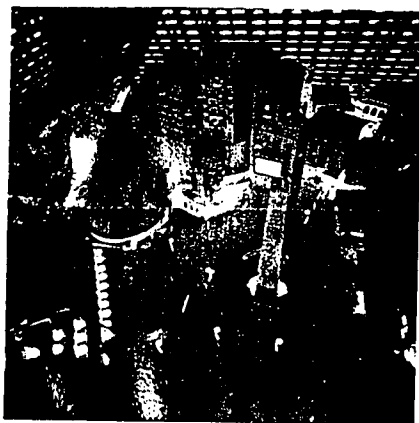
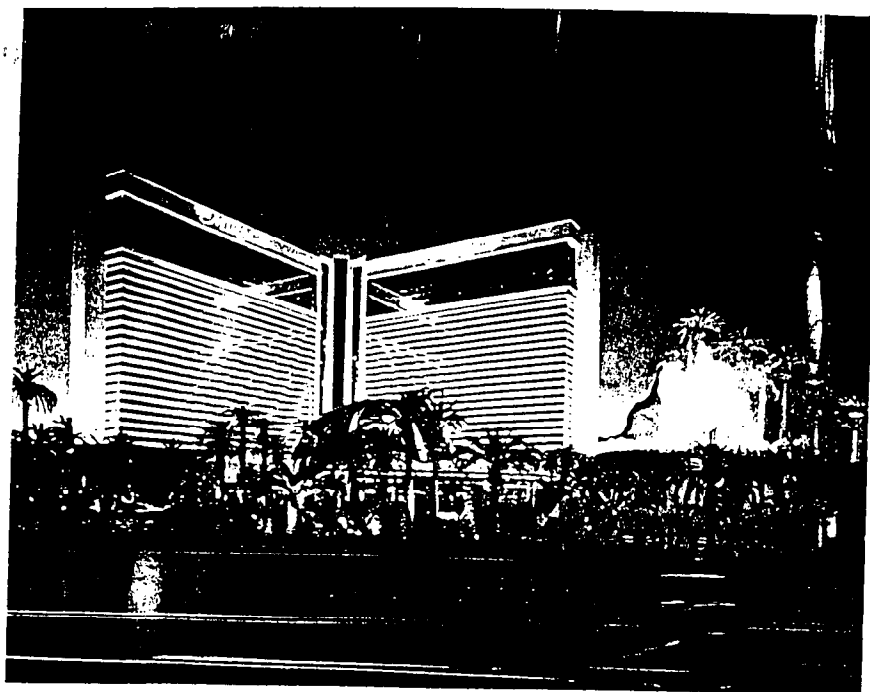
Upon entering the resort, guests find themselves in a replica of an old sailing village inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson passages. Kids move on to Mutiny

Bay, featuring video games and other arcade standards. That’s about the only move the hotel has made to cater to the younger set. Indeed, it often bristles at being included as part of the new family-friendly Las Vegas. Restaurants range from the 24-hour Lookout Cafe and Sweet Revenge, an ice cream emporium, to the Plank, for a more sophisticated evening of steak and seafood.

If you’re up for a splurge, treat your family to the astounding acrobatic performances of the French-Canadian troupe, Cirque du Soleil. Shows are twice nightly, at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. Tickets are \$52.80; half price for children under 12.

Treasure Island is linked to the lushly tropical **Mirage** (702-791-7111 or 800-627-6667), with its rumbling volcano, Dolphin Habitat (an educational exhibit starring seven dolphins), and its anomalous, pseudo-Himalayan Tiger Habitat, featuring





## MORE FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

**B**elieve it or not, Las Vegas offers more than casinos, most notably its stunning desert surroundings. Here are a few fun spots to visit when you're weary of the slots:

**Ethel M's Chocolate Factory and Cactus Garden** is a kid's dream come true. About 12 miles east of the city, on the way to Hoover Dam, the factory offers tours daily, and, best of all, free samples. Outside the factory is a beautiful botanical garden featuring some 100 varieties of cacti (702-458-8864).

**Wet 'n Wild**, the area's 15-acre water theme park, is closed during the winter months, but reopens in March. Kids will have a blast splashing in more than a dozen rides (702-737-3819).

**Lied Children's Discovery Museum**, housed in the city's central library, features more than 100 hands-on exhibits that encourage children to think about their relationships with machines, money, sports, work, and themselves (702-382-3445).

What better home for the **Guinness World of Records Museum** than this quintessential town of superlatives? A surefire hit with kids intrigued by the biggest, highest, smallest, and tallest (702-792-3766).

**Las Vegas Natural History Museum** offers standard mounted-animal fare, but it also sports a 300-gallon aquarium teeming with live sharks and other sea creatures (702-384-3466).

Further afield, you can get a taste of the area's wonderful natural beauty and splendor. Thirty miles east of the city, the **Hoover Dam** is still Nevada's number-one tourist attraction. A marvel of civil engineering, the massive dam celebrates its 60th anniversary this year (702-293-8367).

The 550 miles of shoreline of **Lake Meade**, created by Hoover Dam's back-up of the Colorado River, provides a majestic respite for quiet reflection—something you may desperately need after a stay in Vegas. Boat rentals, picnic grounds, and plenty of activities are available (702-293-8907).

Twenty miles west of Vegas, **Red Rock Canyon** offers splendid vistas typical of the Southwest. Hiking trails, rock-climbing paths, and a car route provide access to this serene landscape, but you may just want to sit still and listen to the wind. Beginning in March, a superb panorama of color unfolds as red, purple, orange, and yellow wildflowers blossom (702-363-1921).

rare, white tigers owned by house illusionists Siegfried & Roy.

**Circus Circus** (702-734-0410 or 800-44-CIRCUS), the granddaddy of family-friendly casinos, boasts a recently constructed water theme park, Grand Slam Canyon, highlighted by the Canyon Blaster—a four-loop, double-corkscrew roller coaster. Also at the theme park are rides for smaller kids, eight fully animated life-size dinosaurs, free magic shows, the ubiquitous video arcade, and an ongoing cavalcade of free circus acts.

Room rates for each of these hotels fluctuate, depending on occupancy levels. In general, though, standard rooms cost between \$59 and \$89. Reserve at least two months in advance—even with some 25,000 hotel rooms, the town is almost always completely booked.

Text: JoAnn Carico

CITY OVERVIEW

SANITARY MAINTENANCE

MILWAUKEE, WI  
MONTHLY 18,000

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# Las Vegas

UP TO 97% PAYBACK ON 5 YEAR PROGRAM

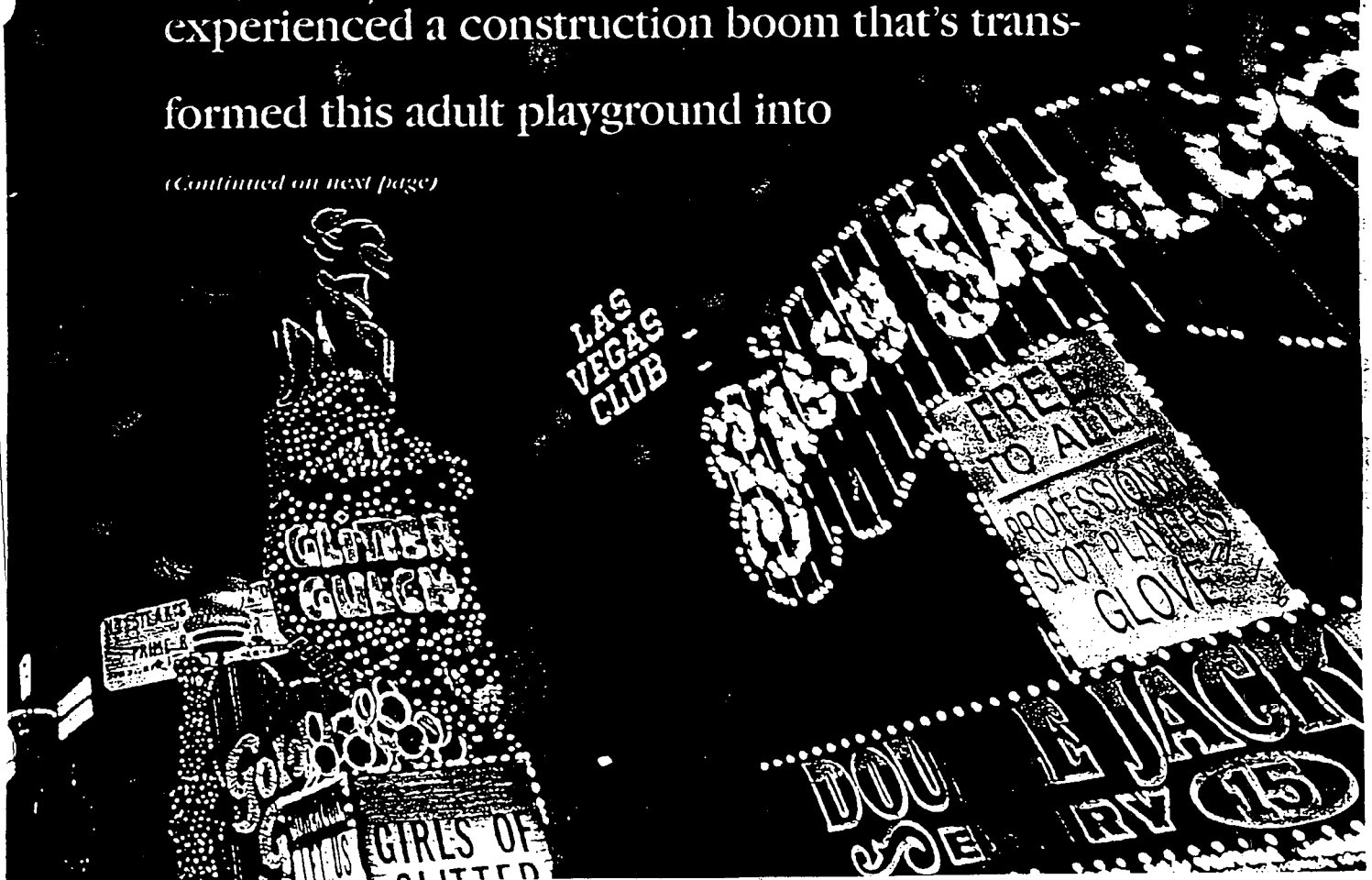
BY MARIANA JOVANOVIC

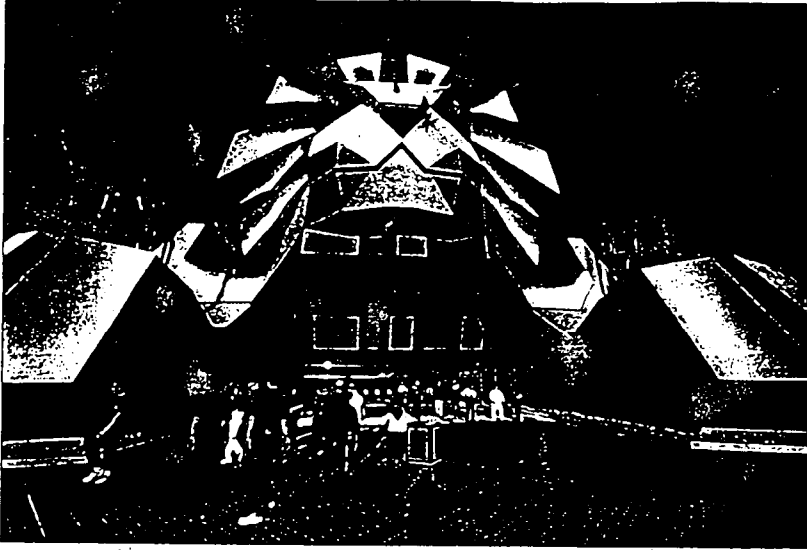
Contributing Editor

SINCE THE LAST ISSA CONVENTION was held in Las Vegas in 1991, the "entertainment capital of the world" has changed dramatically. While the bright lights and non-stop gambling still permeate every corner of this desert oasis, Las Vegas has put on a bold new face.

