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Part 3 **of** 4

Incentive

MAY 1994
BURRELLE'S

MGM GRAND HOTEL & THEME PARK

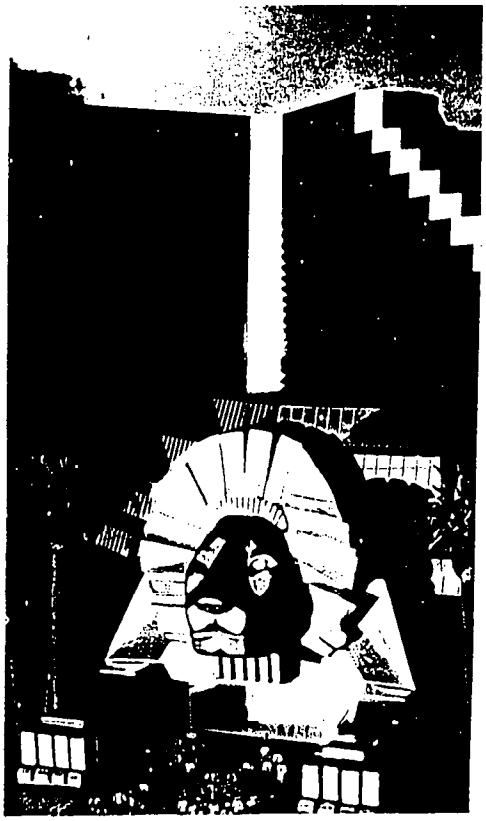
Treasure Island

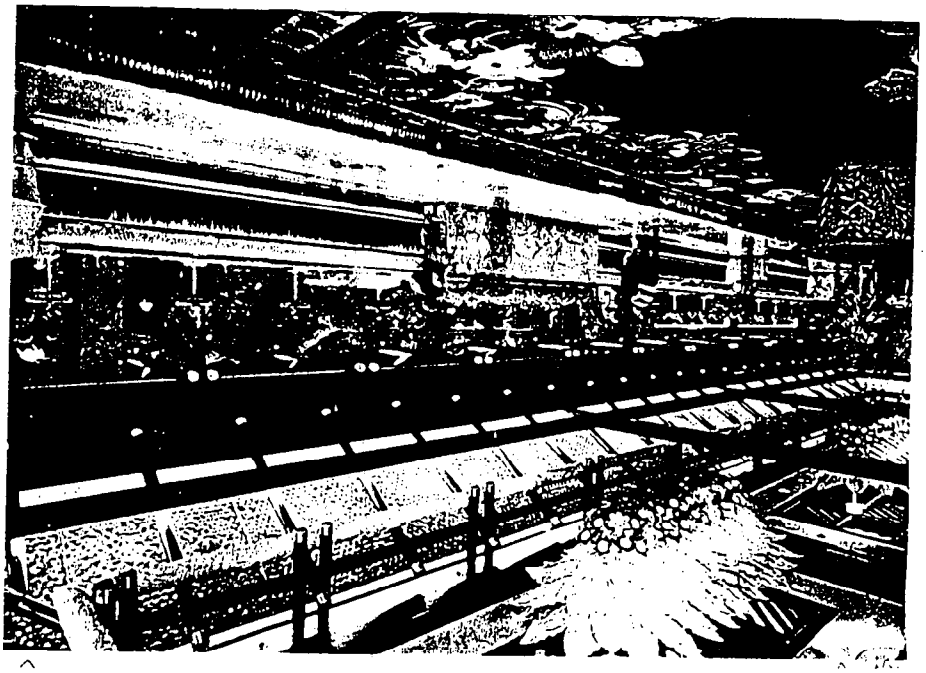
Only one place could marry the world's largest hotel casino to a full-tilt theme park: Las Vegas. Opened December 18, 1993, the MGM Grand complex is the 112-acre creation of multimillionaire developer and entrepreneur Kirk Kerkorian, who has twice built the largest hotel in Las Vegas for each hotel's time, and has done it again with the MGM Grand.

Beyond the regal golden head and flanks of the MGM lion are two 30-story mirror-finished wings with 5,005 rooms and suites, a separate "youth hotel," a mammoth casino split into three themed areas, eight themed restaurants, two showrooms, pools and spas and tennis courts, and a 33-acre Hollywood movie-lot theme park featuring 12 major rides, theme streets and four theaters.

Banqueting and party venues include a Grand Ballroom seating 1,010 and a special events center with a 15,200-seat arena (that Barbra Streisand showcased New Year's Eve) and 10 breakout "studios."

MGM is a "multi-niched" destination resort. "Caesars is Roman theme, Luxor is an Egyptian theme, Mirage is a tropical theme—well, the MGM has five themes in one. Take their casinos: The Monte Carlo casino caters to a high-end market and is as magnificent, as beautiful a room as you'll ever see. That serves one niche. The Oz casino is more slots





TIC 1853

oriented, so it serves a different niche," Lauster says.

THE MIRAGE

A Polynesian paradise is felt from the moment you step foot into the Mirage: hear the sound of a waterfall splashing and see lush tropical plantings and placid lagoons. Arrive at night, and you may see a volcano erupt, which it does on the quarter hour. The palatial golden and white hotel debuted November 22, 1989, a composition of three 29-story towers with 3,049 rooms, six luxurious lanai bungalows with private pools (great for select groups of VIPs) and a 1,500-seat showroom.

Behind the registration desk, running its length, is a 20,000-gallon saltwater aquarium teeming with sealife. Other exotic fauna live in the hotel too: playful dolphins in a large pool, and rare white tigers, performers in the Siegfried and Roy show, in a big cat habitat. Among group venues in the Mirage are two divisible ballrooms (the larger seating 2,660 for a banquet) and a large handful of breakout rooms.

TREASURE ISLAND

Sharing a 100-acre parcel with The Mirage is sister property Treasure Island, which opened October 27, 1993. Every 90 minutes between 3 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. in Buccaneer Bay, its theatrical grand entrance modeled after the village that Stevenson described in his novel *Treasure Island*, the pirates of the ship *Hispaniola* do cannon battle with the soldiers of the British frigate *Brittania*. (P.S.: The pirates always win.)

Treasure Island encompasses 2,900 guest rooms, a themed casino, a fully equipped games and recreation area for children adjacent to the casino, a 1,500-seat showroom, several restaurants and retail boutiques, a spa and salon, and a high-tech games arcade.

Its largest venue for banquets and receptions is the Treasure Island ballroom, accommodating 820 in banquet rounds.

HILL AND KNOWLTON

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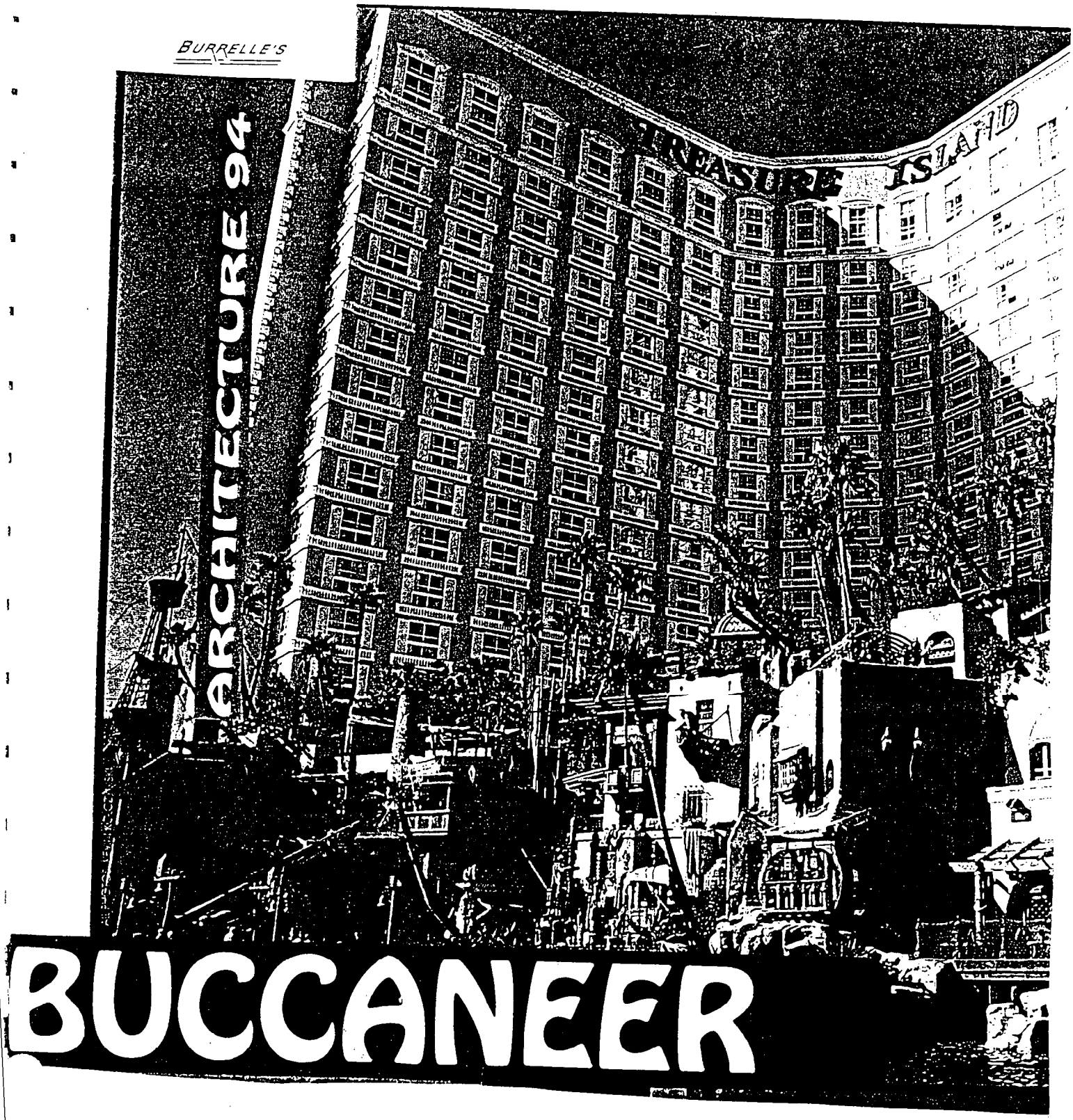


TIC 1855

HILL AND KNOWLTON

BAY

TIC 1856

It's a live show. No, it's a theme-park ride. Actually, you're both wrong, it's a sign. Sign, schmign, I happen to know it's a live show! Oh yeah, well I'm telling you it's a theme-park ride! Now look pal, I know Vegas, and this is a sign!

Such might be the heated discussion taking place every 90 minutes out in front of Treasure Island in Las Vegas, as groups of tourists, locals, and other curious types gather along the boardwalk eight times a day to witness the approximately five-minute free "event" known as Buccaneer Bay. Featuring live actors, fiery explosions, an exquisitely detailed pirate village, and a replica of an 18th-century British frigate that actually sinks in a million-gallon lagoon, this approximately $30-million centerpiece of the nearly $500-million Treasure Island hotel and casino is unique even in a town like Vegas, and it has left many wondering exactly what to call it. But more on that later.

Located on a 100-acre site adjacent to the Mirage, Treasure Island is the brainchild of Stephen A. Wynn, chairman of the board of Mirage Resorts Inc. Approximately three years ago, Wynn was looking to build a resort that would cater more to families than the typical Vegas casino, and he wanted a gimmick that would attract such a clientele; the story goes that Wynn found the answer while visiting the pirate set of the Steven Spielberg film *Hook*. Whatever the inspiration, Wynn called on architectural firm The Jerde Partnership Inc. in Venice, CA to help him and his in-house design firm Atlandia Design come up with the ideas that would lead to Treasure Island and Buccaneer Bay.

According to Jules Lauve, director of entertainment operations at Treasure Island, the final theme came into being only after the usual evolutionary process of sketches and discussions. "At one point it was a very contemporary pirate location, with Cadillacs and parts of cars stuck in the sand, things like that," Lauve explains. "And then the ships came into being, and the ship battle came into being, and then the ship moving came into being. So it went stage by stage through a whole bunch of lives before it ended up what it is now."

The final script goes like this: The pirate ship Hispaniola has just docked in Buccaneer Bay and the crew is unloading the booty stolen from around the world. Suddenly, the HMS Royal Britannia sails around Skull Point and into the harbor; the naval officers on board order the pirates to surrender their ship. The pirates, being pirates, scoff at such a notion and prepare to defend their ill-gotten booty as well as their home. A cannon battle ensues, and the pirates receive major damage to their ship (a broken main mast, a fire on the deck) while the Britannia remains relatively unscathed. A final volley from The Brits hits the nearby warehouse where the pirates store their explosives, causing a huge series of explosions. In a last desperate bid to save his ship and village, the pirate captain grabs a rope hanging from the main mast, swings toward

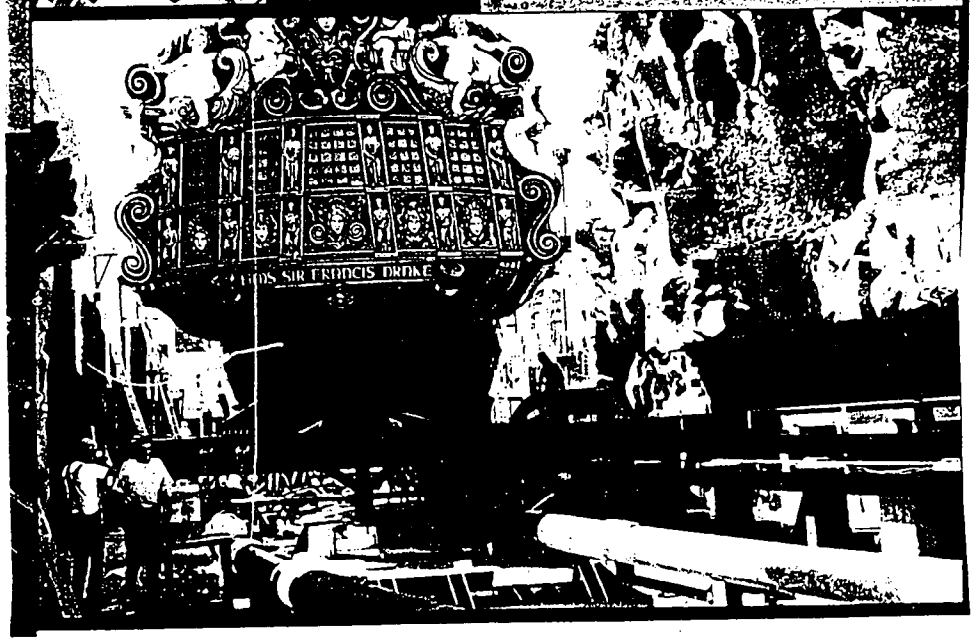
BUCCANEER BAY

Lighting System

2 ETC Concepts
2 Richmond Sound Design Stage Managers
6 JLCooper MIDI Mergers/Routers
5 ETC L86 96x2.4 Dimmer Racks
5 Macro Electronics 32x2.4 Relay Panels
2 ETC 120M DMX Distribution Devices
1 ETC ARW Building Management Interface
1,950 Architectural Lighting Fixtures by Phoenix, Hydrel, Stonco, Hinkley, and Lightolier (Par 64, Par 56, Par 38, MR16, and UHI)
135 Practical Fixtures; Lanterns, Sconces, etc.
5 Lightwave Research Dataflash Strobe Units
6 Xenotech Britelights 4k, 4,000W Xenon Automated Fixtures
8 Xenotech Britelights 2k, 2,000W Xenon Automated Fixtures
500 Lighting Control Channels
1,024 DMX Devices
57 Light Cues in 14 minutes, plus Loops [illegible]

Audio System:

2 Pioneer LDV-8000 Laser Disk Players
2 Akai S1100HD, 8-Track Digital Sampler
1 Richmond Sound Design Composer [illegible] 24x16x24
1 Richmond Sound Design Stage Manager
5 JLCooper MIDI Mergers/Routers
3 Mark of the Unicorn MIDI Time Piece [illegible]
275 Unique Audio Samples
230 Audio Cues in 9 1/2 minutes
12 Rane MPE-14 Equalizers [illegible]
30 Crown Com-Tech Amplifiers [illegible] CT-400, CT-200
48 Community RS Series [illegible]
[illegible] Intersonics Satellite [illegible]
62 OWL 40, 70V Speakers [illegible]



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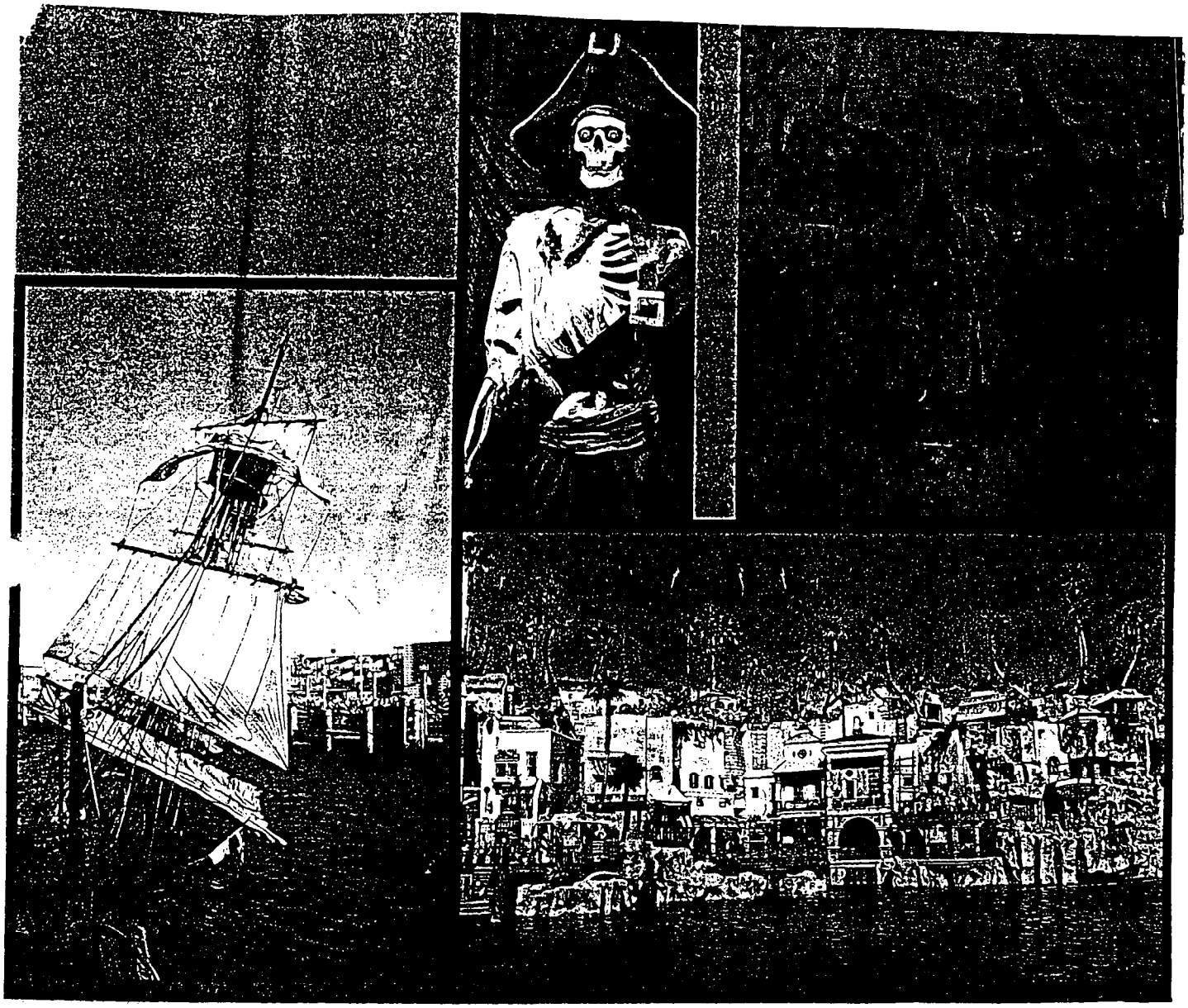

TIC 1859

Details from Buccaneer Bay and its environs include, clockwise from far left: the pirate ship Hispaniola, docked directly under the ammunition warehouse which provides much of the explosive fun during the show; the sea god Neptune and serpents guarding the casino doors; faux skulls adorning a column near the entrance; riches plundered from around the world were taken into consideration when creating the architectural elements of the village and contributed to its eclectic look; the Britannia and its dolly system during construction.

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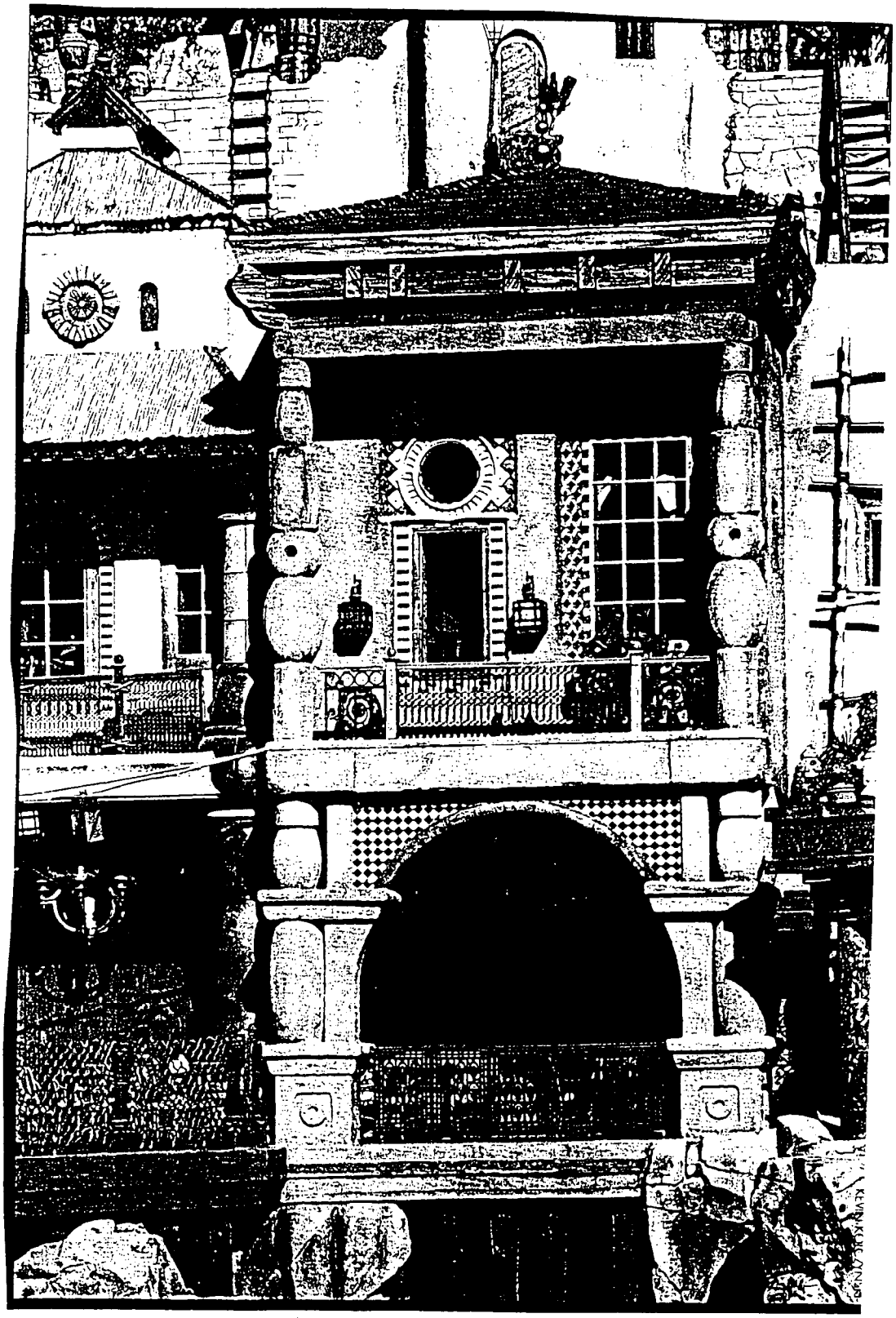
TIC 1861



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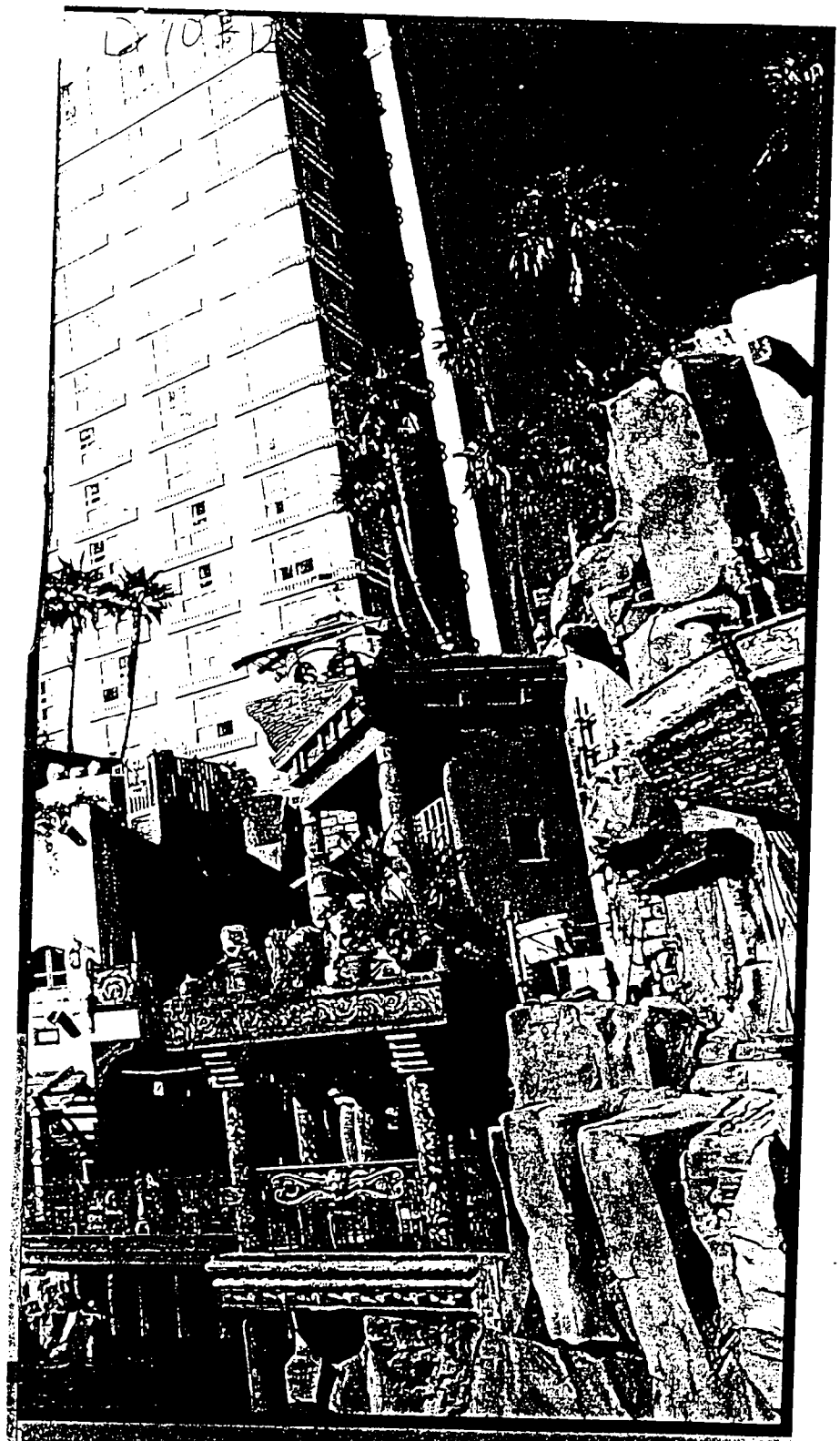


Clockwise, from top: Buccaneer Bay, dwarfed by the 36-story hotel; the skull and sabres beckoning visitors on the strip is said to be among the world's largest free-standing signs; some of the abodes making up Buccaneer village; the HMS Royal Britannia sinks into the murky depths; a skeletal pirate stands guard at the Mutiny Bay arcade inside Treasure Island; and a glowing Skull Point laughs it up.

TIC 1863

the starboard, grabs a smoldering ember from the on-deck fire and lights a cannon. A direct hit! The Britannia's gunpowder storage area explodes, and the ship goes down in flames. The British sailors dive into the lagoon, but the captain goes down with his ship. You see, the pirates always win in Vegas.

To create Buccaneer Bay, Wynn, Jerde, and Atlandia contracted Marnell Corrao Associates in Las Vegas to construct the village, and Showtech USA in Las Vegas and South Norwalk, CT to construct the show systems. The stars of the show, the ships, were built by Showtech at its Vegas office (which has since closed), and was based on designs by Charlie White of Olio Productions in Venice, CA. (Wynn was reportedly so impressed with White's initial drawings of the village, ships, and costumes that the artist was hired as the project's art director and production and costume designer.) The Hispaniola is a 90' stationary ship placed on a slab, with a fore, mizzen, and main mast, two of which are designed to fall on command; a hydraulic plant in the stern of the ship takes care of the mast breaks, while a pneumatic plant in the bow handles the air effects for the cannon hits. Six working cannons are situated in the ship's lower section.

The Britannia may move through the water, but at 140,000 lbs., with a skeleton of welded steel covered with fiberglass made to resemble wood, it needs all the help it can get. Showtech solved that by placing the ship's keel on a dolly with urethane wheels specially made by Uniroyal. The ship then tracks along a 100'-long guide-rail system, pulled by a 12-ton stainless-steel winch driven by a hydraulic motor located in a dry room on the north end of the lagoon. To keep the cable dry, the designers devised a fish-tank system: the water coming through the hole where the cable penetrates is caught in a tank and pumped out; the cable passes through the tank, drops its water off, and rolls onto the drum.

One of Wynn's mandates for the show was that the Britannia had to go under not just a few feet, but to sink so that water completely covered all the decks, leaving nothing but the masts above water.

"He wanted it to sink, and he also wanted it to keel as it sunk so that it didn't look plastic, just going straight under," explains Bill Mensching, president of Showtech. To that end, Showtech turned to Bob Gurr of GurrDesign of Tijunga, CA. "What we arrived at was a pivoting tilt deck so that we could get both motions out of one movement," Mensching says. "We have a large platform bed made out of plate girders about 2' wide by 4' tall that extend out about 40' on a cantilever, and are controlled by a piston on a crank arm." Once the ship is in position, it is held onto the deck by dog locks and dissociated from the cable, and the arm forces both deck and ship underwater at a 30° angle.

Impressive though the moving ships are, what really draws the crowds to Buccaneer Bay are the cannon fire, explosions, and other eye-

popping effects. Showtech subcontracted Spectra F/X of Camarillo, CA, and Birket Engineering in Orlando, FL, to handle the 14 explosions and 12 afterburn effects in the show, as well as the hull-hit system for the Britannia, the barrels that shoot off the Hispaniola deck, and the wave machines (yes, wave machines, 60 to be precise, all run by hydraulic motors: Wynn wanted at least 2' swells in the lagoon during the show, with whitecaps; the movement also guards against the development of bacteria in the water).

To achieve the proper explosive effects, thousands of feet of plumbing were installed behind the scenes to route all the necessary propane; there are four 120-gallon and six 60-gallon accumulators on board the Britannia, and eleven 120-gallon accumulators behind the warehouse to store the gas. "We wanted the explosions, particularly in the warehouse, to be monumental," explains Spectra F/X president Bob MacDonald. "And the only way to get really large fireballs is to accumulate the gases, the necessary fuel, in large pressure vessels near where you're going to use it. So there's a lot of plumbing. You need to be able to deliver the gas when you want it, so you have to verify that you have an ignition source; we always try to use a pilot flame. Because of the velocity in which the gas is moving, we don't want to have a misfire, because you're emitting a huge quantity of gas. So all of that takes a lot of equipment."

The warehouse explosion, dubbed by Lauve as the "Harley-Davidson of gas effects," is the big crowd-pleaser of the show. For this effect, the Spectra F/X team, which consisted of MacDonald, Bob Bauer, and John Richardson, turned to their previous work on the Backdraft attraction at Universal Studios in Hollywood; in the opening office explosion of that show, the expansion of burning gas was used to create pressure to open the office doors rather than actuators. "We were thinking of doing the same thing for three very large and heavy door systems at Treasure Island; it was a quantum leap in technology really, but it used basically the same philosophy. So we made doors that are as light as possible for their size, and basically there's no other actuation than the gas. If the fire doesn't go for some reason, then the doors don't open."

The effects for Backdraft are all done indoors, a particularly challenging environment for fire-related effects, since propane is heavier than air and is a dicey proposition in a closed setting. Buccaneer Bay may be outdoors, but MacDonald says it was no cakewalk. "This one still had a lot of [obstacles]: it's a venue that's subject to capricious winds; there was a lot of intricate rigging—we had to worry a lot about making sure we didn't burn things up; and we were interacting with live stunt actors."

The presence of water also provided its share of challenges, points out Glen Birket, president of Birket Engineering, which designed all the controls for the fire effects, show action equipment, and safety systems. "The fact that the Britannia submerges every show has a significant effect on all the systems on the boat," he says. "All of the control equipment has to be in a submersible container, and any penetration into that is a big deal because it is a possible source of water entry. So the cables themselves have to be the right type. Space itself becomes a big issue, because

everything is in a container that can't get any bigger. You can't just tack something onto the side of the boat." To solve that problem, Spectra F/X found a company that makes sub-sea equipment which provided them with stainless-steel enclosures manufactured at very close tolerances.

"Nobody wants to have another Jaws on their hands," adds Mensching, referring to the trouble-plagued ride at Universal Studios Florida. "So we used all submarine-rated components, we used electrical componentry that's used in off-shore drilling rigs. We really went to the limit on that kind of specification, because there was no way that the water could be drained from the front of the hotel. It's so much of the front of the hotel that draining the water and having an empty bathtub there would be totally unacceptable to Steve Wynn."

Still, Mensching and the Showtech staff felt they needed some sort of backup position for the Britannia in the event of an unforeseen mechanical problem, so a dry-dock system was engineered and built in the north end of the lagoon, away from the crowds; the boat can be moved into position and closed off, and the water is then pumped out for maintenance, repainting, or other needs.

Production Arts Lighting in Moonachie, NJ, which installed the lighting systems for Buccaneer Bay, had its own technical problems with the water; everything within 5' of the lagoon had to be GFI (ground fault interrupter) fire protected. "We tracked down myth after myth," says Steve Terry, president of Production Arts. "An engineer would say, 'There's this great GFI that will work out to 1,000'.'" Production Arts, however, found no GFI that would handle long wire runs and dimmer circuits. "The problem is the British ship trails an umbilical cord that is about 250' long to the shore-side connection point," says Terry. "There was discussion about putting generators, batteries, all kinds of garbage on the ship, and it was abandoned. What we did was, we simply said to [lighting designer David] Hersey, 'You can't dim these circuits, you have to switch them.' So all the circuits that are on the trailing umbilical cord are switched under relay control, not from the dimmer."

Such precautions were common in the design and construction of Buccaneer Bay, and nowhere is that more apparent than in the safety features for the show. This is a show with live actors and explosions, after all, not to mention the fact that the audience is a mere few feet away from much of the action. Needless to say, Wynn and the Mirage wanted no chances taken. For instance, if the desert winds in Las Vegas exceed 15 miles per hour, the show will not run; eight shows were cancelled one weekend last December due to high winds. The decks of both ships are scattered with standard E-stops for the actors; if they don't hit their cues where these touch pads are located at a specified time, effects will not go off. There are 13 low-level detectors sniffing for gas leaks throughout the space. A systems check is done before each show, and a printout is made of each prep so an accurate record is kept of every event that happens before, during, and after each show. Such precautions are standard with shows involving live actors, but extra care was taken here to ensure that nothing was overlooked.

"There is a tremendous amount of thought that goes into redundancy and fail safety," says Birket. "We have to have the answer to every possible question involving 'What if something goes wrong?' There can't be anything that fails and creates and unpredictable situation. And that consumes a lot of time and effort. However, it's an engineering process that you can proceed through in a known fashion."

Safety precautions were also taken for the audience and others in the perimeter, according to Lauve. "The railings [on the boardwalk] look like rope with net strung along them, but in fact there's wire rope inside the

HILL AND KNOWLTON

TIC 1866

hemp-looking rope, so it's strong enough so you can't pop through that and fall in," he explains. "Also, there's a perimeter alarm system so that if anybody were to go into the water, then immediately if the show were running it would E-stop. Up behind the Hispaniola, where the warehouse doors blow open, there's a perimeter alarm system up there, so if maintenance engineers or some of the horticultural staff were to unknowingly go into that area, and they couldn't read the copious signs and somehow got past the locked gate, that by breaking the beam or hitting a pressure pad it would eliminate those effects from the show." (For more on the safety and pyro features on Buccaneer Bay, see the next two pages.)

Taking a keen interest in all of this during the four months of construction were officials from Clark County, who visited the site on a regular basis. The permit process involved in Buccaneer Bay was quite complicated for Las Vegas, in part because of the unusual nature of the project: How many casinos feature a million gallons of water, moving machinery, live actors, and 25' fireballs? The fire department, the building department, and other Clark County officials required permits for the storage of propane, the use of flame, the storage of pyrotechnics, and the transportation of the ships (from the Highway Department), plus the standard facility structural, electrical, and mechanical plumbing permits.

Because of the precedent-setting nature of the electrical and mechanical aspects of Buccaneer Bay, the county also required that everything be certified. To that end, ETL of Los Angeles and Radco were brought in as third-party inspection companies. ETL, a nationally recognized lab, certified all the electrical systems that didn't already have a UL sticker, while Radco certified all the gas propane systems.

Once those and countless other permits and revisions of permits were finalized, the last major hurdles were to obtain operating permits for both ships; trouble was, Clark County had a hard time coming up with the proper classifications. Their dilemma was similar to the one audience members still have: What the hell do you call it?

"They originally were going to classify [the Hispaniola] as an unoccupied building," explains Mark Hanlon of Atlandia, who served as project manager. "Which is very appropriate, because it is an unoccupied building. Underneath the hull is hollow, and inside of that is a large concrete bunker, fully waterproofed, submerged. And you go in through an access hatch through the deck and into this utility room where all the hydraulic pumps are and the compressors that power the south end of the bay, and all the wave machines, and all the special effects on the Hispaniola." But the county eventually decided against such a classification.

"They really didn't know how to classify it," adds Mensching of the county officials. "They really struggled and were trying to get their arms around what we were doing."

The final designation: the Hispaniola was classified as a sign, "because it was being fabricated in our shop, and it had all kinds of electrical components within it," Mensching explains.

"Why they made it a sign just blew my mind, it made no sense to me whatsoever" says Hanlon. "But then I never cease to be amazed by regulatory authorities."

The Britannia was classified as an amusement transportation vehicle; trouble was, there was nothing for amusement transportation vehicle in Clark County's code. "That's the one that we really went to work on and hammered out a specification as to what it was and what it should be," Mensching says.

In other words, Buccaneer Bay at Treasure Island is a live show, it's a theme park ride, and it's a....well, you get the idea.

DAVID JOHNSON

TIC 1867

HILL AND KNOWLTON

PYRO FOR PIRATES

The pyrotechnic effects at Buccaneer Bay are part of the smorgasbord of violent effects Showtech subcontracted to Spectra F/X; among the other effects are the water splashes and gaping hole at the water line on the frigate Britannia. The timing of the cannon blasts and explosions is determined by SMPTE time code mediated by the Automated Controls Systems, ACS, show-contol computer, but the design of the pyrotechnic system and cue structure minimizes the possibility that equipment malfunction or operator or actor error will result in any injuries.

"The pyrotechnic [control] system was primarily done by Birket Engineering down in Orlando," says Bob Bauer, Spectra F/X's flame specialist on the project. "They basically do our control systems for us." The Birket system is based on an Allen Bradley programmable logic controller with control software written for this application.

"The ACS system is the one that's in charge of the timing," says Glenn Birket, president of Birket Engineering. "At the appropriate times it sends digital signals over to the PLC that controls the fire and the pyro. There's an enable and a fire signal, so it takes two signals to cause anything to happen."

There are also at least two other enable signals that have to be given by human beings before the Birket system will allow a pyrotechnic effect to happen. "Each boat has an enable [button] that the captains of that boat have to maintain [hold down] in order to fire the effect," says Buccaneer Bay technical director Paul V. Myers. "Plus, I'm the last element in the order. The enable button on the technical director's control panel also has to be depressed for the show to fire."

"There are some pyrotechnic devices that involve more risk," points out Bauer. "Those particular effects are enabled on a higher resolution." These effects require actors located near the effect to be in specific positions or perform specific actions to ensure they are out of harm's way. One actor appears to be blown off a yardarm on the pirate ship, but he actually dives into the water, which takes him out of the way of the warehouse blast. "He arms a mat, then he steps on the mat so we know he's there, and then he has to get off the mat in order for the central and south warehouse explosions to go off," says Bauer.

The Birket control system looks for transitions in the states of the enable switches during particular time intervals to know if an enable signal is valid. "When the ACS sends a signal to us saying it's time to fire the pyro, we don't simply look to see if the button is pushed. We look for the action of pressing the button," explains Birket. "What we're guarding against is the thing that inevitably happens with a group of people who do things repetitively. It's

TIC 1868

annoying to have to stand there with your finger on that button. They'll find some way to mash the button so they don't have to hang around. They'll wedge a matchstick in there, or use a big rubber band and a block of wood or something. The system has checks built in to prevent them from doing that."

The Birket control PLC is wired to DPDT firing relays housed in waterproof boxes within 20' of the pyrocharge each relay fires. In a relay's normal position, the leads from a charge's squib are shunted together and grounded. When the charge is fired, the squib is connected to the firing power bus, which is only powered at the moment of detonation. Both the relay and the bus must be energized together, or there is no ignition.

Before each show, after the new charges are loaded, the Birket control system does a continuity check on each of the squibs. Each of the 82 charges used on the show is checked in turn by running a limited current through it—just enough current to see if the squib is intact and properly installed, but too little current to fire the device. All personnel are kept away from the charges when this is done.

"If we don't get a good continuity check, there is very little time to go back and do anything about that, so we will just note it as absent, and, instead of firing that one, we will fire the next one," says Birket. "There are multiple charges in the cannons, and that way there is a little bit of immunity to a misfire. The effect will be the same."

The results of the tests and the firing events in the show are logged to a computer file, which is printed out and kept on file. "Anything that doesn't work,

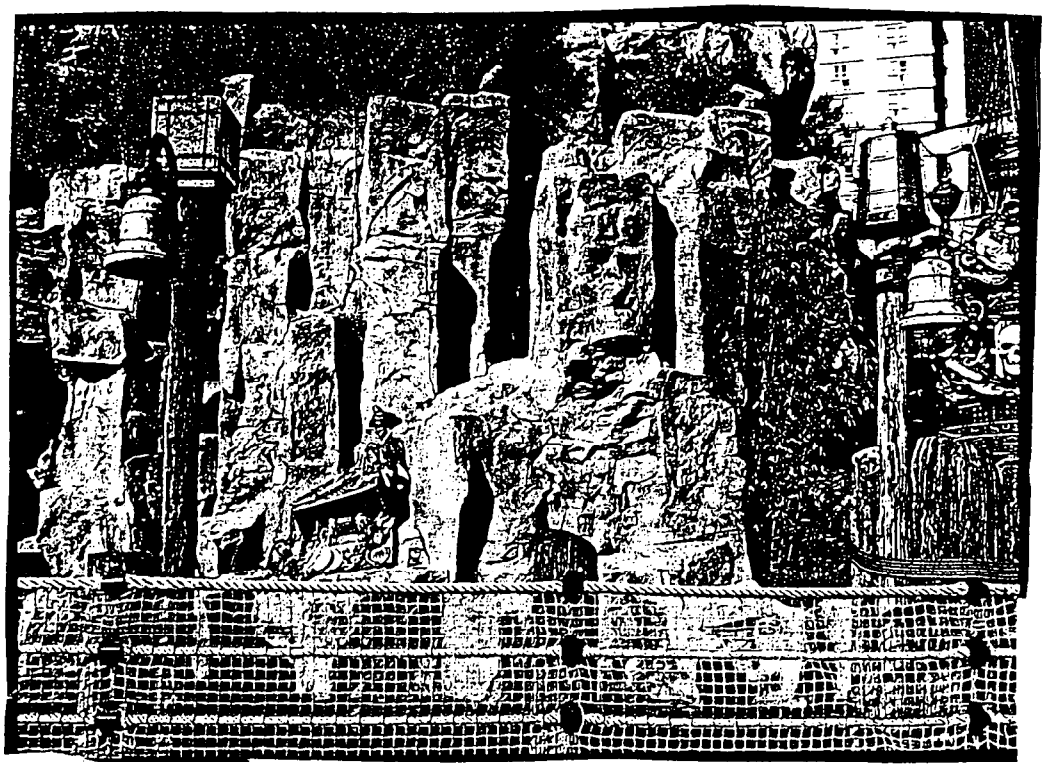
that we enable for the show, gets an alarm, and all of our alarms are recorded in the history," says Myers. "If we miss an effect for some reason, we can go back and find out, 'Well, the actor came off his enable button,' or it will come up here and say that the effect faulted."

Show documentation is an important diagnostic tool, and also a legal requirement. "They keep a report of every shot," says Bauer. "The laws are pretty much the same in Nevada as they are in California. If you strictly interpret the California laws, every time you fire a show you would write down exactly what you loaded and what you fired. In our case, we know exactly what we loaded because this stuff comes from a factory, prepackaged."

The pyrotechnic loads are made by MP Associates and are specifically designed for their applications in Buccaneer Bay. "There is some very close proximity work in this show, not only for the actors, but also for the audience," says Bauer. The cannons of the Hispaniola point right at the audience. "You can actually look down the barrel and see the device. That's rather unnerving from a pyrotechnic point of view. So, of course, those loads are very carefully manufactured. Every load is specifically packaged and labeled for its location."

"One of the reasons we use MP Associates is because they have written specifications and they test 10% of the lot," says Bauer. "If they don't meet those specifications, they throw out the whole lot and start again. It would be foolish to say we can predict every event, but we're using quality-control methods that are traceable and provable."

The charges from MP Associates are kept in a powder magazine behind the casino, and only enough charges of the proper type for a day's shows are loaded



TIC 1872

into two day boxes that are then taken to the front of the casino. One day box carries the pyrotechnic charges at the north end of Buccaneer Bay, the other carries the charges for the south.

"The idea is that the pyrotechnician will have a minimal opportunity to exchange devices inadvertently or take a British cannon shot and put it in a Hispaniola cannon. The two boxes keep those loads 100% separate," explains Bauer. The two boxes also minimize the exposure of the public to the charges. "From the north side to the south side, there is no good communication except within the attic of the casino. We just don't want to bring the pyro through those areas. It's a split to allow us to handle the pyro without exposing it to members of the public in the casino."

KARL G. RULING

HILL AND KNOWLTON

TIC 1873

BUILDING A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Lifescapes designed the exterior of the Treasure Island Casino, but the company that made all the ersatz rocks and pier pilings in the Caribbean village look real was Rock & Waterscape Systems, Inc. of Irvine, CA. The company has about 15 years of experience in making natural-looking, durable, artificial landscapes. "Their best guys are like scenic artists in concrete," says Rod Hickey, who was Showtech's mechanical project manager building the Buccaneer Bay ships.

The basic form of the front of the casino is made of concrete cinder blocks, to which Rock & Waterscape's workers attached glass-fiber-reinforced concrete (GFRC) panels. The panels are roughly 3'x4' or 2'x4'. "They're made from molds that are taken from natural formations in nature," says Jack Larsen, Rock & Waterscape Systems' project manager. "We just reproduce them." The types of panels used are selected or made after consulting the designer's drawings or models. For Treasure Island, "there were a couple of models made," says Larsen. "We just happened to have the right kind of rock in stock."

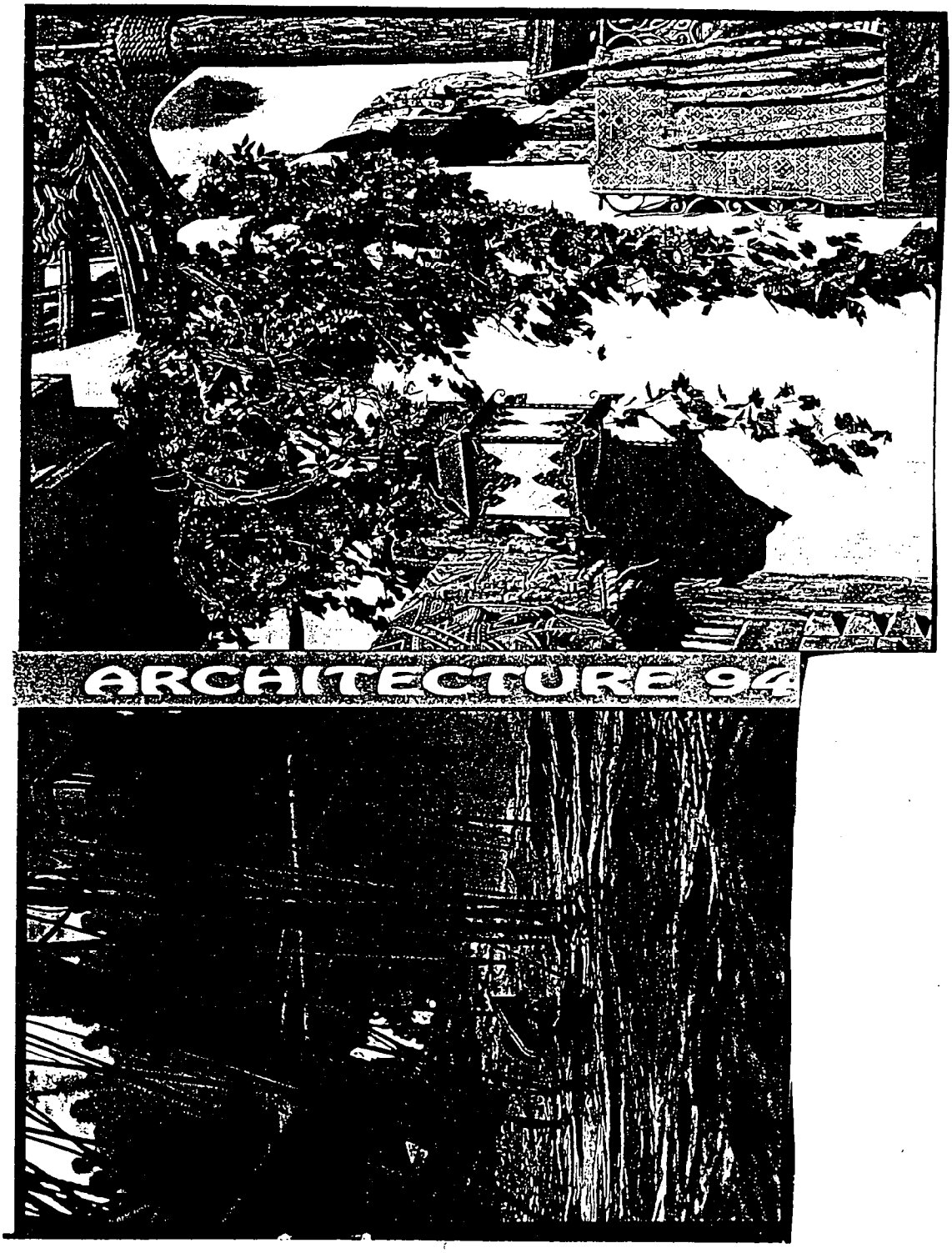
The panels are made with a steel frame imbedded in the backs of the panels. An angle-iron steel frame is attached to the front of the building and an armature is built in place and welded to the backs of the panels. "When they start, it looks like a mish-mash of panels just hanging off the wall," says Hickey. "They're pretty close together—a couple of inches apart at different angles."

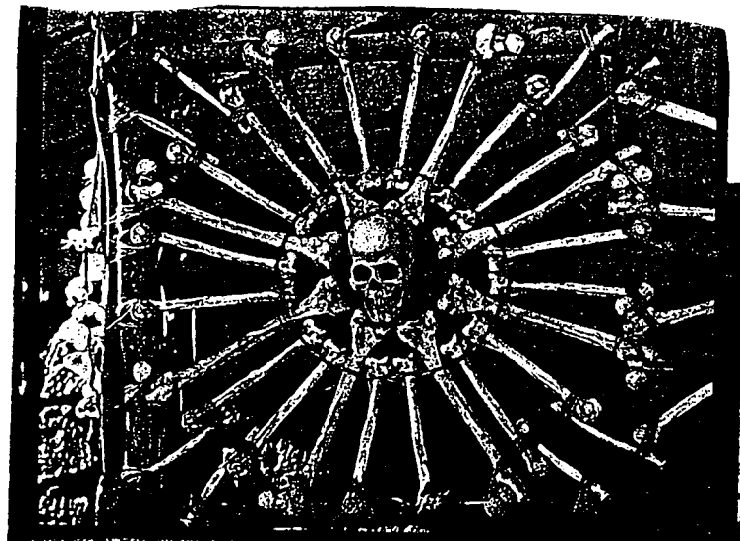
Gaps between the panels are joined together by filling in the spaces with metal lath or chicken wire. The construction is then sprayed with "a coat of plaster," says Larsen. The "plaster" is a particularly tough, weather-resistant material. "It's just like regular concrete. It holds up fine," says Larsen. "It's like how somebody would build a swimming pool," explains Hickey. A bit of hand trowelling is done in spots "and then it's hand-textured and hand-carved to put all the rocks together," says Larsen.

Texturing is done with a variety of techniques. The pier pilings started out as steel pipes and were covered with plaster. While the mix is soft, "they take a big plastic mold and wrap it around the concrete and pound on it," says Hickey. "It impresses the wood grain into the concrete." Hand-combing and carving are used to touch-up or add texture.

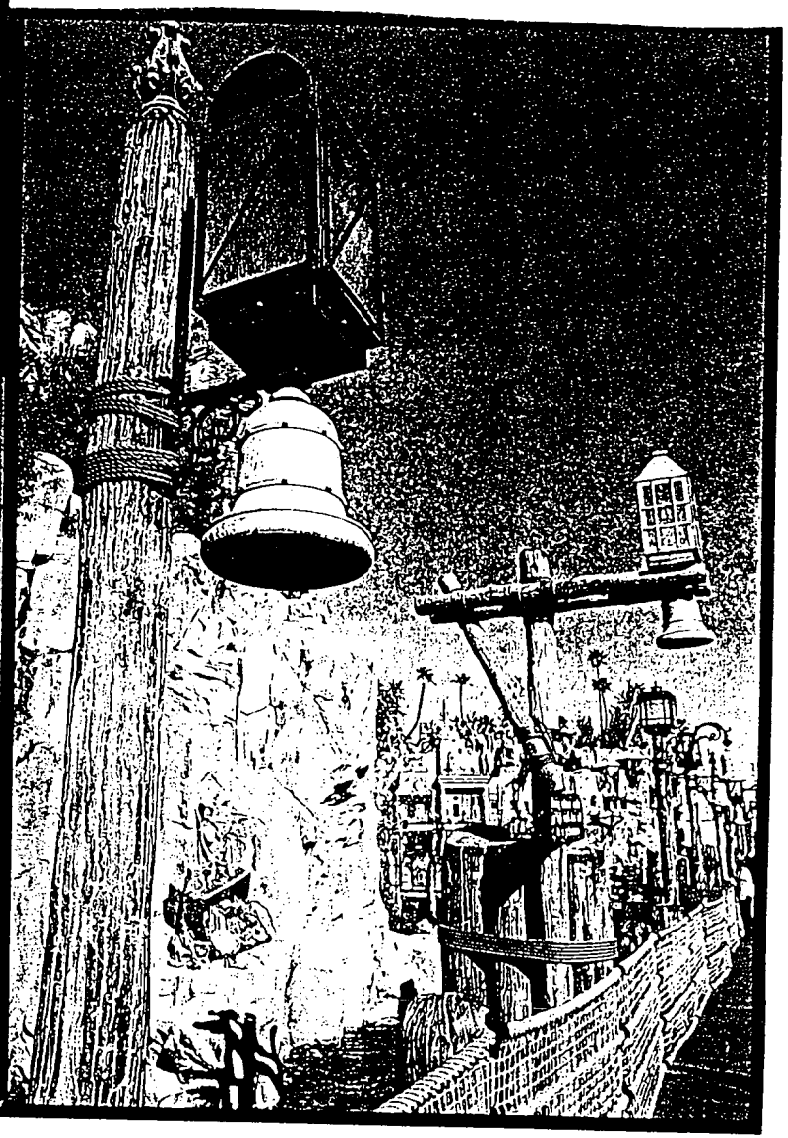
The rocks and pilings are painted to finish the effect. An inspection of the "wooden" pilings reveals some wet-blend work in earth colors, and drybrushing in black or near-black. "We use different techniques. We use a lot of different kind of paints. That's a trade secret," says Larsen. "It's really messy," adds Hickey. "Scenic painters are like angels of cleanliness compared to these guys."

KARL G. RULING


ARCHITECTURE 94



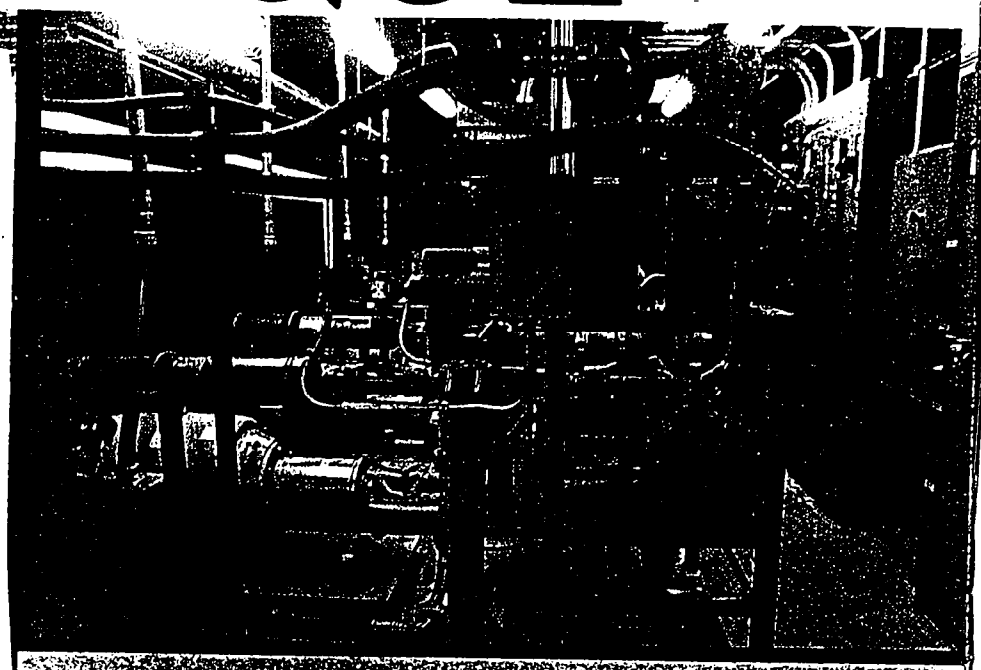
British sailors abandon ship into the watery lagoon as the Britannia explodes, the result of a direct hit from a pirate cannon; despite BB's lavish attention to detail, the Strip is never far away--note the Days Inn sign in the background (opposite page, top). At the south end of the lagoon, a skeletal pirate guards his plunder to the bitter end, while details of the stern of the Hispaniola are visible from the street (opposite page, bottom). Eight times a day, the British captain goes down with the ship (this page, top left); not to worry, though—an underwater breathing apparatus allows the actor to stay submerged for extended periods. Muskets, Oriental rugs, and lifelike tropical fauna contribute to the intricate detail of Buccaneer Bay (this page, top right). In another veiw from the south end of the lagoon, (this page, bottom right) crowds begin to form for the next performance under sunny Vegas skies. And the faux bones of several unfortunate seamen force spectators to think twice about crossing the pirate powers that be (above).



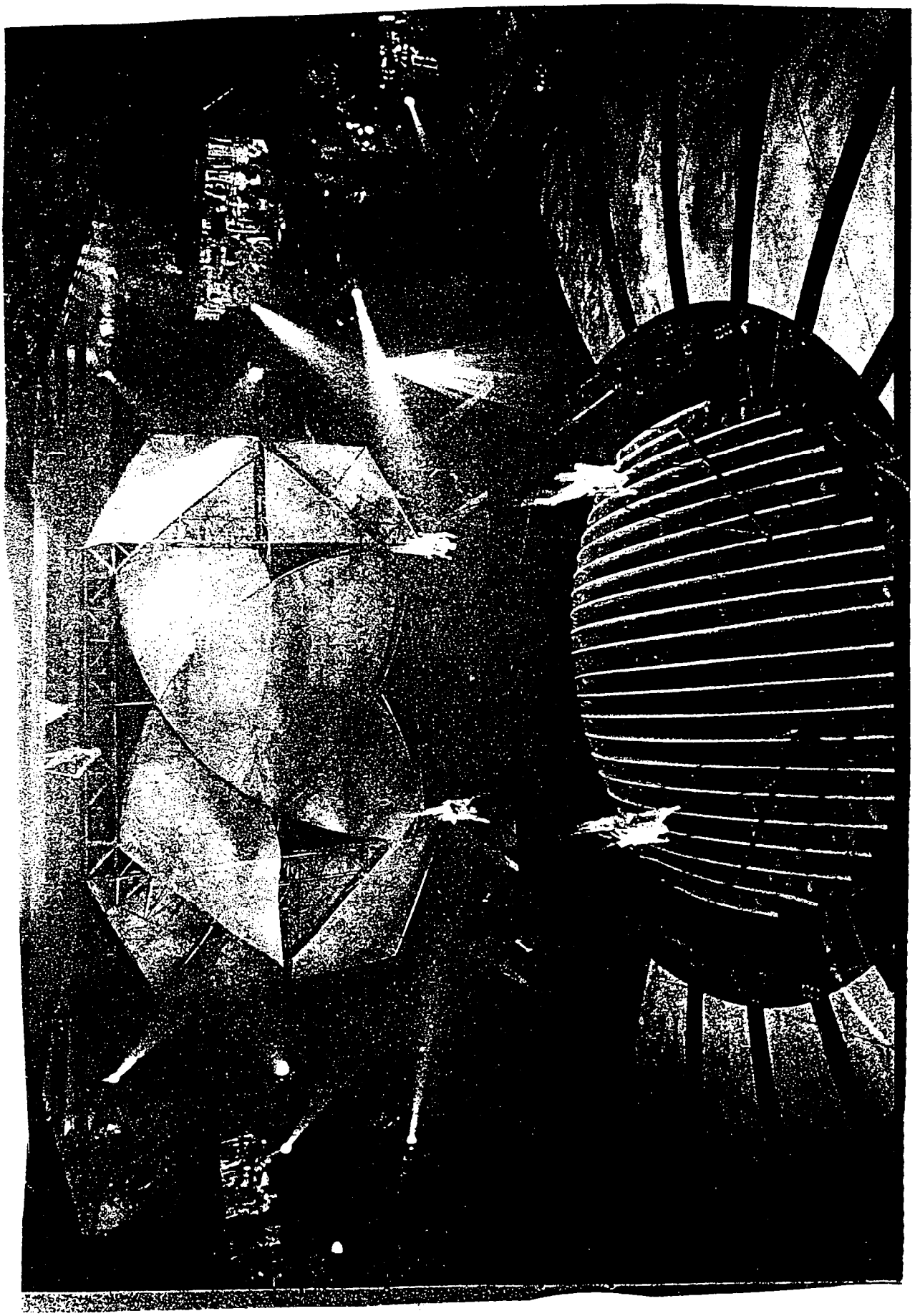
HILL AND KNOWLTON

TIC 1876

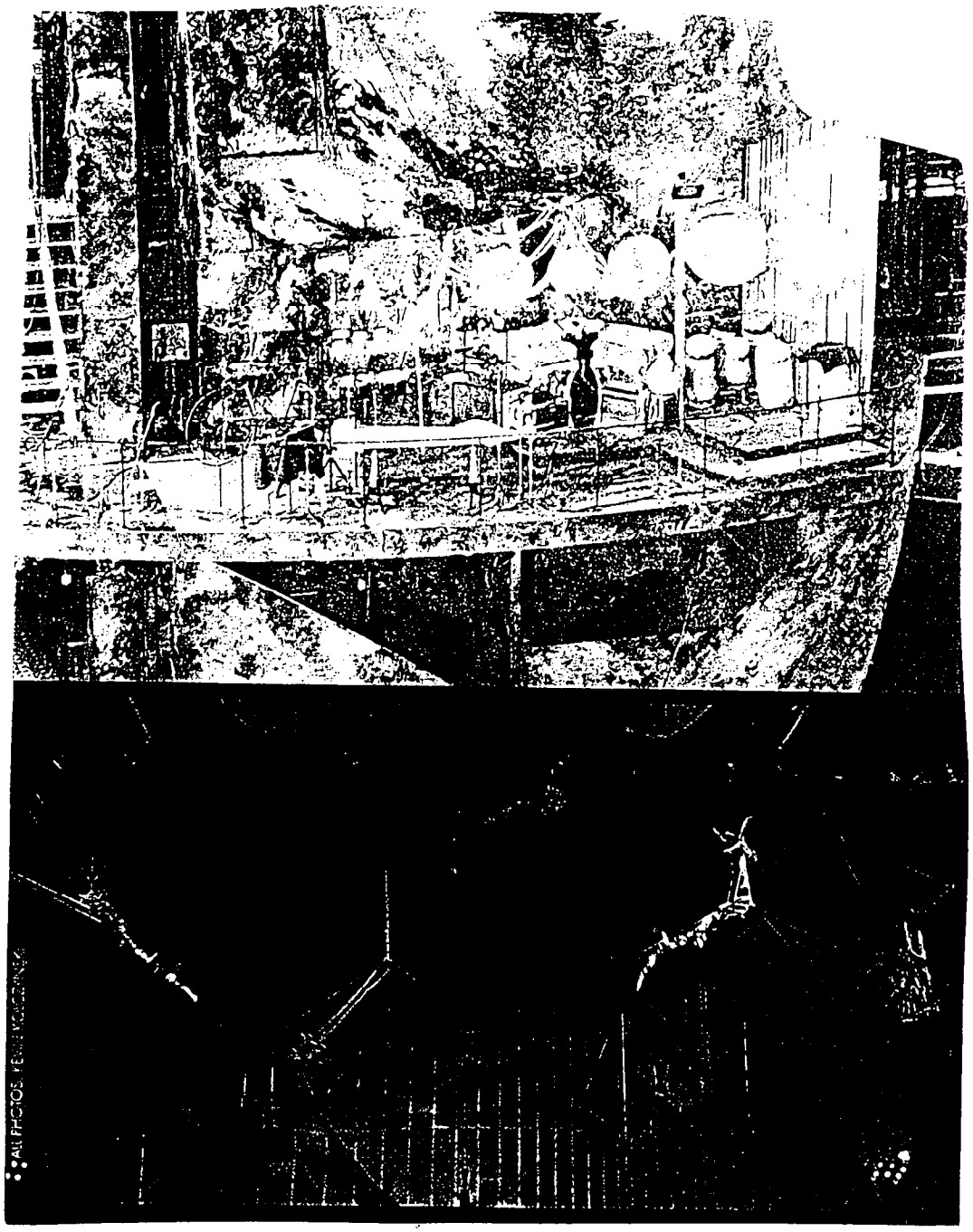
CIRQUE



For *Mystère*, Cirque du Soleil and design firm Scenic Plus wanted to recreate the feel of a big top in a theatre setting. One of the focal points of this new show is an asymmetrical rig meant to represent the sky that moves and rotates throughout the show (this page, top). The orchestra is situated on either side of the stage; stage right holds singers and the percussionist, among others (this page, middle left, and opposite page, bottom.) *Mystère* also marked the first time Cirque had employed projections in a show. Projectionist Pierre Desjardins used surreal fragments of photos of the performers and projected them onto the sky rig to suggest emotions (Opposite page, top). The rounded panels on the theatre ceiling (affectionately dubbed the Veg-o-matic) unfold for the trapeze act (this page, left). And a side view of the stage area reveals the lack of a proscenium: the open space below the thrust and another angle of the sky rig (opposite page, middle). The hydraulic units (this page, center) power the rigging system.



TIC 1878



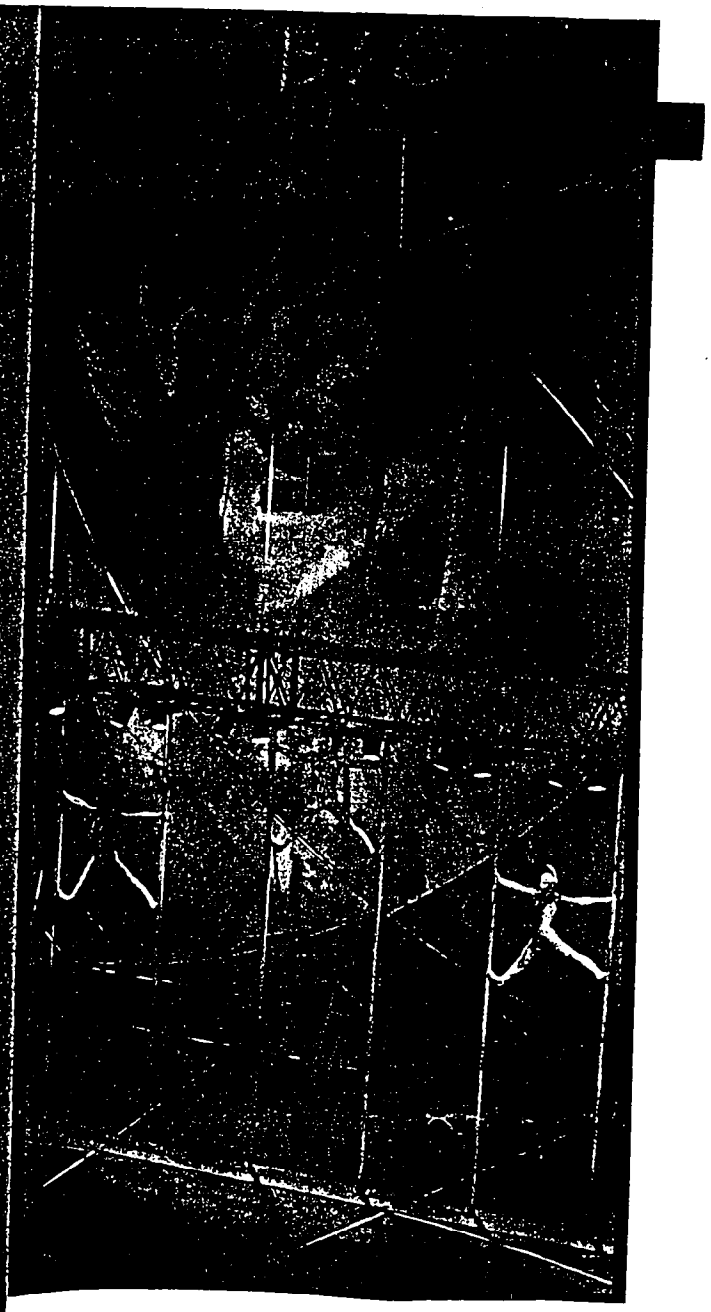
ALL PHOTOS: KENNY MCCRINER

TMB ASSOCIATES:
QTY DESCRIPTION
300 ETC Source 4 19 Degree ERS
30 ETC Source 4 26 Degree ERS
30 ETC Source 4 36 Degree ERS
6 6k HMI Fresnels w/Color Ram
29 Clay Paky Superscans
10 Clay Paky Gobo
Rotators for Above
All Cable for the
Install.
Audio System:
Acromedia
Rigging System:
Showtech USA
LA Forest Stage Lifts:
Gagnon
DU
SOLEIL

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL LIGHTING EQUIPMENT LIST

CINEMA SERVICES

QTY	DESCRIPTION
8	90" Light Bar w/6 Par 64s VN
8	60" Light Bar w/4 Par 64s ACLs
6	Altman 9 Lights
50	Altman 5 Degree ERS
100	Altman 10 Degree ERS
24	Altman 3 Cell Far Cyc Units
10	Altman 3 Circuit 76" Zip Strips
4	Altman Micro Ellipse Spots
350	Altman Par 64 Fixtures
4	Lycian Starklite II Followspots
2	Strong Xenon 2k Followspots, Long Throw
4	Wildfire S/F 400W UV Fixtures w/DMX Shutters
90	7" Color Ram Scrollers
32	Altman 3 Circuit 76" Zip Strips
32	10" Color Ram Scrollers
8	9 Light Color Ram Scrollers
15	Color Ram Power Supplies
130	Scroller Data/Power 25' Cables
30	GAM Twin Spins for ETC Units
24	Ray Lite Reflectors for Par64s
1	Colortran Medallion Console, Full Backup, 3 Monitors, and Remote
2	Compulite Animator Console w/Remote
5	2.5k Pani Projectors w/Image Scroller and Dimming Shutters



How far is it from Montreal to Las Vegas? Some would say they're worlds apart, others would give you a figure in the neighborhood of 3,000 miles. But if you're talking about the distance between the Canadian-based Cirque du Soleil's longtime status as the premier touring circus and its newfound role as a mainstay of the Vegas showroom circuit via the show *Mystère* at Treasure Island, three years, well over $20 million, and lots and lots of frequent-flier miles might begin to provide an accurate measurement. Still, there's another distance between these two locales that may be farther and harder to measure: the gap between French-Canadian artists and designers and Las Vegas businessmen and technicians.

There are two aspects to this story; one has great David and Goliath potential. In this corner: Steve Wynn, chairman of the board of Mirage Resorts Inc., the company which owns both the Mirage and Treasure Island; one of the most powerful men in Las Vegas, Wynn has the final say in almost every aspect of the Mirage empire, from the placement of the slot machines in the casinos to the pigment of the rocks on the Mirage volcano. He is a man used to making deals—and used to getting what he wants. And in this corner: Cirque du Soleil, a traveling troupe of acrobats, clowns, and other circus types, more at home under a big top than on the Vegas strip. A passionate, temperamental bunch, Cirque du Soleil has succeeded by sticking to its own artistic impulses. Needless to say, it's a pairing that would seem ripe for fireworks.

The other is the age-old tale of designers and technicians from different worlds simply trying to figure each other out. The players in this one are the Cirque designers, long used to big tops and a creative process in which myriad last-minute changes are the norm; and the Vegas tech crews, veterans of showrooms and theatres along the Strip with their own lingo, methods, and choices of equipment.

That such disparate groups had to make adjustments during the course of this endeavor is hardly surprising. That such disparate groups made it through relatively unscathed may be somewhat noteworthy. That such disparate groups got together at all may be the most unusual news of all.

Originally, Cirque du Soleil was going to be housed in Caesar's Palace. In January of 1991, Cirque founder Guy Laliberté traveled to Vegas with Patrick Bergé, general manager of Scéno Plus Inc., a Montreal-based company specializing in the design, restoration, and renovation of theatres which Laliberté had chosen to design the space. In town to pitch their plans to the Caesar's Palace board of directors for a theatre (complete with Roman-style columns) that would house the Cirque du Soleil vision in Vegas, things were not going well. After a lengthy presentation to these "12 guys in grey suits," as Bergé refers to them, the Cirque contingent was met with a less-than-enthusiastic response. "No one really wanted to say, 'Oh, its a good concept,' or 'Oh, it's a bad concept,'" Bergé says. Matters were complicated when the board expressed concern over such matters as show schedules and costumes. "It came to a point with Caesar's Palace where they were telling the circus that the girls are going to be dressed like this and the show had to look like that....So we all got up and walked out and slammed the door."

Whether or not the meeting ended so abruptly is open to debate, but news of the failed venture did reach the ears of Wynn, who, never one to miss an opportunity, flew to Toronto to see Cirque's *Nouvelle Experience*. According to Bergé, Wynn was so impressed with what he saw that he approached Laliberté at intermission and said, "I'll give you your building." Wynn saw in Cirque a perfect complement to Treasure Island, a show that would appeal to its international guests, but more importantly, one that would appeal to Vegas' newest target audience: the family.

Laliberté and Bergé flew back to Vegas, this time to meet with Wynn and go over their proposed plan for the project (now known as Vegas 2), which was similar to the Caesar's proposal but without the columns and other trappings of ancient Rome. "The first morning at 9:00," Berge recalls, "we're sitting in the conference room and Steve Wynn walks in with a plan in his

mouth and two others in his hand and said, 'Okay, guys, you can go back home, I've designed you're whole theatre.' That was the beginning of a three-year adventure."

Cirque and Scéno Plus explained to Wynn their vision of the space: a 1,525-seat theatre that would retain the feel of a big top and feature a 80' by 120' stage, a 36' by 36' thrust with a revolving turntable that can rotate up to 10rpm, a computer-controlled hydraulic rigging system, four onstage elevators, and no proscenium arch. After several rounds of debate and discussion, the Canadians were able to convince the Nevadan of the merits of their plan and were given a 10-year lease. The project was to be managed by Wynn's in-house design firm, Atlandia Design, while Marnell Corrao Associates would act as architects and building contractors. Vegas 2 was one step closer to reality; now all Cirque and Scéno Plus had to do was convince everyone else of the merits of their plan, a task that would not always be easy.

The lack of a proscenium proved to be an early hurdle. The fire marshall obviously took an interest in the fact that there was no fire curtain in the space; Bergé had to haul a model of the theatre to the fire marshall's office to explain to them that a major portion of Cirque's show was a trapeze act. "Half the show is on top of the audience and you can't put a fire curtain in the middle of a set," Berge told them. The proscenium-less space also met with some resistance from Wynn and architect Joel Bergman of Atlandia; Bergman pointed out that if *Mystère* were to flop in six months, Mirage Resorts would have to shut the space down and transform it into a "normal" theatre. The solution was to design the theatre and its catwalk system so it could be easily modified to add a full proscenium arch should the space be converted.

For the stage lifts, the design team faced another obstacle: Mother Nature. Underneath all that sand in Las Vegas is a crust of calcium carbonate called caliche, a substance said to be harder than concrete; in addition, the Treasure Island property is directly over an aquifer. Talk of digging through the caliche for the lifts left the Mirage accountants seeing red. "Every time we talked about elevators or a pit, people were freaking out," Bergé says. "We never really understood, before we saw the construction site, what caliche was." Luckily for

both sides, Scéno Plus came up with a solution: Spirolifts by Gala, a division of the Montreal-based Paco Corp. Affectionately termed Slinky-lifts, the units support four stage lifts (three are 10' by 36', and one on the thrust is 36' by 36') and require no caissons—an ideal choice under the circumstances.

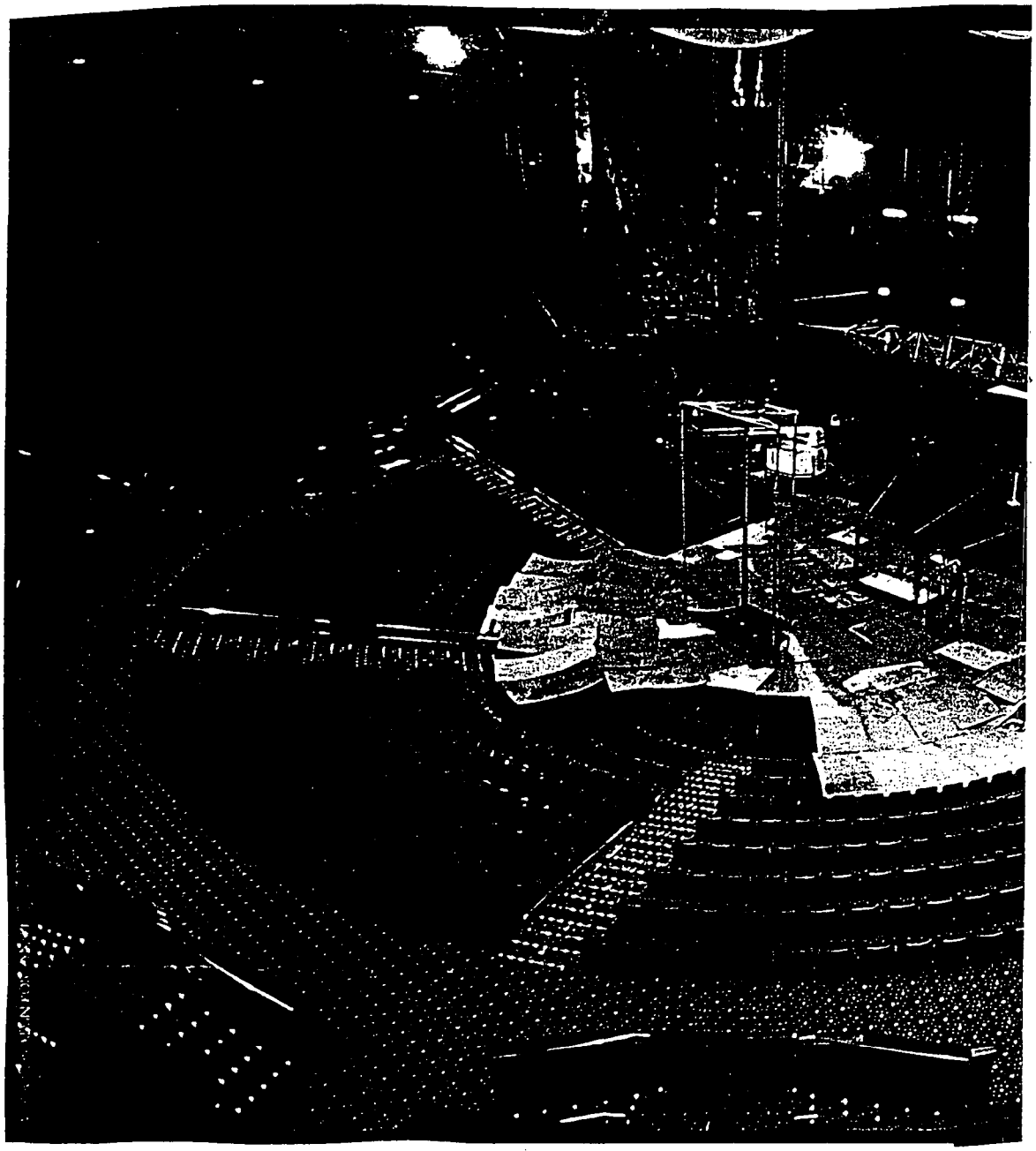
"You know that old magic trick where you can make a cane appear from nowhere, with spring steel coiled around?" explains Jules Lauve, director of entertainment operations at Treasure Island. "Imagine one of those that's about 2' in diameter, and to feed that out you've got a slinky that's attached to a platform on top of this cane; you compress it, and there's a mechanism that runs around a cartridge that feeds the slinky out and allows the cane to grow, or brings it back in. The result is you can get a 10' elevator packed into an 18"-tall area."