Indeed, during the past three years, the city has experienced a construction boom that's transformed this adult playground into

*(Continued on next page)*





The famous MGM lion greets visitors to the world's largest hotel, casino and theme park.

a fun-for-the-whole-family fantasy land.

New mega-resorts now dominate the world-famous Strip, including the \$375 million Luxor, the \$475 million Treasure Island and the \$1 billion MGM Grand.

Symbolic of the "new" Vegas, none of these behemoth facilities — which alone account for a whopping 10,426

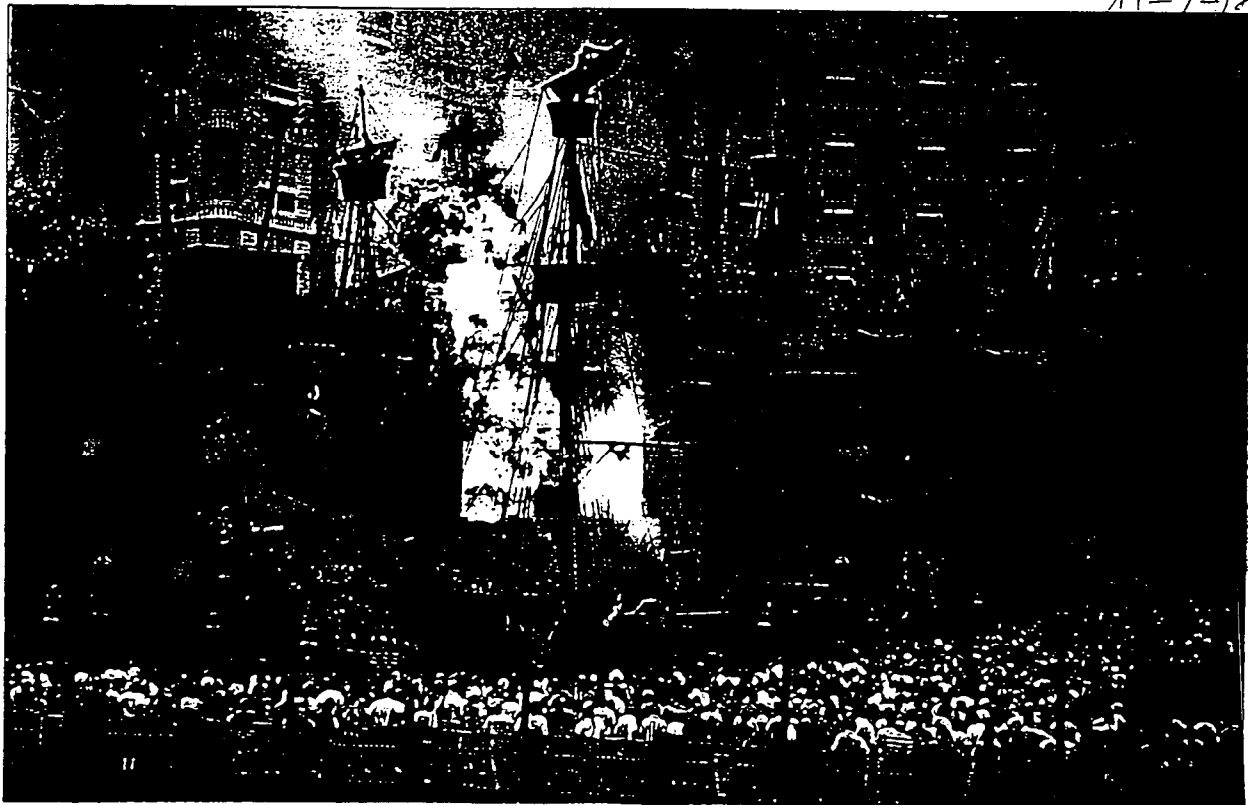
hotel rooms — feature neon signs on their facades. Instead, they promote elaborate theme parks and family-oriented activities reminiscent of Disneyland or an old-fashioned World's Fair. But, there's still plenty of gambling action — in fact, the MGM Grand boasts the world's largest casino.

With a proliferation of casinos now dotting the Midwest and other parts of the country, offering close-to-home gambling opportunities, investors are attempting to lure crowds to Las Vegas by providing family entertainment. According to a tourism official, Las Vegas is now "an adult destination to which you can bring your family."

Early results indicate that this "gamble" is paying off, since the number of visitors to Las Vegas increased 7.3 percent in 1993, to 23.5 million, compared to 21.9 million in 1992, according to the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

If the key indicator of a city's business climate is a successful economy, the numbers prove that business is booming in and around Las Vegas. The millions of tourists and conventioners who visit Las Vegas each year spend more than \$15 billion, including gaming revenues. And the city's average room occupancy rate in 1992 was 83.9 percent — well above the national av-

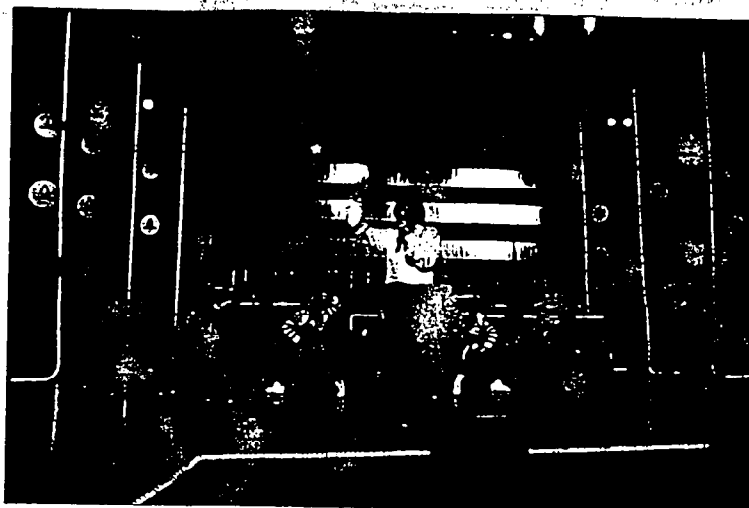
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Pirates wage a spectacular "battle" every 90 minutes at Treasure Island's Buccaneer Bay.

Las Vegas offers an endless variety of lavish stage shows, world-famous singers, unbelievable magicians, bone-tickling comedians and non-stop entertainment. Following is an alphabetical listing of on-going, popular attractions at local hotels.

For specific show times, ticket prices and other details, call the number listed (Las Vegas is located in the 702 area code). For special "headliner" acts, such as Englebert Humperdinck or Wayne Newton, consult a current issue of *Showbiz Weekly*, *Vegas Visitor*, *What's On in Las Vegas* or *Where To in Las Vegas* (available free-of-charge throughout the city in hotels and restaurants).



Las Vegas shows are famous for singing, dancing and colorful costumes.

#### ALADDIN

736-0111

*Showroom*

Indefinite, Country Tonite

#### BALLY'S

739-4111

*Jubilee Theater*

Indefinite, Jubilee!

Bally's Theatre

Indefinite, Catch A Rising Star

#### CIRCUS CIRCUS

734-0410

*Main Arena*

Indefinite, World's Greatest Circus Acts

#### DEBBIE REYNOLDS

734-0711

*Debbie's Star Theatre*

A Musical Revue Featuring Debbie,

Rip Taylor & The Uptown Country

Singers

#### EXCALIBUR

597-7600

*King Arthur's Arena*

Indefinite, King Arthur's Tournament

#### FLAMINGO HILTON

733-3111

*Showroom*

Indefinite, City Lites

*Bugsy's Celebrity Theatre*

Indefinite, American Superstars

#### HACIENDA

739-8911

*Fiesta Showroom*

Lance Burton, World Champion  
Magician

#### HARRAH'S

369-5000

*Commander's Theatre*

Spellbound, Concert of Illusion

#### IMPERIAL PALACE

794-3261

*Imperial Theatre*

Indefinite, Legends in Concert

#### LADY LUCK

477-3000

*Stardust Theatre*

Melinda, the First Lady of Magic

#### HILTON

732-5755

*Showroom*

Indefinite, Starlight Express

#### MAXIM

731-4300

Comedy Cabaret

#### MIRAGE

791-7111

*Theatre Mirage*

Siegfried & Roy

#### RIVIERA

794-9433

*Versailles Theater*

Indefinite, Splash

*Mardi Gras Plaza*

Indefinite, An Evening At La Cage,

Starring Frank Marino

Crazy Girls Revue

An Evening At The Improv

#### SANDS

733-5454

*Copa Room*

Indefinite, Viva Las Vegas

#### SAHARA

732-6213

*Stardust Theatre*

Indefinite, Enter The Night

#### STARDUST

737-2515

*Congo Theatre*

Indefinite, Boy-lesque

#### TREASURE ISLAND

894-7722

*Cirque du Soleil*

#### TROPICANA

739-2714

*Tiffany Showroom*

Indefinite, Folies Bergere

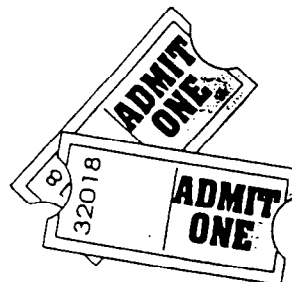
Indefinite, The Comedy Stop

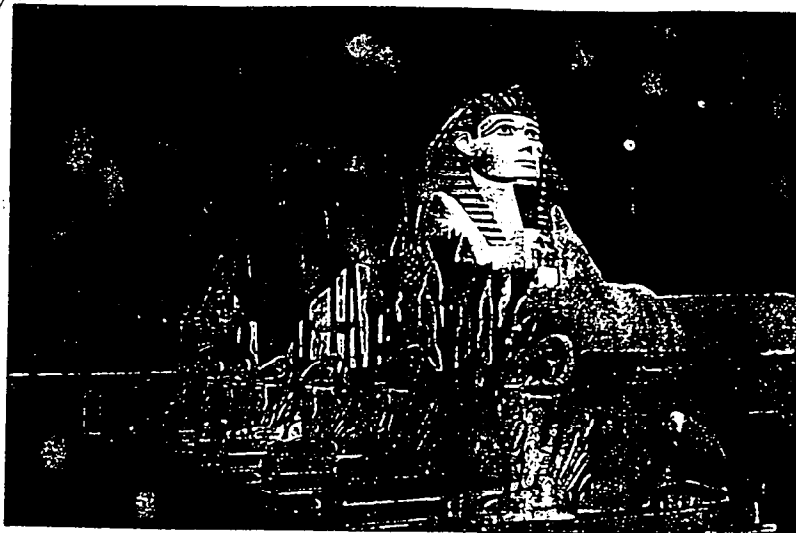
#### VEGAS WORLD

382-2000

*Galaxy Theater*

Indefinite, Memones of Elvis





The Luxor transforms modern-day Las Vegas into ancient Egypt.

erage of 61 percent.