In each instance of compromise or change, Bergé says Scéno Plus found itself caught somewhat in the middle: though they were being paid by Treasure Island, their hearts were with Cirque du Soleil. It was a situation that led to a few disagreements. "We fought so strongly, standing up on top of tables with conference rooms with 20 people around us trying to get our guts," Bergé explains, perhaps exaggerating just a bit. "In our office here in Montreal, everybody increased their insurance policies. We were very scared. I'm 35 years old, and here I am telling all these 60-year-olds who've done at least 100 theatres how to work."

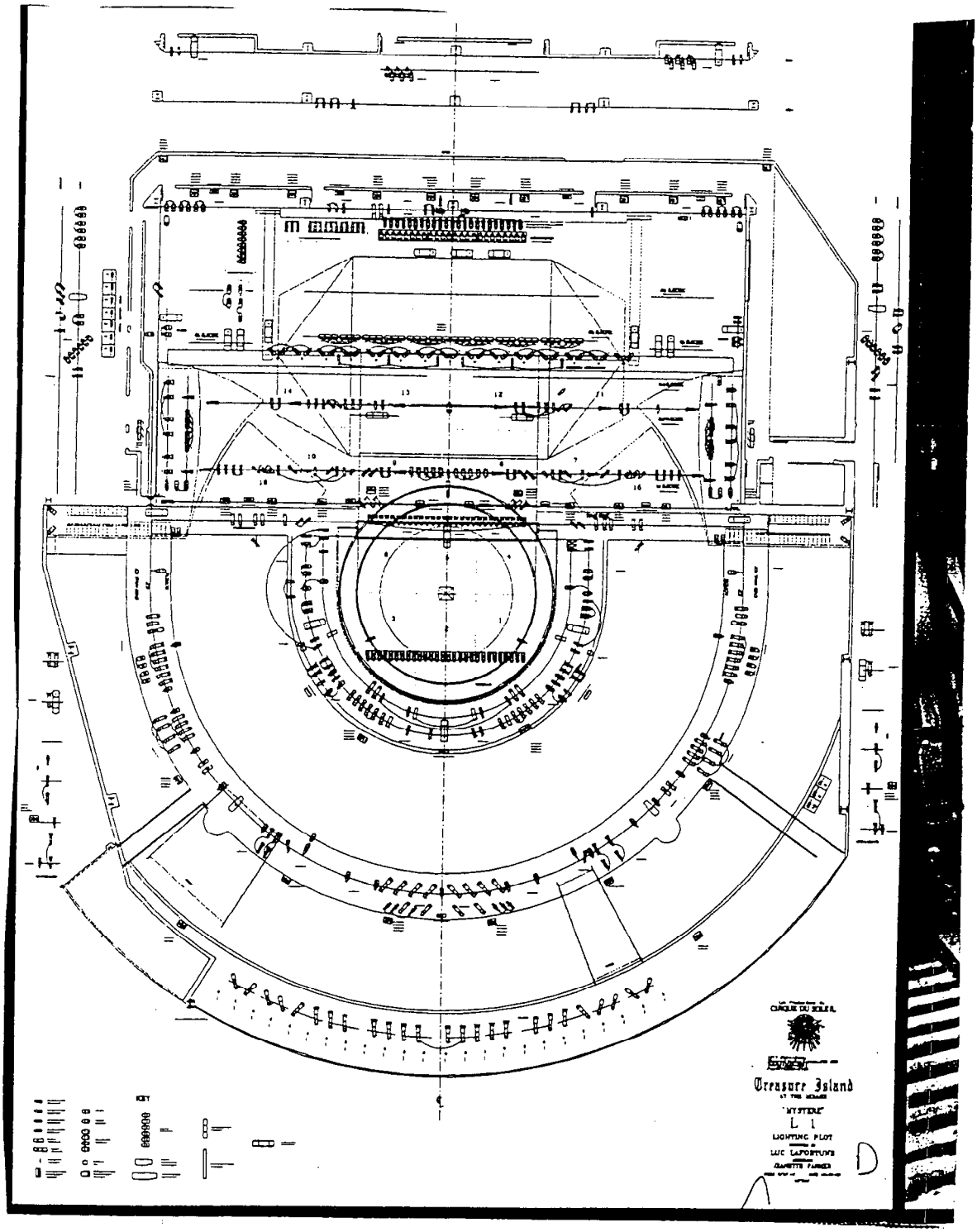
There were no such emotionally charged battles between Scéno Plus and the Cirque artisans; Bergé, project manager Claude-Andre Roy and the rest of their team were attentive to the needs of lighting designer Luc Lafortune, sound designer Jonathan Deans, set designer Michel Crête, and the entire Cirque creative staff.

"They were so impressive as far as asking for input, some things that I have never seen a consultant company do before," says Jeannette Farmer, lighting director for *Mystére*. "They came in and worked with us, asking us, 'What kinds of needs have we overlooked?' 'Is there something specific that you know you're going to need or require?'"

For example, Farmer notes, the original designs of the theatre did not include box booms, a cove-one position or a rail-cove (balcony) position. "The cove-one position was already available, but for rigging purposes only," she explains. "So we talked them into putting in dimming and things like that. Then the two tough ones, the two hard sells were the box booms and the rail cove, which are just crucial to the show. That enabled us, especially on the thrust, which is our main playing area, to get some really wonderful sidelight angles happening."



TIC 1885



TIC 1886

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL SOUND EQUIPMENT LIST

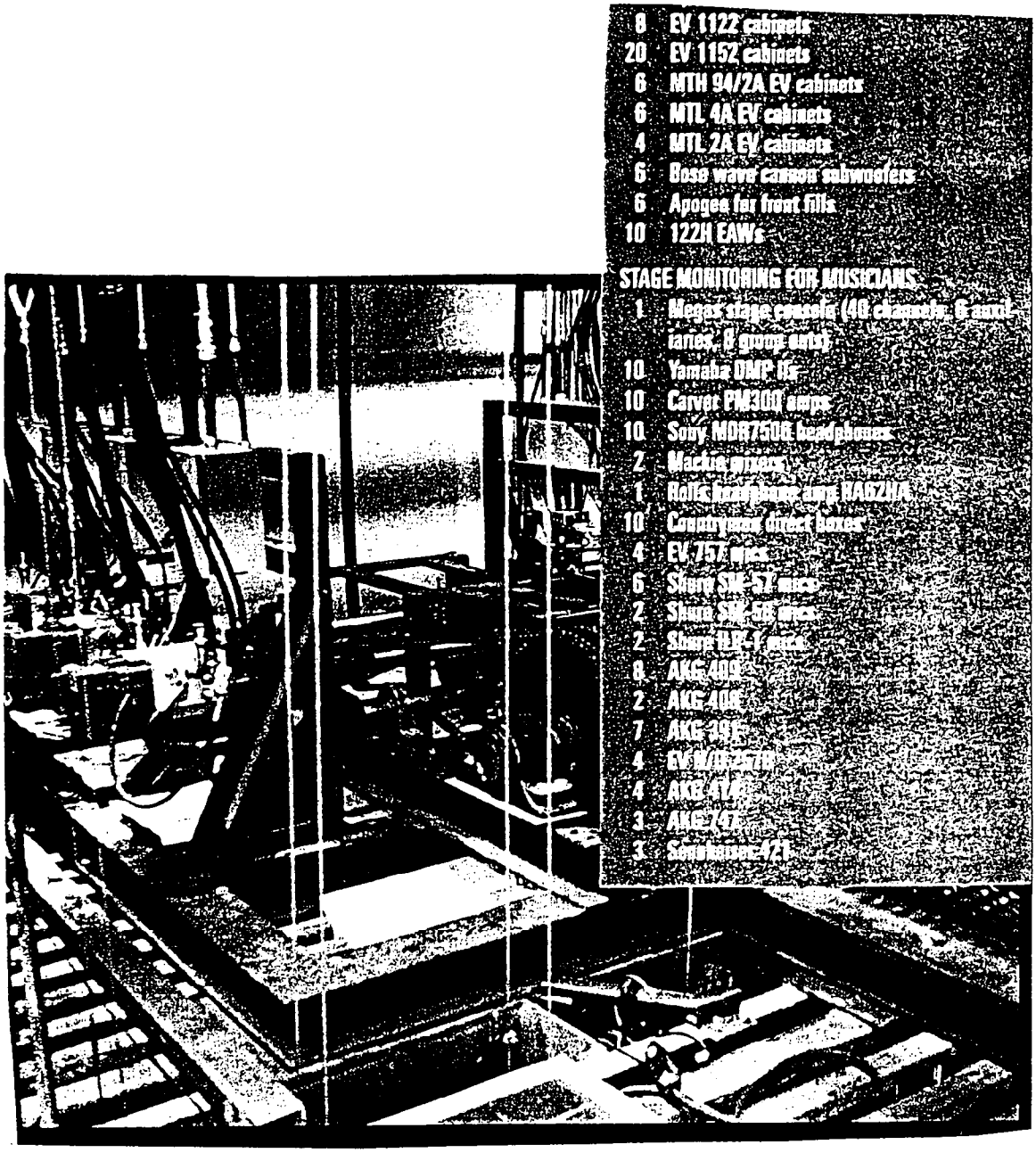
FRONT OF HOUSE

1 Midas 56 channel FOH console
1 Logic Control Systems 46x8x48 program (with Apple Centris 650)
1 Studio 4 opcode
1 RTS Systems SDS
2 Lexicon PCM70
2 Lexicon 300
6 Drawmer DL251 compressor/limiters
3 Drawmer DS404 noise gates
2 BSS FCS-926 equalizers
6 Sennheiser EM2003 wireless mics
1 Vega RMT-14 transmitter with 7 receivers for in-ear monitoring
2 Panasonic SV-3900 DATs
1 Alesis ADAT
1 Yamaha tape deck
1 Sony CD player

EQUIPMENT RACK ROOM

2 JL Cooper MIDI amplifiers
18 BSS TCS-804 delays
22 BSS FCS-920 equalizers
1 BSS FPC-900R equalizer analyzer controller
10 BSS FDS-360 X-Os
28 Crown 1200 amps
23 Crown 2400 amps
3 Crown 600 amps
6 Crown 400 amps for dressing room page w/ 3 Yamaha Q2031A equalizers
1 Lyn Tec paging switcher
1 Symetrix compressor

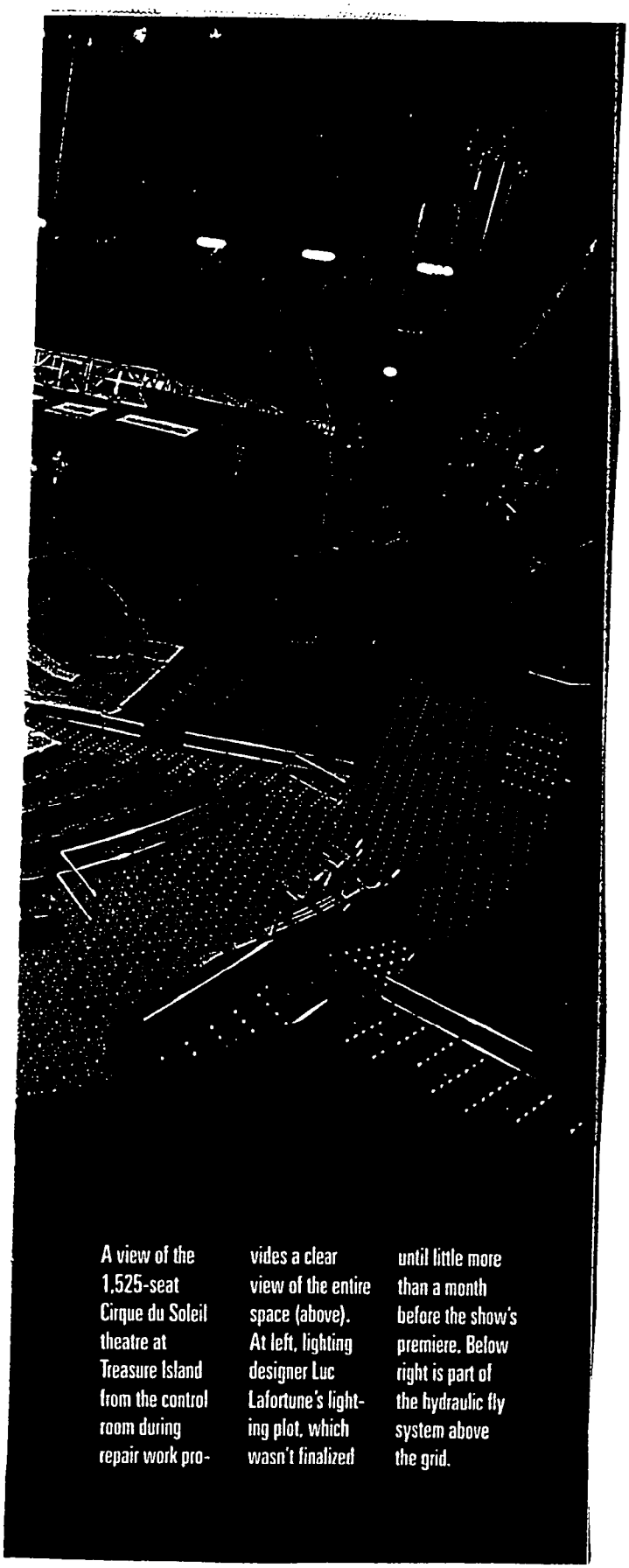
TIC 1887



8 EV 1122 cabinets
20 EV 1152 cabinets
6 MTH 94/2A EV cabinets
6 MTL 4A EV cabinets
4 MTL 2A EV cabinets
6 Bose wave cannon subwoofers
6 Apogee for front fills
10 122H EAWs

STAGE MONITORING FOR MUSICIANS

1 Megax stage console (40 channels, 6 aux, 6 mates, 8 group outs)
10 Yamaha DMP IIs
10 Carver PM300 amps
10 Sony MDR7506 headphones
2 Mackie mixers
1 Rolls headphone amp HA62HA
10 Countryman direct boxes
4 EV 757 mics
6 Shure SM 57 mics
2 Shure SM 58 mics
2 Shure BETA 91 mics
8 AKG 409s
2 AKG 414s
7 AKG 391s
4 EV N/D 267As
4 AKG 414s
3 AKG 451s
3 Sennheiser 421s



A view of the 1,525-seat Cirque du Soleil theatre at Treasure Island from the control room during repair work provides a clear view of the entire space (above). At left, lighting designer Luc Lafortune's lighting plot, which wasn't finalized until little more than a month before the show's premiere. Below right is part of the hydraulic fly system above the grid.

TIC 1889

Deans notes that he stressed with the architects the importance of keeping the room live acoustically. "I felt very strongly that for Cirque, when you sit in the tent, you actually are so aware of the people sitting within 30' of you, how they laugh, how they respond; and the performers are very aware of how the audience is responding to each act," he says. "And I thought that if the showroom were to be designed as a standard Las Vegas showroom, it would probably kill a lot of the feeling that Cirque has of the audience concept. So I pressed the point that we didn't want a showroom that you would walk into and it would feel fairly empty." Deans tapped Acromedia in San Leandro, CA to install the BSS and AKG components he eventually chose for the site; a total of 78 speakers fill the theatre.

Once final plans for the theatre were set, the Cirque design team began the preparations for setting up *Mystère* in the space. Because the construction crew working on Treasure Island was also working on the theatre, progress was fairly rapid, and the Cirque crew got their first opportunity to work in the space late summer of last year.

The first order of business, obviously, was to purchase and install the equipment they would need for the show. The problem with that was that at that time nobody knew what the show was going to be. Cirque du Soleil creates all its shows as it goes along; each begins life as a basic general concept, which is usually generated by the creative staff of artistic director Gilles Ste.-Croix, director Franco Dragone, composer René Dupéré, choreographer Debra Brown, costume designer Dominique Lemieux, and the other aforementioned designers. *Mystère*, for instance, has something to do with man's quest to reach a higher plane of existence; it is worth noting that most of the people interviewed for this story had a different take on what exactly the show is about. But then again, it is called *Mystère*.

At any rate, aside from the show's general concept, the creators make it up as they go along, adding and dropping acts for months at a time, coming up with last-minute creative inspirations at four in the morning. The final cast of characters may not be known until a month or so before opening, and until the designers know exactly who the players are, there are certain limitations as to the extent of their preparations. "We were hanging a wash, a basic wash, and we were hanging specials everywhere we could," says Lafortune. "But not all of them had a purpose, because we didn't have all the information." In the end, Lafortune opted for an assortment of fixtures, ranging from 39 Clay Paky Superscans, four Wildfire S/F 400W UV lights, a truckload of Altman luminaires, and five Pani projectors, all run on a Colortran

Medallion. Cinema Services in Las Vegas and TMB Associates in Burbank, CA were the suppliers.

The addition of bungee cords in the ceiling area for an aerial ballet forced Deans to alter his original layout for the overhead speakers. "I had to rethink how the system would work," Deans explains. "You have to be quite open and be able to change your whole system setup in order to accommodate the changes, or run out and go shopping very quickly if needed. When those new ideas and commands come in, it takes time to set them up, and therefore it takes time for the show to take its shape. Because until everyone in every department has done this, it's forever changing. In a conventional show, it's like sitting down and working with a picture; this is like working with a moving picture, and that image that you just saw that you were working with might come back or it might not."

The Cirque crew was relatively comfortable with this scenario; some of the Vegas technicians, however, were a little less accustomed to such tenuousness. "The biggest adjustment was dealing with the new facility and the fact that a lot of the light crew and other people on the production weren't used to our process," Lafortune says. "I kept on reminding Jeannette that the process was going to be unusual. And I tried to bring it up not in an alarming way, but in a way that could be interesting. I wanted to tell her not to be insecure with the fact that a month before the show we hadn't run it once, and we were working on pieces that weren't in chronological order but that would be set in the show.

"But sometimes," he adds, "even I wondered how we were going to make it."

Needless to say, they did make it. Despite all the disagreements, changes, and headaches that are part and parcel of such a process, *Mystère*, featuring an international cast of 78 artists and acts ranging from a bungee-jumping aerial ballet to a Korean plank-jumping act to an airborne Taiko drum act, opened in January of this year to an enthusiastic opening-night crowd of VIPs from the Strip. The trip from Montreal to Las Vegas was complete. After the premiere, Steve Wynn ran into Bergé and congratulated him. "He told me, 'It's a good thing you let your French blood go to your head.'"

DAVID JOHNSON

POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY
NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 350,000

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Travel

SEPTEMBER 1994

-5481 BURRELLE'S NW

Want to photograph fantasy? The new Las Vegas is it!

Elinor Stecker-Orel

Glitzy, sinful Las Vegas: the center of gambling and tacky, kitschy, gaudy hotels. Is this any place for a nice person like you to look for wholesome, exciting, adventurous pictures? Las Vegas, friends, is a-changing, and it's loaded with photo opportunities you haven't dreamed of. A large part of the old Las Vegas has been swallowed up and turned into a family entertainment paradise. You can have fun without putting so much as a nickel in a slot machine.

The new theme hotels are design spectaculars; so are the incredible

Find an unusual shooting angle: The enormous sphinx in front of the Luxor Hotel is one of the many places around this hotel that beg you to stand close and aim up. Shot with 35–135mm f/3.5–4.5 AF Nikkor lens at 135mm, 1/250 sec at f/8; Fuji Velvia film.

Get thee to Treasure Island early: That's the best way to get an unobstructed view of the British sailors abandoning their sinking frigate as the pirates do them in. Shot with 35–135mm f/3.5–4.5 AF Nikkor lens at 50mm, 1/250 sec at f/8; Kodacolor Gold 100 Plus film. All photographs taken with a Nikon N8008S.

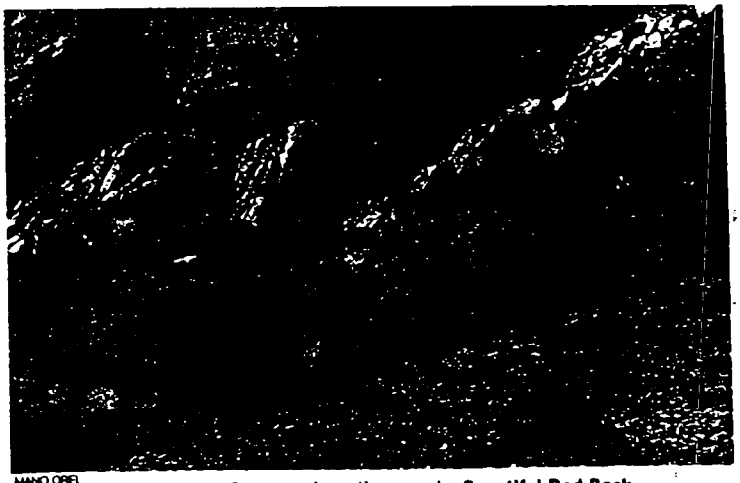
TIC 2010

Keep shooting at night: Put your camera on a tripod and take long exposures of the illuminated buildings. Shot with 28–85mm f/3.5–4.5 AF Nikkor lens at 35mm, 1/2 sec at f/8; Kodachrome 200 film.

Let's start out with the must-photograph buildings, which are on the Las Vegas Strip. My favorite is Treasure Island Hotel. The front looks nothing like a hotel—or even a single building. It's a huge stage set replicating an 18th-century Caribbean village fronted by a lagoon. Details are incredible. Shoot overviews and close-ups (that wide-to-medium-tele zoom will do it). You can tell your friends you were on an exotic trip to the Caribbean, and they'll believe you!

But the real excitement of Treasure Island takes place in the lagoon. Six times a day, a pirate ship battles a British frigate. In this 15-minute free show, smoke and fire belch from canons, fireworks light up the sky, and the sound of explosions fills the air as 22 seafaring actors combat each other. It's really something! The frigate actually sinks. The sailors jump off—except for the captain, who, of course, steadfastly goes down with the ship.

Use a moderate telephoto lens: Then you can shoot across the man-made lagoon to capture details of the Caribbean "village" that fronts the Treasure Island Hotel. Shot with 35–135mm f/3.5–4.5 AF Nikkor lens at 135mm, 1/250 sec at f/11; Ektachrome Plus film.



MANO ORIEL

Get away from the crowds: Beautiful Red Rock Canyon is a 30-minute drive from Las Vegas. You can take trails to shoot the rocks up close, or you can stop near the road, as done here, and shoot with a 28–85mm f/3.5–4.5 AF Nikkor lens at 50mm, 1/125 sec at f/8 on Fuji Velvia film.

shows inside and outside. They're great just to look at, even better to photograph in still or video.

Take film! Plenty of it. Figure you'll need at least three rolls a day. Food can be cheap in Las Vegas; film isn't. Days generally are bright and sunny, so ISO 50 and 100 films should do. For nighttime shots, pack ISO 400 (daylight, not tungsten, if you're shooting slides).

What lenses do you need? A medium wide-angle to medium tele: A 28–85mm, 35–105mm or, even better, a 35–135mm will deliver the goods. But some ultrawide angles or long teles can also get you perspectives other photographers don't get.

Shoot it twice: once during the day, so you can get pictures of the action, and once at night, when the lighting effects are terrific. At night, your shutter speed (about 1/15 sec, wide open, on ISO 400) will blur the moving actors, and you're too far away for flash. You might bring along some

continued on page 20

TIC 2012

sphinx broods mysteriously, its eyes beaming intimidating rays of colored light. Inside, hotel guests and visitors can pay $3 to board the Nile River Tour, a 15-minute excursion by barge through what in any normal hotel would be the lobby. At the 2,500-room Luxor, the lobby is so immense that there is plenty of room for a meandering river and a whole fleet of 20-passenger barges.

The Luxor's brochure touts the trip as an "educational look at Egyptian mythology," which means you see the hotel's colorful murals and statuary depicting the gods and goddesses of Ancient Egypt, identified by guides who stand at the prow of each barge portraying archaeologists. Several times the barges enter murky tunnels, where thick mists suggest you may be lost in time.

But reality keeps intruding. On the Luxor's slender Nile, which traces the four corners of the lobby, the barges can't escape the din of hundreds of spinning slots on shore—and the occasional clamor of a payoff. After a glimpse of what seemed to be Isis, the goddess of fertility, I looked up to see a family of five struggling to get to their room, with too much luggage. Our archaeologist, who laced his spiel with dumb jokes, paid them no heed, but I thought they were a lot funnier.

Perhaps the oddest juxtaposition of fantasy and fact in Las Vegas is the enormous "Wizard of Oz" tableau that greets you as you step through the main entrance of the MGM Grand casino, which is across the street from the Luxor. There, ringed by row after row of slots, stand life-size replicas of Dorothy, Toto, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion as they appear in the movie. Behind them, at the end of the Yellow Brick Road, soars the gleaming Emerald City of Oz, while off to the side Glinda the Good Witch beams on the assembled gamblers and in the domed sky overhead the Wicked Witch hovers ominously as lightning flashes and thunder rumbles.

Child or adult, who can resist this scene? Enveloped by nostalgia, my wife and I succumbed to the adjacent slots, which feature a "Wizard of Oz" theme. My wife played the Ruby Red Slippers machine, on which Dorothy's red slippers replace red cherries to indicate the jackpot; I favored the Yellow Brick Road machine, where the Wizard himself represented the big payoff. For 30 minutes, I plunked three quarters at a time into the device, pulled the lever and hoped for riches while the Wicked Witch darted back and forth above my head. But benevolent Glinda must possess greater power. Under her eyes, I walked away from Oz a winner by $34, and my wife did pretty well too.

This is just an introduction to Las Vegas' wacky ways. Among other examples:

- The entrance to the MGM Grand—with 5,000 rooms, the largest hotel in the world—is guarded by a giant golden lion, the symbol of the movie company. You enter the resort beneath its closed jaws. Out back is Grand Adventures, MGM Grand's 33-acre open-air amusement park, where the tiled mosques

of a counterfeit Casablanca overlook both the streets of Old New York and a miniature Grand Canyon. There, for a park admission fee of $15 each, we climbed into a large rubber raft and were launched on a bouncing ride down the splashing rapids of a pseudo Colorado River. We got soaked.

- Beneath the Luxor's casino floor is a replica of the interior of King Tut's Tomb, filled with reproductions of the treasures found in the original. You walk through the exhibit carrying a taped narration of the sights before you. This was, by far, the most educational 15 minutes and $3 of my Las Vegas stay. The adjacent gift shop sells Egyptian-made boxes and other crafts, as well as ancient artifacts—among which I saw a carved wooden ibis marked at $22,500.
- Mutiny Bay, Treasure Island's bustling entertainment center, is set in a Moorish-style castle that is tightly packed with games of skill. Toss a coin or pitch a ball accurately, and you can win a stuffed teddy bear. I lost out in a race of a dozen pirate ships, which sail over a painted sea if you manage to roll a small wooden ball into the proper hole.
- Circus Circus, an older resort, recently erected a gigantic pink-glass bubble that encloses an amusement park called Grand Slam Canyon. The scariest ride is the corkscrew roller coaster, which loops above the fake red rocks of another mock Grand Canyon. In the resort's casino, you can play the slots while watching trapeze acts overhead. And one cluster of slots has been placed aboard a carousel, which rotates slowly.
- Excalibur, a towering white hotel in the shape of a fairy-tale castle, invites visitors to relive the days of King Arthur's court at Camelot. But amid the heraldic banners and armor, one of its cafes has been dubbed Lance-a-Lotta Pasta. Ouch. When I passed by the Court Jester's Stage—offering free live shows throughout the day—singers and flutists in medieval attire were performing "Puff, the Magic Dragon."

And so it goes, one new fantasy after another scattered among acres of gaming devices. If bad luck haunts you, then amusements to lift your spirits are always close at hand.

In summer, daytime temperatures in Las Vegas can top 100 degrees for days at a time, but virtually everything is air-conditioned—including the scorching outdoors. At many attractions where visitors must wait in outdoor lines, nozzles have been installed to spray mist. You don't really get wet, I learned firsthand, but the slightest breeze passing through the mist drops the temperature considerably. Amazing contraptions, those.

"Las Vegas is an event," says Manuel J. Cortez, president of the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority. Cortez aptly sums up Las Vegas today. A big event. An extravaganza. The sort of only-in-America show you really ought to see at least once—if only to marvel at how ludicrous or wonderful it is (depending on your point of view). I'm a sightseer, not a gambler, so I went to see the sights, and I found more than enough to keep me amused for three very full days.

TIC 2013

But the booming tourist business is not without its troubles.

In the past, Las Vegas attracted visitors interested primarily in gambling. But to keep its rooms filled, the city now sees itself blossoming into one of America's big entertainment centers, drawing increasing numbers of fun-lovers and young families for whom gambling is just one of many possible pastimes. Business is good, but nonetheless, some resort owners see possible dangers in this approach. Big-time gambling fuels the local economy, and it partially subsidizes the cost of hotel meals and lodging, keeping rates quite reasonable. The problem is that the nongamblers, including children, who fly into Las Vegas take up precious plane seats that could be occupied by hard-core gamblers, who are apt to spend a lot more money.

As the debate on the city's future continues, Las Vegas is plunging ahead with plans for more themed resorts. One mega-project recently announced, called New York, New York, will re-create the sites of the Big Apple, including a 200-foot-high Coney Island roller coaster. This month, ground-breaking is expected to get underway for a sculpted steel-mesh bubble around the older casinos at Glitter Gulch—the neon-splashed downtown area of the city at the northern end of The Strip. When the project, called the Celestial Vault, is completed, 15 animated floats choreographed to music and light will parade regularly overhead.

One unfortunate result of all the new construction is that The Strip, which stretches for about five miles south from Glitter Gulch to the Luxor, can become gridlocked—especially on weekend evenings. Deciding my rental car was virtually useless in the barely moving traffic—and noting that the city buses plying The Strip were slow, crowded and often not air-conditioned—I resorted to taxis to get around. For about $10 a trip, the cab drivers shuttled me between casinos on back streets I might never have found.

Major road-building projects underway or planned should eventually relieve some of the congestion, as will additional pedestrian bridges that are being considered between casinos. New bridges already link the Luxor and Excalibur on one side of The Strip with the Tropicana and MGM Grand across the street, and they have proved successful in reducing jams at the busy intersection the four resorts share. The bridges also offer great photo ops of the dazzling night lights.

As for Las Vegas's future as a family destination, I'm not sure. On several occasions, I saw parents at adjacent slot machines bouncing one or more toddlers on their knees. Maybe the kids were having fun, but I don't think so. Another time, I watched a concerned father nudge his preteen son away from a long line of magazine racks filled with free pamphlets touting nudie shows, massage parlors and limousine services to legal brothels outside the city. On the other hand, a family with little or no interest in gambling can have lots of good clean fun in Las Vegas for less than they might pay at the Disney parks. At the Luxor, where I stayed, an all-you-can-eat dinner buffet costs about $10 per person, and a standard room for two begins at $59 a night (in off-peak periods), with children under 12 staying free.

Don't go to Las Vegas looking for rest or quiet: This is a high-energy playground. Most wearying for me was the constant noise in the casinos, and the shoulder-to-shoulder crowds everywhere, including the hotel swimming pools. You can't easily avoid the crush, because the pathway to your room or to the amusement centers usually leads right past the slots. Watch out, or the devices will snatch every coin in your pocket. It happened to me, over and over again.

I have visited Las Vegas many times, once as the climax of a long white-water raft trip through the Grand Canyon to Lake Mead just south of the city, and another time en route to Death Valley National Monument, 135 miles away. But several years had passed since my last visit, and I wanted to see what was new—especially the three latest hotels, which have had such an impact on the city's character.

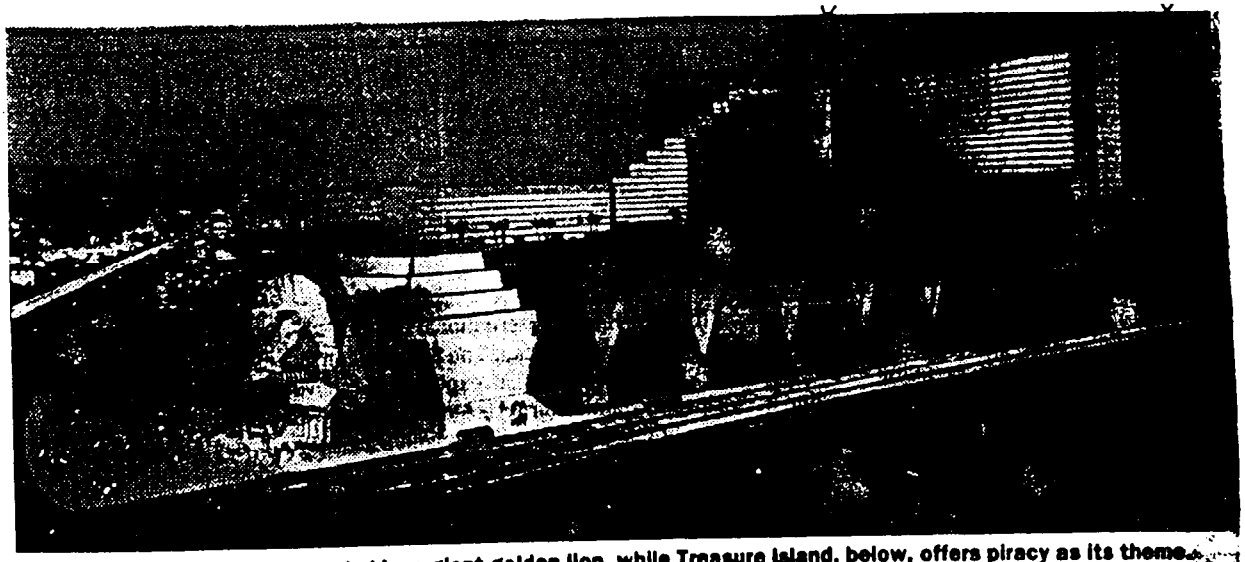
The Luxor intrigued me because I've never been to Egypt nor slept in a pyramid. Appropriately enough, the huge complex sits at the southern end of The Strip, where the city gives way to the open desert. The exterior of bronze reflective glass gives the Luxor a look of restrained elegance, in contrast to the gaudy blue and red castle towers of the neighboring Excalibur. Its huge sphinx, however, is excessive—but then, excess is the Las Vegas style.

The Luxor's vast interior is a disappointment. Mostly hollow, except for the guest rooms terraced along the four walls, the pyramid's atrium could have been used much more effectively. Instead, it presents a puzzling hodgepodge. Much of the main floor is devoted to gaming, and above it is a mezzanine featuring replicas of the exterior of King Tut's Tomb, the New York skyline with King Kong clinging to the Empire State Building, and a couple of futuristic geometric structures. I could make no sense of the mix, even after the archaeologist's tour. In contrast, our Egyptian-motif room proved quite pleasant. I particularly enjoyed the whirlpool tub, on a raised platform beside the bedroom window. We could soak and watch the sun casting shadows across the desert toward distant purple mountains.

Except for the scenic tub (which cost extra), the Luxor struck me as the least fun of the three resorts, and we spent little time there. The liveliest and most entertaining was the MGM Grand, a modernistic high-rise of emerald glass. I particularly enjoyed dining there at the latest restaurants of two of America's most famous chefs, Mark Miller of Washington's Red Sage and Wolfgang Puck of Los Angeles, both of whom serve up creative cuisine at a decent price. (Puck's meat loaf in wine sauce with garlic mashed potatoes was a $10.50 entree.)

The hottest show tickets in town—at $52.80 a seat—are for Treasure Island's "Mystere," an enchanting Cirque du Soleil presentation of incredible high-wire acrobatics and ballet that turned out to be the most intelligent 90 minutes we spent in Las Vegas. For what it's worth, I lost all my Oz winnings, and then some, at the Treasure Island slots, while waiting for the theater doors to open.

TIC 2014



The MGM Grand, above, is guarded by a giant golden lion, while Treasure Island, below, offers piracy as its theme.

WAYS & MEANS

GETTING THERE: Most major airlines serve Las Vegas with a connection or stop en route from Washington. Currently, United is quoting a round-trip fare of $278, with restrictions. Numerous air and hotel packages are available—through the airlines and tour operators—that could provide a savings over booking your flight and lodgings separately.

WHERE TO STAY: The choices range from modest motels to mega-resorts. Dedicated gamblers may prefer a property in the downtown area's Glitter Gulch such as the **Golden Nugget**, which is mostly off the path of the sightseeing hordes. Families may want to consider such fantasy-themed resorts as **Circus Circus, Excalibur, Treasure Island** and the **MGM Grand**—which are on The Strip and offer attractions appealing to children. **Caesars Palace** and the **Mirage**, two other large resorts on The Strip, seem more suited to singles and couples.

Lodging prices soar or plummet from day to day, depending in large part on whether a big convention is in town—as is often the case. Rates tend to be highest during conventions, on weekends and in the fall, when the weather is most pleasant and when the high-stakes gamblers show up.

The three newest resorts are:

- The **Luxor** (800-288-1000), where a standard room for two ranges from $59 a night (during slack periods) to $159 a night (when a convention has filled the place). A small suite with a whirlpool tub by the window ranges from $150 to $199 a night. For such a large hotel—2,500 rooms—check-in and check-out procedures were reasonably swift, and our room was made up promptly each day by mid-morning. The rooms are nicely decorated, and the views from the pyramid are great. Its elevators are called "inclinators," because they rise at a slant.
- The **MGM Grand** (800-929-1111), where a standard room for two ranges from $69 to $149 a night midweek; on weekends, the rate begins at $149 a night. The Wizard of Oz display should delight children and their nostalgic grandparents, and the Grand Adventures amusement park is fun for all ages. Visitors who don't want to pay $15 for the rides can stroll the park for free. Song and dance acts are staged regularly in various park locales.
- **Treasure Island** (800-944-7444), where a standard room for two ranges from $69 to $199 a night midweek; on weekends, the rate begins at $99 a night. The big naval duel at the entrance is boffo, and the best place to watch it is from the Battle Bar—if you are early enough to get an outside table. But overall, the resort's pirate-themed decor struck me as dark, heavy and uninviting.

The **Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority** (702-892-7575) operates a room reservation service. During slack periods, it can offer a hotel room for two beginning at about $35 a night during midweek and $45 a night on weekends.

WHERE TO EAT: If you want to dine cheaply, consider one of Las Vegas's famous and inexpensive buffet tables. Most of the hotels offer them at breakfast, lunch and dinner, but beware of long lines. At the Luxor, I paid about $9.50 for a full dinner (including a glass of lemonade) at the resort's **Manhattan Buffet**. Salads and desserts were fresh and plentiful, but the choice of entrees—baked chicken, roast pork, sauteed fish—seemed surprisingly limited and uninterestingly prepared.

But fine dining can also be enjoyed—and at not unreasonable prices. As fans of chef Mark Miller's popular Red Sage restaurant in Washington, my wife and I made advance reservations for his new **Coyote Cafe** in the MGM Grand. Like the Red Sage and Miller's other Coyote Cafe in Santa Fe, his Las Vegas place features his chile-spiced version of Southwestern cuisine. One room in the Coyote Cafe offers less-expensive casual dining on a first-come basis; another room (reservations accepted) presents a gourmet menu. In the gourmet room, I ordered a salad of greens, avocado and grapefruit; an entree of char-grilled filet of beef with garlic mashed potatoes and a ragout of lima beans, artichokes and grilled tomatoes; and for dessert, a caramel sundae topped with toasted pinon nuts. With tax, tip and a couple of margaritas, the meal came to about $65 for one person.

CAUTION: Heavy second-hand smoke is pervasive in many of the casinos, and as a nonsmoker I found it excessive at times. Several of the big casinos do offer smoke-free blackjack and other gaming tables—although even at them it is hard to escape the smell of stale smoke. The **Imperial Palace's Gallery of Imperial Legends**, a casino room with 110 slot machines, is smoke-free. The **Silver City** casino, across The Strip from the Stardust Hotel and Casino, is entirely smoke-free.

INFORMATION: **Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority**, 3150 Paradise Rd., Las Vegas, Nev. 89109, 702-892-7575.