With nearly double its 1980 population, Las Vegas is the fastest-growing metropolitan area in the United States. In fact, the city is growing at a rate of more than 1,100 new residents a week. From 1990 to 1992 alone, the metropolitan area grew nearly 14 percent, to a population of 971,169 from 852,737, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In 1980, Las Vegas had fewer than 465,000 residents.

The city owes much of its recent growth to the huge, fast-paced tourism industry, which employs approximately two-thirds of the area's workers. However, had it not been for the unique contributions to the city provided by Charles Fey, William Ramsey, M.W. Travers and other pioneers, Las Vegas would never have evolved to such a lofty status.

#### A COLORFUL HISTORY

In 1895, San Franciscan Charles Fey invented the Liberty Bell, a three-reel gambling device that became the prototype of the modern slot machine. In 1898, chemists William Ramsey and M.W. Travers discovered neon, an inert gas.

The combination of creative engineering and chemistry became a commodity that Las Vegas has always appreciated and put to use throughout its colorful history.

Even though the city sits in a seemingly bare desert, Las Vegas (meaning "the meadows") is built on the site of Las Vegas Springs. In the mid-1800s, this oasis attracted travelers on the Old Spanish Trail between Santa Fe, NM, and Alta, CA. The Paiute, Shoshone and Washoe Indians inhabited the area as well.

Modern-day Las Vegas traces its roots to 1905, when a mining boom hit the southern part of Nevada and workers laid the last piece of track for the Salt Lake City-Los Angeles railroad route in Jean, NV, (23 miles south of Las Vegas).

For the next few decades, the city

existed as a whistle stop on the Union Pacific railroad and grew beyond its image as a boom town of the Wild West into a small, stable community. However, in the early 1930s, with the construction of Hoover Dam, which attracted thousands of construction workers to the area, Las Vegas began to realize its potential as a resort area.

By 1932, several luxurious hotels and casinos were built to accommodate elite visitors from relatively nearby Hollywood, CA, (many of whom were attracted to the town by relatively lenient divorce laws). Even the Great Depression did not affect Las Vegas as it did the rest of the country, since Hoover Dam and gambling (legalized in 1931) helped bolster the city's economy.

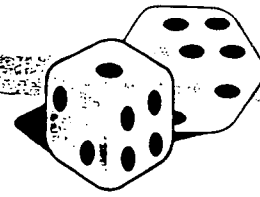
In the 1940s, several new resorts opened, thanks to funds provided by Midwestern mobsters such as Bugsy Siegel. To attract crowds, many of the new hotels and casinos "imported" big-name entertainers, including Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and other members of the legendary "Rat Pack."

In the mid-1950s, when several new resorts opened — each boasting "bigger and better" neon signs, one-of-a-kind swimming pools and glamorous casinos — the glitzy tone of modern-day Las Vegas was set. Hordes of gamblers



Grand Slam Canyon amusement park at Circus Circus features roller coasters and other hair-raising thrills.

# FOOTBALL: ONE OF THE BEST BETS IN TOWN



By Anthony Curtis

It's a new Las Vegas. Pyramids and pirates; roller coasters and roller hockey; virtual reality and a thousand-foot tower — there's more to do. For the bottom-line conscious, room, food and drink opportunities are a better bargain than ever before.

But, let's face it. Las Vegas is still synonymous with gambling, and chances are you will want to make a laydown or two (i.e., gamble a bit) while you're in town for the ISSA Convention.

What game should you play? Approximately 65 percent of Las Vegas gamblers pull slot machine handles. Visitors love the slots because they're easy to play, offer large jackpots and provide instant gratification. Casinos love visitors because of their fondness for these one-armed bandits, which beat you at a rate of \$4 (nickel slots) to \$40 (dollar slots) per hour.

However, better gambling options (and odds) are available. One of the best bets in town is wagering on a college or professional football game.

Why football? Because low minimum-bet requirements and long games combine to provide more "bang for the buck" than any other gambling proposition in Las Vegas. Taking this to the extreme, Vegas World casino owner Bob Stupak placed a \$1 million bet on the 1989 Super Bowl and laughed all the way to the bank with almost \$2 million!

The expected loss (i.e., the casino's advantage) on a typical \$11 football wager is about 50 cents. Divide that by the three hours it takes to play a game and you wind up with an average 17 cents-per-hour entertainment tab (if you have time to sit back and watch an entire game Saturday or Sunday afternoon).

That's a fraction of what it costs to play the slots, and a bargain when compared to other, more traditional forms of entertainment — like seeing a movie at \$4.33 per hour, or a concert

at \$10 per hour, or riding an "E" ride at an amusement park at \$150 per hour.

It's exciting, too. Casinos do everything they can to make the sports books the next best thing to the stadium. For instance, there are promotions, giveaways and low prices on hot dogs and beer.

But, most of all, there's the unique form of stimulation that accompanies financial involvement. Even the smallest bet can turn an otherwise dull sporting contest (in Las Vegas, you can bet on a wide variety of sports other than football — baseball, basketball, boxing, hockey, horse racing, etc.) into a riveting, energy-charged experience.

STARDUST HOTEL AND CASINO



This room may resemble Mission Control, but these people are more concerned about Warren Moon.

Placing a football bet in a legal Nevada sports book is easy, as long as you understand a little protocol. Wagers are made in increments of \$11 (to win \$10), and most casinos will accept \$5.50 bets (to win \$5).

Consider the following example:

1003 Chicago Bears - 5  
1004 L.A. Rams

This line provides all the information you need to place a wager. The team listed second is the home team. An easy way to remember this is to think, top city "at" bottom city. In this case, da Bears are playing in Los Angeles.

Chicago is the favorite, listed at minus 5 points. This means that you lay (i.e., give up) 5 points when you bet on da Bears. For you to win this bet, da Bears must not only beat the Rams; they must beat them by more than 5 points.

There will be no number after the underdog, but the relationship is symmetrical. When you bet the Rams, you take (i.e., get) 5 points. You win your bet when the Rams win the game, or if they lose by less than 5 points. With a final score of Bears 30 — Rams 28, a wager on the Rams would win because da Bears did not cover the 5-point spread.

Now that you know how to read the line, it's time to make a bet. Go to any sports book in any major casino. Some of the largest and most lavish facilities — which typically resemble NASA's Mission Control with walls full of flashing TV monitors — include Caesars Palace, the Hilton and the

Stardust. If you're looking for a no-frills place full of atmosphere, stop in at the cigar-filled joint where Bob Stupak placed his famous bet — Little Caesar's Gambling Casino (it's located in a mini-mall on the East side of the Strip between the Aladdin Hotel and the MGM Grand Hotel).

Have your \$11 (or \$22, \$33, \$44, etc.) ready and walk up to a betting window. To avoid confusion, use the numbers preceding the team names to make your bet. Tell the ticket writer the number of the team you want and the amount you are betting.

For example, "Number 1004 for \$11" means you are betting \$11 on Los Angeles +5 (i.e., getting 5 points). Hand the writer your wager and he or she will give you a ticket with your bet printed on it. Check the ticket for accuracy, then put it in a safe place; it's your receipt to collect. While you're at it, ask for a drink ticket, good at any bar. Some books will give you this comp (i.e., freebie) just for asking.

Now, sit back. Watch the game on the casino's 30-foot-tall screen or one of numerous TV monitors located throughout the facility. Root for your team, eat a hot dog and have a soft drink or a beer.

Anthony Curtis is publisher of the *Las Vegas Advisor* newsletter and author of the book, *Bargain City: Booking, Betting and Beating the New Las Vegas*. For more information on either publication, call (702) 597-1884.

arrived in earnest after Havana's casinos closed in 1959 with the triumph of Fidel Castro's revolution.

When Howard Hughes embarked on a \$300 million real estate shopping spree during the mid-1960s, Las Vegas began to assume a more "legitimate" image and erase its gangland stigma. By the mid-1970s, large hotel chains and corporations began gobbling up local real estate to cash in on the Vegas mystique.

Today, the city grows every day and numerous resorts line both sides of the Strip, which stretches almost four miles along Las Vegas Boulevard. Las Vegas offers visitors luxurious accommodations in more than 87,000 hotel rooms, modern convention facilities, unsurpassed recreational opportunities and, of course, non-stop entertainment.

Major meeting sites include the Las Ve-

The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace offer world-class shopping in a unique atmosphere that recreates an ancient Roman street.

gas Convention Center (site of the ISSA Show), which is America's largest single-level convention facility. The Convention Center recently grew larger when a \$50 million expansion project added 200,000 square feet to the original complex and replaced the 35-year-old Rotunda. The center features 1.3 million square feet of exhibit and meeting space capable of handling the 108 percent growth in Las Vegas's convention attendance during the past decade.

One of Las Vegas' great appeals is its warm weather, with an average of 320 days of sunshine and only four inches of rainfall per year. However, during the summer months, daytime peak temperatures often reach more than 100 degrees. In fact, that's why many residents have backyard swimming pools to cool off. Spring and fall are relatively short, with temperatures in the 70s, while the winter months have daytime temperatures in the 50s and 60s.

Las Vegas — well-

known for its star-studded shows, championship boxing matches and 24-hour casinos — is without a doubt the entertainment capital of the world.