—James T. Yenckel

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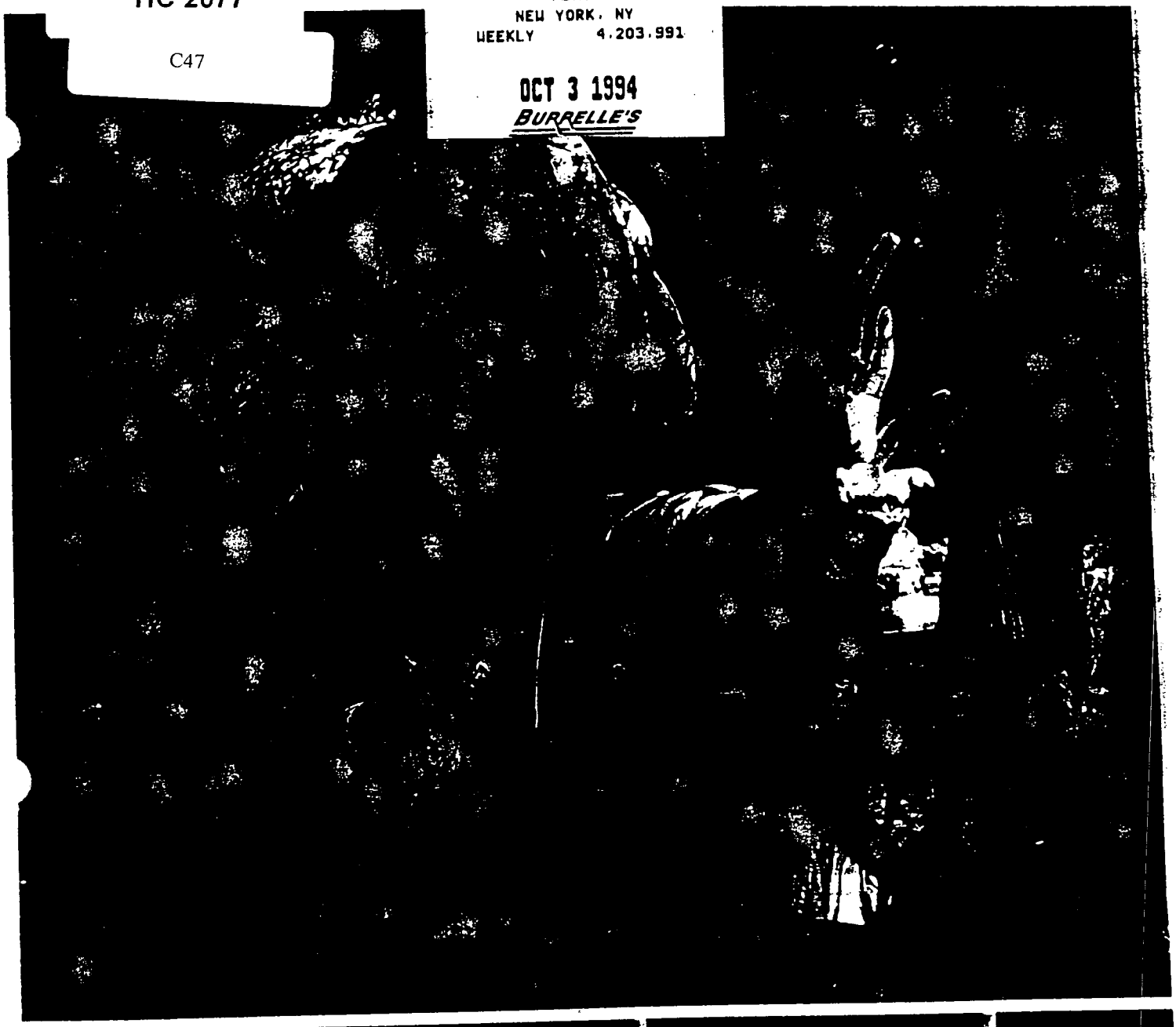

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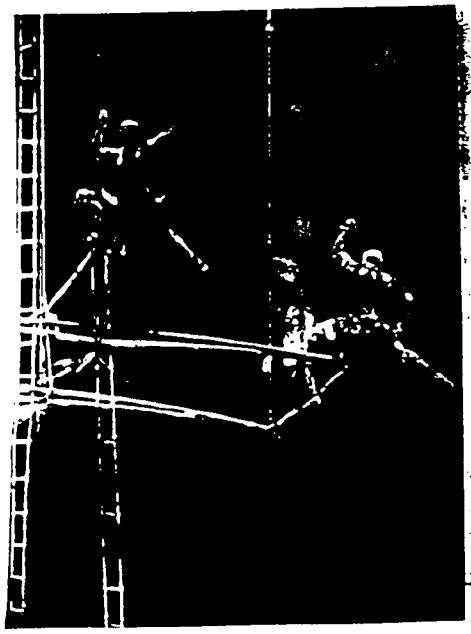

■ SHOW BUSINESS

Voilà!

Cirque du Soleil, which reinvented the magic of the big top, brings dazzling theatricality to two glamorous shows in Las Vegas and California

By RICHARD CORLISS

A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN SAILS over the green earth, briefly alighting, then aloft again. Next a man and a woman materialize, Adam and Eve without the snake, in a stately, rapturous dance that hints at what passion was like before guilt. Finally, six animal-angels drop from the sky and soar back into it, gliding, pirouetting, seeming to meditate in midair before they swoop back, swing down and holds hands, in a little aerodynamic miracle of celestial accord.

The creatures are only human, of course—just acrobats, dancers, trapeze artists, doing their lithe, aerodynamic thing, proving that bodies can be pliable sculptures and that gravity is just another rule to be broken. The show is *Mystère*, one of two new extravaganzas from the Montreal-based troupe Cirque du Soleil. And the scene is, of all places, the Treasure Island hotel in Las Vegas, temple of the great American crapshoot.

But when Cirque comes to town, all entertainment bets are off. In four acclaimed tours of North America, the company has reinvented the traditional circus, updating it with a story line and baroque costumes while returning it to its origins as a home for spellbinders and spellbreakers. *Mystère* is as posh as any Vegas spectacular: 72 performers, including scantily clad high steppers of the showgirl persuasion and a huge stage full of gaudy illusion. This isn't Siegfried and Roy; it's Siegfried-*times*-Roy. Yet *Mystère* has the old Cirque majesty, the theatrical buoyancy, plus a more surreal appeal of its own. If someone were to dream of a cathedral to the goddesses of earth and rebirth, and then dare to build it on the Vegas strip, this would be it.

Mystère is just one of three Cirque shows on view this season. *Saltimbanco*, which wowed Americans on both coasts in 1992-93, opens Nov. 2 in Montreal, after a six-month Tokyo engagement. And *Alegría*, the troupe's newest touring show, opens next week on the Santa Monica Pier, a few miles from Los Angeles; in 1995 it will play New York City and other Easterly venues. In all these towns Cirque du Soleil will be a hot ticket, and a fairly pricey one ($39.50 for *Alegría's* best seat, $52 for *Mystère's*). As the shows proliferate, as casino owners and movie moguls compete to showcase Cirque, the artists who founded the company and still run it have to decide how quickly and broadly they want to expand. Metaphorically speaking, Cirque Ltd. is poised to become Cirque Inc.

In just 10 years the outfit has expanded from a band of Montreal street performers to a $40 million-a-year corporation. Cirque's first U.S. show cost about $200,000; *Alegría* cost $3 million; *Mystère*, $7 million. Since the beginning of last year, the number of employees has

Spectacle

The majesty of *Mystère*, a surreal procession of earth and rebirth, complements the family intimacy of *Alegría*, with its fire eater, lithe Mongolian contortionists, Russian clowns and trapeze act, the Flying Lev

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR TIME BY WILLIAM MERCER MCLEOD

OCT. 3, 1994

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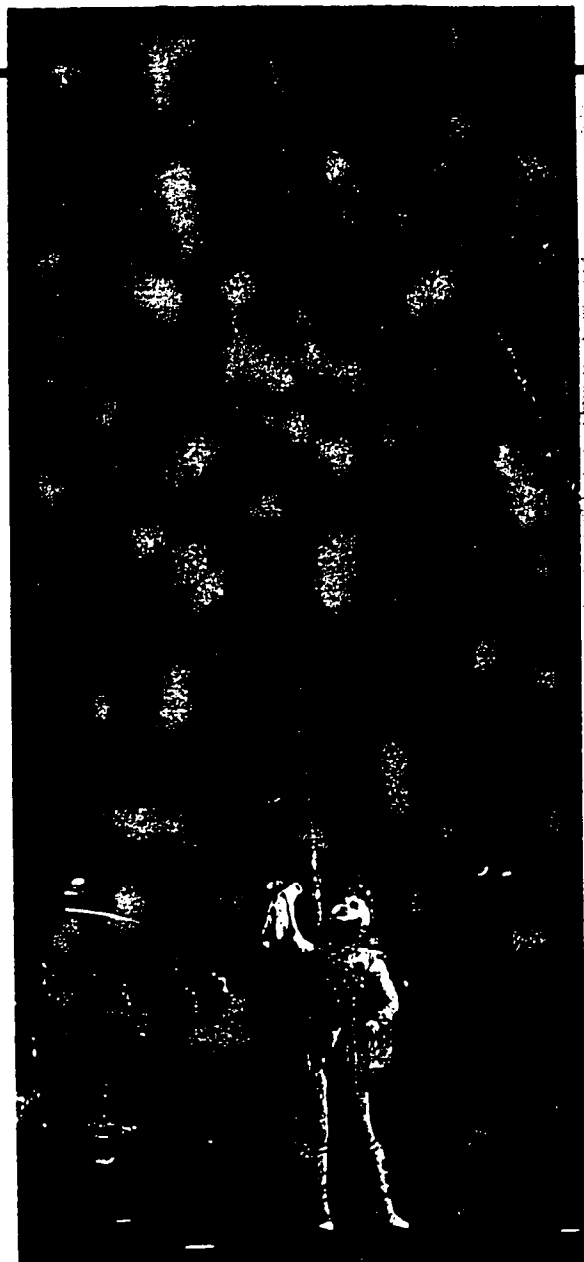
doubled, but hardly fast enough to accommodate the artistic and entrepreneurial itch of the creators, who have devised and fulfilled two five-year plans, and are launched on a third. They are building a $10 million "creation studio," an elaborate rehearsal space, in Montreal. Now a television series is planned. Perhaps there will be another permanent site, in Vancouver—if Steve Wynn, the Treasure Island owner who put up $26 million for a theater designed to Cirque's specifications, gets approval from Canadian officials to build a casino there. Next year *Saltimbanco* invades Europe.

All this costs money. "I'm astonished at the change," says Gilles Ste-Croix, 45, Cirque's artistic director. "I can have an idea, and when it's evaluated, I can't believe how expensive it is. Every idea we had for *Mystère* seemed to cost more than $100,000. And I'd say, 'We built a show for that much in '84!' But we spend the money because we want to keep the show of the highest quality. It is the point of the arrow of what we do."

Cirque's triumph is that it has kept to the point, to its earliest mission of blending circus with theater. And if the meta-Broadway superproduction *Mystère* is the most theatrical of Cirque shows so far, *Alegría* is the most circusy, the most intimate, traditional, European. Though it boasts wondrous sets and costumes—an aviary motif with acrobat birds in brilliant plumage—it is dominated by the clowns, most of them Russian, with a dolorous wit and poignant stories to tell. In one sketch a clown-bird perches alone on a telegraph wire (a rope stretched across the stage) enjoying his solitude until another arrives; it is a French existential drama in miniature, a *No Exit* or *Godot* with a sweeter aftertaste.

Alegría is full of these delicate moments, laced with wonder. The "fast-track" act—14 acrobats racing and bouncing on trampoline strips embedded in the stage—allows for both solo dazzledry and daredevil group synchronization; it's like a playground of gifted children who actually get along. So do the girl duos of tightrope artists (Chinese) and contortionists (Mongolian). And everywhere are the stately clowns, peering through their gilded, glassless mirrors at the enraptured audience.



A Delicate Balance

In *Alegría* two girls, Zheng Li Sha, 12 (who holds the 60-lb. pole), and Kang Hiu, 11 (the elfin tightrope walker), give a lesson in productive co-dependence: one bears the weight of the other's stardom

If amazement can escalate into astonishment, that is the difference between *Alegría* and *Mystère*. From the black baby carriages at the beginning to the giant lumbering snail at the climax, director Franco Dragone peoples the stage with outlandish figures from a Bosch or Robert Wilson dreamscape. They have sad eyes or pinheads or faces on the backs of their heads, or they wander about pensively on stilt legs, passers-by in the parade of life. They somnambulate while the acrobats somersault on a trampoline bent up at the ends, as others jump from one vertical pole to another using only leg power—and that gorgeous bungee ballet of angels unfolds to René Dupéré's ethereal music. For this powerful, beautifully designed fantasy, applause is unworthy. Awe will do.

Ste-Croix doesn't want audiences to be so awed by the Cirque experience that it becomes mere spectacle. "We always keep contact with the public," he says. "This is our source. We want the public to cross through the wall and be an actor in the event. It makes us feel as if we are not God; we're human, we are Saltimbanco—a street player, here tonight to share this big joke, our show."

But as these shows get bigger, so do the challenges. The Cirque bosses need to be pleased; the powerful men they deal with need to be attended, though not appeased. Ste-Croix says that when Wynn saw a run-through of *Mystère*, he didn't like it: "He thought it was too heavy, like an opera." Ste-Croix assured his sponsor that the piece was still in rehearsal but that Cirque would not dilute its brand of theater to turn *Mystère* into a standard Vegas show. The company is equally unlikely to compromise on movie offers. Disney and Universal (two film companies with theme-park operations that might welcome a Cirque attraction) have expressed interest, but Ste-Croix insists that Cirque have artistic control, which he doubts any big studio will agree to.

Meanwhile, the gifted vagabonds from the streets of Montreal have established a globe-trotting itinerary for each new tent show, which they continue to produce biennially: the first year in Canada and California; second year, the East Coast and Chicago; third year, Japan and Asia; fourth and fifth years, Europe.

"Our latest five-year plan will bring us into the year 2000, and then," Ste-Croix says with a chuckle, "we'll go to Mars!" But why reach for the heavens? As an enchanting theatrical experience—as a place where audiences can watch a Prometheus glide magically in space and then find themselves soaring with him—this Circus of the Sun already rules the earth. —***Reported by Georgia Harbison/New York***

TIC 2079

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AP Associated Press

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^Eds: Contains items on Steve Wynn, Mystery Science Theater stars, Andy Warhol, Leslie Feinberg, Eddie Van Halen, Pete Hamill's daughter. (
^AP Photo NY14, Van Halen(

LAS VEGAS (AP) _ 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 _ 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.

The mystery player did make some trips to the bank and may have set some money aside.

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) _ So who's going to make fun of THEIR movie?

The wisecracking trio from Comedy Central's ``Mystery Science Theater 3000'' will take a break from mocking the rubber-suited monsters and mad scientists of the world's cheesiest movies to make a film of their own.

The makers of ``Mystery Science Theater 3000 _ The Movie'' promise that ``you will see the strings.''

The cable TV show features a stranded-in-space human, played by Michael J. Nelson, and his homemade robots, Crow and Tom Servo. Their movie is a spoof of the 1954 science-fiction classic ``This Island Earth.''

``We have a little bit of money to blow things up,'' said Nelson, 30, who also is the show's chief writer. ``We fully expect to make a dozen of these things.''

``MST3K'' started on a Twin Cities UHF station in 1988.

TIC 2299

NEW YORK (AP) _ The former lawyer for Andy Warhol's estate has been awarded an additional $2.4 million for three years of work.

Surrogate Judge Eve Preminger said Thursday that Edward Hayes gave up a thriving law practice at the request of the estate's executor, Fred Hughes, to work full time on the estate's affairs.

Hayes was hired in 1987, the year the pop artist died, and was fired in 1990. He said he was paid $4.8 million in that time but was owed more than twice that, according to an agreement with Hughes to base his fee on a percentage of the estate's value.

Preminger eventually fixed the estate's value at about $510 million. But she ruled that the agreement with Hughes was unenforceable and decided Hayes' additional fee herself, bringing his total fee to $7.2 million.

BRADFORD, Mass. (AP) _ Human rights activist and novelist Leslie Feinberg will deliver this year's commencement speech at Bradford College because of students who practiced what she preaches.

President Joseph Short on Thursday reversed his initial decision to veto students' choice of the lesbian novelist and activist because, he said, "I was impressed by students' conviction and commitment to human rights for all people."

"I was also persuaded and saddened by the intolerance of the local news media for those who live a different life and have alternative views. I deplore and reject ugly harassment and discrimination against all people," Short said in a statement.

When Short announced his rejection in early April, about 100 students held a sit-in to protest.

LOS ANGELES (AP) _ Eddie Van Halen has pleaded no contest to carrying a loaded handgun into a suburban airport.

The 40-year-old guitarist was fined $300 and placed on probation for one year after entering the plea Thursday, said Burbank Deputy City Attorney Robert Walters.

Van Halen then headed for the Midwest to resume a concert tour.

Burbank Airport security guards found a Beretta on April 7 inside a piece of Van Halen's carry-on luggage after an X-ray machine spotted it.

LAS VEGAS (AP) _ The daughter of New York Newsday columnist Pete Hamill has pleaded guilty to felony child neglect, four years after her infant son died of a head injury.

Adriene Hamill, 30, entered the plea Wednesday. She could get anything from probation to 20 years in prison at her June 14 sentencing, prosecutor David Schwartz said.

An autopsy determined that Hamill's 3-month-old son, Michael Wellesley, died at a hospital in May 1991 after suffering a fractured skull and broken leg and arm bones.

Evidence indicated that the boy's father inflicted the abuse, Schwartz said. Adriene Hamill committed child neglect by accepting her husband's "bogus explanation" of the baby's injuries and failing to remove her son from a dangerous environment, prosecutors said.

Hamill, now a researcher for a New York publishing company, has since divorced Charles Wellesley. His trial on murder and child abuse charges is set for July 3.

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TIC 2300

NATIONAL EXAMINER

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Tramp wins $1.5M – then blows it

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IT WAS America's most bizarre gambling spree.

Shoeless Joe the hobo blew every penny of his $409 Social Security check at a Las Vegas casino — and came up a millionaire.

Then he lost it all — in just one week!

The strange rags-to-riches-to-rags saga began when the 80-year-old tramp bought gambling chips at the exclusive Treasure Island resort. He headed for the blackjack tables surrounded by smartly dressed businessmen.

When he leaped up and shouted: "I'm a millionaire," even gambling pros were impressed.

"He was one of the worst blackjack players I have seen — and the luckiest," said one gambler. "He did it all wrong, taking extra cards when the book says you don't."

With $1.5 million in winnings, the hobo's life was instantly transformed. He was given a luxury hotel suite and a limo.

Sadly, when his luck ran out at the table, Shoeless Joe returned to the streets — in his rotting boots and ill-fitting jacket.

"We're glad to see the back of him," confides one dealer. "Not once did he tip anyone."

TIC 2318

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JUNE 1995

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TIC 2334

C53

INTERNATIONAL

Gymnast

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Say Uncle!

Bogdan Zajak (bottom) and Kristoff Suszek single-handedly entertain during Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere."

PHOTO BY STEWART COHEN

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THE SHOW GOES ON...

Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere" is in its second year at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas

BY SANDRA BOTNEN

A cont from p. 8

WHEN the cast of *"Mystere"* met in 1993 in Montreal, many well-known gymnasts were reunited. Having left behind their competitive careers, but not their talent, these unique gymnasts found themselves once again spending long hours training.

Now their skillful technique was being blended with other athletes, circus artists, actors, dancers and musicians. The repetition and push toward perfection remained the same, but there was no world-class competition on anyone's mind. Instead, everyone's focus was on the December 25, 1994, premiere of Cirque du Soleil's *"Mystere."*

"Mystere," which employs 72 artists, is the largest show Cirque du Soleil has ever produced. It performs 12 times a week, and unlike other Cirque du Soleil productions that tour Europe, North America and Japan, *"Mystere"* rests permanently in Las Vegas at the Treasure Island Hotel. Among its cast are names that may easily be remembered from past Olympic Games, world championships or the pages of IG.

Former gymnasts who are part of *"Mystere"* include Philippe Chartrand, Yves Decoste, Mario Pontbriand, Terry Bartlett, Mike Rice, Terry Notary and Natasha Hallett. All use their gymnastics experience to explore new apparatus and relate to the audience that fills the 1,500-seat showroom each night.

Chartrand was one of the first gymnasts to find his way to a circus career with Cirque du Soleil. As a resident of Montreal, he was well acquainted with Andre Simard, the former Canadian National Men's Team Coach and currently renowned trapeze trainer who, at the time, was involved with both Cirque du Soleil and L'Ecole National du Cirque.

Chartrand, 1983 University Games high bar champion, made a quick transition from gymnastics to circus. After only a few months of training he began to see some of the same success he had enjoyed as a gymnast.

In 1989 he joined Cirque du Soleil for its North American tour of *"Nouvelle Experience"* and was soon recognized as one of the top trapeze catchers in the world. "Trapeze is less about technique and more about the psychology of the group," Chartrand says. "As a catcher my job is to quickly find its harmony."

Chartrand also frequently performs as a soloist. In his "flying man" act—which to a gymnast can look like a cross between parallel bars and rings—he is attached to the top of the theatre by leather, which he wraps around his wrists and forearms depending

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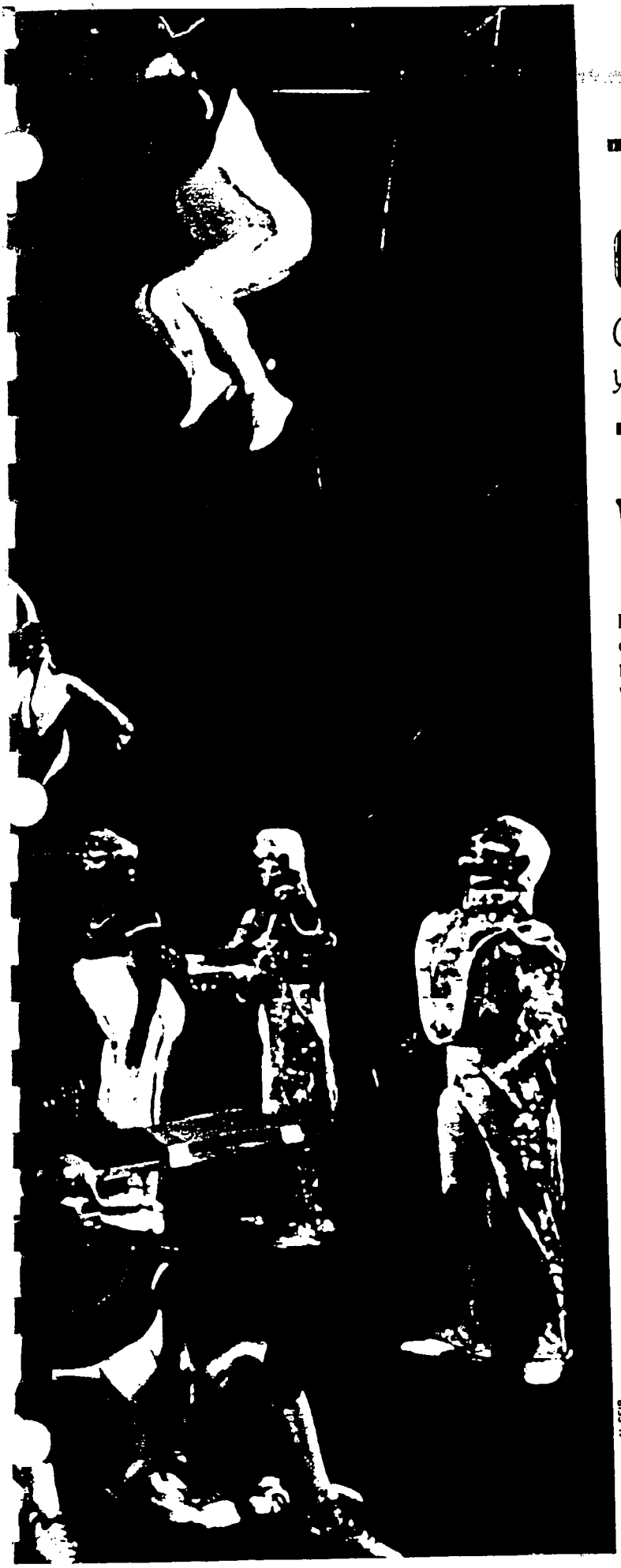

AL SEIB

The house troupe, which includes former gymnasts Terry Bartlett, Terry Notary, Mike Rice and Natasha Hallett, teeters around a lot.

TIC 2338

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AL SEIB

"The circus was the perfect choice for me." —*Natasha Hallett*

A

1992, Bartlett was vacationing in Santa Monica, Calif. On his way to the beach, he came across a Cirque du Soleil audition and decided to give it a try. He was so impressive they later contacted him in England.

Now, a year after the premiere, Bartlett reflects on the path that led him to the circus. "I left gymnastics after a long career when the caliber and level of difficult tricks were increasing quickly," he said. "At 30 years of age I like the idea of no longer competing and, instead, taking my experience and skill to discover new ways visually to do things as simple as, for example, a back layout."

Bartlett also recalls his training before the premiere. "The preparation for the show was very different from the training for a competition," he says. "We realized the show was not a two- or three-day event, and once we started performing we had to maintain that level for the entire year."

There is also the artistic and expressive side of Cirque du Soleil which can either attract or intimidate athletes. It was a perfect fit for Notary, who had just completed his arts degree in theatre at UCLA. During the creation of "*Mystere*" in Montreal, Notary sparked many of the ideas which eventually determined the show.

The list of talent continues. Hallett is one of the youngest members of the cast. At 20 she came to perform with "*Mystere*" after being an alternate to the 1992 Canadian Olympic team. Rather than choosing an American University scholarship, she went straight to the circus. "I wasn't able to see myself continuing the same thing for another four years, but I wasn't able to stop either," Hallett says. "The circus was the perfect choice for me."

All these athletes seem to have found the circus to be a good choice, although they had to sacrifice many things to be there. Rice, a former U.S. national team member, is unique in this respect. He had already moved to Las Vegas from Oklahoma to start his own gym club (Gymcats) with his wife, Cassy. Now he's added "circus acrobatics" to the list of classes he offers.

After a one-year anniversary together, these accomplished gymnasts, along with various artists from all over the world, are sharing a unique experience. As they enter their second year together, they are all part of one of the most successful forms of live entertainment in North America called Cirque du Soleil. **IG**

Sandra Botnen is a former Canadian national team member and former member of Cirque du Soleil.

Flemke Exhibit 36
Date 6-17-99
DEBBY J. CAMPEAU, RPR

Treasure Island Resort & Casino

A Caribbean paradise at your back door

by Stephanie Peden

Lush palm trees and colorful exotic flowers surrounding a cascading waterfall. Sandy beaches, island villages and a tropical jungle. Sound like a Caribbean paradise? Well it is, but visitors don't have to travel to the Caribbean, they only have to go as far as Red Wing, Minn.

Treasure Island Resort & Casino, ch is owned and operated by the rie Island Indian Community, is a Caribbean paradise in the heart of the tates. Nestled among the bluffs lississippi River in southern is this rare escape to the he Caribbean theme makes land the only themed casino Midwest.

e a unique and compelling erentiate our facility from e feel the tropical theme to the excitement and alue at Treasure Island." - sland General Manager Kikumoto.

In 1984, Treasure Island started as a 30,000-square-foot bingo operation. The 1988 passing of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) allowed them to expand their gaming, adding blackjack tables and slot machines. Since then, Treasure Island has come a long way. Today the total casino resort is 375,000 square feet, with 1,500 slot machines, 60 kjack tables, as well as video poker, and craps.

Treasure Island employs 1,450 people, 57 percent of which are Native merican, and is the single largest employer in Goodhue County. An average of 5,000 to 6,000 people visit Treasure Island every day.

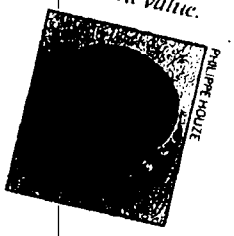
But those at Treasure Island wanted to offer more than just a large casino, they wanted to make it a destination for travelers from the Midwest and beyond. So they hired Totally Fun Design, a Florida-based company, to incorporate a Caribbean theme to make the facility compelling and exciting enough to draw people to Treasure Island.

They then hired the design/build team of Worth Group Architects, AmerIndian Architecture and Knutson Construction Company to add a 250-room resort, which opened in December 1996. Guests at the resort choose between the luxurious rooms and private whirlpool suites that include four-poster beds and wet bars. The resort also has a waterfall-filled tropical swimming pool with hot tubs, a fitness room, child care facilities, video arcade and the Emerald Bay Club Lounge.

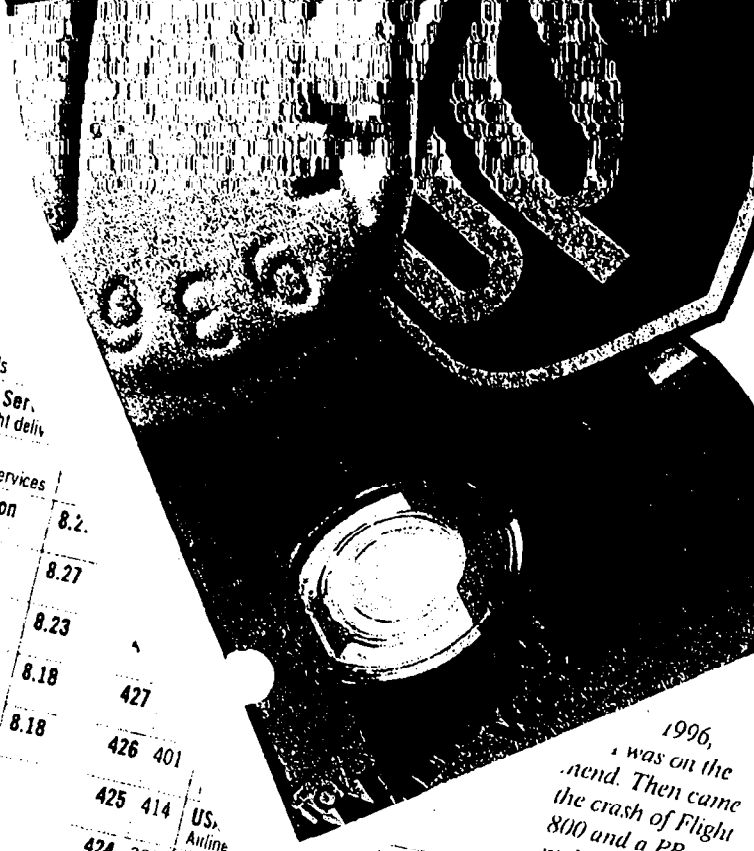
Not only did Treasure Island bring the sights and sounds of the Caribbean to Minnesota, they also brought the delectable tastes as well. Javas, a fine dining restaurant, offers visitors a choice of dishes that range from buffalo to frog legs to swordfish. Or, those interested in a quick snack can head to the Morongo Bay Grill for burgers, fish or chicken. For complete indulgence, the newly expanded 400-seat Tradewinds Buffet has culinary favorites as well as some exotic new additions. Every Friday night is a seafood buffet and every Saturday night is a prime rib buffet. In addition to all this, Treasure Island offers private charters, sightseeing, and dinner cruises on their luxury ship, the Island Princess.

The Island Princess is docked at the 137-slip marina on the Mississippi River and is part of the resort casino complex. There is also a RV park and campground. Visitors can also enjoy the surrounding communities and outdoor activities because Treasure Island is just minutes away from golfing, shopping,

Coca-Cola repeats this year as America's most admired company, garnering praise for its financial soundness, management quality, and investment value.



RANK 1996	RANK 1995		
1	1	Coc Bevera	
2	7	Mirage Hotels, casi	
3	6	Merck Pharmaceuticals	
4	25	United Parcel Ser Mail, pkg. & freight deliv	
5	7	Microsoft Computer & data services	
6	4	Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceuticals	8.2
7	5	Intel Electronics	8.27
8	12	Pfizer Pharmaceuticals	8.23
9	2	Procter & Gamble Soaps, cosmetics	8.18
10	17	Berkshire Hathaway Diversified financial	8.18
427			
426	401		
425	414	US Airline	
424	399	Beverly Health care prises	4.13
423	411	Amerco Trucking	4.31
422	407	Cal Fed Bancorp Savings institutions	4.44
			4.44



1996, was on the end. Then came the crash of Flight 800 and a PR meltdown. It's TWA's second straight year as the least admired.

After a year defined by the slick image-making of presidential politics, it's refreshing to note that corporate reputations are built on firmer ground. Indeed, FORTUNE's 15th annual survey of corporate reputations shows once again that what elevates companies above their peers is a lot of honest hard work. In the preceding pages, we've described the major role of innovation in enhancing companies' standings. In addition, there emerge this year three other bedrock elements of success: the soundness of a company's financial structure, the caliber of its management, and its value to investors over the long term. Eight of the top ten companies in the survey excel in these key attributes of success (see box). And Coca-Cola, which repeats this year as America's most admired company, beat all comers in each.

This year's list, prepared by the research firm Clark Martire & Bartolomeo, brought some real surprises. Three new companies appeared in the top ten—United Parcel Service (No. 4), Pfizer (No. 8), and Berkshire Hathaway (No. 10). They joined perennial top performers like Merck (No. 3), Microsoft (No. 5), and Intel (No. 7). The basement featured four newcomers: Cal Fed Bancorp (No. 422); Beverly Enterprises (No. 424), a health care provider; Flagstar (No. 426), a food service firm; and Canandaigua Wine (No. 428). They accompany some repeat performers—Kmart (No. 429), Standard Commercial, a tobacco and wool concern, (No. 430), and Trans World Airlines (No. 431). TWA achieves the highly dubious distinction of being the least admired company for three straight years.

But what a year it was for repeat winner Coca-Cola. The Summer Olympics provided the Atlanta-based soft drink maker with a spectacular showcase for its ubiquitous global brand. Coke also scored points for its business prowess, articulated eloquently in its bold capture of a major PepsiCo bottler in South America. Chairman and CEO Roberto Goizueta says that a big part of what attracted the bottler to Coke was the enthusiasm, honesty, and quality of his work force. Says Goizueta: "Employees with integrity are the ones who build a company's reputation. Working for the Coca-Cola company is a calling. It's not a way to make a living. It's a religion." And amen to Coca-Cola's results: It earned $3.5 billion last year, a 17% increase over 1995. It also provided a whopping 43.3% total return to investors in 1996, 23 points higher than the S&P 500 index, and its ten-year performance delivered a platinum 29.8% average annual return.

That kind of run buys a lot of admiration, but Intel's 1996 total return to investors of 131.2% deserves outright worship. Intriguingly, the Santa

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TERRY ALLEN

Steve Jobs's Secret Plan to Take Back Apple

FORTUNE

America's MOST ADMIRED Companies

Masters of Innovation

1. Coca-Cola
2. Mirage Resorts
3. Merck
4. United Parcel Service
5. Microsoft
6. Johnson & Johnson
7. Intel
8. Pfizer
9. Procter & Gamble
10. Berkshire Hathaway

C59

1997

THE MOST ADMIRED

RANK	1995	COMPANY	SCORE
1	1	**Coca-Cola** Beverages	8.87
2	7	**Mirage Resorts** Hotels, casinos, resorts	8.44
3	6	**Merck** Pharmaceuticals	8.34
4	25	**United Parcel Service** Mail, pkg. & freight delivery	8.31
5	7	**Microsoft** Computer & data services	8.29
6	4	**Johnson & Johnson** Pharmaceuticals	8.27
7	5	**Intel** Electronics	8.27
8	12	**Pfizer** Pharmaceuticals	8.23
9	2	**Procter & Gamble** Soaps, cosmetics	8.18
10	17	**Berkshire Hathaway** Diversified financial	8.18

Coca-Cola repeats this year as America's most admired company, garnering praise for its financial soundness, management quality, and investment value.

PHILIPPE HOUZE

THE LEAST ADMIRED

RANK	1995	COMPANY	SCORE
431	417	**TWA** Airlines	3.42
430	408	**Standard Commercial** Tobacco	3.76
429	415	**Kmart** General merchandise	3.82
428	•	**Canandaigua Wine** Beverages	4.03
427	416	**Morrison Knudsen** Engineering, construction	4.05
426	401	**Flagstar** Food services	4.07
425	414	**USAir Group** Airlines	4.13
424	399	**Beverly Enterprises** Health care	4.31
423	411	**Amerco** Trucking	4.44
422	407	**Cal Fed Bancorp** Savings institutions	4.44

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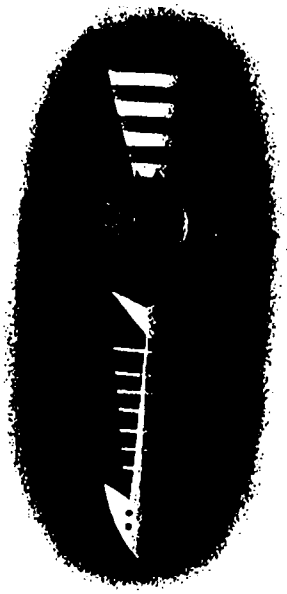
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TERRY ALLEN

RAFAEL FUCHS

Continental Airlines Chairman and CEO Gordon Bethune has a lot to smile about. By vastly improving its service to customers, his company jetted up nearly 100 places on the list.

BIGGEST GAINERS AND LOSERS



BIGGEST GAINS OVER LAST YEAR

COMPANY	% CHANGE	SCORE
Continental Airlines	37.3%	5.86
PacifiCare Health Systems	27.0%	6.74
Oryx Energy	20.8%	6.31
Omnicom Group	15.0%	7.56
Salomon	22.4%	5.31
Herman Miller	13.9%	7.78
Freeport-McMoRan	14.5%	7.30
Morrison Knudsen	29.6%	4.05
Hilton Hotels	14.5%	6.94
Tyco International	13.5%	7.10

BIGGEST LOSSES OVER LAST YEAR

COMPANY	% CHANGE	SCORE
AT&T	−23.7%	5.61
Caliber System	−20.9%	5.21
Tenet Healthcare	−17.8%	5.81
Humana	−17.7%	5.09
Viacom	−15.1%	6.08
Arkansas Best	−18.3%	4.46
Apple Computer	−16.8%	4.87
Intl. Flavors & Fragrances	−12.2%	6.71
Warnaco Group	−14.1%	5.55
Consolidated Freightways	−14.1%	5.55

Clara, California, chipmaker drew higher praise for its innovation than for its financial performance—which says a lot about its engineers. Mirage Resorts, which got high marks for its ability to provide quality service, to attract good people, and to innovate, moved from No. 7 to No. 2. CEO Stephen Wynn's transformation of mundane hotels and casinos into sparkling gaming palaces has forever changed Las Vegas. For his efforts, Wynn's company was rewarded with the fourth-highest overall ranking in quality of management.

Another first-rate manager, Warren Buffett, drove Berkshire Hathaway, the holding company he runs, into the No. 10 spot. Berkshire's financial reputation scores remained even (read: excellent) with last year's. Likewise, Procter & Gamble, the Cincinnati-based household products maker, notched its highest score in the management column, apparently reflecting the exemplary job CEO John Pepper has done in cutting more than $3 billion in costs over the past five years.

As for those companies that took a hit to their reputations, let's start with Rubbermaid, the housewares giant that bestrode the No. 1 spot for two years before Coke's ascension in 1995. The Wooster, Ohio, company lost its decade-long residency in the top ten, falling to No. 22. Once heralded as a model of how to run a company, Rubbermaid this year saw its quality-of-management score drop by 12%. The company is still feeling the effects of a wrong turn it made a couple of years ago. Forced to raise prices after its cost of raw materials increased, it passed

on the hike to its customers and sparked a feud with its biggest buyer, Wal-Mart. Lower earnings resulted.

AT&T wishes it had Rubbermaid's problems. Appearing uncertain in the wild new frontier of deregulated telecom, Ma Bell free-fell from No. 45 to No. 351, posting this year's biggest loss in reputation. The company was inadvertently cast as the poster boy for corporate downsizing after it announced in late 1995 that it would lay off 40,000 employees. But analysts say AT&T's reputation was dealt a far harder blow when its second- and third-quarter operating profits failed to meet expectations. The performance underscored the company's sluggish response to competition from rival long-distance carriers and a host of smaller, new telecom companies, like phone-card providers. "It's like a guerrilla war in this market now," says Bear Stearns analyst William Deatherage, and AT&T isn't used to competing with nimble adversaries.

DAVID STRICK

Mirage Resorts combined strong management with splashy Vegas acts like magicians Siegfried and Roy to gain the No. 2 spot.

Another high-profile tumble was suffered by entertainment giant Viacom, which nose-dived from No. 63 to No. 290. Though it basked in the glory of two blockbuster movies produced by its Paramount unit—*Mission: Impossible* and *Star Trek: First Contact*—it experienced turmoil in the executive suite when Chairman Sumner Redstone jettisoned CEO Frank Biondi.

Moving to the resurrection department, it's plain to see that some companies seized on the opportunities a purring economy offered. Case in point: Continental Airlines, which won bragging rights as this year's comeback kid, climbing from No. 412—sixth worst—to No. 317. CEO Gordon Bethune's hands-on management approach and the airline's much improved quality of service were reflected in our survey, with 34% and 32% jumps in each category, respectively. But it didn't hurt

EIGHT KEY ATTRIBUTES OF REPUTATION

Coca-Cola dominated, finishing first in five of the eight key corporate attributes, including financial soundness and quality of product, and ranking second in two others.

INNOVATIVENESS

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Enron	9.01
Mirage Resorts	8.90
Intel	8.87
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
TWA	3.68
Kmart	3.79
Cal Fed Bancorp	3.81

ABILITY TO ATTRACT, DEVELOP, AND KEEP TALENTED PEOPLE

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Microsoft	9.05
Coca-Cola	8.81
Mirage Resorts	8.52
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
TWA	2.62
Morrison Knudsen	3.65
Standard Commercial	3.69

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Coca-Cola	9.30
Berkshire Hathaway	9.16
Microsoft	8.93
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
TWA	3.75
Canandaigua Wine	3.87
Archer Daniels Midland	3.92

QUALITY OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Coca-Cola	9.23
Mirage Resorts	9.15
Walt Disney	8.83
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
Kmart	4.04
Southern Pacific Rail	4.15
TWA	4.27

VALUE AS A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Coca-Cola	9.11
Berkshire Hathaway	8.81
Microsoft	8.73
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
TWA	2.67
USAir Group	3.21
Apple Computer	3.22

FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Coca-Cola	9.44
Microsoft	9.42
United Parcel Service	9.19
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
TWA	2.23
Kmart	2.85
Standard Commercial	2.98

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Coca-Cola	8.35
Herman Miller	8.23
Corning	8.03
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
Standard Commercial	3.60
Archer Daniels Midland	3.92
Amerco	3.94

USE OF CORPORATE ASSETS

MOST ADMIRED	SCORE
Berkshire Hathaway	8.84
Coca-Cola	8.74
McDonald's	8.25
LEAST ADMIRED	**SCORE**
Morrison Knudsen	2.98
Standard Commercial	3.56
Kmart	3.59

WHAT THEY DID FOR SHAREHOLDERS

THE MOST ADMIRED

COMPANY	TOTAL RETURN TO INVESTORS COMPOUND ANNUAL RATE 1986–96	1996
Coca-Cola	29.8%	43.3%
Mirage Resorts	27.9%	25.4%
Merck	22.1%	24.0%
United Parcel Service	N.A.	N.A.
Microsoft	44.5%	88.3%
Johnson & Johnson	22.2%	18.1%
Intel	43.8%	131.2%
Pfizer	21.7%	34.0%
Procter & Gamble	21.9%	32.1%
Berkshire Hathaway	28.3%	6.2%
S&P 500	11.8%	20.3%

N.A. Not applicable.