That's no surprise, since the number of visitors has almost doubled — from 12.8 million in 1984 to 23.5 million in 1993, while hotel and motel occupancy rates have risen from 72.5 percent to 87.6 percent in the same period.

According to the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, visitor counts for 1994 are already up 29 percent over last year. In fact, city officials predict that 29 million people will have visited Las Vegas when the final year-end numbers are tallied.

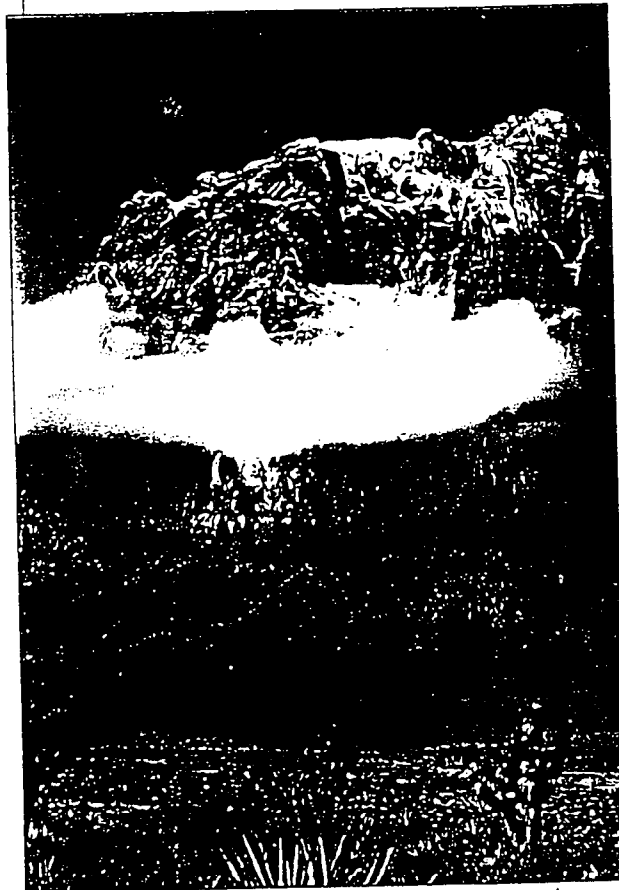
#### YOUTHFUL SPIRIT

One of the reasons for the increased interest in Las Vegas is its new, family-oriented image. Today, 35 different states run lotteries and 25 have some form of casino gambling.

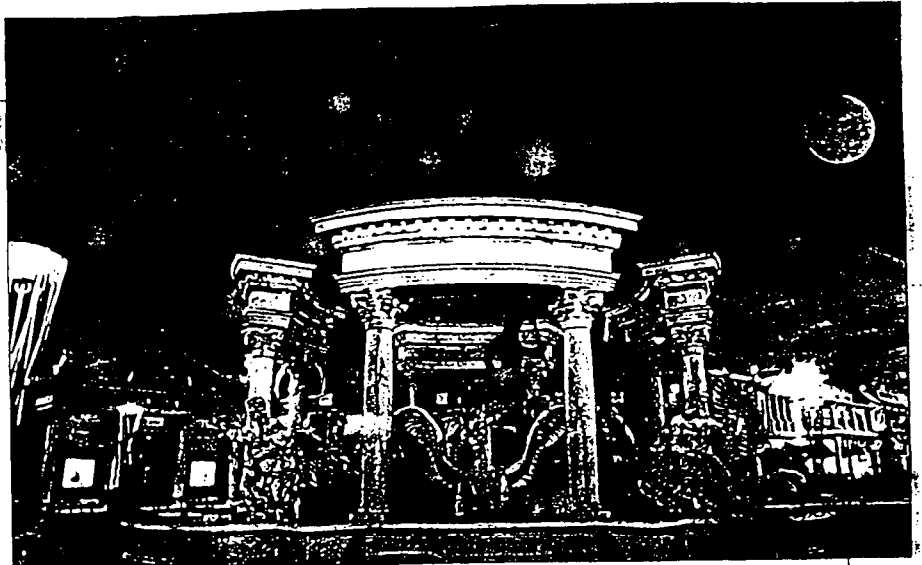
Casino gaming is currently a \$10 billion industry, and is expected to increase to a \$19 billion industry by the year 2000 due to consumer demand, additional tax needs of state governments and new casino business enterprises organized by Native Americans.

Since players now have a wide variety of venues to choose from, many of them much closer to home than the Nevada desert. Las Vegas has been scrambling to add more family-oriented attractions to compete against new gaming markets throughout the country.

(Continued on page 1/54)



Red Rock Canyon offers spectacular desert scenery less than a half-hour drive from Las Vegas.





(Continued from page 1/52)

As Las Vegas attempts to become a family resort, rather than just a gambling mecca, national chains that cater to children and teenagers have appeared. For instance, a Hard Rock Cafe opened in 1990, with its loud music, memorabilia-lined walls and colorful t-shirts. The popular restaurant chain is now planning to open a rock 'n' roll-themed hotel in Las Vegas.

The city boasts several go-kart tracks and water parks, and new attractions keep springing up every month. Indeed, the Excalibur now offers a "virtual reality" theatre, Circus Circus provides 200-foot-high bungee jumping and Caesars Palace features a huge Omnimax Theatre. Kids can also have a good time at the Lied Discovery Children's Museum, one of the newest and largest children's museums in the country, which houses more than 100 hands-on exhibits in the arts, sciences and humanities.

In addition, each of the three new



The Desert Inn golf course is rated as one of the best in the world.

hotel-casinos recently opened on the Strip features a children's arcade. The MGM Grand even has a day-care center for 3-to-12-year-olds — the first of its kind in town.

Thanks to those three projects, Las Vegas is the largest tourist destination

in the world with 87,000 hotel rooms, surpassing Orlando's 81,000 rooms. In fact, 13 of the world's 20 largest hotels are in Las Vegas. Travel agents claim more families are heading to Las Vegas because there is so much for

(Continued on page 1/58)



Las Vegas casinos radiate with energy and activity 24 hours a day.

(Continued from page 1/54)

kids to do there now.

The three new Las Vegas attractions follow a new style in architecture, often referred to as "archi-tainment" — a combination of architecture and entertainment where form follows feeling. Each project expresses a unique theme.

Circus Circus Enterprises' Luxor, a 357-foot black glass pyramid-shaped complex with an Egyptian theme located at the south end of the Strip, was named after the most exotic tourist destination in upper Egypt. The 30-story pyramid offers three levels of entertainment, a replica of King Tut's Tomb, a Sega video arcade, an arena with 1,200 seats, restaurants, shops, interactive rides and 2,500 hotel rooms. At night, a white laser beam shoots skyward from the apex of the pyramid.

At the Luxor, getting to your room is an experience in itself. Guests are transported to the elevators by boats that glide down a 1,750-foot-long, 1.5-million-gallon "Nile River," which runs through the lobby. Because of the building's unique shape, elevators called "inclinators" run at a 39-degree angle.

The Egyptian theme is carried throughout the Luxor, especially in the hotel rooms and the basement casino, while the faux sphinx in front of the



The Luxor's 30-story pyramid features a spectacular interior with 29 million cubic feet of open space.

pyramid looks at home in the Nevada desert. The only exception is the second-story entertainment area, which includes an arcade that, according to some architecture critics, "looks like a glorified shopping mall."

The MGM Grand, the world's largest hotel with 5,005 rooms, includes a 170,000-square-foot casino with 3,500 slot machines and 165 gaming tables; a day-care center with midway and arcade; a theme park; and an adventuredome.

The Grand Adventures Theme Park features 12 major attractions in eight "theme" areas, such as Asian Village, Casablanca Plaza, French Street, New York Street and Tumbleweed Gulch. This 33-acre "fantasy land" (located on the "backlot" behind the hotel) features thrill rides, such as a Grand Canyon Rapids adventure along a 1,600-foot-long "raging" river, and re-creations of historic streets. A variety of entertainment is located throughout the park, including theatres, game arcades, restaurants and shopping outlets.

The romance of the movies and the magic of the *Wizard of Oz* are the two themes integrated into the MGM



The UNLV campus offers a tranquil setting in the heart of Las Vegas.

(Continued on page 1/64)

## A MUSEUM FOR EVERY TASTE

Las Vegas, like any other world-class city, has a number of quality museums.

There is an art museum, a few history museums and a children's museum. But the city is also home to several unique museums that you won't find anywhere else in the world, such as:

**The Imperial Palace Auto Collection** (Imperial Palace Hotel & Casino, 794-3114) is one of the largest automobile collections in the world with more than 750 antique, classic and special-interest vehicles. More than 200 cars, trucks and motorcycles are on display at any one time.

Three unique displays are featured within the collection: the Duesenberg Room, featuring the largest collection of Model J Duesenbergs in the world (the 25 vehicles, built between 1929 and 1937, are worth more than \$50 million); Presidents Row, showcasing the cars of U.S. presidents like John F. Kennedy's 1962 Lincoln Continental, Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 Chrysler Imperial and Franklin Roosevelt's 1936 V-16 Cadillac; and Donors Row, featuring Adolf Hitler's 1938 Mercedes Benz and Benito Mussolini's 1939 Alfa Romeo.

The museum also houses vehicles such as Al Capone's 1930 V-16 Cadillac and Howard Hughes' 1954 Chrysler (featuring an air purification system that cost more than the car itself). Other celebrities whose vehicles are displayed include Clark Gable, Elvis Presley,

W.C. Fields, Steve McQueen and Sammy Davis, Jr.

The Guinness World of Records Museum (2780 Las Vegas Blvd. South, 792-3766) brings to life the Guinness Book of World Records with exhibits paying tribute to amazing feats and astonishing facts.

Covering 5,200 square feet, the museum includes life-size replicas of the world's tallest man, smallest woman, oldest man and the world's greatest sword-swallower. Other exhibits feature such topics as the animal kingdom, weather, space, sports and entertainment.

The Liberace Museum (1775 East Tropicana Ave., 798-5595) showcases the world of "Mr. Showmanship." Liberace founded the museum in 1979, and it has grown considerably since his death in 1987.

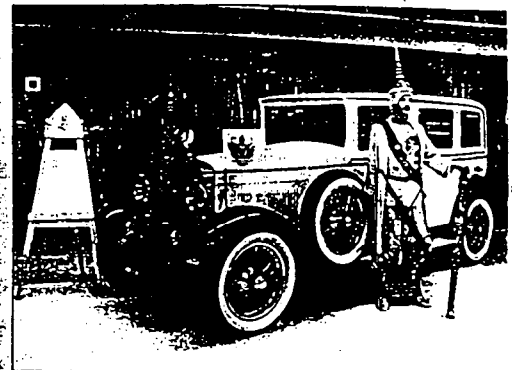
The museum features his antique car and piano collections, along with a variety of costumes he wore on stage. A piano played by Chopin is on display as is a 1962 Rolls Royce Phantom V Landau Limousine. A recent addition is the world's largest milestone, valued at \$50,000.

The Thunderbird Museum (Nellis Air Force Base, 652-4013) is home of the famous Thunderbirds precision flying team. The museum features memorabilia and gifts. The dare-devil aviation unit has received from the various places it has performed all over the world.

Visitors are given a tour of the museum, which includes a movie and the viewing of an F-15 jet in its hangar. Tours are only given on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2 p.m., and visitors are asked to arrive about a half hour early.

The Las Vegas Club's Sports Hall of Fame (Las Vegas Club Hotel & Casino, 385-1664) features an extensive collection of sports memorabilia. The collection is privately owned by Mel Exber, the hotel's owner.

The Hall of Fame primarily features photos, trophies and other



The Imperial Palace auto display includes this 1921 Delage, which belonged to the King of Siam.

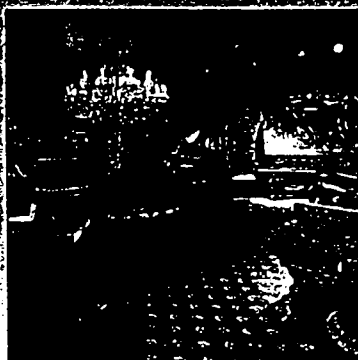
memorabilia from baseball, boxing and golf. Its display includes what is believed to be the most complete set of signed baseball bats from the World Series, a football signed by Green Bay Packer immortals Vince Lombardi and Bart Starr, and a bank of six wooden seats rescued from Chicago's old Comiskey Park. The sports-themed hotel is even shaped in the form of a baseball stadium.

The Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Motion Picture Museum (Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Hotel & Casino, 734-0741) is the newest museum in Las Vegas — so new that it might not be open when the ISSA convention takes place.

Randy Hendrickson, executive museum curator, says the opening date has not been set due to the technical aspects of the museum, but it will open before the end of the year. The museum is home to a huge collection of costumes and memorabilia from the Golden Age of film.

Part of the attraction will be a half-hour film about the museum featuring Reynolds, the museum's founder. The film will awe visitors as it places Reynolds in classic movie scenes (like the chariot race in *Ben-Hur*) while she describes the museum's various attractions. "We wanted to create a completely different concept for a museum," says Hendrickson.

— Matt Mendenhall  
Assistant Editor



Glittering pianos dominate the unique Liberace Museum.

(Continued from page 1/58)

Grand's overall design. The facade's emerald green color is an attempt to tie the building to the Emerald City in the *Wizard of Oz*, while the front contains a cartoon-like, 88-foot-tall lion's face that you can walk through.

Mirage Resort's Treasure Island, styled after an 18th-century pirate village, features old-world shops, a brightly colored pool area, two wedding chapels decorated in the European tradition, an entertainment center complete with video games, rides, a shooting gallery, the French-Canadian circus *Cirque de Soleil* and a live-action "sea battle."

Treasure Island's pirate-hideaway theme is present every step of the way, from a mock naval battle at the street-front entrance to a Mutiny Bay arcade for kids. The peach-colored exterior of the hotel is made of synthetic materials, but the convincingly-designed window trim and other details does

not make it appear cheap.

A Y-shaped floor plan makes the tower appear smaller than it actually is, which keeps with the scale of the street-side pirate village. The pirate-hideaway theme is woven into myriad details, including chandeliers with fake human bones finished in gold leaf.

The Buccaneer Bay Pirate Show takes place every day from 1:30 to 10:30 pm, with a new "battle" every 90 minutes. During the 10-minute spectacle, actors dressed as pirates and British sailors aboard life-size replicas of the *Hispaniola* and the *HMS Britannia* engage in a mock battle complete with cannon fire, explosions, fires and sinking ships. In order to conserve resources, much of the water in the 2.5-million-gallon, 40-foot-deep Buccaneer Bay is recycled from guest room sinks and showers.

Besides the three new mega hotel-casinos, other new attractions in town include Grand Slam Canyon Adventure dome at Circus Circus, which in-

cludes five acres of mountains, a waterfall, Indian cliff dwellings, animated dinosaurs and thrill rides. Grand Slam Canyon, open 365 days a year in a completely enclosed, climate-controlled dome, also houses the largest roller coaster in the world featuring a 94-foot climb, a 45-degree drop and a top speed of 60 feet per second, among other twists and turns.

Debbie Reynolds' newly renovated resort, near the Convention Center, features 200 rooms, a gaming area and a Movie Museum (see sidebar on page 1/59). Reynolds also stars in her own showroom.

#### THE PAST IS STILL PRESENT

Despite its Disneyland-type facelift, Las Vegas still retains much of its adult atmosphere. In fact, the city mirrors the split personality of many metropolitan areas, with their struggling center cities and booming suburbs.

(Continued on page 1/66)

1/1



Slot machines are located nearly everywhere you look in Las Vegas.

(Continued from page 1/64)

For instance, the older, more traditional neon dazzle along Fremont Street (located two miles from the northern end of the Strip) cannot hide street barkers, panhandlers, striptease clubs and pawn shops. The *Las Vegas Sun* reported earlier this year that the downtown casinos had suffered declines in gross revenues for six consecutive months.

In order to compete with newer attractions along the Strip, local merchants are putting their heads together to develop new marketing strategies. One idea recommends flooding the streets to achieve a Venice-like canal effect, while another plan calls for a 100-foot-tall awning that would be installed over a several block area.

If you get tired of seeing pirate fights, talking camels and *Wizard of Oz* char-

acters, a trip to Glitter Gulch is well worth the small cab fare. Las Vegas gambling began on Fremont Street in the 1930s, and much of the original honky-tonk atmosphere remains.

Vegas Vic and Sassy Sally (50-foot-tall neon characters) keep a watchful eye on visitors as they amble between casinos. The area is home to such old-time favorites as Binion's Horseshoe (site of the annual World Series of Poker), the Golden Nugget (site of the world's largest gold nugget) and the Four Queens (site of the world's largest slot machine).

Meanwhile, business is usually booming back on the Strip, the 3.5 mile stretch of casinos located outside the Las Vegas city limits in unincorporated Clark County.

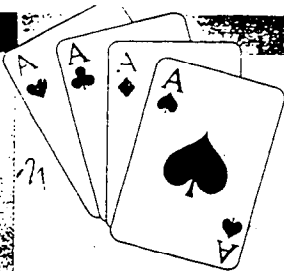
Once, the Strip used to be an exaggerated version of the typical commercial strip, with low-slung buildings

dominated by towering neon signs. However, the Strip, with its hotel towers, now resembles an edge city. Even though the Strip is up to 10 lanes wide in spots, people stroll and mingle on its sidewalks, just as they do along Chicago's North Michigan Avenue or along a Parisian boulevard.

An emphasis on family entertainment is not the only new feature Las Vegas has acquired in the past three years. The city has also become the latest and most likely high roller on the national restaurant scene. Only five years ago gastronomic opportunities were limited to modest family-style establishments catering to year-round residents.

However, the arrival of new resorts was accompanied by the opening of nearly 200 restaurants in the past two years (for an up-to-date list, see page 1/80). The growing presence of fine

(Continued on page 1/68)



## A Nose for Gambling

If you've ever ventured inside a casino, you've probably seen the bright, flashing lights; you've heard the bells and rattling coins; you've felt the plush carpet underfoot and you've tasted a soothing drink or two. But have you ever noticed what you smelled?

A recent study conducted by the Small and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation, Chicago, has considered this question and its findings are astonishing.

Slot machines in a Las Vegas casino which were in a noticeably odorized area brought in 45 percent more gambled money over one weekend than they did the weekends prior to and after the study, according to Dr. Alan Hirsch, the foundation's director.

The study, conducted at the Las Vegas Hilton, used two distinctly different pleasant odorants in two locations. The first odorant was dispensed near 18 quarter slot machines, and the second in an area with 19 nickel and nine quarter machines. A control area with no odorants consisted of 22 quarter slots.

Slots in the area of the second odorant showed no significant difference in gambled money, showing that not all odorants will produce results like the first odorant.

Hirsch notes several significant points about the study's findings with Odorant #1:

- Since the aromas were noticeable, the results were not obtained subliminally. The odorants themselves are not known



Aromas inside casinos can help determine the amount of money that's wagered.

- to impair judgment or nervous functioning. "If persons do not intend to gamble, it is highly doubtful that an odor will cause this effect," says Hirsch.

- The odorant might have caused gamblers to linger longer in the area. But, the more likely effect of the aroma is that it induced nostalgic recall to the gamblers' emotional state. "The odorant in our study may have acted somewhat like the other environmental stimuli of the casino—bells, whistles, lights, etc.," explains Hirsch.

- The odorant's presence did not divert gamblers from other areas of the casino; rather, it caused an increase in the actual amount of money gambled. The study shows the rate of gambling did not change in the area near the second odorant.

- The most likely cause for the gambling increase was the level of odorant used. The level of odorant on the second day was significantly lower than that of the first day, and the amount of increase in gambling showed the difference. Gambling increased 53 percent on the first day and 33 percent on the second.

— Matt Mendenhall  
Assistant Editor

(Continued from page 1/66)

dining establishments and their impressive wine lists have attracted nationally-known restaurateurs.

One of the biggest restaurant successes is Spago in Caesars Palace, a Wolfgang Puck's re-creation of his Los Angeles grill, serving California-style pizza, grilled fish and meat. The recently-opened Coyote Cafe in the MGM Grand, an offshoot of a restaurant by the same name in Santa Fe, NM, offers Southwestern cuisine.

The biggest new Italian restaurant is Sfuzzi, a stylish theatrical spot serving northern Italian specialties like individual pizzas, risotto and game. Among the most prominent out-of-town establishments in Las Vegas are Morton's, a Chicago-based chain; Palm, a Manhattan beef emporium; and Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, part of a large New Orleans chain.

The newly developed Las Vegas attractions have not erased the tradition. More than 75,000 couples tie the knot in Las Vegas annually, with New Year's Eve and Valentine's Day being the most popular dates. Las Vegas wedding chapels have attracted some of America's most famous stars. Celebrities who have exchanged vows in the city include Michael Jordan, Joan Collins, Frank Sinatra, Eddie Fisher, Elizabeth Taylor, Dudley Moore, Jon Bon Jovi and Bruce Willis.

The liberal Nevada marriage laws do not require waiting periods, which makes weddings in the city of lights easy, quick and attractive. Couples can wed in one of 30 chapels, all of which offer an extensive list of matrimonial services that fit any budget. Video recordings of ceremonies are very popular, while other options include special music, flowers and limousine service. Even t-shirts bearing the name of the chapels are available.