THE LEAST ADMIRED

COMPANY	TOTAL RETURN TO INVESTORS COMPOUND ANNUAL RATE 1986–96	1996
TWA	N.A.	–36.7%
Standard Commercial	6.6%	113.4%
Kmart	0.5%	45.6%
Canandaigua Wine	11.8%	–12.6%
Morrison Knudsen	N.A.	N.A.
Flagstar	N.A.	–71.0%
USAir Group	–4.2%	76.4%
Beverly Enterprises	–2.3%	20.0%
Amerco	N.A.	66.7%
Cal Fed Bancorp	–14.6%	55.6%
S&P 500	11.8%	20.3%

N.A. Not available.

that the robust economy drove demand for air travel higher, prompting industrywide hikes in ticket prices. That helped the company post record year-end operating profits—$556 million. Not bad for a company that used to simply lose less money than usual during good economic years. Says Bethune: "We were ready to capitalize on a good rising tide, and we didn't have any holes in our boat."

The least admired companies turned in dismal performances in the financial soundness, management quality, and long-term investment categories. TWA, for instance, actually flew high during the first six months of the year, with the company's share price climbing from around $10 in January to a $23 high in April. Then came the Flight 800 crash in July and the airline's achingly slow response. TWA failed so poorly in communicating with families of the victims that one PR manager at another airline faxed TWA a how-to guide in crisis management. Later in the year the airline announced that, to curb losses in its transatlantic business, it would initiate a major rollback in its operation at New York City's Kennedy airport. Shares now hover around $6.

Meanwhile, Kmart ranked poorly again as its turnaround appeared to run out of gas. Analysts say the Troy, Michigan, retailer desperately needs revenue growth, but can't lower prices without risking erosion in its fragile earnings picture. Kmart CEO Floyd Hall might find solace in the fact that the company's quality-of-management score rose 25% this year. Then again, the retailer has one of the worst rankings in the use-of-corporate-assets category and was also slapped in the quality-of-service column. Analysts are apocalyptic about the company's future. "It's a lost cause," says Robert F. Buchanan of NatWest Securities.

Some companies like Microsoft ranked well because of their ability to attract and keep talented people. Microsoft takes this issue very seriously, and the software colossus, known for luring high-IQ workers to Redmond, Washington, leads the field in attracting hot talent to its ranks. In fact, two companies that posted big gains in reputation this year did so largely on the strength of higher scores in the talent column. Salomon Inc.'s reputation was stung in last year's list after the company's investment-bank unit tweaked that most sacrosanct of Wall Street holy objects—compensation—and set off an exodus of talent. Salomon Bros. CEO Deryck Maughan shelved the much maligned pay-for-performance system, and Salomon's score in the talent category subsequently rose an impressive 44%. That helped lift the company from No. 410 to No. 371 in the overall standings.

But advertising giant Omnicom Group fared even better. It leaped from No. 169 to No. 31 after experiencing a 20% increase in its talent score. Nothing draws skilled hands to your ship like a clearly defined destination and a plan to get there, and last year Omnicom provided both. It made an unambiguous move into cyberspace with its acquisitions of minority stakes in eight interactive advertising agencies. Wall Street liked what it saw, and the stock rose from $35 last year to a recent $48 per share. "At one time Omnicom was playing catch-up with its competitors," says Karen Ficker, an analyst with Furman Selz. "Today it's receiving credit for its strategy and for achieving some aggressive earnings expectations."

There are no magic tricks here, or at other companies that scored well this year. There's just solid performance—the surest way anyone has found to shine a corporate reputation. ■

USING CAPITAL WISELY

Company reputations are reflected in EVA—how much operating profits did or did not exceed cost of capital.

THE MOST ADMIRED

COMPANY	EVA 1995 $ MILLIONS
Coca-Cola	$2,140
Mirage Resorts	$3
Merck	$1,115
United Parcel Service	$295
Microsoft	$1,345
Johnson & Johnson	$841
Intel	$2,431
Pfizer	$562
Procter & Gamble	$624
Berkshire Hathaway	N.A.

THE LEAST ADMIRED

COMPANY	EVA 1995 $ MILLIONS
TWA	–$161
Standard Commercial	–$21
Kmart	–$1,294
Canandaigua Wine	$10
Morrison Knudsen	–$12
Flagstar	–$235
USAir Group	–$155
Beverly Enterprises	–$119
Amerco	–$60
Cal Fed Bancorp	–$93

SOURCE: FOR ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED: STERN STEWART

THE MOST ADMIRED

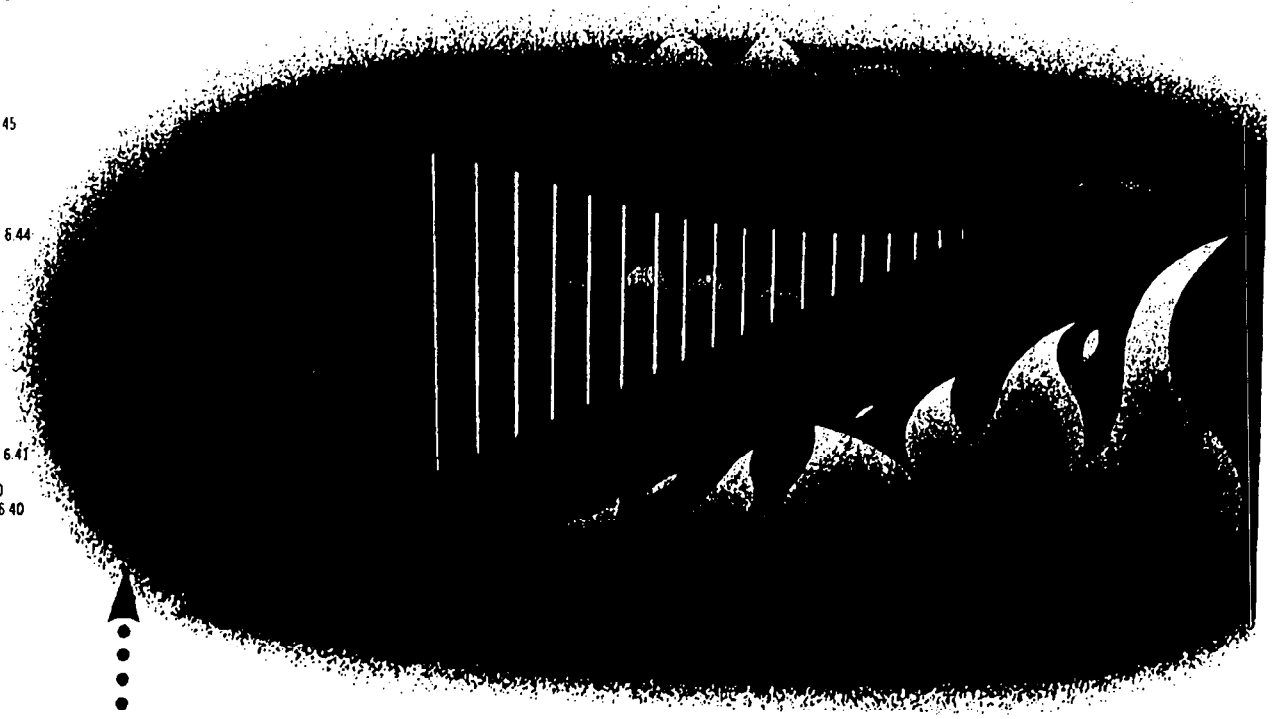
1. Coca-Cola 8.87
2. Mirage Resorts 8.44
3. Merck 8.34
4. UPS 8.31
5. Microsoft 8.29
6. Johnson & Johnson 8.27
7. Intel 8.27
8. Pfizer 8.23
9. Procter & Gamble 8.18
10. Berkshire Hathaway 8.18
11. 3M 8.14
12. Hewlett-Packard 8.06
13. Corning 8.03

THE 431 BEST AND

14. Home Depot 7.99
15. Levi Strauss Associates 7.97
16. Walt Disney 7.97
17. McDonald's 7.95
18. General Electric 7.92
19. Gillette 7.91
20. Boeing 7.89
21. Enron 7.89
22. Rubbermaid 7.81
23. Herman Miller 7.78
24. Cardinal Health 7.66
25. Goodyear Tire & Rubber 7.64
26. USAA 7.62
27. Motorola 7.61
28. American Intl. Group 7.58
29. J.P. Morgan 7.57
30. Shell Oil 7.57
31. Omnicom Group 7.56
32. M.A. Hanna 7.52
33. Interpublic Group 7.50
34. American Brands 7.49
35. Kimberly-Clark 7.49
36. Du Pont 7.48
37. Oracle 7.46
38. Merrill Lynch 7.46
39. Fed. Natl. Mortgage Assn. 7.45
40. Mobil 7.45
41. Norfolk Southern 7.44
42. Albertson's 7.41
43. Caterpillar 7.41
44. Exxon 7.40
45. Southwest Airlines 7.39
46. Coca-Cola Enterprises 7.38
47. Alcoa 7.38
48. Leggett & Platt 7.37
49. Anheuser-Busch 7.36
50. Deere 7.35
51. Emerson Electric 7.35
52. Xerox 7.35
53. Manpower 7.34
54. General Re 7.32
55. Sun Microsystems 7.32
56. Citicorp 7.31
57. Walgreen 7.30
58. Fed. Home Loan Mtg. Assn. 7.30
59. Freeport-McMoRan 7.30
60. Williams 7.27
61. Chubb 7.26
62. Abbott Laboratories 7.24
63. Wal-Mart Stores 7.24
64. Marriott International 7.24
65. Morgan Stanley Group 7.23
66. Liz Claiborne 7.23
67. Southern 7.22
68. Freeport-McMoRan C&G 7.22
69. Sysco 7.21
70. Fluor 7.20
71. Eli Lilly 7.19
72. Northwestern Mut. Life 7.18
73. Campbell Soup 7.18
74. Lockheed Martin 7.17
75. Armstrong World Ind. 7.17
76. CUC International 7.17
77. Eastman Kodak 7.16
78. Federal Express 7.16
79. Chrysler 7.15
80. Compaq Computer 7.15
81. FPL Group 7.14
82. General Mills 7.14
83. Sara Lee 7.13
84. Dow Chemical 7.12
85. Columbia/HCA Healthcare 7.11
86. PanEnergy 7.10
87. Tyco International 7.10
88. HON Industries 7.10
89. Publix Super Markets 7.10
90. Nucor 7.09
91. State Farm Group 7.08
92. Amoco 7.07
93. United HealthCare 7.07
94. Olsten 7.06
95. Nordstrom 7.06
96. Dow Jones 7.06
97. Washington Mutual 7.06
98. ConAgra 7.06
99. Unifi 7.05
100. Sears Roebuck 7.05
101. Schering-Plough 7.05
102. IBM 7.04
103. Springs Industries 7.03
104. Monsanto 7.03
105. Estée Lauder 7.01
106. Nestlé 6.99
107. Gannett 6.98
108. Tribune 6.97
109. Premark International 6.96
110. Shaw Industries 6.96
111. Golden West Financial 6.96
112. Household International 6.95
113. PepsiCo 6.95
114. Union Pacific 6.95
115. Safeway 6.95
116. AMR 6.94
117. Alco Standard 6.94
118. Hilton Hotels 6.94
119. AlliedSignal 6.94
120. Charles Schwab 6.93
121. Circus Circus Enterprises 6.92
122. American Home Products 6.92
123. Illinois Tool Works 6.92
124. United Technologies 6.91
125. Allstate 6.90
126. CPC International 6.89
127. McKesson 6.89
128. Clorox 6.89
129. CSX 6.88
130. Honeywell 6.88
131. Chevron 6.87
132. Brunswick 6.87
133. SBC Communications 6.86
134. Burlington No. Santa Fe 6.85
135. Ryder System 6.85
136. BankAmerica 6.85
137. VF 6.84
138. H.J. Heinz 6.84
139. Bristol-Myers Squibb 6.83
140. A. Schulman 6.83
141. Colgate-Palmolive 6.82
142. New York Life Insurance 6.80
143. Cyprus Amax Minerals 6.80
144. Russell 6.79
145. Genuine Parts 6.79
146. Textron 6.78
147. Philip Morris 6.76
148. Marsh & McLennan 6.76
149. Sonat 6.76
150. Cooper Tire & Rubber 6.76
151. Texas Instruments 6.75
152. NationsBank 6.74
153. PacifiCare Health Systems 6.74
154. Unilever 6.74
155. American Express 6.74
156. Banc One 6.73
157. Arrow Electronics 6.73
158. Vulcan Materials 6.72
159. Mitchell Energy & Devel. 6.71
160. Intl. Flavors & Fragrances 6.71
161. Travelers Group 6.70
162. Dell Computer 6.70
163. NCC 6.70
164. Host Marriott 6.69
165. NN Energy 6.67
166. Phelps Dodge 6.67
167. First Data 6.67
168. ADVO 6.67
169. American Honda Motor 6.66
170. Computer Associates Intl. 6.66
171. Turner Broadcasting 6.66
172. Dean Witter Discover 6.66
173. May Department Stores 6.63
174. Brinker International 6.62
175. Parker Hannifin 6.61
176. Kroger 6.60
177. Ingersoll-Rand 6.60
178. Automatic Data Proc. 6.60
179. Circuit City Stores 6.60
180. ITT Hartford Group 6.60
181. UAL 6.58
182. Office Depot 6.58
183. J.C. Penney 6.56
184. Bergen Brunswig 6.54
185. Knight-Ridder 6.54
186. Harrah's Entertainment 6.54
187. Toys "R" Us 6.54
188. Johnson Controls 6.53
189. BP America 6.53
190. Ford Motor 6.52
191. Texaco 6.52
192. Kimball International 6.52
193. Chase Manhattan 6.52
194. American Electric Power 6.50

HOW THIS WAS DONE

This year's survey of America's most admired companies comprises 431 FORTUNE 1,000 companies, divided into 49 distinct industry groups. More than 13,000 senior executives, outside directors, and financial security analysts were asked to rate the ten largest companies (or in some cases fewer) in their own industry by the eight key attributes of reputation (see box). This year we added two new industry groupings: recreation equipment and temporary help. We divided insurance companies into two separate categories: property and casualty, and life and health. We have also eliminated ties in the rankings by carrying each company's score out to six decimal places and then rounding it off to two decimal places. An index of companies appears at the end of the listings.



WORST COMPANIES

195. Wendy's International 6.49
196. Weyerhaeuser 6.48
197. WestPoint Stevens 6.48
198. PPG Industries 6.48
199. Mead 6.47
200. Arco 6.47
201. New York Times 6.45
202. Rockwell International 6.45
203. International Paper 6.45
204. Thermo Electron 6.45
205. Halliburton 6.45
206. American Greetings 6.45
207. Lowe's 6.44
208. Principal Mutual Life Ins. 6.44
209. Dover 6.44
210. Seagate Technology 6.43
211. Union Camp 6.42
212. Black & Decker 6.42
213. TRW 6.42
214. First Union 6.42
215. Cummins Engine 6.41
216. Dana 6.41
217. Tejas Gas 6.41
218. AK Steel Holding 6.41
219. Northwest Airlines 6.41
220. Jacobs Engineering Group 6.41
221. Foster Wheeler 6.41
222. Pacific Gas & Electric 6.40
223. Student Loan Mktg. Assn. 6.40
224. Polaris Industries 6.40
225. Edison International 6.40
226. Daimler-Benz NA 6.39
227. Siemens 6.39
228. McDonnell Douglas 6.38
229. Centex 6.38
230. Reynolds Metals 6.38
231. Reader's Digest Assn. 6.38
232. Stanley Works 6.38
233. Texas Utilities 6.37
234. Pulte 6.37
235. Warner-Lambert 6.36
236. R.R. Donnelley & Sons 6.36
237. TIAA 6.35
238. Tenneco 6.35
239. BellSouth 6.35
240. Computer Sciences 6.33
241. Bayer 6.32
242. Dayton Hudson 6.32
243. U.S. Healthcare 6.32
244. Equitable 6.32
245. Oryx Energy 6.31
246. Owens-Corning 6.31
247. Supervalu 6.30
248. ITT 6.29
249. Cone Mills 6.29
250. Sprint 6.29
251. Avon Products 6.28
252. Phillips Petroleum 6.28
253. Alumax 6.25
254. American Stores 6.25
255. Bear Stearns 6.25
256. A.G. Edwards & Sons 6.24
257. Roadway Express 6.23
258. Ameritech 6.22
259. Raytheon 6.21
260. General Dynamics 6.20
261. CREF 6.20
262. Bridgestone/Firestone 6.19
263. Kelly Services 6.18
264. McGraw-Hill 6.18
265. Becton Dickinson 6.18
266. Standard Fed. Bancorp. 6.18
267. Union Carbide 6.17
268. MCI Communications 6.17
269. Newell 6.17
270. First Chicago NBD 6.16
271. Entergy 6.16
272. Asarco 6.15
273. B.F. Goodrich 6.15
274. RJR Nabisco Holdings 6.15
275. Coleman Holdings 6.14
276. Adolph Coors 6.14
277. ITT Industries 6.13
278. Limited 6.13
279. Furniture Brands Intl. 6.13
280. Burlington Industries 6.13
281. Winn-Dixie Stores 6.12
282. Sundstrand 6.11
283. Mark IV Industries 6.10
284. Loews 6.10
285. US Freightways 6.09
286. Delta Air Lines 6.09
287. Bell Atlantic 6.09
288. Peter Kiewit Sons' 6.09
289. Landstar System 6.09
290. Viacom 6.08
291. Mohawk Industries 6.08
292. Liberty Mutual Ins. Group 6.08
293. American Standard 6.07
294. Hoechst Celanese 6.07
295. Pitney Bowes 6.05
296. BASF 6.05
297. Federated Dept. Stores 6.05
298. Raychem 6.05
299. Baxter International 6.00
300. Case 6.00

6.5

301. Northrop Grumman 5.98
302. Bankers Trust N.Y. 5.97
303. CDI 5.97
304. Crown Cork & Seal 5.97
305. J.B. Hunt Transport Svcs. 5.96
306. Food Lion 5.96
307. Volt Information Sciences 5.95
308. Pharmacia & Upjohn 5.94
309. Canon U.S.A. 5.94
310. Dresser Industries 5.93
311. PriceCostco 5.92
312. Charter One Financial 5.90
313. Conrail 5.88
314. Metropolitan Life Ins. 5.88
315. Comdisco 5.88
316. Dillard Department Stores 5.86
317. Continental Airlines 5.86
318. IBP 5.85
319. Times Mirror 5.85
320. Air Express International 5.84
321. Equitable Resources 5.84
322. Collins & Aikman 5.83
323. American General 5.83
324. Aramark 5.82
325. Tenet Healthcare 5.81
326. Whirlpool 5.81
327. EG&G 5.81
328. Time Warner 5.80
329. Masco 5.79
330. General Motors 5.76
331. Fleetwood Enterprises 5.76
332. H.F. Ahmanson 5.75
333. Owens-Illinois 5.75
334. Dun & Bradstreet 5.74
335. Fleet Financial Group 5.72
336. U.S. Industries 5.70
337. Airborne Freight 5.69
338. Nationwide Ins. Enterprise 5.69
339. Helene Curtis Industries 5.69
340. Cigna 5.68
341. USG 5.68
342. Pittston 5.67
343. Bausch & Lomb 5.67
344. Polaroid 5.66
345. Public Svc. Entpr. Group 5.65
346. NorAm Energy 5.64
347. Georgia-Pacific 5.64
348. GTE 5.64
349. MascoTech 5.63
350. Alaska Air Group 5.63
351. AT&T 5.61
352. Great Western Financial 5.57
353. Consolidated Freightways 5.55
354. Warnaco Group 5.55
355. WellPoint Health Netwks. 5.54
356. Novell 5.54
357. Alberto-Culver 5.53
358. USX 5.51

6

359. Ball 5.49
360. Bally Entertainment 5.49
361. Enserch 5.49
362. UST 5.47
363. Ruby Tuesday 5.47
364. Fleming 5.47
365. Con Edison of N.Y. 5.44
366. Turner Corp. 5.43
367. Tandy 5.42
368. LTV 5.36
369. Unicom 5.35
370. Melville 5.33
371. Salomon 5.31
372. US West 5.31
373. Fred Meyer 5.31
374. Schuller 5.28
375. Aetna Life & Casualty 5.26
376. Champion International 5.23
377. Inland Steel Industries 5.22
378. Brown-Forman 5.21
379. Caliber System 5.21
380. Triarc 5.20
381. Health Systems Intl. 5.18
382. J.E. Seagram 5.15
383. W.R. Grace 5.12
384. Occidental Petroleum 5.11
385. Archer Daniels Midland 5.11
386. Digital Equipment 5.11
387. Foamex International 5.11
388. Paine Webber Group 5.10
389. Humana 5.09
390. Fieldcrest Cannon 5.06
391. Dial 5.04
392. Westinghouse Electric 5.03
393. Universal 5.02
394. Kellwood 5.01

5.5

395. FHP International 4.99
396. Maxxam 4.95
397. Outboard Marine 4.94
398. Southland 4.92
399. James River of Va. 4.91
400. Nynex 4.88
401. Apple Computer 4.87
402. Prudential Ins. of Amer. 4.84
403. Unisys 4.80
404. Dimon 4.78
405. A&P 4.77
406. Boise Cascade 4.77
407. Lehman Brothers Holdings 4.74
408. Merisel 4.73
409. America West Airlines 4.73
410. Woolworth 4.72
411. Bethlehem Steel 4.67
412. Shoney's 4.67
413. Fruit of the Loom 4.63
414. Glendale Federal Bank 4.60
415. Yellow 4.59
416. Foodmaker 4.58
417. Southern Pacific Rail 4.58
418. Whitman 4.55

5

419. Stone Container 4.49
420. Family Restaurants 4.47
421. Arkansas Best 4.46
422. Cal Fed Bancorp 4.44
423. Amerco 4.44
424. Beverly Enterprises 4.31
425. USAir Group 4.13
426. Flagstar 4.07
427. Morrison Knudsen 4.05
428. Canandaigua Wine 4.03

THE LEAST ADMIRED

429. Kmart 3.82
430. Standard Commercial 3.76

C65

WHERE COMPANIES RANK IN THEIR OWN INDUSTRIES

Who knows a company better than its competitors? Here's how peers rank one another in their own industry groups.

HOTELS, CASINOS, RESORTS

1996	1995	COMPANY	SCORE
1	1	Mirage Resorts	8.44
2	3	Marriott International	7.24
3	8	Hilton Hotels	6.94
4	5	Circus Circus Enterprises	6.92
5	4	Host Marriott	6.69
6	•	Harrah's Entertainment	6.54
7	•	ITT[3]	6.29
8	10	Bally Entertainment	5.49

EXCERPT

THE

SECRETS

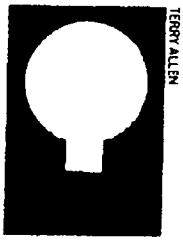
OF AMERICA'S MOST ADMIRED CORPORATIONS:

NEW IDEAS NEW PRODUCTS

Companies that know how to innovate don't necessarily throw money into R&D. Instead they cultivate a new style of corporate behavior that's comfortable with new ideas, change, risk, and even failure.

BY BRIAN O'REILLY

Making it to the top of FORTUNE's most admired companies list is a bit like scaling a half-dozen Everests at once. A company has to conquer a slew of damnably difficult challenges. Management, product quality, and financial soundness must be unsurpassed. Stockholders must be seduced. A company needs to be an exemplary corporate citizen, and it has to attract white-hot talent. But to be genuinely admired, an ineluctable quality must be in the mix as well: a spark that ignites the work force and allows the enterprise to respond readily to change. That ingredient is innovation, and all the top companies embrace it passionately.



TERRY ALLEN

Innovation abounds at ever-fertile 3M Corp., which introduced 500 new products last year. It's the force behind Pfizer, now known for having the best pipeline of new drugs coming to the market. It's what galvanizes Intel, whose brilliant new microprocessors keep driving the world's voracious appetite for computers.

It's not just manufacturers that win reputations for delivering creativity, either. Enron, a very different kind of power company, and Mirage Resorts, a dazzling collection of Las Vegas gambling casinos, were ranked first and second for innovation among all 431 companies in this year's list. Even Coca-Cola, which has made nearly all its fortune from a single unvarying product for more than a century, is relentlessly innovative.

But that raises the question: Just what is innovation? It isn't necessarily frizzy-haired scientists in white lab coats, though too many people think it is. Says Douglas Ivester, chief operating officer at Coke: "Everybody falls into the trap of looking at the latest gadget, or thinking that creativity has to be in the arts and sciences. But you've got to encourage creativity in staffing, strategy, branding, and business processes too." You might say, then, that innovation is a style of corporate behavior that's comfortable with, even aggressive about, new ideas, change, risk, and failure. And it must permeate a very wide swath of an organization in order to make a difference.

But that doesn't mean you have to spend gobs of money on innovation. A FORTUNE analysis of 143 companies, comparing R&D expendi-

"Computer modeling of drugs...helped Pfizer win a reputation for innovative and profitable new medicines."

tures as a percent of sales and rank on this year's innovation list, reveals that there is very little correlation between R&D spending and standing on the list. For some, the relation between R&D dollars and perceived innovation is downright perverse. Pharmacia Upjohn spends over 18% of revenues on research, more than almost any major company in any industry. But the pharmaceuticals company ranks 339th in innovation this year.

Bright ideas are an important part of innovation, of course. But as Steve Wynn, CEO of Mirage Resorts, observes, they aren't terribly rare. "Three executives sitting in a room can get 40 good ideas ricocheting off the wall in minutes." The challenge is getting a steady stream of good ideas out of the labs and creativity campfires, through marketing and manufacturing and all the way to customers. In most companies a good idea is a fragile thing, "like a lighted match, easily blown out by the cold winds of rigid management," says Enron President Jeffrey K. Skilling.

It's not that corporate bigwigs are especially stupid. Often, good ideas die when that new creative culture the boss espouses collides with a sound but outdated managerial approach still embraced in remote outposts of the corporation.

David Lieberman, marketing director at GVO, a Palo Alto innovation consulting firm, tells the story of a company "known by three initials" whose creative types had come up with a great idea for a new product. Just about everybody loved it. But it was shot down at the last minute by a high-ranking manufacturing executive. "A new color?" the executive exploded. "Do you have any idea of the spare-parts problem that will create?" This was no dimwit exasperated at having to build a few new storage racks at the warehouse. "He'd been hearing for years about cost cutting, lean inventories, and 'focus,' says Lieberman. "Good concepts, but not always good for innovation."

GE TOLD MANUFACTURING DIVISIONS THAT THEY SHOULD FUND R&D ONLY IF THEY WANTED TO.

Get innovation right, though, and you can change the rules—and the profits—of an entire industry. Virtually all the companies with high marks for innovation on this year's most admired list have had a significant impact on their industry and, in the process, produced impressive increases in earnings and market capitalization. Take Enron, for example, which got the highest innovation score of all this year. Just ten years ago the Texas company was losing money. Today it is highly profitable, and its stock has quadrupled over that period. How did Enron do it? Not by being a humdrum gas utility.

Sometime, when you are having a *very* slow day, take a look at an old map of all the natural gas pipelines crisscrossing the United States. To any idiot, it looks like a vast cobweb of interconnections, capable of shipping gas from any gas field to any local gas company. But a decade ago, to the geniuses in Washington and in the utility businesses, it was no such thing. Government regulation required a gas pipeline to run single-mindedly from a specific field to a particular utility company, with few shifts or diversions.

Along came Kenneth Lay. In 1986 his company, Enron, had just been formed by the merger of two natural gas giants. Lay figured it was a good opportunity to change the entire way they did business. "I was trained as an economist, loved free markets, and was convinced that government regulation was causing most of the problems in the gas industry." And he viewed that national map of gas pipelines differently than just about everybody.

Lay recognized that by pushing deregulation, Enron could use all those natural gas lines as a network to buy gas where it was cheap and ship it to where it was needed. So, while most gas utilities were vigorously resisting deregulation, Enron hired aggressive, well-compensated traders and almost single-handedly began creating spot markets in gas. To accelerate the growth of the new cultures he needed, Lay created several new public companies, majority owned by Enron. Those gung-ho traders went to one company; later, employees beating the bushes for business in Third World countries got set up in another.

And while his colleagues in the gas business harrumphed that there was no need for a spot market, Enron found its new approach and structure could reduce the cost of gas for some utilities by 30% to 50%. "We changed the concept of how the natural gas industry was run—new products, new services, new kinds of contracts, new ways of pricing," says Lay.

Success bred new ideas. With the cost of free-market gas so cheap, Lay thought the unthinkable: using gas for fuel in electric generation plants—something forbidden under old federal regulations. Enron built and operated its own gas-fired power plant in Texas, showing that it could compete economically against coal-fired plants, with far less pollution. "We created a huge new market for natural gas as fuel for electric generation."

The company is even expanding overseas and has just finished building a 150-megawatt plant in Hainan Province, China. Gadgets, patents, doodads? At Enron, not a one. Nevertheless, Ken Lay has turned Enron into the most innovative power company in the country.

Innovation, though, doesn't always need to be played out on such a grand scale. Sometimes it's the little things, the details, that count. For instance, what made Mirage Resorts No. 2 in innovation and in overall reputation was CEO Steve Wynn's simple but creative idea: Give people great service, great food, and entertainment they can't get in Kokomo, and they will pay for it. "When someone walks into the Mirage, you can never tell if he is going to drop $500 at the tables, or $100,000," says Wynn. "We treat them all the same." His $475 million Treasure Island casino hotel is the first one designed to generate more revenue from nongambling sources than gambling. And it is running at a 99.4% occupancy rate. A $1.35 billion casino is under construction.

The key to Mirage's soaring stock price (its return to investors has averaged 22% a year for the past decade),

REPORTER ASSOCIATE *Rajiv M. Rao*

GREG GIRARD—CONTACT

BRIGHT IDEA *A once sleepy energy company, Enron is revolutionizing its markets. Shown here is its 150-megawatt plant in China.*

Wynn says, was getting thousands of easily burned-out employees to be enthusiastic about service. His proudest morale-boosting inventions? Spending more per square foot to build the employee cafeteria than he did on the hotel's coffee shop; decorating the back corridors that employees use the same way that guest corridors are (not in gloomy industrial green); and not least, insisting that if managers and supervisors can't explain why they're asking employees to do something, then the troops don't have to snap to. Is good service innovation? When Wynn introduced it to the sleepy gaming industry, it sure was.

Sometimes it takes a crisis to turn plodding, sweaty, cautious companies into daring, windswept, leading-edge types. Says Stephen Tang, a vice president at management consultants A.T. Kearney: "Frequently the difference between being merely a good company and an innovative one is realizing you've got a big problem unlike any you've ever had, and then doing something about it that you've never done before."

That description fits few companies better than Chrysler. The carmaker ranks 16th on this year's innovation list—ahead of Sun Microsystems, surprisingly, and Microsoft. A few years ago, though, Chrysler was writhing near bankruptcy for the second time in a decade. Desperate, 30 top executives met and rewrote the book on carmaking, says Chief Executive Robert Eaton. The result: Chrysler was the first to put together teams that included people from engineering, marketing, and manufacturing, all working simultaneously to design new cars. It developed kinder, gentler relations with suppliers that have reduced costs and are a model for the industry. Suppliers were also given free rein to come up with novel solutions to design problems.

Now Chrysler gets innovative new models to market faster than any other of the Big Three. Hard to believe, but the Viper, that testosterone-rich 12-cylinder sports car launched in 1992, is the oldest car in Chrysler's fleet. The new Chrysler Concorde sports an aluminum hood—a lightweight but hard-to-use material that other big carmakers have found impractical. The innovation has paid off. Chrysler has the highest margins per vehicle and the best-performing stock of any American automaker.

Not a crisis but a giant flop emboldened Coca-Cola to become more innovative. It learned, with some embarrassment, that failure isn't fatal. In the early 1980s, Coke was staid, steady, and losing market share to Pepsi at home. In 1985 it nervously trotted out sweeter New Coke, which bombed. But demand for Coke Classic surged, making Chief Executive Roberto Goizueta, and the rest of the company, view Coke in a new way. "New Coke made us realize that Coca-Cola was more than a flavor or a bottle," he says. "It was a mental attitude." Energized, the company since then has generated one of the most imaginative, pervasive, and successful brand-image campaigns.

Just as important, Coke learned it could recover from, and even capitalize on, the gaudiest screwup. "Some people think there are 'You bet your company' decisions," says Goizueta. "There are no such things. Every decision has two parts. You make it, and then you make a decision to continue it or to change it."

Of course, most companies shouldn't need the threat of bankruptcy or the embarrassment of a New Coke to make them more innovative. It sounds like an oxymoron, but creativity and innovation can be managed, at least to some degree.

Take those white-coated researchers. You don't want to stifle them, but neither do you want them drifting into outer space, oblivious of the need to come up with something practical. Ronald Jonash, head of the technology consulting practice for Arthur D. Little, says one consumer products company just stumbled on an effective arrangement. "By a freak accident of the budgeting process, a group of R&D people were being paid half by the research department and half by the manufacturing section." Without meaning to, this company had created a direct line between the manufacturing floor and R&D. "It produced very different, very innovative behavior," says Jonash.

General Electric made even more explicit steps in that direction when it declared that the manufacturing divisions were free to fund GE's R&D centers if they wanted to or spend the money elsewhere. That scared and demoralized the scientists for a while. "They were feeling jerked around, trying to sell themselves," one GE executive admitted at an A.D. Little seminar. "But now it is a much healthier, more strategic laboratory."

It's also important to give creative types room to play. At Pfizer, CEO Edward Steere presses researchers not to fall into the common trap of concentrating on areas where they are familiar and comfortable. Instead he urges them to stretch into promising new approaches like genetics too. Pfizer's labs include the biggest overseas R&D center of any American drug company, which is located in England. Being far away, researchers are refreshingly uncowed by authorities in New York, highly creative, and well-positioned to get Pfizer's drugs tested and into overseas markets quickly.

Pfizer, like most drug companies, comes upon some of its new ideas through acquisitions. It has invested in scores of small independent biotech firms but avoided a pitfall that frustrates many big drug companies. Steere's practical rule: "Don't pour too much money into a little company. Otherwise, half the scientists there will cash in their shares and quit."

And sometimes good things just, well, pop up. A compound that Pfizer was testing for angina was supposed to improve blood flow to the heart. But when the medicine was tested on a group of college students, they kept getting erections. (One can imagine the topic of conversation at the frat house dinner *that* night.) "Turns out there were more receptors for the medicine in the penis than in the heart," Steere says with a wry smile. Pfizer plans to file Viagra as a remedy for impotence with the FDA this year. If approved, says Steere, "take one an hour before you think you're going to get lucky."

Steere's approach is paying off. The company now has two blood pressure drugs, a fungus medicine, and a treatment for depression, each pulling in around $1 billion a year. Pfizer has surpassed Merck as the most innovative pharmaceuticals company on this year's list.

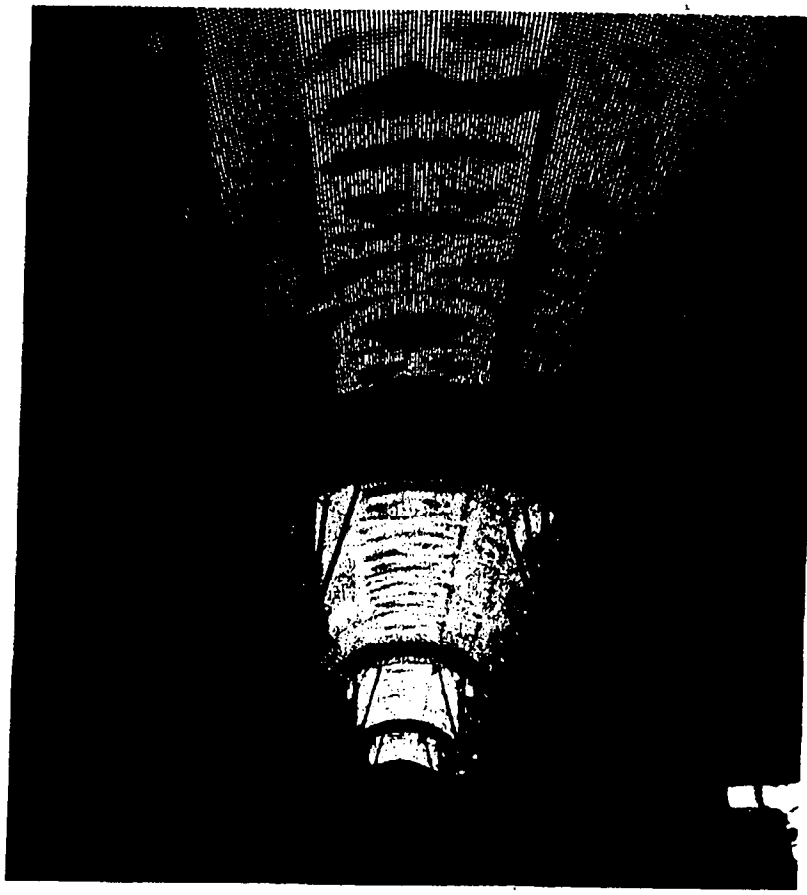
If your creative types aren't getting lucky enough, you might want some help from outsiders. The Doblin Group, innovation consultants in Chicago, sends teams of cultural anthropologists to camp out with a client's customers. They watch what customers do, need, like, or hate, and try to come up with a drop-dead new product or service that nobody knew they needed. "It's brutally hard work," says Larry Keeley, Doblin's president. "Don't try it at home."

Keeley says he is surprised and disturbed to find that the marketing departments at many large companies are often the least receptive to innovation. "They study data, they ask you what you don't like about your VCR, they make straight-line extrapolations. But they don't get powerful new insights that way." When companies start to itch for a dramatic breakthrough product, the impulse usually begins high up in the organization. "It's CEOs, division heads, strategists. The people who are watching the bloody margins spiraling down."

Does every company need to be drop-dead innovative, killing itself for the next breakthrough blockbuster? Probably not. Lots of big companies do just fine by tweaking a product—putting sparkles in toothpaste and colored dots in laundry detergents. Until the advent of managed care, drug companies often made out like bandits by making pills just fractionally better than their previous ones, but priced three times higher.

So don't abandon a healthy business just for the sake of trying to be innovative. It's often enough, say the experts, to make sure there are lots of good ideas in various stages of fermentation. When the time comes, though, be willing to take risks. If you wait to move until everything is certain, you can be sure your competition will be there first. ■

GLITZ CITY
Thinking outside the box, Mirage helped turn Las Vegas into a destination for families.