In addition to entertainment, Las Vegas offers outstanding educational and cultural opportunities. The University of Nevada—Las Vegas (UNLV) includes the William F. Harrah College of Ho-

(Continued on page 1/70)

(Continued from page 1/68)

tel Administration, which has one of the world's best hospitality programs. The university is also the site of many of the city's cultural events.

For instance, the Master Series hosts visiting performers such as the London Symphony and Itzhak Perlman, while the Barrick Lectures feature such speakers as Walter Cronkite and Carl Sagan. The Las Vegas Symphony, Las Vegas Opera Company, Las Vegas Chamber Players and the Nevada Dance Theatre also perform at UNLV.

Entertainment within Las Vegas can also be found

in its numerous museums. At the Las Vegas Art Museum, patrons can view the works of local and international artists in permanent and changing exhibits of oils, watercolors, pottery and sculpture. The museum offers beginning and advanced art classes in all mediums for children and adults.

Las Vegas also provides numerous sports and recreational facilities, with tennis and golf being the most popular sports. The city hosts three professional golf tournaments, including the Las Vegas Invitation Tournament, which takes place October 19-23 at three different golf courses around town: the Las Vegas Country Club, the Sahara Hotel/Casino and the Tournament Players Club (for ticket information, call 382-6616).

Other popular events include the National Finals Rodeo, the Professional Bowlers Association Showboat Invitational and championship boxing. Las Vegas is also known for the Las Vegas Stars, a Triple-A farm club for the San Diego Padres, and the Runnin' Rebels of UNLV, who won the 1990 NCAA college basketball tournament. In addition, the Las Vegas Posse play in the Canadian Football League (CFL), while

the Las Vegas Thunder are part of the International Hockey League (IHL).

#### A NATURAL WONDERLAND

Las Vegas serves as a gateway to spectacular scenic destinations and recreational resorts in surrounding counties.

Red Rock Canyon, located 16 miles west of Las Vegas, offers a 13-mile (one-way only) loop drive with hiking trails and picnic sites. The park has evolved from a 400 million-year-old sea bed into a series of geological formations and wind-sculptured sandstone outcroppings.

Only 45 minutes northwest of the city in Toiyabe National Forest is Mt. Charleston, Nevada's fifth highest mountain, with picnic and campground sites, hiking trails and bristle cone pines, the oldest living things on earth.

Another attraction is Lake Mead, the largest man-made body of water in the United States located approximately 30 miles southeast of Las Vegas. The lake was created by the construction of Hoover Dam, one of the seven man-made wonders of the world built 60 years ago to control floods and gener-

ate electrical energy.

Only a short distance from the city, visitors can see a number of ghost towns. More than 100 years ago, scores of adventurers plodded into the Nevada territory searching for mineral wealth. The first lode mining operation churned out thousands of dollars worth of gold 30 miles from Las Vegas and several historical sights remain within close range.

Potosi, site of Nevada's oldest lode mine, is on the old Spanish Trail 25 miles southwest of the city. Goodsprings, 35 miles southwest of Las Vegas was a booming mining camp for lead and zinc after the turn of the century; mine workings and an abandoned railroad grade remain. Sandy Valley, 13 miles west of Goodsprings, includes a ghost town called Sandy and an old gold mine. Eldorado Canyon, 40 miles southwest of Las Vegas, is dotted with old mining activity in a narrow, rugged canyon. The Techatticup mine alone produced more than \$2.5 million in gold before 1942.

While Las Vegas is a boom town today, its future fate may be determined by water. The city is one of the world's

(Continued on page 1/72)



The MGM Grand features a replica of the Emerald City from the *Wizard of Oz*.

(Continued from page 1/70)

biggest consumers of the precious resource. In fact, Las Vegas consumes more than 300 gallons of water per person per day.

While the hotels and casinos use a fare share of water, observers claim more than 60 percent goes for residential use — watering lush lawns, elaborate swimming pools and artificial lakes that have literally been carved out of the desert. Despite protests from local real estate developers, city officials have recently been forced to ban construction of new lakes, ponds and waterfalls.

However, even with those problems, Las Vegas is expected to keep on growing between now and the end of the decade. Another 10,000 hotel rooms could be built within the next three years as the city steps up its attempts to lure family vacationers with fantasy settings and elaborate theme parks.

For instance, ITT Sheraton Corp. has unveiled plans to build a \$750 million resort on one of the last open parcels of land on the Strip. The 34-acre, 3,500-room Desert Kingdom hotel and entertainment complex will be built adjacent to the Sheraton Desert Inn Resort & Casino.

Desert Kingdom will feature as its "theme" the discovery of a lost kingdom in the desert. Guests will enter the resort either through 10-story high carved wooden doors within a massive stone archway entrance, or via boat along a 3,000-foot-long "River of Gold."

In addition, Mirage Resorts recently announced a joint-venture agreement with Gold Strike Resorts to develop a \$250 million, 3,000-room entertainment resort on the Strip.

The 1,150-foot-tall Stratosphere Tower, currently being built by Vegas World owner Bob Stupak, will be the tallest building on the Strip when it's com-

### Helpful Phone Numbers (702 Area Code)

Emergency — 911

Gamblers Anonymous — 385-7735

Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce — 737-2011

Las Vegas Convention Center — 892-0711

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority — 89-30711

McCaan International Airport — 739-5749

Weather Conditions — 734-2010

pleted sometime next year.

Las Vegas is also an expanding retirement destination. The 80,000 hous-

(Continued on page 1/71)

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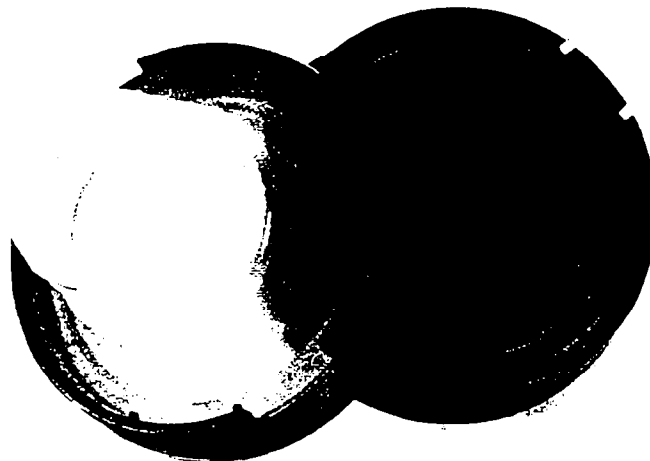
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The entire facade of Binion's Horseshoe is covered in neon.

If you have an opportunity to fly into Las Vegas after dark, keep your eyes peeled out the window about a half hour before your plane lands. If it's a clear night, you'll be treated to one of the best light shows in the world.

Gazing out onto the distant horizon you'll notice a glowing light shining like an oasis in the black desert sky. As it keeps getting brighter and more intense, you will suddenly realize that it's being generated by thousands of tiny lightbulbs and miles of neon tubing.

Extravagant neon signs help give Las Vegas its one-of-a-kind atmosphere. The city owes it all to Thomas Young, a signmaker from Ogden, UT, who installed a neon sign in the window of the Oasis Club in 1929. Las Vegas has never been quite the same ever since.

The most concentrated collection of neon in the city is located downtown in Glitter Gulch, a four-block long stretch of Fremont Street (between Main and Fourth streets). The entire front side of Binion's Horseshoe (128 E. Fremont St.) and the Fremont (200 E. Fremont St.) are covered in colorful, block-long neon. In fact, if all the tubing from those two establishments alone was laid end to end, it would stretch more than 10 miles.

Glitter Gulch is also the home of

Vegas Vic (a 50-foot-tall cowboy who's been puffing a cigarette and waving to visitors since 1951) and Vegas Vickie (a 50-foot-tall cowgirl).

Hotels, casinos and other business establishments up and down The Strip (a four-mile stretch of south Las Vegas Boulevard) also advertise themselves with eye-popping displays of neon. In fact, even the local McDonald's has a colorful sign.

The Stardust (3000 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) features one of the most impressive (and most famous) visual delights in Las Vegas. In 1958, it was the first hotel on the Strip to construct a massive neon sign. The 183-foot-long pink and blue sign, which depicts "stardust" and bursting stars, contains 11,000 lightbulbs and more than 7,000 feet of neon tubing.

However, many observers claim the much newer sign at the Rio (3770 W. Flamingo Rd.), which was built in 1990, is now the "best" in Las Vegas. The multi-colored neon is emblazoned with the hotel's logo and a pair of maracas.

The Sahara (2535 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) features one of the tallest free-standing signs in the world (222 feet), which contains more than 3,000 lightbulbs in its lettering alone.

Another tall sign is located in front of Circus Circus (2880 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), where Lucky the Clown, a 125-foot-tall neon character, clutches a spinning pinwheel and lollipop.

But, when it comes to tall signs, the Hilton (3000 Paradise Rd.) outshines everyone.

It recently installed the world's largest and tallest free-standing sign, which stands 362 feet above the street. The sign's surface area measures 121,300 square feet (more space than three football fields) and includes 6,000 feet of red neon tubing and 77,000 incandescent

lamps. When lit, the total connected electrical load is more than three million watts — enough energy to light 660 individual homes.

Other neon signs worth taking a look at include the Riviera (2901 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), whose celebration-themed facade features neon stars and fireworks, and is depicted on the cover of the *Sanitary Maintenance ISSA Show Guide*; Harrah's (3475 Las Vegas Blvd. S.), which features a rotating red paddlewheel; and the Flamingo Hilton (3555 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) with its neon frieze of pink and orange flamingos.

If you have the time, swing by Young Electric Sign Co. (5119 Cameron St.), a local firm which has been lighting up the Las Vegas sky for more than 60 years. The company claims it has installed 3.5 million lightbulbs which, if laid end to end, would stretch 15,000 miles. A neon "graveyard" located behind the building is littered with old casino signs and lettering.

— Austin Weber  
Managing Editor



Vegas Vickie has been the "queen" of Glitter Gulch for more than 40 years.

Las Vegas is filled with many unique people and unusual places, so it's not unlikely that the city is also full of fascinating trivia. For instance, did you know that:

There are more churches per capita in Las Vegas than in any other city in the US. The "Entertainment Capital of the World" has 500 places of worship and 63 different religious faiths.

Guardian Angel Cathedral (302 E. Desert Inn Rd.) has standing-room-only on Saturday evening, as visitors pray for luck and drop casino chips into the collection basket during a special tourist Mass at 4 pm. Once a week, a priest takes the chips to a local casino and cashes them in.

The world outdoor Frisbee-throwing record of 551 feet was set in Las Vegas in 1984.

Las Vegas is the cellular telephone capital of the US. The city boasts the nation's highest percentage of portable phone users.

When Elvis Presley made his debut in Las Vegas in 1956 at the Frontier Hotel, he was a big flop. He received third billing in the hotel's Venus Room and went on to complete only one week of a scheduled two-week engagement. However, during his Vegas heyday in the early and mid-1970s, more than 25 million fans flocked to the Hilton to see "The King" perform during 837 shows.

The U.S. Army exploded the first atomic bomb 70 miles northwest of Las Vegas at the Nevada Test Site in 1951. Over the next 11 years, 121 nuclear devices were detonated in the state's atmosphere, and eerie "mushroom clouds" were clearly visible from Las Vegas. Since 1962, nearly 500 more tests have been conducted underground. The remains of some blasted structures (which were filmed for government propaganda films and atomic bomb survival training in the 1950s) still stand at the site of "Ground Zero."

The Strip (a four-mile stretch of south Las Vegas Boulevard) was named after the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles. Guy McAfee, a casino owner in Las Vegas during the 1930s, traveled back and forth to Los Angeles in his car so often that

he began referring to the dusty highway leading out of town as "the Strip."

Bell, Book and Candle (1725 E. Charleston St.) is one of the most unusual shops in Las Vegas, featuring a large selection of spiritual, occult and metaphysical symbols of luck, ranging from "fast-money" potions and powders to quartz crystals.

The Tropicana features the only swim-up blackjack table in Las Vegas.

The Four Queens boasts the world's largest slot machine, called Big Bertha. It's 18 feet long and seven feet high (approximately the same size as a mobile home) and six people can play at one time.

The Golden Nugget features the world's largest gold nugget, called "The Hand of Faith." Weighing a whopping 63 pounds and valued at

jack table, your expected loss is about \$2.50.

The MGM Grand is the largest hotel in the world, with 5,005 guest rooms, 93 elevators and 2,300 miles of electrical wiring. Some building contractors nicknamed the mammoth structure "Monty Hall's Nightmare" because it has a mind-boggling 18,000 doors.

The 1.5-million-gallon dolphin habitat at the Mirage is the largest saltwater pool in the world.

Basketball superstar Kareem Abdul-Jabbar broke the NBA record for earning the most points in a career during a game in Las Vegas. While the Los Angeles Lakers were playing the Utah Jazz on April 5, 1984, Kareem made one of his legendary "sky hooks," giving him 31,421 career points and breaking Wilt Chamberlain's record of 31,419.

Siegfried & Roy's contract is the



In some parts of Las Vegas, it's still possible to catch a glimpse of Elvis.

\$1 million, it would make 12,000 18-karat gold rings if it was melted down. The monster nugget was found with a metal detector behind a trailer park in Australia.

Ninety percent of Las Vegas visitors gamble an average of five hours a day. Fifty-one percent play slot machines; 23 percent play blackjack; 12 percent play video poker; and 5 percent indulge in craps. Ninety percent of the gamblers make minimum bets of \$5 or less, and the average gambler's bankroll is \$500.

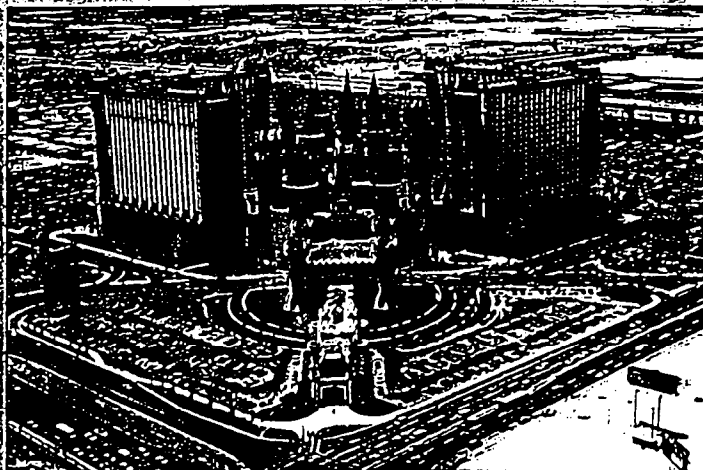
If you play perfect "basic strategy" for eight hours at a \$1 black-

jack entertainment agreement ever signed: \$57,500,000 for five years.

The Circus Circus buffet serves more than 12,000 meals a day, making the hotel the world's largest commercial eating establishment.

Elvis and Liberace once appeared together at the Riviera — "The King" played piano and "Mr. Showmanship" played guitar (while wearing each other's flamboyant costumes).

— Austin Weber  
Managing Editor



Large hotel/casino complexes, which contain thousands of rooms, present unique challenges for many housekeeping and maintenance professionals in Las Vegas.

We're still here, doing great and maintaining a good life daily challenges that would impede in other parts of the world. I look for a bottle of aspirin because many of the city's who completely contain in the amount of space that must be used on a round-the-clock ba-

A properties such as July's, as Palace, Circus Circus, die for the Duxor, the Mirage, the Grand, the Riviera, the Sahara, are island and the Temple and each maintain thousands of hotel rooms and huge cash

For instance, the 25-year-old Las Vegas Council Headquarters (the SSA Convention) commando rolling a 170 guests and suites which must be used on a daily basis.

The structure houses an auditorium with glass walls, a restaurant and brass band at the entrance. The marble and turquoise floors, made in 1900, still show. In the main hall, brass frames 220,000 square feet of tile and convention space. A 24-gallon swimming pool, a 24-square-foot casino and a 24-square-foot race and sports pool.

is not enough to make a manager's head spin, con-

After the fire, the Las Vegas Hilton contains a mere 101,562 sq ft, 10 light bulbs and 224,936 square feet of windows. The huge facility also processes more than 29 million pieces of laundry annually.

In order to keep its operation humming, the Hilton employs 502 house-keeping professionals, only 140 of whom are women. The hotel also employs 123 janitors, who maintain all public areas, such as the lobby, restrooms, and restaurants, working in three continuous eight-hour shifts.

The biggest challenge is to consistently be able to clean the facility without causing inconvenience to any of our guests," notes Randy Lancaster, assistant director of public works. Every day, Lancaster's staff strives to provide a facility so clean that our guests would not even remotely consider staying at another inn open in the town.

## **Lancaster says casino cleaning con-**

ists: vacuuming and shampooing carpets, emptying trash containers and ashtrays, plus cleaning slot machines, ceiling vents and washrooms. The day and swing shifts concentrate on maintaining operations to sustain an overall acceptable casino appearance, explains the supervisor. The graveyard shift performs equipment operation and engine maintenance, and enforces the general and heavy-duty cleaning of the casino.


According to Eli-Martin, the core of housekeeping lies in the challenge every day is a continuous emphasis on all aspects of training and retraining employees. When evaluating a carrier, supply distributor or supplier, the looks for "quality products, training, problem solving, timely deliveries and competitive prices."

**Austin Weber**  
Managing Editor

ed from page 1/72)

erlin, rising on 22,000 acres  
western rim of Las Vegas Val-  
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people are signing on to this  
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nes will be spread out over 30

neighborhoods, which are slated to be 60 percent residential, 25 percent parkland and 15 percent retail. Three of seven villages in the 6,000-acre first phase are currently under construction, including Del Webb's Sun City, an age-restricted community with a 36-acre world-class golf course.

The following pages contain current listings of local restaurants, nightclubs and popular attractions. For further information, contact the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority at (702) 892-0711 or the Chamber of Commerce at (702) 457-4664. 

FEB 25 1995

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By DONALD A. BLUM  
Journalist/Reporter/Editor

HERE ARE other things to do in Las Vegas.

You can get married in one, or more, of the 35 wedding chapels — which even include a drive-through operation.

If you get sick of what you're there for, there are more than 2,000 hospital beds in the city of more of everything but clocks.

You can pray for luck, or deliverance, at any of about

500 houses of worship, representing more than 40 religious faiths.

There are 10 museums and 21 libraries.

In the city of glitter, visitors easily may explore (or gawk at) 3,000, 4,000, and 5,000-room "mega-resort" hotel complexes built to look like Egyptian pyramids, medieval castles, or Roman coliseums.

"More than" is used a lot in describing Las Vegas, and so there are more than 700 shops at more than a half-dozen "megamalls" if you are in search of some-

thing to keep for the money you spend there.

There are 25 golf courses, more than 85 tennis courts and, hey, even bowling centers and an ice skating rink.

The convention and visitors bureau calls it a one-stop, multi-dimensional resort destination for the whole family.

But come on, now, who are we kidding? There are 400 gaming licenses in Clark, the county that Las Vegas calls

home. Please see glitter page 8.

The luxury resort in Las Vegas evokes ancient Egypt with pyramids, sphinxes, seated animals and standing gods. Below: The Excelsior Hotel and Casino offers mad yemotel.



Photo (top) by Patrick Soren; page design by journal's art director, Pelisek

# Glitter/Hotel and flight packages are a popular route to Las Vegas

From page 1

home. There are about 125,000 slot machines in the county, which accept anything from nickels to \$500 tokens, and about 4,000 table games such as craps, roulette and blackjack.

More than 25 million visitors a year funnel into the neon oasis to massage the senses, looking for the big payout, watching each other watching celebrities, and looking for the shortest line to the \$6.95 all-you-can-eat prime rib dinner.

And the facilitators make it marvelously easy — that is, inexpensive — to get there and stay there.

It's called packaging, and Milwaukee, which long has been addicted, almost certainly leads the universe for visitors per capita to "The Meadows," which is what Las Vegas means in English.



Photo by Patrick Soran  
**EACH DAY** in Las Vegas, onlookers on the boardwalk watch the mock "naval battle" staged in front of Treasure Island. In this detail, the swashbuckling pirate captain fires on the British ship.

One of the largest package wholesalers in the country, Funjet Vacations, with headquarters at 8907 N. Port Washington Road, Fox Point, doesn't talk numbers in such a competitive business. But estimates from various sources indicate that at least 200,000 Wisconsinites a year make the trip via package deals, most staying two to four nights.

Funjet doesn't sell directly to the Las Vegas client. It sells its packages to travel agents, pays them a commission for their services and lets them sell to the customer.

#### HUNGRY GAMBLERS

And the customers line up like those at the Circus Circus buffet, where the average number of daily diners ranges from 12,000 to 13,000 — more than 4 million a year.

A recent package offering sent to travel agents by Funjet lists 21 hotels with two-, three- or four-night packages, including air fare, that range from \$299.95 to \$509.95 per person double occupancy. Air fare alone ranges

from \$279.95 to \$309.95. Simple subtraction shows that for the low-end, two-night stays, the room is selling for \$10 a night.