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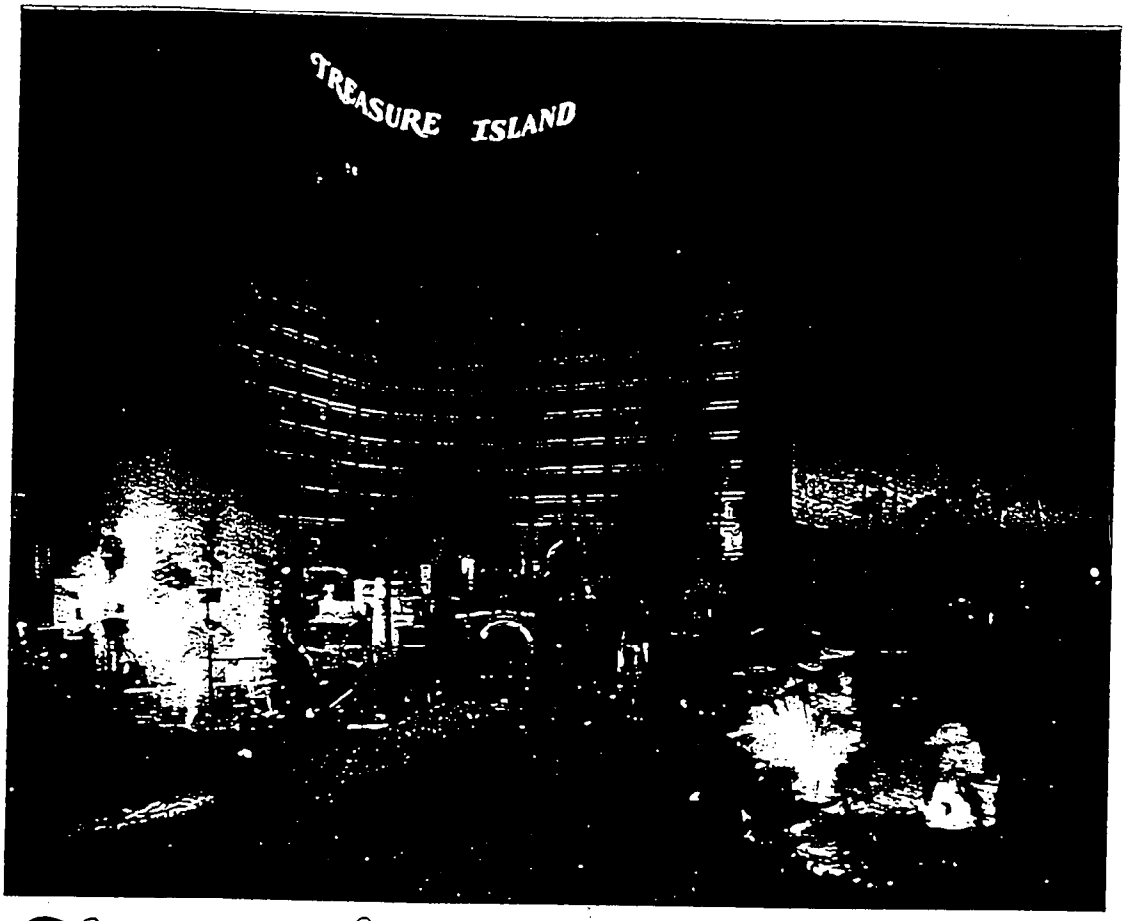

Treasure Island at The Mirage

Las Vegas, Nevada

Entering Treasure Island through Buccaneer Bay's main gate, guests set foot in 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 is designed as a pirate city. The lure of the pirate theme continues throughout the resort. Everywhere the eye can see, crevices and niches hide jewels and goods the pirates have plundered from around the world.

winter 1998

TIC 2355

C71

At Treasure Island guests are transported back to the Caribbean to the days of the pirates, complete with a dramatic sea battle between the Treasure Island pirates and British naval officers aboard full-scale ships and featuring 30 stunt people and actors. Each evening this pyrotechnic battle to the finish climaxes with firing cannons, ammunition exploding and stunt men flying through the air into the waters below. The pirates win, of course. After all, this is Las Vegas.

Reminiscent of The Mirage, Treasure Island incorporates the distinctive Y-shape, tri-tower configuration which has become a landmark in Las Vegas. Treasure Island offers 2,900 guest rooms decorated in soft earth tones. Each room features floor-to-ceiling glass with a spectacular view of either the mountains, "The Strip" or the pool area.

Treasure Island is an idyllic getaway, based upon the village created by Robert Louis Stevenson in his famed novel, *Treasure Island*. Here guests can try their hand at the pirate life. Yet when they choose to relax, they can treat themselves to a day in the spa including sauna, whirlpool and exercise room. The pool area is accentuated by awnings in bold crisp colors, brightly colored flowers and palms of dozens of varieties, creating a tropical paradise. Cabanas are available to guests looking for a little added privacy.

Treasure Island features three gourmet dining experiences each set in a striking environment. *The Plank* specializing in mesquite grilled seafood and steak, this stately pirate's library is warmly lit by wall sconces and chandeliers stolen by the pirates from around the world. 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 oyster tail. *The Buccaneer Bay Club* located on the second level and overlooking Buccaneer Bay, each window in this intimate space overlooks

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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 sautéed Chilean Sea Bass or the Shrimp Scampi Sauté. *Madame Ching's* features Szechwan and Cantonese cuisines reminiscent of Old World China. Also on the menu are such delectable treats as Grandfather Chicken, Steamed Salmon Filet and Macadamia Beef.

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 lighter snack.

Treasure Island is home to the world famous French-Canadian performing troupe Cirque du Soleil in a production designed especially for this resort.

Spa and Beauty Salon: If guests choose to either work out or wind down, the health club and spa is the ideal location. Staffed by fitness experts, the health club features separate men's and women's facilities, a state-of-the-art exercise room, sauna, steamboat, whirlpool and massages. The beauty salon features a full complement of services including hair stylists, manicurists and aestheticians.

Casino: The casino gives the feel of an old Caribbean pirate hideaway. Decorated in rich gold and white-washed tones, the casino has been decorated with booty and plunder from around the world. Games of chance include slots, video poker, Pai Gow, Pai Gow tiles, mini-baccarat, European Roulette, Big Six and two new card games, Caribbean Stud and Let It Ride are offered. Keno, craps and blackjack also are feature in the Treasure Island casino.

Wedding Chapels: Treasure Island features two graciously-appointed wedding chapels, decorated in the European tradition. One chapel seats 30 people and the other chapel has room for 60. Accommodations for video and photography are available, dressing rooms are provided and a retail area offers last minute needs, including bouquets, champagne glasses and wedding gifts.

For reservations call your local travel agent or 708-650-7400.

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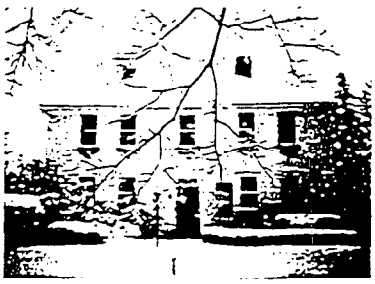

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There may have been a live pirate battle staged just outside the casino at Treasure Island in Las Vegas when Texas business owner Ralph Allen started playing a Megabucks progressive slot machine in June, but the real "looting" took place when Allen sacked the casino for a $3.5 million Megabucks jackpot. Megabucks has produced over 30 millionaires to date, but Allen's jackpot was the first to be hit at Treasure Island since its opening in October.

TIC 2368

Video Poker Giveaway Weekends

By Invitation Only • by Bob Dancer

How would you like to stay in a luxurious suite at the Treasure Island casino in Las Vegas, with gourmet food and drink in the hotel's best restaurants and a reasonable chance at winning a share of $50,000 or more? Sound too good to be true? It's not something that anyone can do, but it's easier than you probably think. In fact, for some players it's a several-times-a-year event. Here's how it works.

About once a month, Treasure Island invites 400 or so guests to a Thursday through Sunday weekend at the resort. On Saturday night there's a big party with cash and prize giveaways. Although the details change with each promotion, you typically get one drawing ticket when you arrive and additional drawing tickets for every $3,000 you put though a video poker or slot machine during the hours that the promotion runs. Sometimes you get extra tickets for hitting a royal flush or the highest jackpot on the slots.

The Saturday-night parties are usually themed in some way. For example, twice during the past year TI hosted a "Game Show Giveaway." Twenty names were drawn from a barrel to play a modified version of "The Price is Right" for prizes such as trips, Lazy Boy recliners, big screen TVs, and other goodies. In addition to the great prizes, the winners received between $2,500 and $20,000 cash during a bonus round. Losers got $1,000 cash. No one could win more than once, which means that 20 winners, out of 400 attendees, took home at least $1,000—not bad odds. Of course, those who played the most over the weekend had more tickets in the drum and a better chance of having their name called.

The best promotion during each of the past two years has been a program called "Santa Bucks." For a four-day period just before Christmas, the casino matched slot club cash-back with coupons good for merchandise in any gift shop in the hotel. It worked out to $25 cash-back plus a $25 gift certificate for every $3,750 run through a slot or video poker machine. The prices in the gift shops in most luxury hotels tend to be higher than normal, but at Treasure Island, they're not too far out of line, and even moderate play was enough to earn some snazzy TI logo wear. Big players, the type inclined to run $3 million through the machines, could find $20,000 Rolexes for sale in the jewelry store. Treasure Island has several other shops where the certificates could be redeemed, including "Damsels in Dis'Dress" (love that name!).

You can earn your invite (and additional drawing tickets) by playing any half-dollar or higher machine in the house. Play on less-than-50¢ machines is not tracked by the slot club; however, quarter players can lend a helping hand in the qualifying via the following back-door method. Treasure Island has several $1 machines that accept 1 to 100 coins and are tracked by the slot club. The best games of this type are 8/5 Bonus. You get the full royal treatment on these machines, no matter how many coins you play. That is, hit a royal with $1 played and win $800. Hit a royal with $100 played and win $80,000. There's no penalty for betting less than maximum coins. How does this benefit quarter players? Well, 25¢ players who are used to betting $1.25 per hand can bet $1 on these machines without a reduction in odds. While playing $1 at a time won't allow you to accumulate enough points to qualify for one of these weekends by yourself, you can combine your play on the same card of your spouse who plays half-dollars or higher to speed up the qualifying process.

"Overall, most frequent participants will find that they've been able to take several first-class mini-vacations at a rather modest price."

The best returns for dollar players are available from the 9/6 Jacks or Better video poker machines. With perfect play on these machines, and Treasure Island's .67 percent slot club cash-back bonus, you can even get a small advantage. "We know there are a few players out there who have a small edge," says Mark Scheiner, vice president of slot marketing. "But overall, we do okay. We believe that when you combine our promotions with our games, we provide the middle to high-end player with the best value in town." I agree.

The program is flexible, allowing you to tailor the weekend to your own gambling budget. Play at a level that earns 600 points a day to get the standard "room only" invitation. Nine hundred points a day gets you RFB in a standard room. The suites start at 1,500 points per day. RFB at Treasure Island includes the restaurants at both Treasure Island and the Mirage, so you have a choice of a dozen fine eateries.

One of the fortunate by-products of becoming a regular at these parties is that you get to know the other regulars. You'll have a lot in common with the other guests. You'll commiserate about how long it's been since you've hit a royal, or discuss how you're going to spend the $20,000 you hope to win on Saturday night. Many enduring friendships are forged at these parties.

So how do you go about getting invited? According to Trina Donovan, executive slot host, the first step is to get a Treasure Island slot club card and use it. "We'd love to invite you if you're a player," says Donovan. "But you have to use the card so we know that you are." Secondly, you have to show that you're comfortable playing enough to earn 1,000 points or more per day. That entails running about $15,000 per day through the machines, which is about five hours of play on a $1 machine (or fewer hours on $2 and higher machines). Of course, $15,000 per day is not a trivial amount. But keep in mind that this is a luxury hotel that caters to people who can appreciate and afford some of the finer things in life.

After a few days of play at this level, contact a slot host and ask to be invited to a party. Different parties have different requirements, but playing at this level will get you invited to an event relatively quickly. For undisclosed reasons, local players need a lot more play than out-of-staters to get invited to many of the parties.

Now for the bad news. Even the best video poker players lose during most sessions. If enough playing time goes by without your hitting a royal, there's no way to avoid finding yourself substantially behind—even when playing 9/6 Jacks or Better and factoring in the slot club cash-back. The cash prizes at the parties are powerful, but only 20 people (or less) will win one at a given event. The point is, since you won't hit a royal flush during most weekends that you play, you figure to be stuck by the time you go home. Assuming that you will win on a trip just because you have an advantage is naive. But if you keep coming back month after month under the same conditions, you should find that you do all right. Some trips are expensive, others are profitable. Overall, most frequent participants will find that they've been able to take several first-class mini-vacations at a rather modest price.

This month's article was a departure from my normal subject matter. Next month I'll address when and how much you should tip while playing video poker. Until then, go out and hit a royal flush.

Bob Dancer is the video poker expert for the Las Vegas Advisor, *and the author of the Bob Dancer* Video Poker Reports *series.* ♠

INSIDE: ATTACK EVERY CASINO GAME IN JUST ONE NIGHT!

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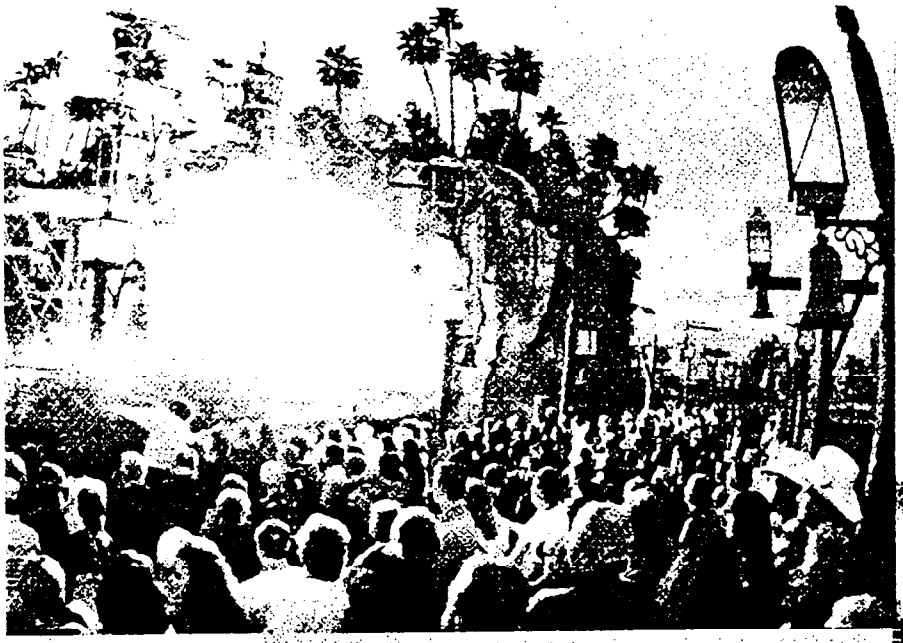

10 Money Management
Tips for Slot Players

Test Your Slot IQ
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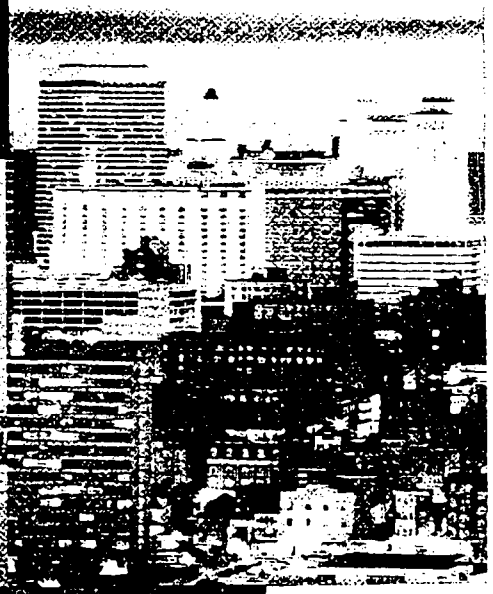

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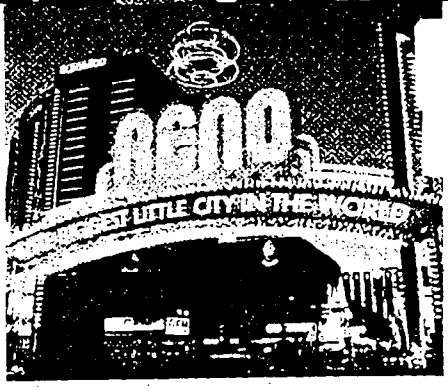

Las Vegas ■ Atlantic City ■ Reno ■ Mississippi

TIC 2409

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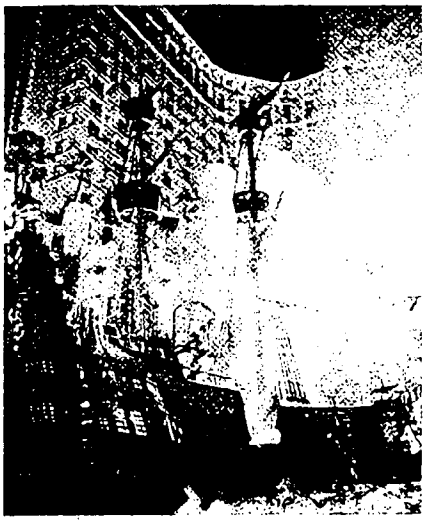


FOUND TREASURE

This summer, you want to escape from the rigors of daily life? Well, Treasure Island has the package just for you. Based on a three-day, two-night stay in deluxe accommodations, each guest will receive two buffet breakfasts, a buffet dinner, and a cocktail. The "Escape to Adventure" package is priced at $89 per person including tax, based on double occupancy. The package is available Sunday through Thursday, May 24 through August 13, 1998.

Additional nights may be purchased for each package and single, triple and quadruple occupancy rates are available upon request. An option may be purchased for tickets to Cirque du Soleil's dazzling production of *Mystere* for $63.50 per person, plus tax.

People taking advantage of the promotion will find that they have a lot of new things to do at the hotel. Treasure Island recently underwent a $25 million redesign of many of its public spaces. The remodel features a new lobby and registration desk overlooking the tropical pool, and an Italian restaurant, Francesco's, featuring celebrity artwork, including pieces by Tony Bennett, Phyllis Diller and Tony Curtis. Treasure Island's newest intimate retreat, the Hideaway Lounge, is situated next to Francesco's.

For reservations, contact Treasure Island at (702) 894-7111 or (800) 944-7444.

TIC 2410

C77

Will 1998 be the year of the table game?

By Dan Emerson

Considering the challenge facing table game designers evokes the memory of a sports renegade from the past: the late Oakland A's owner Charles O. Finley. Roughly 30 years ago, Finley aroused the indignation of baseball purists across the land when he attempted to energize the tradition-bound "national pastime" with such radical touches as green and gold uniforms, white shoes, an elephant mascot, and orange baseballs.

Today's table game designers may feel a certain kinship to Charlie O. as they ponder strategies to inject new excitement and appeal into traditional dice and card games—without altering the delicate competitive balance that has made them casino staples for cons.

In recent years glitzy, high-tech video poker and slot machines have relegated traditional table games to a back seat, now accounting for less than 25 percent of casino revenues. Virtually every casino manager is on the lookout for the next hot, new game that will lure players back to the tables. There's no shortage of would-be game inventors hoping to strike it rich.

As with video games, most of the new table game excitement has been generated by "bonusing" and progressives enhancing players' chances to win. As in the video game arena, industry consensus seems to view bonusing as the key to bringing players back to the tables and keeping them there.

The expansion of gaming has bred a new generation of discriminating players who expect more excitement for their money, says Alan Abrams, casino manager at the Stardust in Las Vegas: "Any game that's too strong for the house won't last. If players lose their money in five minutes they won't be happy. They want to have fun, they want value for their money, and we want them to have value."

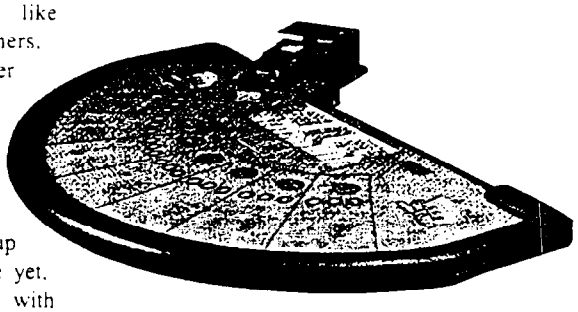
Abrams is the proud inventor of one new table game at the Stardust, Progressive Pai Gow Poker. Because Progressive Pai Gow Poker is a seven-card game, rather than a five-card game like Caribbean Stud and others, players "have a much better chance of hitting a payout," Abrams says. A recent "top meter" hit paid $23,900. Boyd Gaming has exclusive rights to the game through October.

New table games may yet recoup some lost glory but they're not there yet, contends Ken Kukuda, a consultant with Gaming Systems International in Las Vegas. "None of the derivations of '21' and dice games have really taken off. No one has perfected a bonusing system for '21.' How do you have every table game tied-in electronically? The way to make an entire pit an ongoing blackjack tourney hasn't been figured out," Kukuda says. While acknowledging the impact of Let It Ride, "when you look at a pit and see 60 '21' games and two Let It Ride, you wouldn't say it has taken over the industry."

Progressive Pai Gow Poker inventor Alan Abrams (r) with its sharp-toothed, but friendly, mascot (c) and dealer Mei Zhao (l)

Table game proponents struggling to entice players away from the rattle and hum of the machines must also deal with a certain generation gap, says Kukuda. The card games played by what Kukuda calls "the World War II generation" have been superseded by video and other modern diversions; the Friday night poker game has largely become an anachronism.

Another negative is the economic uncertainty involved in non-mechanized table games. "Based on the internal components of slots, we know the house is going to get 5 to 6 percent. In blackjack, the casino could lose $700,000 in a night," Kukuda points out. That same element of uncertainty can cause players to lose their money too quickly and become disenchanted former customers. Kukuda extols the virtues of Double Exposure, a new form of '21' invented by former Vegas World owner Bob Stupak, and now on the floor at Stratosphere. "All the cards are dealt face up; it captures an element of the game everybody can relate to and then make a more-informed decision," he says.



Gameboard for Shufflemaster's Let It Ride Bonus.

As video game inventors introduce wired facsimiles of traditional table games and table game makers seek to emulate the appeal of the glitzy, new video games, "we're seeing a blending of the two experiences," notes Lou Kelmanson, director of gaming operations at Harveys Casino Resort Lake Tahoe, a casino not averse to giving new table games a shot. Harveys has officially tested 10 games in the past two years and informally "evaluated" 100 games, according to Kelmanson, who should have a well-rounded perspective on the industry.

A Harvard MBA who says he "grew up in the industry as a player," Kelmanson teaches a continuing education course on new game development and analysis at the University of Nevada-Reno (UNR). He also serves on

(continued on page 42)

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C78

the board of directors of BET Technology. In blackjack, "simple but popular side bets seem to be the trend," Kelmanson says, citing the popularity of Pai Gow Blackjack and BET Technology's Royal Match, which has more than 500 tables nationwide. Harveys has developed Fortune Pai Gow Poker, now offered in four states and "doing very well."

With more table game makers vying for limited floor space, Kelmanson sees competition heating up. "We're going to see more bells and whistles coming to table games. [Shufflemaster's] Let It Ride was the first table game to add the whole sound package. We want to tap into the emotions of gamers and to do that we have to reach out beyond sight—tap into the other senses for extra thrills."

There are always success stories. Joker '21,' a new, double-joker variation invented by Oklahoman John Green, has given a boost to lagging '21' action at Showboat Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, table game manager Bill Dimbinski reports. The game offers a shot at achieving 21. "People get bored with [standard] blackjack, but this has a twist. The players love it." Another popular new "side bet" game is New Vision Gaming's '21' Madness. "It's generated a lot more fun for the regular blackjack players," Dimbinski relates.

Showboat's tables also offer Shufflemaster's Let it Ride Bonus, offering a $1 side bet and higher win frequency than the tourney version of LIR, in which players vied for a $3 million jackpot. The latter game was beginning to lose its pull, according to Dimbinski: "After three years, the drop had started to go down."

Let It Ride Bonus offers "a more immediate reward," notes Shufflemaster Vice President Mark Yoseloff. "If you win the side bet, you're immediately compensated at the table. This has allowed us to leave more of the side-bet wager in play at the table. The result has been a tremendous increase in player participation."

Such "novelty games" as Casino War (based on a one-card, kids' game) and Spanish '21' (marketed by inventor Richard Lofink's Las Vegas-based Kinetic Gaming Group) are making waves at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, reports Alida Delponte, VP of table games. Casino War's fast pace makes it very popular with young players, Delponte says, and more lucrative for casinos. Spanish '21,' which she calls reminiscent of Five-Card Charlie, offers "bonus payouts if you make it to '21' in five or fewer cards, and quirky twists that make the game more interesting—decisions you don't get to make in standard '21.'"

Like most pit managers, Delponte has "a drawerful of ideas" for new games, especially "variations on '21' with side bets attached." Last year, the MGM Grand "field tested" four new table games, two of which were successful enough to stick around.

In the competition between video and table games, Delponte expects the pendulum to start swinging the other way eventually, with casinos increasingly reliant on superior customer service to set themselves apart from the competition. "The trend will turn around," she predicts. "There's no question video slots are attractive, but human interaction is what's going to keep table games alive. Everybody loves to hear their name and 'Hi, so good to see you again.'" Still, few dealers can yet muster the energy to make such utterances. The dealer service mandate remains, to date, more hot air than consistent execution.

At Treasure Island, pai gow poker has become a leading producer, according to Joe Wilcox, VP of table gaming operations. Along with ease of play, Wilcox attributes much of the game's popularity to its origins in Southern California card rooms in the early '80s and his casino's large Golden State clientele. Also popular at Treasure Island are Casino War ("very easy to learn") and Spanish '21,' with "great options that appear to offer the customer more for his dollar." Still, the game offers casinos a higher hold percentage than the standard '21' game, Wilcox points out. Caribbean stud and Let it Ride Bonus are also holding market share at the Island.

Wilcox says Treasure Island has seen an increase in "lower end" or "grind" customers, who spend less time and money gambling and more time sightseeing: "When I worked at Caesars in the late '70s, people never left the building. Now, there's huge foot traffic up and down the Strip.

"One really exciting trend is that there are lots of women playing craps, lots of young people wanting to learn the game," he continues. In sync with that trend, "we've made a 180-degree reversal from the old days," Wilcox explains. "We rate our dealers on their interaction with the customers. We want them teaching customers to play."

One route to a table game resurgence

(continued on page 51)

Green Felt Jungle

(continued from page 42)

would be to see new suppliers enter the arena. A long-trusted name in the industry, Paul-Son Gaming, has done just that. Their Paul-Son Poker, in field trials at Boomtown (Biloxi) and Imperial Palace (Las Vegas), is "one of the most promising of the new table games," notes Scott Kramer, director of games at Boomtown. Offering Deuces Wild, Jokers Wild, and Draw Poker, the game plays "the same way you play video poker, except you have a larger jackpot."

With casinos in a "try anything" mindset, in the coming months Paul-Son Senior Vice President of Sales Lou Degregorio expects to see new variations of baccarat and progressive versions of pai gow poker, aimed at the generation of gamblers 21 to 30 years-old, "who are willing to try non-traditional things. We're always going have table games," Degregorio contends. "I don't care what everybody says. Players want live action and interaction with dealers."

In their efforts to grow table game revenues, casinos have not put enough effort into marketing existing games, contends Dennis Conrad, a Reno-based casino marketing consultant and *Casino Executive* columnist. "New games tend to steal players from existing table games," he argues. Nobody has done an adequate job of highlighting what they really have—craps, blackjack and roulette—which have been, and will likely continue to be, the staples of the business. Nothing is being done in terms of liberal rule changes or making the games more exciting. Everybody's trying to hit home runs with niche games but, even with a new game that's really successful, you're only talking 1 to 2 percent of the market."

Still, "there is room for a new game," Conrad says. "I don't know what it's going to look like. Much like Wheel of Fortune slots, it will be something that taps into [what] people really understand and have a fond memory of. In the next five years, somebody's going to stumble onto it." ❑

Dan Emerson is a frequent contributor to Casino Executive.

TIC 2386

C79

Chef Marco Porceddu directs things at the Strip's newest Italian eatery: **Francesco's**, in Treasure Island. It boasts celebrity artwork (Tony Bennett, Phyllis Diller, a Picasso). Classic antipasti. The Mediterranean seafood stew (clams, lobster, mussels, scallops, calamari) is a meal by itself (about $20).

It 's like a dining room just off the kitchen, where you can watch the cooks work. Most pasta dishes are in the $9-$13 range, although there's one dish with homemade spaghetti, shrimp, scallops, calamari and mussels (about $16). Soups and salads are about $5. Francesco's is open nightly (5:30-11 p.m.)

TIC 2387

CASINO EXECUTIVE
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NEW YORK, NY
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OCTOBER 1998

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BY THE NUMBERS BY ANTHONY MELLO

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Anthony Mello

Outlining a Superior Return Strategy

Despite what you hear, the most definitive characteristic of a superior return on gaming company investments has to do with an ideal location. With returns on gaming companies shrinking, gaming's management teams are scrambling to understand how to maximize every dollar they invest. And while you might be thinking of such catchy slogans as "entertainment product," "destination megaresort" and "master-planned megastore" as the solutions to gaming's declining returns, the answer to this quandary may already be in the numbers.

Indeed, new resorts and product expansions that have yielded the best returns have been those with superior locations. Despite the importance of a unique theme, a large enough site, creative architects and contractors, low gaming taxes, and the skills of operating management, the most important factor behind a property's success is still location, location, location. (See table.)

The evidence is overwhelming. The $200-million renovation of Harrah's in the center of the Las Vegas Strip (despite being under construction for most of 1997) helped the property produce a cash return on investment of almost 25%. The returns at the Luxor on the south end of the Strip, however, have been nothing short of dismal —despite its recent $400 million renovation.

"A terrible location doomed the Stratosphere," says Joe Coccimiglio of Prudential Securities in a recent report. "Stratosphere, which declared bankruptcy in January 1997, nine months after opening, is a prime example of the negative effect of a poor location." And other North Strip properties, such as the Sahara, Circus Circus, and the Riviera have produced weak returns as well, says Coccimiglio in his report.

On the other hand, great locations have helped operators such as Mirage Resorts earn some of the highest returns on the Strip. The Mirage, an eight-year-old prop-

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Las Vegas EBITDA Returns on Invested Capital

Property	Property Age (Yrs)	Location Assessment	Total Capital Invested	1997 EBITDA	1997 EBITDA Return
Bally's	25	Superior	450	93	21%
Caesars (1) (2)	32	Superior	850	115	14%
Circus Circus LV	24	Weak	530	52	10%
Desert Inn (1) (2)	48	Weak	160	(25)	—
Excalibur	8	Good	330	80	24%
Flamingo Hilton	28	Superior	445	109	24%
Harrah's (1) (2)	25	Superior	200	48	24%
Imperial Palace	20	Superior	220	42	19%
Luxor (1)	4	Weak	825	90	11%
LV Hilton (2)	29	Weak	500	45	9%
MGM Grand (1)	4	Good	1,050	224	21%
The Mirage	8	Superior	860	252	29%
Monte Carlo	2	Good	355	92	26%
New York New York	1	Good	460	130	28%
Rio (3)	8	Weak	100	100	18%
Riviera	43	Weak	140	20	14%
Sahara	46	Weak	260	15	6%
Stardust	10	Weak	300	33	11%
Treasure Island	4	Superior	485	110	23%
Tropicana	11	Good	200	10	5%
Total			9,180	1,634	18%

(1) 1997 returns adversely impacted by construction

(2) Does not include capital invested in 1997 which is expected to benefit results in 1998

(3) 1997 return is annualized for opening of $200 million expansion in February 1997

Source: Prudential Securities, Inc.

city, is currently generating the highest EBITDA returns on investment on the Las Vegas Strip—29%. And Mirage's Treasure Island and 50%-owned Monte Carlo are close behind, with annual returns of 23% and 26% respectively. According to the table at left, those properties with *Superior* locations outperformed casino hotels with *Weak* locations by more than 12%; and in 1997, *Superior* locations generated average EBITDA returns on investment of 22% versus *Weak* location average returns of less than 10%.

David Anders, of Credit Suisse First Boston, agrees that location makes the difference. In a study Anders released in April of this year, he concluded that companies generating superior average returns on

TIC 2461

assets will, first and foremost, possess an "ideal geographical location along the Strip." According to Anders, other factors that greatly affect whether or not a company can generate a superior return on assets, albeit to a lesser extent than location, include:

- Management teams with a demonstrated ability to open and maintain must-see resorts.
- New project openings within the next 12 months.
- A strong balance sheet.

Implications in Las Vegas are bipolar and highlight different rewards for operators depending on the respective locations of their new projects or expansions. For Mirage and its Bellagio, the results of the above analysis are quite bullish and predict that despite the extravagant sums spent building Bellagio, corresponding returns on investment should easily justify dollars spent.

For Circus Circus' Mandalay Bay, the implications are the opposite. With a $950-million investment in Mandalay Bay on the south end of the Strip, and with more than $6 billion in additional investment hitting the market over the next two to three years, Circus will be one of the hardest-hit operators on the Strip. In addition, with Strip visitor gravitational pull expected to head north toward the Bellagio and The Venetian, Mandalay Bay's success may only be a detriment to Circus' other south Strip properties, Excalibur and Luxor. In short, with more additional investment in Las Vegas being added than ever before, a $950-million proposition in a weak location may be a sucker's bet.

A $950-million proposition in a weak location may be a sucker's bet.

For those of you who are not convinced that returns on assets and on invested capital drive the train, there is one more conclusion Anders drew from his study outlining the importance of a superior return on assets strategy: "returns drive stock prices." Unfortunately for most public gaming companies with exposure to Las Vegas—due to the large incremental investment coming into the market—returns on investment will continue to come down, leading most analysts to predict that gaming stocks will continue their lackluster performance versus indices such as the S&P 500 for at least the next one to two years. In short, the 20% cash-on-cash return on investment hurdle most public gaming companies targeted is no longer the bench mark in Las Vegas.

Of course, with interest rates at such low levels—and with lower risk premiums required by increasingly motivated banks and bond investors that are scrambling to loan casino companies money compared to a few years ago—returns on investment over 20% may no longer be necessary. With companies such as Mirage borrowing money at 6% to 7%, a historically paltry 15% return on investment for a new project can still greatly enhance shareholders' equity. Indeed, to put things in perspective, a 15% annual EBITDA return on investment at Bellagio will generate more than $270 million in annualized cash flow for Mirage Resorts, adding more than $75 million annually to the company's bottom line. Indeed, this shows me that even in a shrinking investment return environment such as this one, companies that pursue unique projects in superior locations and that spend their shareholders' capital wisely can continue to grow their bottom lines.

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DECEMBER 1998

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Kranes on DESIGN

Right Hand, Left Hand

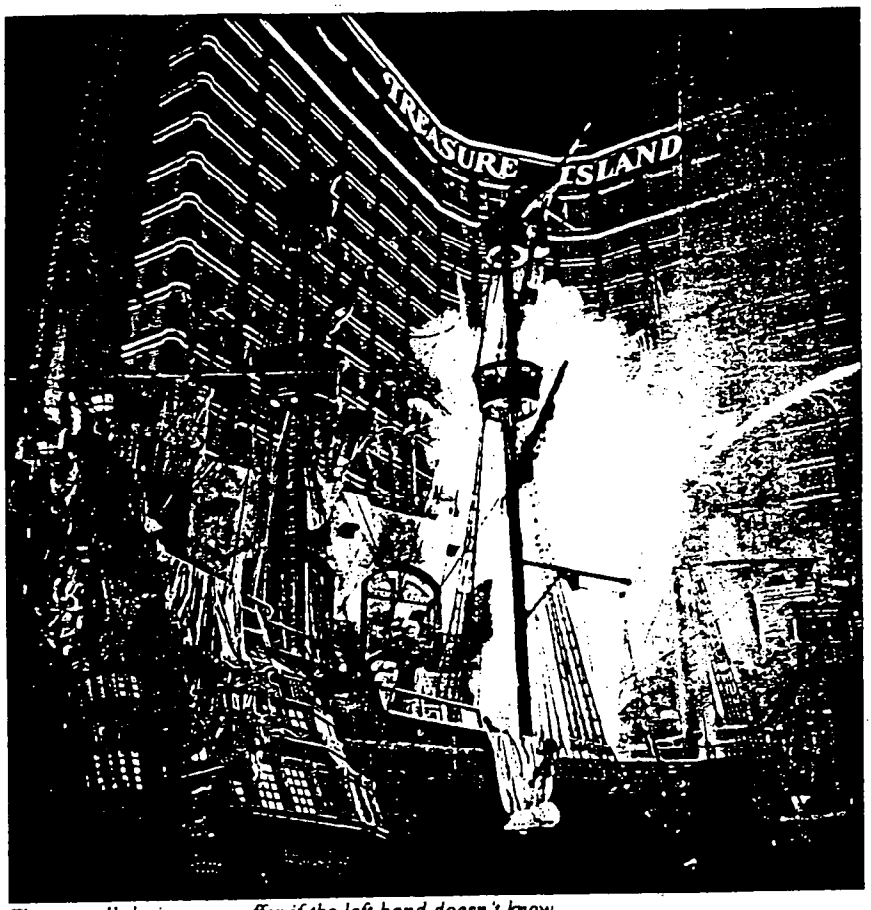
By David Kranes

A great casino resort is seamless in design. It's whole. Everything fits. There is the unexpected—surprise is a part of delight. But the pleasure of finding the unexpected is the "of course." Of course the orchids by the waterfall in the huge solarium are real! Of course the posed

TIC 2491

Michelangelo's. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is.... Steve Wynn's?

There is, of course, creation by committee, so-called Politburo Art, where no hand-eye coordination is in evidence. Buildings rise against a skyline, the products of a dozen competing imaginations, a dozen



The overall design can suffer if the left hand doesn't know...

Roman fountain comes to life! Of course stained glass structures arch, like kites, over the elevated bar. No, we didn't expect it, but it fits. There's an imagination in charge, a master plan, a sort of hand-eye coordination. Beethoven's Ninth is Beethoven's. Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling is competing marketing concepts, and a dozen (or two) frustrating building codes. Klutz buildings. Spastic resorts. The left hand has no idea what the right hand is doing, never mind an overseeing eye. The guest stands in the middle of the resort, looks around and says, "I don't get it."

As one major Las Vegas resort moved toward completion of its recent makeover, I observed a right hand/left hand situation. The old lobby floor was torn up in preparation for new marble to be laid. Dust drifted; plastic sheeting was spread. A hard hat stood with a casino executive examining differently colored and patterned marble tiles. "Which do you think?" the hard hat asked the executive. Had the decision not been made long before this? Was there no single imagination overseeing the redesign?

The same resort—re-imagining itself, expanding—created a truly elegant steakhouse. One wishes the whole resort had been re-conceived with the same detail, imagination, and sense of pleasing shapes and light as this steakhouse. The restaurant had been strategically placed, on the Strip side of the building, on the second floor. From half of the seats in the steakhouse it was possible to dine with a view of erupting volcanoes and frigates doing battle. The other half of its seating overlooked a

...what the right one is doing.

TIC 2492

plaza within which the resort entertainment was staged periodically each night. When the show wasn't going on, mini trash trucks drove through the plaza picking up litter, so that diners, were, most often, treated to the emptying of trash bins beneath them. It seems the right hand was in charge of food; the left hand, waste.

At another renowned casino, entertainment segments and concession segments were interwoven on a given floor. Consultants were called in to redesign the space, create more dramatic lighting, rearrange the elements to enhance the flow. The head of concessions pulled the consultants aside to explain what was necessary, and what could not be changed. The head of entertainment pulled the same consultants aside, and explained what was necessary, what could not be changed. It was an imaginative paralysis. The consultants turned to the general manager. "I know, I know. It's been going on for years," the GM said.

"But isn't someone in charge?" the consultant asked.

The GM shrugged. "Well, in theory," he said. "But it's a big corporation and...."

At the center of a new casino resort in Henderson, Nev., stands arguably the most beautiful bar and table gaming area in the industry. Three wings extend from this design center. In two, the Mediterranean-themed design elements are consistent. But the third wing only gestures at this wholeness. As if the apse at Chartres Cathedral had been extended into a generic shopping mall, it houses a brewery, a bowling complex, and a cinema multiplex. It's like a third hand on a piano player, as if the resort hasn't quite figured out what to do with it, how it fits in. Not surprisingly, it is the single part of the overall property which has already demanded rethinking. In a resort where the left and right hands had been working together, it seems the right hand sneaked away and did some moonlighting.

The guest looks around and says, "I don't get it."

Another newly opened Henderson resort has different left hand/right hand problems. Half of its design is flat, *Jungle Book* by Disney, the other half is authentic, *Jungle Book* by Kipling. Are we in a cartoon or the Veldt? What is the intended experience?

Another casino resort wants to simulate a famed American city. Real city? Kitsch rendition? It's not clear. Certain of the resort elements have instant, almost cliched recognition. Others prompt a "What's that!?" or "Where is this supposed to be?" It seems the right hand may have been in charge of Coney Island and the Statue of Liberty while the left hand drafted the Stock Exchange and maybe the contractor was in charge of Central Park. Again, there seems to be at least three hands independently at work here.

When the left hand and right hand aren't working together, there's damage to the central nervous system. It's what neurologists call "deficit," and the best that can be hoped for any deficit is that it might be repaired. Some are irreparable. The larger the resort, the more difficult the hand-eye coordination. There is one recently built monster resort, a giant squid with a badly damaged central nervous system, which keeps trying to repair itself, trying to make itself whole, trying to make all its parts fit.

The critical point is this: Whole, imaginative patience takes far less time, ultimately, than competitive, restless renovation. Whole designs stay whole and last. Fitful designs fall apart from their own unbalanced centrifugal force. ❑

David Kranes is a professor of English at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and a frequent casino industry consultant.

TIC 2493

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MARCH 1999

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ENTERTAINMENT & Attraction

by Dan Emerson

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Today's signature attractions aren't just fun—they extend awareness of a brand

"WELCOME TO THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY." That's the title and theme of an article in a recent issue of *Harvard Business Review* that should interest anyone hoping to gauge the future direction of not only the hospitality/entertainment business but the entire 21st century marketplace.

TIC 2524

C87

"Economists have typically lumped experiences in with services," write authors B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, "but experiences are a distinct economic offering, as different from services as services from goods." To illustrate, the authors compare the history of economic progress to the four-stage evolution of the birthday cake. In the agrarian economy, wives mixed farm commodities to make cakes from scratch. As the goods-based industrial economy advanced they bought premixed ingredients.

When the service economy rose to prominence, parents ordered cakes from bakeries and grocery stores which cost 10 times as much as the packaged ingredients. In the '90s, many busy parents lack the time make the cake or even throw the party. Instead, they spend $100 or more to 'outsource' the entire event to Chuck E. Cheese's, the Discovery Zone, the Mining Company, or some other business that stages a memorable event for the kids–and often throws in the cake for free.

"Today, we can identify and describe this fourth economic offering because consumers unquestionably desire experiences . . . From now on, leading edge companies will find that the next competitive battleground lies in staging experiences," Pine and Gilmore write.

You don't need a Harvard business Ph.D. to understand that casinos are in the experience business, and that the "next battle" is well underway. "Twenty years ago, you went to a casino showroom to be entertained by people onstage. Today, entertainment is a whole experience that starts from the moment you drive up," notes Tom Hoskens, a vice president with Minneapolis architects The Cuningham Group. "First, casinos gave you a great sign. Then The Mirage added the volcano and Treasure Island its battling pirate ships. The casinos realized 'People are starting to like this,' added themed restaurants and made retail entertaining. Now they're creative, immersive resort environments," says Hoskens, whose firm designed the Las Vegas Hilton's SpaceQuest Casino and *Star Trek*: The Experience.

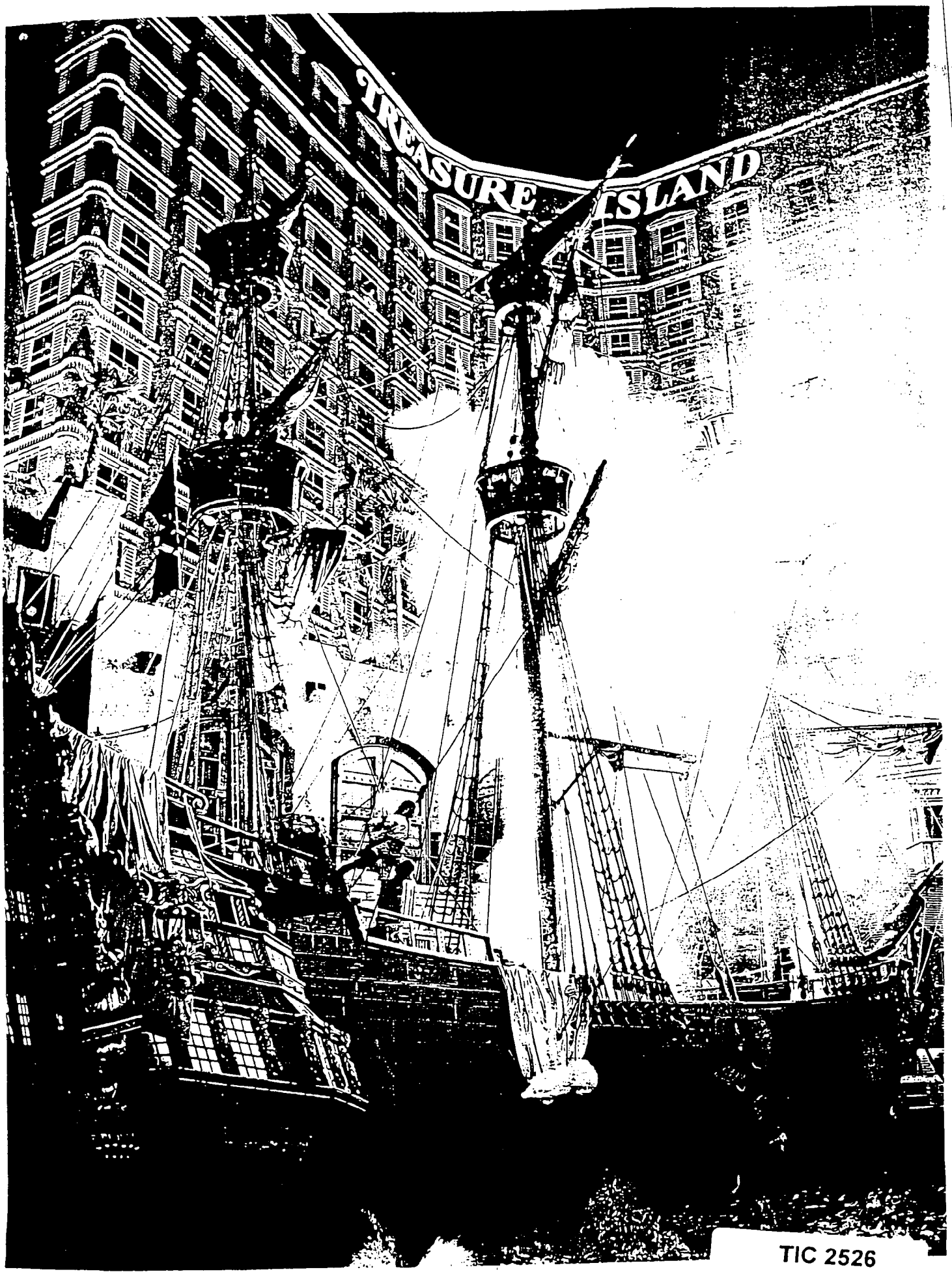
In the '90s, casinos have redefined the concept of entertainment. Whether the attraction of the moment is the MGM Grand's $45-million *EFX* spectacular, women's boxing at Grand Casino Biloxi, or Penn and Teller entertaining New Year's Eve guests at rural Minnesota's Treasure Island, casinos have effected what marketing gurus would call a "paradigm shift."

They've also made some mind-boggling investments in the new-experience economy, from MGM Grand's $700-million City of Entertainment, to Rio's multifaceted Masquerade Village, to Mandalay Bay's 60-acre luxury resort. Casinos' approach to entertaining their customers "used to be 'Get them in and get them out,'" says Joel Fischman, corporate VP of entertainment for Circus Circus Enterprises. "That's not true anymore; the experience has to stand on its own legs. There needs to be a direct correlation between whatever is being provided and paid for and the experience the customer is getting.

"You've got to have something for everybody. We're doing *Chicago*, the musical at Mandalay Bay–a two-hour, 15-minute show including intermission. If you're paying $65 or $75 a ticket, you'll get your money's worth. Six years ago, there was one page of entertainment ads in the Las Vegas newspapers on Fridays; now there's a whole section devoted to entertainment."

"Ten years ago, who would have guessed people would pay $80 a person to see a show in Las Vegas?" asks Bob Kephart, whose firm, Kephart and Corti Productions, operates Comedy Stop the-

TIC 2525



TIC 2526

Forza Italia! at Francesco's

This column is being written under duress. Mostly self-imposed duress, but duress just the same. Gentle coercion never hurts, especially when it implores one to do the right thing, in this case to quit focusing on high-end "gourmet" restaurants, my editors and my conscience have implored me to review more modest places which provide more bang for the buck. Such eateries both deserve and need the exposure, and the faithful followers of SCOPE both need and deserve dining out alternatives which don't require a missed car payment to enjoy.

With these thoughts in mind, I had recently resolved to focus exclusively on smaller, ethnic places; locally owned joints with lower aspirations and prices. These represent the true pioneer spirit of Vegas, not the high-end chains and hotel dining rooms which have manipulated the expense-account crowd into making our town the fifth most expensive restaurant city in America. In case you haven't noticed, Las Vegas isn't the fifth most anything else, but we take the cake when it comes to gouging the hotel/convention-eer customer for what they eat. As locals we are not immune from this avarice, and every time I compliment a celebrity chef or herald a fabulous import from a larger city, I tacitly ratify this practice of charging whatever the expense-deduction will bear.

My hope has been that the casinos, awash in cash and customers, would use their wealth to subsidize the food and beverage part of their operations, and give patrons a break when the stomach's a-grumbling. Sort of like they did in the old days, if memory serves. The days before the bean-counters decided that every part of the operation, from the craps table to the chambermaids, had to be a profit center, and when the food and booze was good and cheap enough to entice you into the joint.

Nowadays, casinos attract only two types of restaurant customers; the slack-jawed hordes waiting interminably for this week's version of a bad buffet, or those not paying with their own money happily eating a $30 steak, after enjoying a $10 martini. Precious few casinos seem at all interested in serving upgraded food to anything but their upgraded guests. The worst offender of all in this category has always been to my mind, Mr. Steve Wynn and his trio of glitzy, overcrowded and overpriced gambling parlors. So put off have I been over the years by the mediocre and expensive food at the Golden Nugget, Mirage and Treasure Island, that my standard response when asked what I thought of the food at any of the three has been "I don't."

And then I ate at Francesco's.

Earlier this year a press packet had announced its opening and the arrival of Head Chef Marco Proceddu. The information packet had included his short biography, highlighting his stint at Tre Visi/La Scala at the MGM Hotel. At that point, I was underwhelmed. La Scala is fondly referred to in my household as the home of the $40 Veal Chop. If you must, Tre Visi, the "outdoor" cafe out front, is actually better, nicer and (much) cheaper.

So you might say that leaping to the bait of the press release was not my first impulse. Being the semi-frugal sort, and spending my own money for this gig (how many restaurant critics can you say that about?), I was not anxious to endure another hackneyed and outrageously priced Italian meal, especially one that involved a mind-numbing walk through a casino. Even after being told by my radio co-host John Bonds, and our "gourmet-at-large" stringer, the "Duke of Las Vegas," that the food and prices here were worth a look, I was hesitant. It was three months before I finally made into Mr. Proceddu's lair. Now I wish it had been three days.

Quite simply, Mr. Proceddu is presently cooking some of the most authentic and best-priced Italian food ever eaten in Las Vegas. Forget the walk you must make through the casino. Ignore the slot machines. Just get there now before it is too late. For so good is his food, and so reasonable are the prices, that something's gotta give.

How Chef Proceddu has escaped lowest-common-denominator chain cooking is beyond me, but when you taste Sgombro ai Ferri su Couscous Funghi Orientali (that's grilled Escolar fish with large Israeli couscous and mushrooms in a red wine reduction sauce), you feel closer to Tuscany than the Tropicana. Or consider his risottos. One choice—a simple rice stew of butter, broth, Chianti and Parmesan—was as deep, rich and flavorful as this dish is supposed to be. Another, made with Butternut squash, truffled oil, crisp mint leaves and Mascarpone cheese, shows ingenuity and risk taking in a venue never know for either. When you consider that these superlative dishes each cost $15, and that the delicious and difficult to find Escolar is $25, you know that slot machine subsidies are finally being used to keep food prices down.

Of the two pastas tried, one, Chicken and Spinach Ravioli with green peas in a Rosé sauce, was outstanding. The other, Lasagna al Forno, was a tad dry for these buds, although probably much closer to the Neapolitan original than the gloppy mess with which we Americans are most familiar. Both used fresh-made pasta, both were lightly napped in freshly made sauces and both were a steal ($12 for the ravioli; $10 for lasagna). Some of the pastas, Cappelini Pomodoro for one, are under $9, which is practically in Olive Garden territory. Chicken and meat dishes continue the theme of more for less. Most run in the $13-16 range, with only the New York Strip coming close to $20. At prices this low, for food this good, in a charming, comfortable and well-spaced atmosphere, I will gladly postpone my newfound dedication to the independently owned restaurants of Las Vegas. I may even rethink my abhorrence to walking through casinos in order to eat.

FRANCESCO'S
Treasure Island Hotel/Casino, 702/894-7111

HOURS: Dinner only, 5:30-11:00

ATMOSPHERE: Well-spaced, comfortable tables and chairs, look onto open kitchen. Brightly lit to highlight the original art lining the walls. Forget the forgettable celebrity paintings, check out the Dali and the Picasso.

SERVICE: Professional, intensive-care, old-time, gourmet room attentiveness.

SOUND LEVEL: Quite low and conversation-conducive.

RECOMMENDED DISHES: All risottos, Grilled Escolar with Couscous, Sauteed Soft Shell Crab with Artichoke and Parsnip Ragout in a Balsamic reduction (I told you this guy can cook), Sauteed Diced Chicken with Asparagus and Mushrooms over Grilled Polenta, Dorada Royale (an expensive fish special—$34—but worth it), Chicken and Spinach Ravioli in Rose sauce, Osso Buco, Caesar Salad, Beef Carpaccio.

WINE LIST: Limited, with few good bottles under $25. Selection is better by the glass.

PRICES: Antipasti, $4-9.95; Soups, $4.50-4.95; Pasta e Risottos, $8.95-15.95; Chicken and Meat dishes, $12.95-$19.95; Desserts, $3.50-$5; Chef's specials may run higher, but they're worth it.

CREDIT CARDS: All major.

Scope May 16, 1998

TIC 2406

USA TODAY
WASHINGTON, DC
FRI/SAT/SUN 2,380,035
APR 24 1998

BURRELLE'S
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NEWS FROM VEGAS

Aladdin Hotel & Casino gambles on $1.3 billion makeover

8307

Another Las Vegas hotel bites the dust Monday when the Aladdin Hotel & Casino goes down in what's billed as a spectacular fireworks and pyrotechnic extravaganza. The 32-year-old Aladdin will be replaced by a $1.3 billion project anchored by a new Aladdin Hotel & Casino, along with a music-themed hotel co-developed by Planet Hollywood and a retail shop and entertainment complex. No completion dates announced. ... The Treasure Island resort is offering the latest wave in over-the-top nuptials on its HMS Royal Britannia, a replica of an 18th century sailing vessel. Couples can take the plunge aboard the ship, which floats in an artificial bay fronting the Strip. It's the scene of nightly pirate battles, but three times a day the Britannia becomes the love boat, complete with a ring-bearing pirate who swoops down from the crow's nest. Wedding packages start at $3,000. Pirate attendants cost extra. Information, 800-866-4748. ... Northwest Airlines begins nonstop service between Tokyo and Las Vegas June 1. The Japanese now surpass Germans as the city's No. 1 overseas visitors,

TRAVEL digest

TIC 2400

USA TODAY
WASHINGTON, DC
FRI/SAT/SUN 2,380,035
MAR 5 1999

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Upstaging Las Vegas

In Sin City, serious entertainment places its bets on the casino strip

By Craig Wilson
USA TODAY

LAS VEGAS

This desert city has long been known for giving bad taste a good name.

The lights are bright and gaudy, and the nightly entertainment is, well, bright and gaudy, too.

For decades, bare-breasted showgirls have strutted their stuff in the casino showrooms up and down the Strip. Throw in a foul-mouthed comedian, a velvet-voiced crooner and a magician or two, and everyone went home happy.

Now, after the entry of world-class hotels and restaurants — a Four Seasons Hotel opened here just this week — Las Vegas also is trying to upgrade the entertainment it offers.

Think Broadway, as in *Chicago*.

Think a $20 million show that calls for a one-of-a-kind $70 million theater as in

'Chicago' west: Ben Vereen with 'Chicago' castmates Wendy Edmead, left, and Jilana Urbana

TIC 2527

Cirque du Soleil's new *O*.

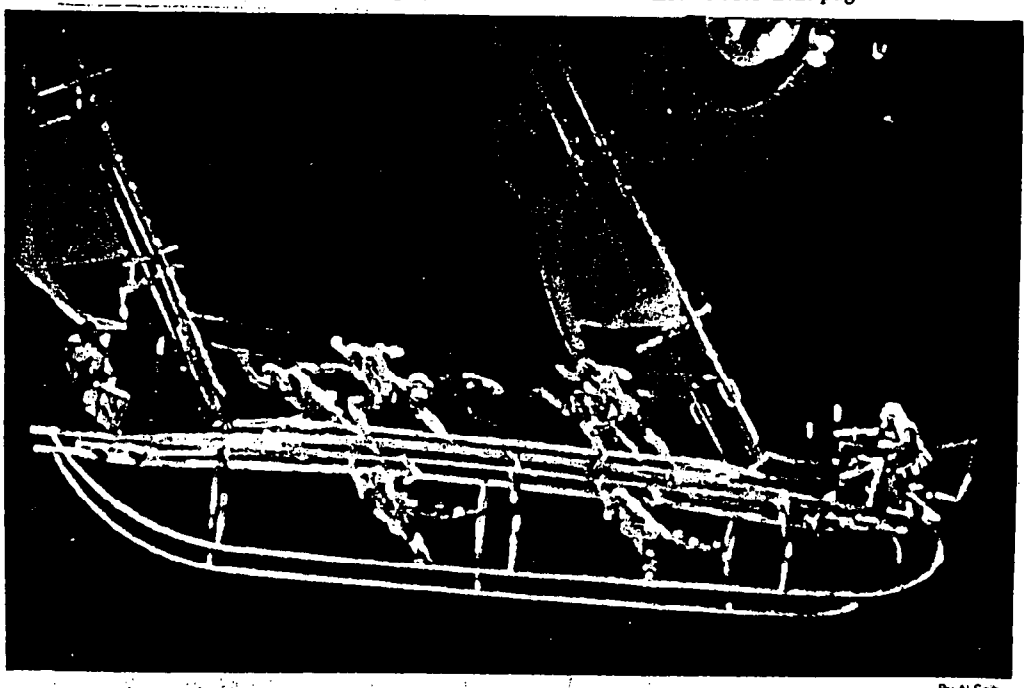
The Tony Award-winning musical *Chicago* opened this week at the new Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino's 1,700-seat theater — the first full-length Broadway show ever to be staged here on an indefinite basis. It's signed on for a six-month run and could be extended for years if enough people are willing to pay the $60.50-$82.50 ticket prices, higher than many Vegas attractions.

"It's all timing, and the timing is right," says Joel Fishman, vice president for entertainment for Circus Circus and the man responsible for bringing *Chicago* to town. "It's an experiment, but we think it will do just fine. We expect it to take off.

"Las Vegas has changed over the past few years," he says. "The audiences have changed."

A new study from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority claims that

Please see COVER STORY next page ▶



By Al Seib

Going strong: Cirque du Soleil's water-fantasy 'O' is elevating the tone of shows in Las Vegas.

TIC 2528

'Taste of the consumer has grown with Las Vegas'

Continued from 1E

more visitors now say Las Vegas is more an entertainment resort destination than a gambling one (50% vs. 48%).

That entertainment, of course, can be anything from *Chicago* to the dancing waters at Bellagio to the nightly pirate ship battles at Treasure Island and the talking Roman statues at Caesars Palace.

But a legitimate Broadway play raises the bar. The *Chicago* production is an exact replication of the Broadway show, not a cabaret version, as Broadway shows in Vegas always have been.

"That was the purpose of doing it in the first place," says Barry Weissler, the show's producer. "These are the things you never get in Las Vegas. That's why we're bringing it there."

Weissler thinks *Chicago* (the tale of a nightclub dancer who kills her lover only to turn into celebrity headlines) and Vegas are a perfect match. "It's so obvious. It's hot. It's sexy. It's dangerous. What else would I do? You tell me. You want me to do *Carousel* or *Death of a Salesman*?"

The show stars Chita Rivera and Ben Vereen, and neither has any doubts a Broadway play can be a long-running hit in Las Vegas, even though it breaks the old Vegas rule that a show should be no longer than 90 minutes so people will return to the slot machines as quickly as possible. *Chicago* runs 2½ hours.

"The show is so musical, and we have so many good-looking women without much on, I think we can keep their interest," Rivera says with a laugh. "People who are on holiday are generally in very good spirits, unless of course they've just lost their family and house and car."

She jumped at the chance "because I wanted to be part of something breaking boundaries. I did *Can Can* here once, and it always broke my heart that we had to break it up."

Rivera, who has signed on for six months, sees *Chicago* opening doors for other plays. "We're moving original pieces further out. Broadening the scope. I think Las Vegas is way ready for this."

"What we fail to recognize is Vegas isn't transient anymore," adds Vereen, referring to the fact that Las Vegas is now home to 1.3 million people, the fastest-growing area of the country. "You're undercutting the people there. They want their culture. They've been waiting a long time for a Broadway play. We're going to do a fantastic run."

Meanwhile, Cirque du Soleil's elegant show *O* — it's performed on, under and over water — has been packing them in since October at Steve Wynn's upscale Bellagio, where it is signed for a 10-year run. (O, phonetically, is the French word for water, spelled *eau*.)

One reviewer called it "an oasis of sophistication on the four-mile Strip." That it is. It's also the most expensive production ever mounted in Las Vegas.

Michael Paskevich of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* perhaps summed it up best when he said the show "defies comparison to anything ever attempted on a stage."

Part Esther Williams parody, part Olympic gymnastics and part Greg Louganis diving flawlessly through the air, the show causes gasps of amazement.

Hundreds of people form a line through Bellagio's casino nightly in hopes of grabbing a cancellation ticket — the show is sold out a month in advance even at $100 a ticket ($90 for balcony).

Another Cirque du Soleil show, *Mystere*, has been a hit at Treasure Island for five years.

"Before us, there was a recipe here, a cliche revolving around the length of the legs and the size of chest," says Pavel Brun, Cirque du Soleil's artistic director.

While his performers have both long legs and broad chests, he says his $20 million *O* goes way beyond that.

"Steve Wynn (who built Bellagio's $70 million theater specifically for the water-based production) told us to break the mold. Use our own recipes, not to repeat these things and start totally new."

Has he set a new standard on the Strip?

"Hopefully not. I hate copycats. I really wish I could see something on the street that would set a fire to my backside," says Brun, who acknowledges noticing some poor Cirque du Soleil imitations (acrobats flying through the air)

TIC 2529

sprouting up on the Strip.

"We need competition, but so far we're just competing with ourselves."

Some nights he feels as if he's competing against the audience, too. Brun says the problem playing Vegas is that the audience makeup changes every night.

"Here we're dealing with the public who just happens to be here on that night. One night we have computer salesmen. The next night might be cowboys. And the third night will be Asians. So there are three different ways of reacting," he says.

"The cowboys sometimes are disappointed there are no cows on the stage. Three claps from the Asians mean they really liked the show. And the computer salesmen's minds are elsewhere."

God only knows why. The O production is so spectacular — the stage transforms itself into a

By Joan Marcus

New twist: The innovative Cirque du Soleil troupe, already successful with its 'Mystere' production, is attracting audiences with its new 'O' show.

TIC 2530

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Source: MGM MIRAGE

MGM MIRAGE Among Forbes List of 'Best Managed Companies in America'

Thursday January 6, 3.00 pm ET

LAS VEGAS, Jan. 6 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Forbes magazine has named MGM MIRAGE (NYSE: MGG - News) one of the "Best Managed Companies in America," as part of its annual Forbes Platinum 400 list of top-performing big corporations. MGM MIRAGE was cited alongside only 25 other companies and was recognized as first in the "Hotels, restaurants and leisure" category.

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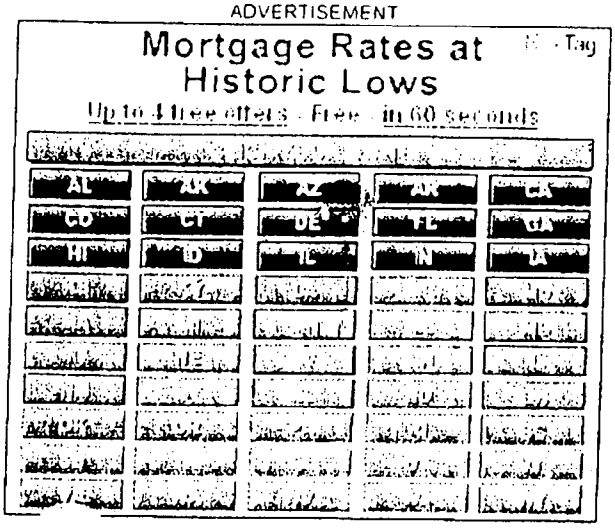

"This recognition reflects our company's solid business practices, financial viability, and outstanding performance," said Terry Lanni, Chairman and CEO of MGM MIRAGE. "The commitment of each of our employees and the dedication of our management team has made this recognition possible."

To identify leaders from each industry category, Forbes ranked companies within their industry by many financial metrics, including growth in sales and earnings, leverage, stock market returns and earnings forecasts. From these ranks, each company received a composite score. Next, a financial analytics firm determined an overall score on each company for accounting and governance practices, financial condition and earnings quality. Finally, Forbes editors and writers looked closer at the top-ranked companies in each industry and considered factors that might not show up on a financial scorecard. From this process, the winners were selected for each industry.

MGM MIRAGE (NYSE: MGG - News), headquartered in Las Vegas, Nevada, is one of the world's leading and most respected hotel and gaming companies. The Company owns and operates 11 casino resorts located in Nevada, Mississippi and Michigan, and has investments in three other casino resorts in Nevada, New Jersey and the United Kingdom. For more information about MGM MIRAGE, please visit the company's website at http://www.mgmmirage.com.

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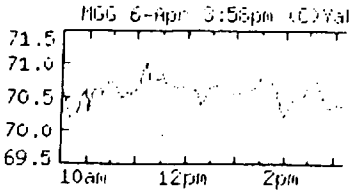

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Statements in this release which are not historical facts are "forward looking" statements and "safe harbor statements" under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 that involve risks and/or uncertainties, including risks and/or uncertainties as described in the company's public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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MGM MIRAGE Named Fortune Magazine's 'Most Admired' Casino Resort Company

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LAS VEGAS, March 9 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- For the fourth year in a row, Fortune Magazine has named MGM MIRAGE (NYSE: MGG) one of "America's Most Admired Companies" in its annual survey of companies with large U.S. operations.

MGM MIRAGE was rated the "Most Admired" casino resort company in the Hotels/Casinos/Resorts category. Overall, MGM MIRAGE ranked second in the Hotels/Casinos/Resorts category after Marriott International, a non-casino hotel resort company.

"We are very pleased to be recognized by Fortune Magazine for the fourth time as our industry's top hotel casino resort company," said J. Terrence Lanni, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of MGM MIRAGE. "This ranking reflects the quality of our top-notch management team and our employees' commitment to excellence."

To identify "America's Most Admired Companies" for 2005, Fortune and its research partner, the Hay Group, asked 15,000 executives, directors and securities analysts to select the 10 largest companies they admire most in their industry, based on eight criteria. Criteria included: innovation, financial soundness, employee talent, quality of management, use of corporate assets, long-term investment, social responsibility, and quality of products/services.

MGM MIRAGE (NYSE: MGG), headquartered in Las Vegas, Nevada, is one of the world's leading and most respected hotel and gaming companies. The Company owns and operates 11 casino resorts located in Nevada, Mississippi and Michigan, and has investments in three other casino resorts in Nevada, New Jersey and the United Kingdom. For more information about MGM MIRAGE, please visit the company's website at http://www.mgmmirage.com.

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VANCOUVER SUN

VANCOUVER, B.C., CN
DAILY 203,000

SATURDAY
APR 22 1995

BURRELLE'S

Entertainment

IN BRIEF

LAS VEGAS — 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 — 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.

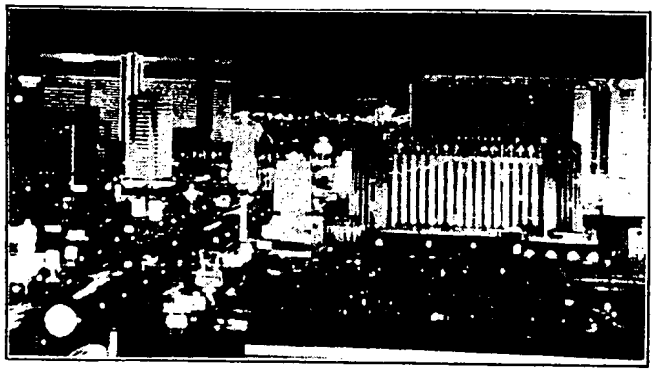
The casino wouldn't identify the man, believed to be in his 80s. He was dubbed "Shoeless Joe" because he gambled one day in bare feet.

The mystery player did make some trips to the bank and may have set some money aside.

CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CN
WEEKLY 14,000

APR 7 1994

BURRELLE'S



A view of the 'strip'

Resort Offers 'Drama, Mystery And Fantasy'

H921CBR

Activities set amidst at atmosphere of "drama, mystery and fantasy" can be found in the Mutiny Bay entertainment centre at the Treasure Island resort in Las Vegas.

The 6,000-square-metre centre offers video games, pinball and electronically simulated games. Its stone interiors are designed as an ancient Moorish castle and a welcoming emblem carries the message, "Mutiny Bay, A Safe Haven for Pirates and Mutineers Alike."

Stone alcoves in the walls have "skeletons" greeting visitors. Their "spirits" tell the history of the once quiet Moorish fortress, overtaken centuries ago by pirates and seamen.

Visitors then pass through a dark hallway and enter the Map Room, where an antiquated treasure map guides them on.

The centrepiece of Mutiny Bay is the Midway, where visitors can try their luck at games of skill. Youngsters can enter the Enchanted Chamber, which has games designed for them. Those wanting to play video and pinball games can try The Armory. The Treasure Hold serves as Mutiny Bay's "redemption centre" and is "piled to the sky with treasures."

Evidence of pirate plunder can be seen throughout Mutiny Bay. Parts of pillaged ships accentuate the architecture and within the courtyard, Mutiny Bay residents can be seen on balconies and behind cottage windows. Pirates also engage in a sword fight.

Visitors will hear the sounds of footsteps on a ship's wooden deck, seagull cries, the crashing of waves and the cries of pirates and their "victims" as they fight.

HILL AND KNOWLTON

TIC 1838

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CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CN
WEEKLY 14,000

OCT 27 1994

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Treasure Rate

L926BK

The Treasure Island resort has a special rate for members of the travel industry planning to visit Las Vegas.

A nightly US$34 rate, single or double, is being offered Sunday through Thursday from Dec. 11-22. The special price is available to all ARC-approved travel agents and meeting and convention planners.

Reservations can be made by calling 800-944-7444. Travel agents and meeting planners will be asked to provide a business card upon arrival for verification.

There is no minimum-stay requirement and rates are net, non-commissionable. An additional charge of US$10 for triple and US$20 for quad occupancy will apply.

CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS
TORONTO, ON, CN
46-TIMES/YEAR 14,000
JUN 8 1998

[redacted]

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las vegas report

Pirates Do A Lot More Than Plunder At This Exciting Las Vegas Resort

Y307

Treasure Island wants to most adventurous landlubbers pound for Las Vegas.

The property, which opened in 1993, typifies the emergence of a new direction for Las Vegas, where full-scale entertainment resorts, rather than standard show-rooms and casinos, are ckly becoming the norm.

Treasure Island says it takes its guests "back to the Caribbean, to the days of the pirates, complete with a dramatic sea battle between the Treasure Island pirates and British naval officers aboard full-scale ships," with performances that feature 30 stunt people and actors. Those performers are found on a pirate ship and a British man o' war that stage nighttime duels outside the resort, with the pyrotechnic battle seeing cannons firing, ammunition exploding and "stuntmen flying through the air into the waters below."

The pirate theme is found throughout the resort, with crevices and niches hiding "jewels and goods the pirates have plundered from around the world."

Guests enter Treasure Island through Buccaneer

TIC 2420

Bay's main gate into a pirate village that serves as the town plaza and the hub of the resort's attractions. It has an 18th-century ambiance.

The interior of the resort has been designed as a pirate city, with many railings and columns that line resort walkways taken from Old World palaces.

Guests will find several restaurants, including the Plank, which serves seafood and steak. The Buccaneer Bay Club overlooks the ship battle below, while Madame Ching's honours Madame Ching, said to be the most famous of female pirates.

Other features of Treasure Island include wedding chapels, a spa and beauty salon and meeting and convention facilities.

The 36-storey Treasure Island resort has 2,900 units, including 212 suites.

TIC 2421

EDMONTON SUN
EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CN
SUNDAY 125,058

JUL 3 1994
BURRELLE'S

The Edmonton Sunday Sun, July 3, 1994

In Las Vegas, pirates do win

By GUY DEMARINO
Travel Editor

Look at that picture on the right and you'll see how Stephen Wynn solved the problem of how to top the unusual. Rare white tigers and a volcano [illegible] every hour after dark.

Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts Inc., decided to outgun himself. Literally.

He went for a pirate theme, with swords, cannons, skulls and crossbones, for an unusual headliner show — the Cirque du Soleil — and for a naval battle which takes place on the Las Vegas Strip and where, of course, the pirates beat the Royal Navy.

That's what Wynn thought up for his recently opened $430 million Treasure Island resort-casino on the Strip, next to his $610 million tropically-themed Mirage, home to the volcano.

The Mirage opened in 1990 and still draws big crowds, especially to its Siegfried and Roy show, which makes white tigers disappear onstage (as well as money at $78 a ticket, it's the most expensive regular show in Vegas.)

But like the Mirage's erupting volcano, free to all comers, the naval battle is also free — to spectators, but not to Wynn, who spent $32 million to build it and spends five million a year to put it on (or about $2,300 a show).

The spectacular 10-minute battle is on six times a day, every 90 minutes, in front of the Treasure Island. A tougher battle is to find a good spot to watch what has become the Strip's most popular outdoor performance.

If you can line up an hour or so before each show (times are posted outside) the best spot is on the wooden dock that extends over the water between the sidewalk and the hotel.

Lesser view spots include the second-level Buccaneer Bay Club, one of the Treasure Island restaurants; the Battle Bar, above the water; the sidewalk and across the street at the Tam O'Shanter motel.

Actors and stuntmen take seriously the roles they play as pirates and British sailors. They [illegible] the *HMS Britannia* comes from around the corner on Buccaneer Bay to surprise pirates on the *Hispaniola* unloading plundered goods.

After a few heated words and ignored [illegible] demands, the cannons begin to speak and the [illegible] starts. Loud explosions, fiery pyrotechnics, sailors falling into the water, a British captain who goes down with his sinking ship — all to the delight of the crowd [illegible]

TIC 1969

TIC 1970

EDMONTON JOURNAL

EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CN
DAILY 161,808

SATURDAY
FEB 25 1995

BURRELLE'S

22

Vegas: Big fantasies for big kids

DAVE FINLAYSON
Journal Staff Writer

452 LBR

Las Vegas

When Dallas lawyer Diana Friedman plugged two quarters into a slot machine and won $1.4 million, the cheers from the wheelers and dealers could be heard as far away as the Hoover Dam.

They love big winners in Las Vegas. When someone walks away with an obscene amount of money, as Friedman did at the Luxor Hotel while working on a single roll of quarters on a statewide progressive jackpot machine, the publicity it generates cannot be measured on any scale devised by humans.

And that means more gamblers come — the equivalent of almost the whole population of Canada this year — hoping to make the big score. A few do, but most contribute in varying amounts to the *$6 billion* the casinos relieve visitors of annually.

Despite all the burbling in recent years about how Las Vegas is becoming a family destination, it's still a blip in the middle of the desert where people come to experience the tension, euphoria and misery of games of chance in a surreal environment.

"We're a casino destination, period," says Myram Borders, head of the Las Vegas News Bureau, the publicity arm of the chamber of commerce.

"Although we've expanded our entertainment base through the theme parks, golf courses and other non-gaming areas at the new hotels, you still have to be 21 to gamble. And this city lives on gamblers."

And the proliferation of gambling in other U.S. states and in Canada hasn't hurt Las Vegas, she says.

"It's helped us, in fact. It's got more people interested in gambling and sooner or later they'll want to come here. It's like going from the minors to the big leagues."

Only eight per cent of visitors were under 21 last year, an increase of only one per cent since 1992. And with so many new themed temples of excess appearing on the clear desert horizon, the developers seem to have tapped into a booming market of adults who,

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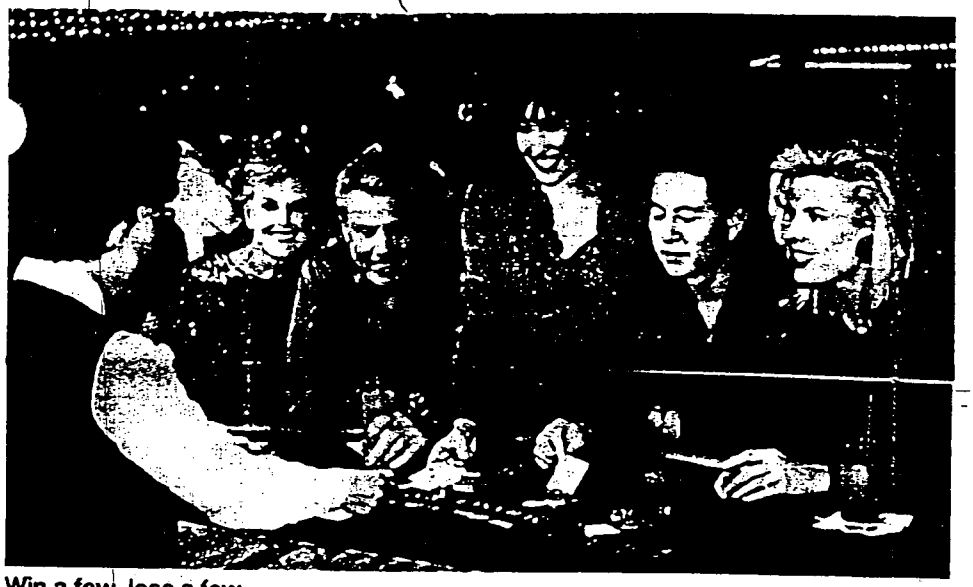
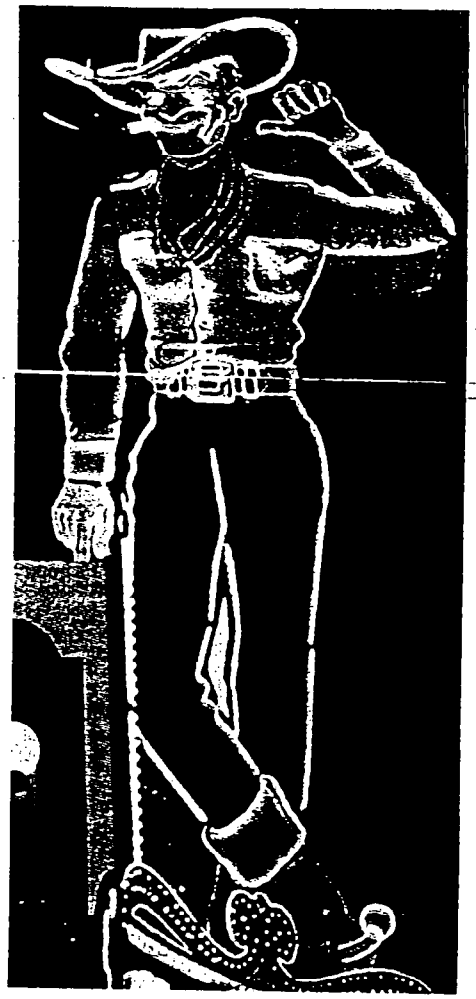


Win a few, lose a few



In Vegas the neon is bigger than life

like Peter Pan, want to pretend they never grew up.

Hey, now *there's* a great idea for a hotel theme.

Don't laugh. *Never, Never Land* is about the only fantasy that hasn't become part of a giant hotel complex in the last few years. Pirates (Treasure Island), King Arthur (The Excalibur), mysterious ancient Egypt (The Luxor), the world of movies (MGM Grand) all have taken up esidence on the The Strip — and there are more on the way.

The biggest fantasy of them all — no, it's love, silly — will be the theme of Steve Wynn's latest mega-project. Wynn, who started the fantasy game with the tigers, indoor lake and erupting volcano at The Mirage, is building Beau Rivage, which he promises will be "the most romantic experience of your life." The 49-storey hotel will be in the middle of a lake Wynn will dig on The Strip at Flamingo Road.

Judging by the name, Wynn still thinks the French are the most romantic people in the world. Obviously he hasn't tried to make halting conversation with a Dordoigne shopgirl and got a sneering reply.

Please see VEGAS/D4

If you go...

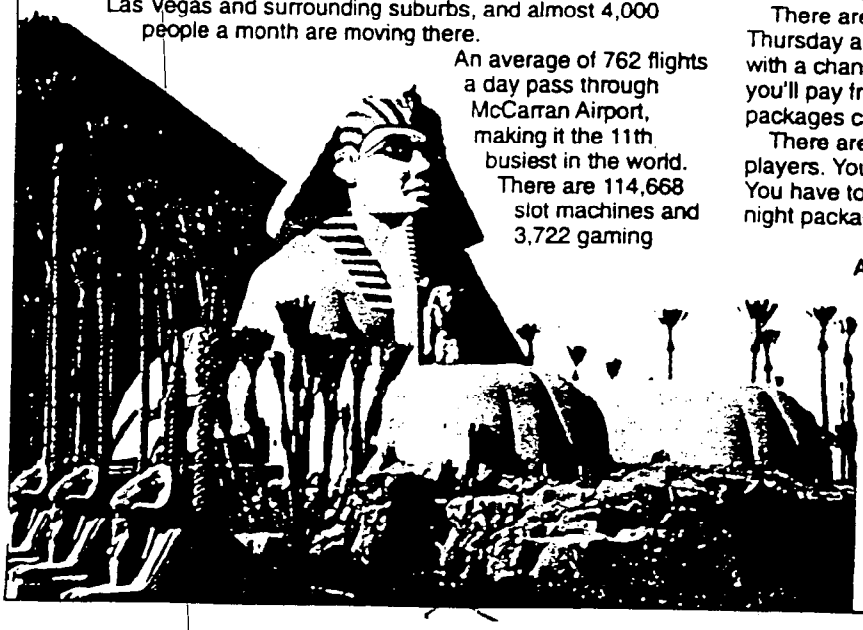
VEGAS FACTS

There are 900,000 people in Clark County which encompasses Las Vegas and surrounding suburbs, and almost 4,000 people a month are moving there.

An average of 762 flights a day pass through McCarran Airport, making it the 11th busiest in the world.

There are 114,668 slot machines and 3,722 gaming tables that produce *winnings* of more than $6 billion annually for the casinos.

Fifteen percent of the 26 million annual visitors come from outside the U.S., and Canada is top of the list followed by Germany.



GETTING THERE:

There are regular air charters from Edmonton, usually leaving Thursday and returning Sunday or Monday. Daily scheduled service with a change of planes is also available. Depending on the season you'll pay from about $259 to $329 for a charter airfare. Air/hotel packages can be as low as $369 for three nights.

There are also free trips for qualified $10 table players or $2 slot players. You prepay a set amount and it's rebated after you qualify. You have to play the tables or slots for 10 total hours on a three-night package. Look for ads in the Travel Section.