Flight times, typically, are 7 a.m. departure from Milwaukee, with an 8:45 a.m. arrival. Return flights leave, typically, at 10:15 a.m., arriving in Milwaukee at 3:25 p.m. with the two time-zone loss.

Says Gerry Jung, operator of Vacations Plus, 18430 W. National Ave., New Berlin, and president of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan chapter of the American Society of Travel Agents:

"As soon as [the prices] are printed, they are out of date. The best advice is for the clients to tell the travel agent when they want to go and let the agent get the best prices for those dates."

Another packager, America West Airlines, with headquarters in Phoenix and service from Milwaukee, quoted recent rates, per person double, of \$179 for a two-night stay, usually Tuesday and Wednesday.

#### FLIGHTS ARE OFF-PEAK

The kicker is the time of the flights, which typically depart Milwaukee at 10:55 p.m. and arrive in Las Vegas at 12:30 a.m. Return flights leave the city that never sleeps at 1:35 a.m. and arrive in Milwaukee at 6:35,

with the two-hour time-zone loss.

In addition to their large show rooms, most of the hotels have smaller lounges where less-famous entertainers sing, dance and tell jokes. But if you want to see Frank or Liza or Julio, the ticket is up around \$100, if you can get one.

Many shows, such as the long-running Folies Bergere at the Tropicana, will cost about \$35 with dinner. Or there's the very-popular Siegfried and Roy magic show at the Mirage Hotel for about \$80, which includes tax, tip and two drinks.

Other entertainment varies from the simulated sinking of the Titanic on the stage at Bally's to mounted medieval knights jousting at the Excalibur.

Hotel room numbers are approaching 90,000 in Las Vegas, where the single, cumulative example of excess is the MGM Grand Hotel, Casino and Theme Park, which opened in 1993. It is built on 112 acres of desert with a total of 5,005 rooms, including 744 suites, some up to 6,000 square feet in size.

The MGM Grand's show room has seating for 1,700, and the complex employs about 8,000, which is more than the population of 41 of Wisconsin's 72 county seats.

The cost? A mere \$1 billion.

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# Mega\$ Value\$ the family

## 4920BL- Treasure Island Mirage Hotel themes gamble on luring families

By Karla Cunningham  
Special to the Gazette

**W**hat is the one city in the United States where you can go to a theme park, see Broadway-caliber shows, visit historic sites, watch a medieval jousting match and meet the characters from "The Wizard of Oz"?

Stumped?

It's Las Vegas.

Las Vegas has become much more than the gambling center of the United States. With the growing number of casinos and riverboat casinos in many states, people don't have to go to Las Vegas to gamble anymore.

During the past five years, Las Vegas has almost doubled in size, and more than \$2 billion has been invested. Many old combination hotel and casinos are being remodeled, and new ones are popping up all over. The resorts being built are not typical of the city's past; instead, they are huge entertainment complexes that focus on family entertainment.

Each year, one or two new hotel-casinos are built. Hotels already in place are expanding and growing. By the year 2000, Las Vegas may be known as the mega-entertainment capital of the world.

The new hotels separate family entertainment from their casinos. For example, the new 2,500-room Luxor hotel has acres of casino space apart from its entertainment facilities.

To reach out to families, reconstructed hotels feature themes that conjure up visions of fairy tales and fantasies. The MGM Grand Hotel, Casino & Theme Park uses the theme of the classic 1939 MGM film "The Wizard of Oz."

Complexes such as the MGM Grand offer something for everyone without ever having to leave. The MGM Grand offers more than 5,000 rooms; four casinos larger than two football fields, each reflecting a scene from the "The Wizard of Oz"; a 15,200-seat event center that can handle anything from a major concert to major league sports; and a 33-acre theme park.

Settings at the MGM Grand were inspired by MGM's classic movies. You can stroll into the Casablanca Plaza or a 1940-style New York street.

A Turn to VEGAS/5D

# Vegas/The desert city isn't just for gamblers anymore

Continued from 1D

The MGM Grand also has settings that replicate Paris, New Orleans, the New York City Waterfront (from "On the Waterfront") and the old West. The hotel just opened its Grand Slam Canyon, an indoor adventuresphere with water rides and other attractions. Shops, restaurants, lounges, pools and health clubs top it all off.

The Luxor is named after a great Egyptian temple built for Amon-Re, King of the Gods. The Luxor looks like a pyramid with elevators that even travel at 60-degree angles. It offers a simulated Nile River and barges, several huge participatory adventure areas, an archaeological ride and a two-story Sega virtual-reality video game arcade.

The Treasure Island Mirage hotel, decorated with a Caribbean theme, offers a Buccaneer Bay Village adventure attraction with live sea battles, the French-Canadian Circus Cirque du Soleil and two wedding chapels.

The Excalibur hotel takes its theme from the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The lower level features a medieval-style carnival. Minstrels travel throughout the hotel.

These hotels are all on the Las Vegas Strip. The city's trolley bus goes up and down the strip. For \$1, you can get on the trolley from any hotel on the strip.

Planning makes Las Vegas an affordable getaway. Local travel agents offer hotel and airfare package deals as low as about \$300 for three days. These deals include coupons for free meals and discounts off shows and tours. Lesser-known hotels and casinos offer great savings on shows and meals.

Prices of package deals vary. The best days of the week to travel are Monday through Fri-

day for four-night stays, Friday through Monday for three-night stays and Friday through Sunday for two-night stays. A four-night stay works best. Weekend visitors, mostly from California, make Saturdays crowded.

You can choose from a long list of hotel accommodations. Smaller hotel-casinos are the most reasonably priced. For example, a recent \$299 package included accommodations at the Palace Station, a small but attractive hotel.

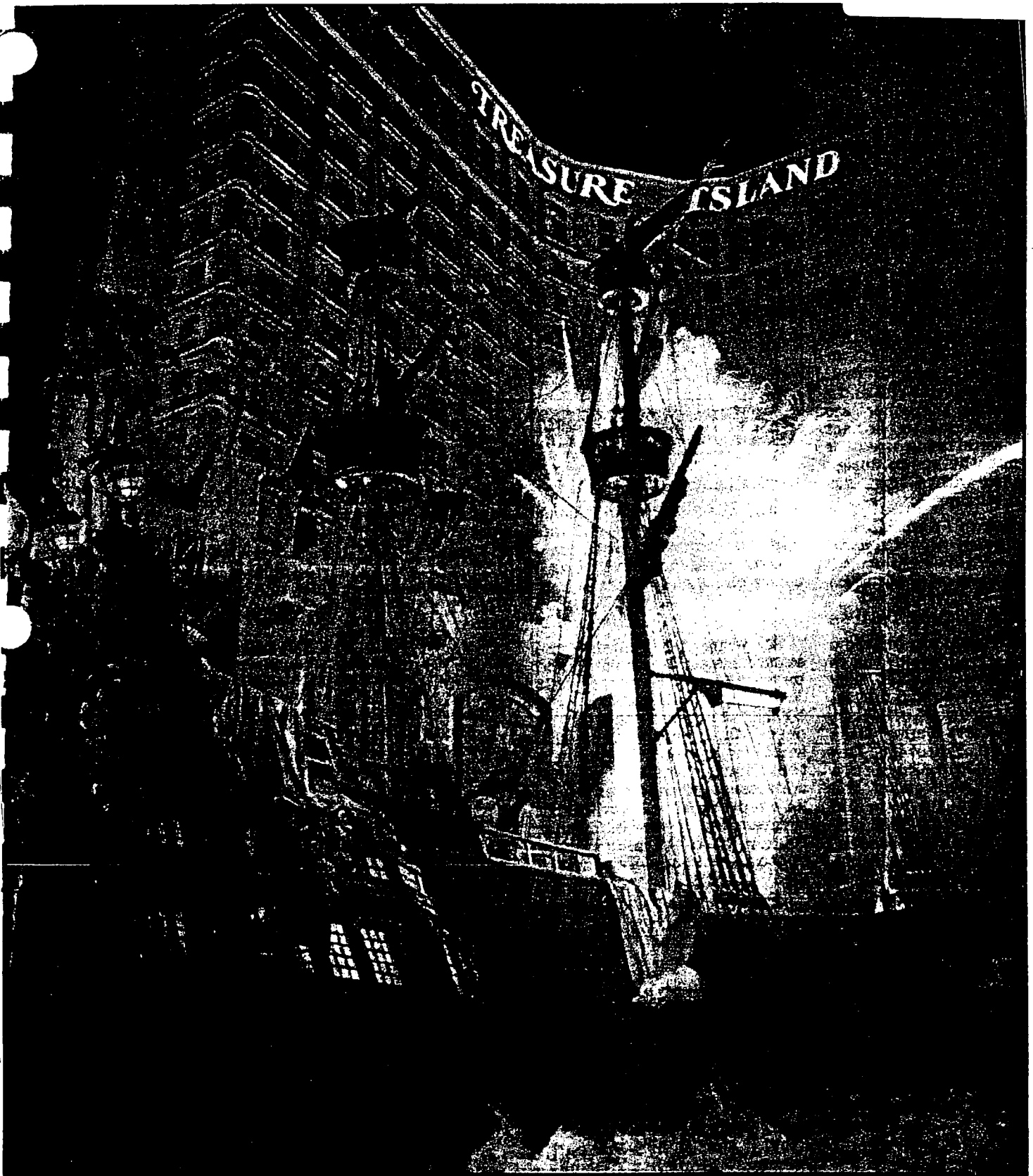
No matter the hotel, Funjet offers some of the best prices.

Funjet vacation packages range from about \$300 to \$500. They include round-trip air via American Trans Air or Sun Country Airlines; hotel accommodations for two, three or four nights; air and hotel taxes; free two-door economy rental car for the first 24 hours in Las Vegas; a Las Vegas FunBook filled with discount coupons; and services of a Funjet representative in Las Vegas, Chicago or Milwaukee. Funjet's 24-hour Traveler Assistance Center and special Grayline tour discounts are included.

If you have your heart set on seeing a well-known show, be prepared to pay more than \$100 per person. Check your coupon book to see what is offered. Many lesser-known hotels offer shows that may not be as spectacular but can be just as entertaining. These include magic shows, revues, impersonations and comedy clubs. Prices for these shows usually stay under \$50 per person, and many include dinners or complementary drinks.

If you want to see a spectacular show at a reasonable price, go see the Excalibur's medieval jousting tournament. It costs \$25 per person and includes a three-course meal. The theater is set up like an arena with seating areas separated into sections.





reach out to families, reconstructed hotels in Las Vegas feature themes that conjure up visions of fairy tales and fantasies. At Treasure Island Mirage hotel, cannons fire, pyrotechnics explode and stunt people are thrown into the waters of Buccaneer Bay as the British Royal Navy challenges the pirates in a battle to the finish.