ACCOMMODATION:

Generally speaking, hotels are more expensive on The Strip than they are Downtown, and you'll pay far less for a room if you avoid going on weekends. The proliferation of new mega hotels has started something of a hotel price war, making Las Vegas rooms even more of a bargain. Do your research and decide what's best for you.

INFORMATION:

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors' Bureau, Convention Centre, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109-9095. Phone: 702-735-3611.

TIC 2222

Eats are cheap

It started in the early 1940s when Beldon Katleman was looking for a way to keep customers in his El Rancho Vegas Hotel after the second show.

The midnight chuckwagon buffet — all you can eat for a dollar — was an immediate success and soon other hotels followed suit.

The rest is food line history.

Las Vegas is now the undisputed world buffet champion, not only in numbers but also in price.

The legendary cheap buffets, designed to get people into the hotels so they will stop by the gaming tables and slot machines, still are very much a part of the Vegas scene.

You can stagger from one buffet line to another just about 24 hours a day and never put a dent in your gambling money. Prices vary of course, but a breakfast buffet can be had for about $3, lunch for $3.50 to $5 and dinner for $5 to $7.

And they don't skimp on the food either, with many hotels having at least 45 items on the buffet trays. Quality varies widely too, so try several before sticking with the one you prefer.

If you get tired of hip of beef and fried chicken, some hotels offer theme buffets. The Carnival World buffet in the Rio Suite Hotel, for example, has Brazilian, Mexican, American, Chinese and Italian fare.

If standing in the buffet lines gets frustrating, you can also get lots of great food deals with table service.

Some hotels offer a full breakfast of eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast for $1 during the quiet periods between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The shrimp cocktail has become something of a Vegas specialty in recent years, and they generally cost no more than $1.50.

The Fremont Hotel loads a plate with two lobster tails and a filet of beef for $8.88 in the Overland Stage Cafe. The Emerald Room in the El Cortez, also Downtown, will serve you a prime rib dinner for $6.25.

Best way to find out if a particular hotel has a buffet or specialty item is to phone and ask.

And just in case you think we're getting a little too sophisticated to stand in endless buffet lines these days, consider these numbers.

The three serving lines at the Circus Circus Hotel buffet push through between 12,000 and 13,000 hungry patrons a day, or more than 4 million a year. On one mind boggling day they served more than 17, 600 customers.

That's a mess of coleslaw.

TIC 2223

VEGAS

Continued from D1

Circus Circus Enterprises is planning a 1,000-room addition to the Luxor Hotel that will link it to its neighboring sister resort, The Excalibur, which already is the world's third largest hotel.

The surging popularity of country music hasn't passed by Vegas, either. Stars such as Reba McEntire regularly headline in the big showrooms, and western theme hotels are starting to appear.

The old El Rancho Hotel is being converted into Countryland U.S.A., an 800-room resort with a 52-lane bowling alley and 35,000-square-foot country music dance hall.

Then there's Buffalo Bill's Resort down at Stateline, 70 km from Las Vegas, a kind of monument to the west's most outrageous showman. They've just built a 6,200-seat stadium for concerts and boxing, and are offering rooms for $15 a night.

There seems to be a theme hotel for everyone these days.

There'll be a refuge for rock fans amid all the glitter next month when the Hard Rock Cafe Hotel plugs in. It'll have 340 rooms and will be based on the successful rock memorabilia diners that are all over the place these days.

Movie nostalgia is the theme of Debbie Reynold's Hollywood Hotel, where old films run continually and the old trooper herself works the show lounge crowd accompanied by the Uptown Country Singers.

Word is the planned Bad Habits Hotel, catering to all the Gregorian chant aficionados out

But all the big news isn't happening on The Strip.

The plastic surgeons have moved in on Downtown Las Vegas.

They're nipping and tucking, slicing and dicing.

And wiring.

And when they're finally done later this year the old girl will have a brand new face she hopes will bring back all the former admirers who've been lured away by the sirens of The Strip.

Plastic surgery doesn't come cheap, though. The facelift, which includes boutiques, cafes and a 30-metre-high mesh canopy that will provide shade during the day and a spectacular light show at night over four blocks of Fremont Street, will cost $70 million, maybe more. The cost just went up $5 million and the completion date moved back from Labor Day to Christmas, so who knows.

The cost of the "Fremont Experience" is chump change when you consider new hotels are going up every year on The Strip at as much as a billion a pop. But it's a big deal for the fading Downtown area, which has seen revenues decline and seediness slither in as the new mega-resorts suck people up like sperm whales inhaling plankton.

"The aim is to make Downtown a destination area again, not just a place for people staying on The Strip to go and visit a club," says LV News Bureau's Borders.

In the meantime, Downtown's face is severely pockmarked as cranes and other heavy equipment crawl all over the place. Streets are torn up, access is restricted and they've had to set up one-way streets for traffic, she says.

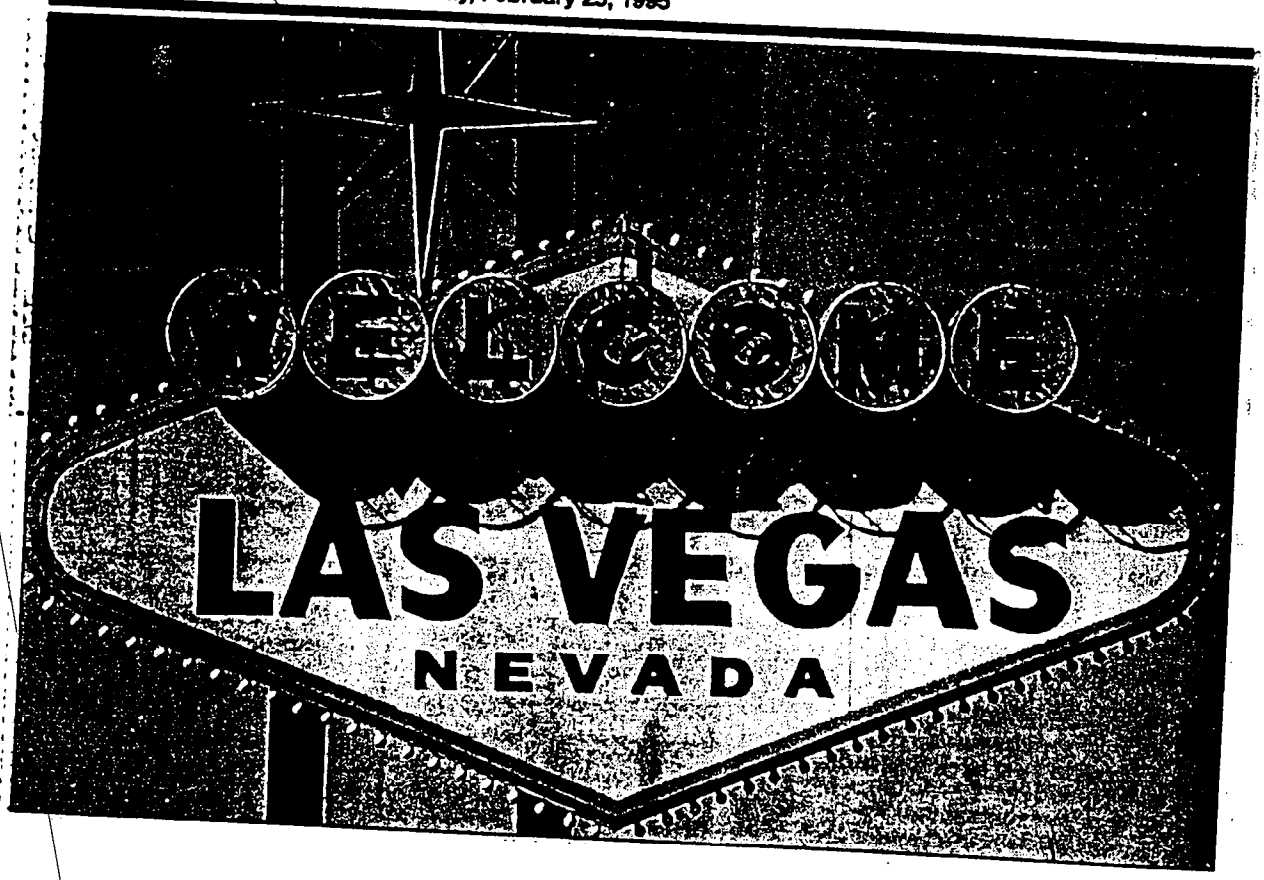
But there are some pretty good deals around as Downtown hotels try to generate some business during the project, she adds.

Many of the hotels also are renovating. Fitzgerald's, for example, plans a block-long, $85-million expansion that will add 1,500 new rooms, provided they can persuade neighboring businesses to sell out, and that's proving more difficult than filling an inside straight so far.

But perhaps the best news for Vegas vultures, especially those who feel guilty taking a cab a block to the next casino — even if the blocks are two kilometres long — is the $25-million monorail system that will connect the MGM Grand on Tropicana with Bally's on Flamingo Road. There's talk of extending it to the Convention Centre and the airport some time down the road.

Although if you're Diane Friedman and you just won $1.4 million, you'll probably be taking a stretch limo — anywhere you want.

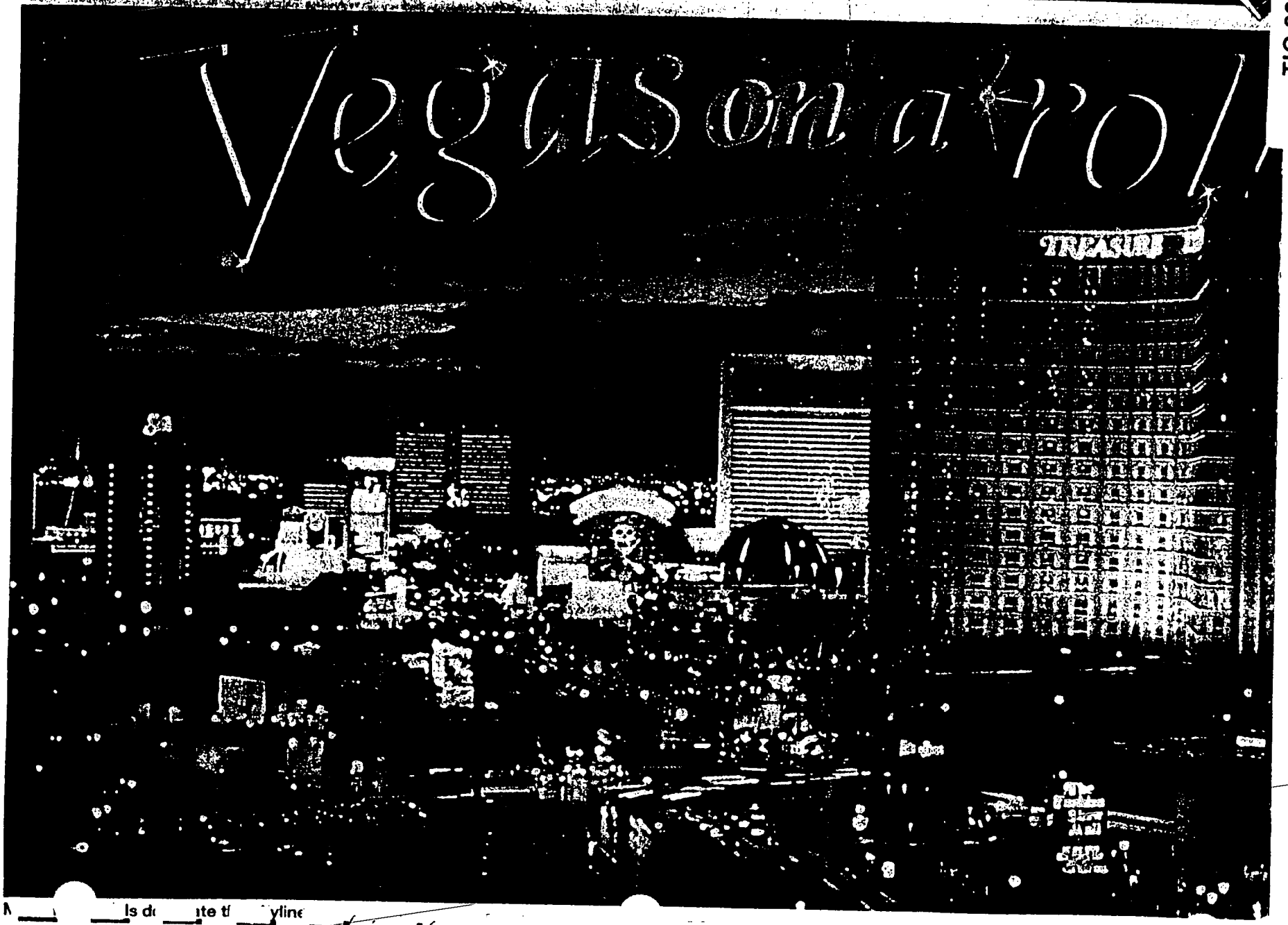
TIC 2224



TIC 2225

The Edmonton Journal

Vegas on a roll



TIC 2226

D13

EDMONTON JOURNAL

EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CN
DAILY 166,910

SATURDAY
APR 22 1995

BURRELLE'S

Casino boss bids for big story

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 Los Vegas Treasure Island Hotel and Casino — 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.

The mystery player did make some trips to the bank and may have set some money aside.

TIC 2303

MARKETING MAGAZINE
TORONTO,ON, CN
WEEKLY 14,200
JUN 15 1998
[redacted]
BURRELLE'S
-4125 HV

Marketing Acrobats

In 1985, the Cirque du Soleil was a stumbling novice in the art of positioning itself outside Quebec. Now it has developed into a surefooted master of the art of selling itself as a global entertainment player

BY HÉLÈNA KATZ

This circus doesn't have any lions, tigers or elephants. Matter of fact, it doesn't have any animals at all. But that hasn't stopped the 14-year-old Cirque du Soleil from turning its unusual product into a growing company that spans three continents.

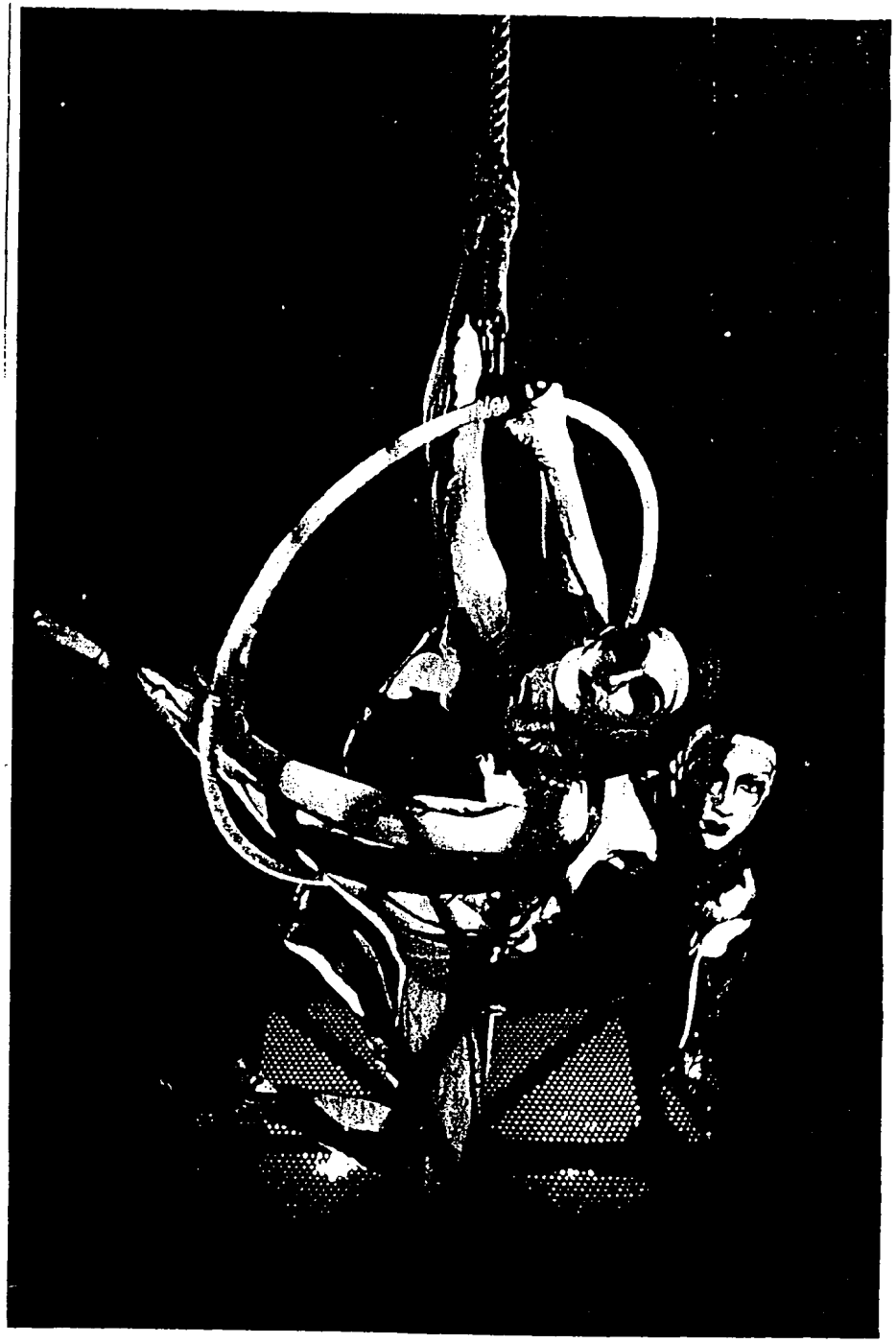
TIC 2432
D15

What started out as a bunch of performers in the streets of Baie St. Paul in Quebec's picturesque Charlevoix region is now a company with offices in Montreal, Las Vegas, Amsterdam and Singapore, shows touring two continents, a permanent one installed in Las Vegas, three new ones slated for the American market in the coming year, an Asia-Pacific tour starting this fall and about $150 million in annual revenues.

The Cirque's success is based on a happy marriage between art and business, where each partner has been respected from the outset for what it contributes to the union.

"We had people protective of the product, but parallel to that we had people saying 'I have no trouble making money and sharing our product with many people because I'm proud of it,'" says Jean David, vice-president of marketing for the Cirque du Soleil.

It's a product that Quebecers also admire. In a poll by Groupe Léger & Léger of Montreal published in *Revue Commerce* in April, only Groupe Jean Coutu and Bombardier



ranked higher among the 50 Canadian companies that Quebecers admire most.

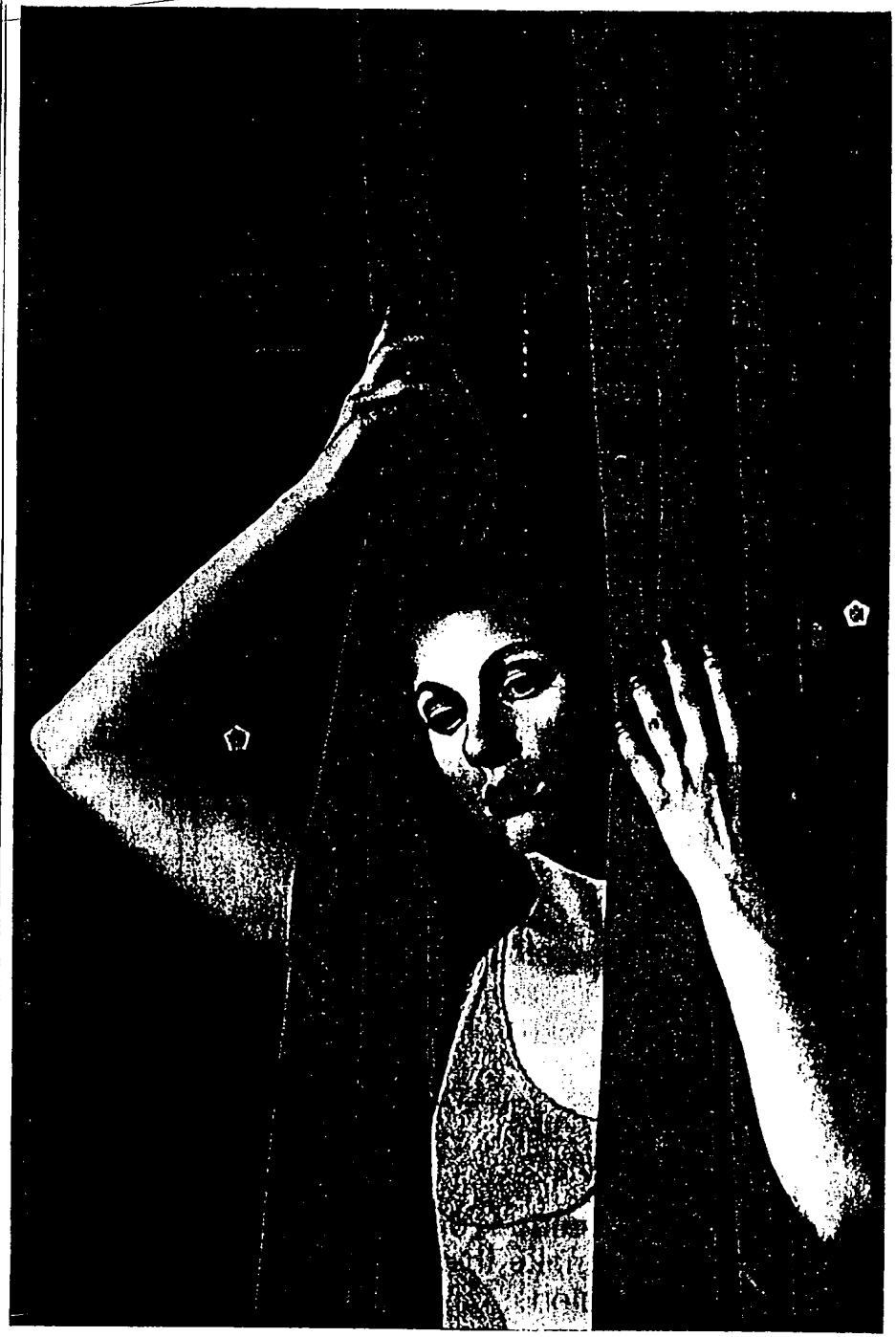
François Colbert, chair in arts management at the Montreal business school École des Hautes Études Commerciales, says personal taste is particularly sensitive when it comes to the arts. "It's not like toothpaste, where people can't see the difference between two products," he says. "People either like it or don't like it. If people like it, they talk about it (to family and friends) and it succeeds."

If it doesn't meet their expectations, a show can lose money–and lots of it–as the Cirque learned in 1985 when it toured Ottawa, Toronto and Niagara Falls for the first time.

Afraid that its French name wouldn't be understood, the group promoted itself as the Sun Circus. It lost about $750,000 and had the highest number it's ever had of unhappy customers asking for their money back. "I bought a ticket for a circus but it has no animals. I want a refund," was the complaint, recalls David.

"We realized that in the Anglo-Saxon culture the word circus really connotes animals, whereas in Quebec culture there isn't that

See CIRQUE DU SOLEIL, page 20



The Cirque du Soleil has offices in Montreal, Las Vegas, Amsterdam and Singapore, a permanent show in Las Vegas, shows touring two continents, three new shows slated for the U.S. market and an Asia-Pacific tour starting this fall

TIC 2434

'CIRQUE DU SOLEIL' CONT'D

same circus tradition," David says.

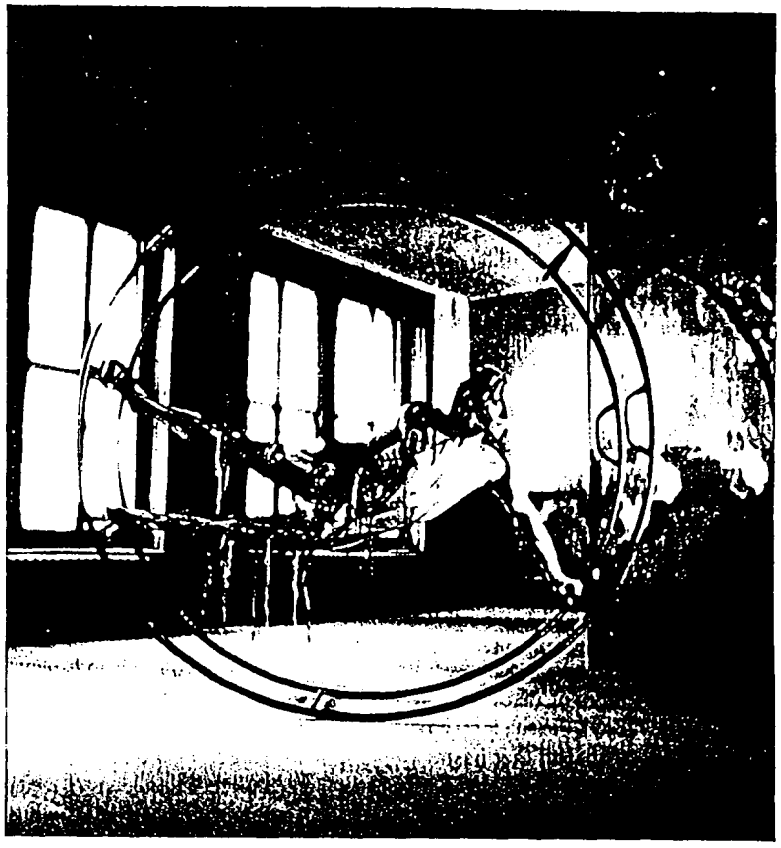
The Cirque du Soleil has since stuck to using its French name, giving the circus with no animals an exotic and chic image that appeals to its target audience of three overlapping groups: women, people who earn $65,000 a year or more and those who are more highly educated.

When the Cirque returned to Ottawa and Toronto a year later, it recouped the money lost on the previous tour, made $750,000 in profits and shed its image problem.

The success of the company's first foray into the American market in 1987 with Cirque Réinventé, helped propel it to new heights, HEC's Colbert says. "They took a risk and went to the United States and it was a success there. So their international reputation was made."

The Cirque now has a permanent show at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas and a second expected to debut in October at the Bellagio Hotel, also in Las Vegas. A third one gets underway at Walt Disney World near Orlando, Fla. in December, and a fourth will take up residence at

merchandising items, such as clothing, key chains, compact discs and videos from shows, since 1985. It



Although the absence of animals turned off some people who were expecting a traditional circus, the Cirque du Soleil's exotic and chic image appeals to its target audience of three overlapping groups: women, people who earn $65,000 a year or more and those who are more highly educated

the Beau Rivage Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. next spring.

Hélène Godin, art director with Graphème, a division of Cossette Communication-Marketing in Montreal, was surprised to discover people talking about the Cirque in Las Vegas. "When you ask a taxi driver what the best show in town is, he tells you it's the Cirque du Soleil," she says. She's developing an image for the Cirque's Bellagio show. "We didn't bias the question," she adds, laughing.

When it enters a new market, the Cirque initially uses public and media relations to introduce the circus without animals before it begins promoting a show. Advertising the company's shows changes little from one place to another. "The same ad that runs in the Toronto *Star* runs in the L.A. *Times*," David says. The Cirque "is a universal product that has no language barriers."

While the Montreal head office handles the overall strategy, new product development and establishes norms and standards, the company's North American, European, Las Vegas and Asian divisions each have their own director of marketing responsible for publicity, advertising and sponsorship.

The shows bring in 85% of the company's revenues. The other 15% comes from merchandising and sponsorships from companies such as BMW, which has a deal with the Cirque for Europe, and AT&T, which has one for North America. David hopes to increase this figure to 35% of total revenues in the next five to 10 years.

The Cirque du Soleil has been sells them through a catalogue, the Internet and at shows. "At first we were scared of having too much inventory," David recalls. "After the first weekend, we were short of stuff because we underestimated the demand."

Since the audience only has a 20-minute intermission during which to visit the washroom and buy snacks and souvenirs, the type of merchandise for sale must be easy to choose from. "You have to have products that don't require trying on that's complicated," David says. "It has to be 'see it, buy it.'"

That means your shopping trip under the Big Top won't include buying, say, wallpaper licensed by the Cirque. But you might be able to get ties and Louis Garneau clothing. David says he wants to increase brand awareness before further developing licensing as a revenue source. "If the brand is not known, people won't buy the product," he says.

A deal that the Cirque signed in March to develop a series of projects with Granada, a TV production company based in London, Eng., could further increase the Montreal company's international profile. The partners haven't determined exactly what form

TIC 2436

these projects will take, but the options include TV specials, a documentary, cartoons or even a soap opera.

With Quidam touring North America, Alegria in Europe, Saltimbanco starting a three-year Asia Pacific tour in the fall, Mystère permanently in Las Vegas, a second show on its way there, another heading to Disney World and a new North American show starting in April, performers aren't the only ones adept at juggling.

It's a stunt that Colbert thinks the Cirque can keep up for a while before saturating the market. With nine productions under its belt, the Cirque du Soleil is more solid than ever, he says. "If they run into trouble with one of their new shows, they'll always have eight others to fall back on."

While the marketers juggle projects on the Cirque du Soleil's second floor offices in east-end Montreal, the artists and acrobats practice their own tricks in the first-floor studios.

Montreal art director Hélène Goulet was surprised to discover people talking about the Cirque in Las Vegas. "When you ask a taxi driver what the best show in town is, he tells you it's the Cirque du Soleil."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

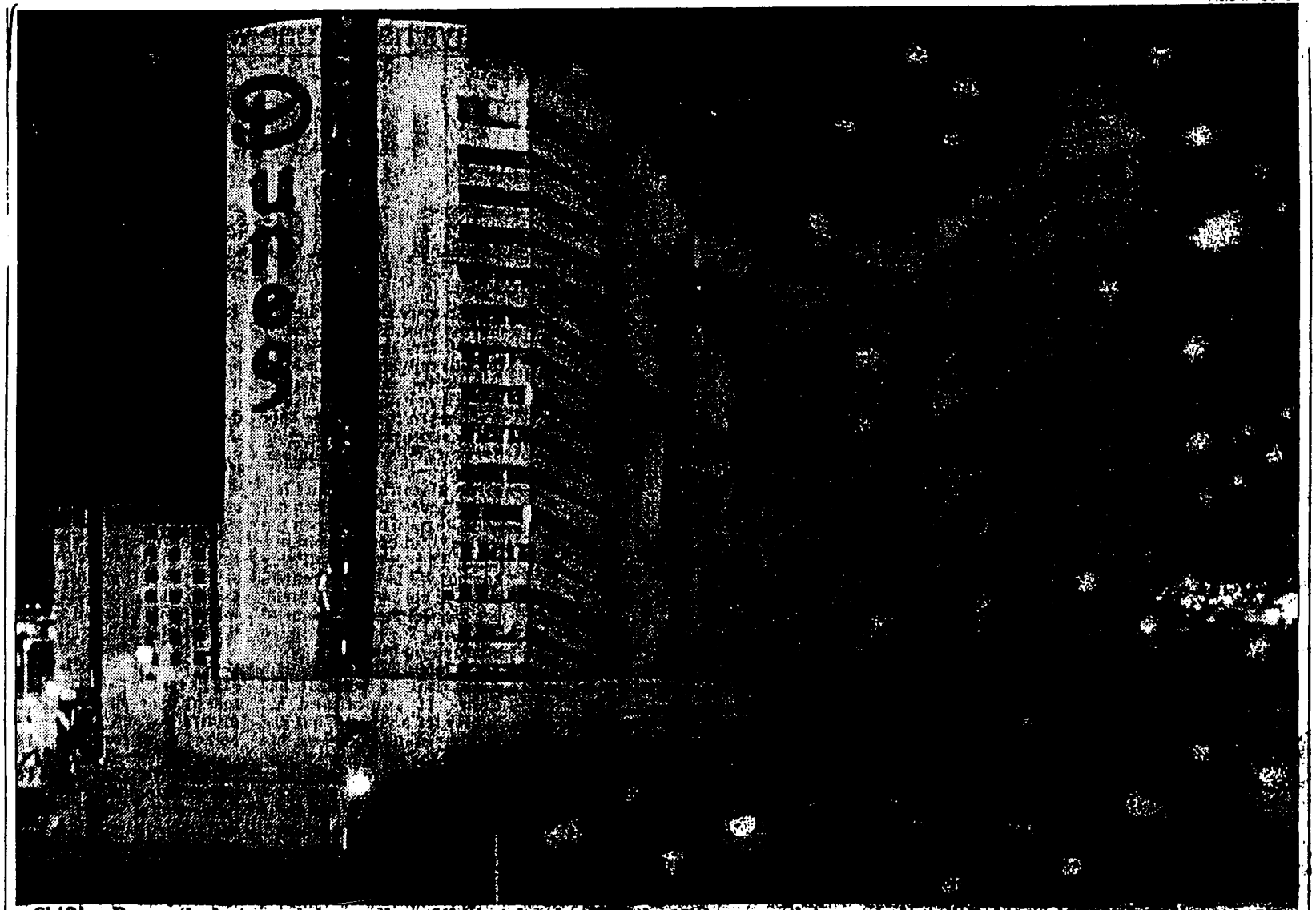
LONDON, EN
DAILY 1,012,371

FRIDAY
JUL 22 1994

BURRELLE'S

338 UF

Picture: REUTER



Shifting Dunes: the last remaining section of the hotel and casino, the 17-storey south tower, is demolished to make way for a theme park

Las Vegas wipes out 'Sin City' landmark

49266R

A LANDMARK of Las Vegas, dating back to its murky "Sin City" past, has been blown up to make way for a theme park, *writes John Hiscock in Los Angeles.*

The 17-storey south tower of the 38-year-old Dunes hotel and casino was demolished by dynamite as part of Las Vegas's effort to change its image from a gambling centre to an entertainment resort for the whole family.

The main building and its landmark 18-storey neon sign were demolished in an explosion last October which was watched by thousands of sightseers.

The domed Dunes and its legendary sign have been landmarks on the "Strip" since 1955, and in its latter years it was reputed to have links with organised crime.

Once the most luxurious hotel and casino in the town, it has a place in Las Vegas history as the first establishment to feature bare-breasted showgirls in its then-famous Minsky's Follies burlesque show. In its heyday, some of the world's leading entertainers, among them Betty Grable, Frank Sinatra and Maurice Chevalier, starred in the Dunes showroom.

Bill-toppers: Maurice Chevalier, Frank Sinatra and Betty Grable

Rumours of Mafia connections have surrounded the property ever since it was taken over in 1969 by Morris Shenker, the lawyer for the Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa.

Known as the Grey Fox, Shenker, who filed for bankruptcy in 1984 and died in 1989 aged 82, was a suspected investment specialist for organised crime.

He is said to have boasted of skimming about £130,000 a month from the operation. Suspicions about gangster involvement increased in 1980 when eight members of the Colombo organised crime family stayed at the Dunes.

The property was bought by Mr Steve Wynn last year for about £48 million from a Japanese businessman who had bought it five years earlier for about £113 million.

The new owner plans to construct a theme resort and man-made lake on the 163-acre property.

TIC 2106

D22

SUNDAY TIMES

LONDON, EN
SUNDAY 1,171,178

APR 23 1995
BURRELLE'S

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Shoeless Joe cuts deal with devil in Vegas

4926BR

by Christopher Goodwin
Las Vegas

NOBODY knows where he came from. Nobody knows where he has gone. But for a week at the beginning of April the man they called "Shoeless Joe" was the talk of this town of broken dreams, his astonishing run of luck the buzz of the blackjack tables.

On April 2, an 80-year-old man with a metal walking stick — described by everyone who met him as hunched, bald, ugly, smelly, with broken glasses, a long pointed chin and terrible teeth — shuffled shoeless past the normally watchful security guards at the faux buccaneer portals of Treasure Island, one of Las Vegas's most expensive new casinos.

In his pocket he had a $400 (£273) government social security cheque, which he cashed at the casino's bank. Then he began playing the $5 blackjack tables, trying to beat the house to 21. Within a week, in a run of luck few in Vegas can recall ever having heard the likes of, Shoeless Joe had built up a kitty of $1.6m.

TIC 2306

As much as anything, though, it was the style in which he did it that shocked people in a town which long ago became unshockable. Shoeless Joe hurled an almost continuous stream of obscenities at the dealers, particularly the women, on the few occasions when the cards went against him. His diet at the table consisted of Jack Daniels and Coke, fat cigars and takeaway pork chops.

What was the secret of Shoeless Joe's success? Playing on a six-deck table, which is shuffled every four or five hands, and against dealers who are changed every half-hour, with management watching his every gesture on security cameras above every table, everyone agreed there was no way Shoeless Joe could have been playing a system, counting or cheating.

What Shoeless Joe had, apart from incredible luck, was a reckless contempt for the normally accepted conventions of how to play blackjack.

"He was the worst player I ever saw and the luckiest player I ever saw," said one of the dealers he played against, a croupier since 1953. Starting the week on the $5 minimum tables, Shoeless Joe was soon playing three hands at a time, staking $5,000 maximums, and usually winning all three. "When he got up over $1m he ran into the buffet shouting 'I'm a millionaire! I'm a millionaire!' "

"He did it all wrong," agreed another dealer. "He would double down on 12s and 13s, and he would always split 10s. That's stupid, crazy." Dealing cards again last week across the green baize of the blackjack table, she added: "That man, he was the meanest man I ever saw. He called us terrible names. Maybe he made a pact with the devil."

"Within a week, in a run of luck few can recall, Joe had $1.6m"

Whatever Faustian pact he may have made, Shoeless Joe did sign a contract with Steve Wynn, owner of Treasure Island and the Mirage, who bought up the film rights to his story for $10,000. The money, however, seems to have found its way back into Wynn's capacious pockets faster than his blackjack gamblers can say "bust".

Even the devil's luck runs out against the odds of the house. Just like the other gambling enthusiasts, whose losses have built this improbable town in the middle of the desert and the immense fortunes of people such as Wynn who own it, Shoeless Joe won all that money only to lose it all again.

Of course he was helped immeasurably by the gracious attention casino management pays to big winners. As the old man's winnings began climbing towards the million mark, the casino began "comping" him lavishly, providing more than the complimentary drinks on offer to all the other patrons at their tables.

He got a suite of rooms, a limousine longer than three roulette tables to take him on shopping binges, and round-the-clock bodyguards who tended to his every need. Although they might not have been instructed specifically to make sure he did not try to gamble away the money he had won at Treasure Island at another casino, they were no doubt gratified that he did not.

"Yeah he's broke, completely broke," said another Treasure Island blackjack dealer last week. "They got it all back. Every cent."

Maybe it was the dealers who got their revenge. Despite all the incredibly lucky cards they dealt him, Shoeless Joe did not tip a dealer once.

What has happened to Shoeless Joe? Some said they thought he was homeless and back on the streets; others that he lived in subsidised government housing. There were unconfirmed reports of him hanging around the cheap casinos and topless joints of the seedy Glitter Gulch area of old downtown Las Vegas, far from the glamorous palaces such as Treasure Island and the Mirage.

The management of Treasure Island is more than relieved to have seen him off. Happy to parade rich winners for the press to help publicise their casino, they steadfastly refused to talk about Shoeless Joe. Alan Feldman, head of public relations for Treasure Island, voiced distaste at the idea of anyone cashing a social security cheque at the casino.

"That money was supposed to be used for housing and food," he said, "and if you think using that to gamble is what Las Vegas is all about then you are grossly mistaken."

Shoeless Joe, whoever he is, wherever he is, has faded back into the poverty and anonymity from which he came. And the dream he briefly embodied, that anyone, given a few decent cards, might tranform themselves into a millionaire, has disappeared with him...

TIC 2307

INTERNATIONAL HERALD
TRIBUNE

PARIS, FR
DAILY 191,717

WEDNESDAY
APR 19 1995
BURRELLE'S

The Rise and Fall of 'Shoeless Joe' in Las Vegas

4926 BR

By Dave Gardetta
Washington Post Service

LAS VEGAS — If the following story of the rise and fall of a gambler reads like a movie script, it may be because its setting is Las Vegas, a town that recently began taking its cues from Hollywood instead of its own sleazy past. It also may have something to do with its protagonist's striking resemblance to Popeye, or simply the fact that the movie and video rights are already owned by Steve Wynn, CEO of Mirage Resorts Inc. and the best-known Maryland bingo parlor operator turned millionaire casino owner on the Vegas strip.

The outline, as related in hushed whispers and boisterous bar conversation by dealers and waitresses and fellow players, goes like this:

On Sunday, April 2, a barefoot man who looked to be in his 80s entered the Treasure Island hotel and casino. He cashed his $400 Social Security check at the house bank and walked with the aid of a metal cane to a blackjack table.

TIC 2297

TIC 2298

At Treasure Island, bets at the blackjack tables start at $5 and go as high as $10,000, and it was quite possible that the old man, who fellow gamblers assumed was homeless because of his appearance, could have lost his entire monthly pension on one hand. That didn't happen. He started playing 21 and winning. And winning and winning.

Drinks are free at the 21 tables, and the man started off ordering a Jack Daniel's and Coke plus four Macanudo cigars. Such an order is called "Bubba-style" in Las Vegas, a phrase that might also describe the man, who identified himself simply as "Joe." At the table, he was grouchy and, when he was losing, emitted a steady stream of profanities in the direction of the dealer.

Joe made a memorable sight, with his small head, pink and hairless, his pinpoint lizard eyes, his thin, wide mouth showing teeth that looked like twin rows of cigarette butts — white and yellow and brown-tipped.

In the beginning, Joe took breaks between hands, walking frequently to the restroom, causing hotel guests to stare. He brought in a takeout dinner of pork chops and threw the bones on the carpet. One player from Vernon, New York, who sat next to Joe while he was betting $5,000 a hand, said he was later astonished to see Joe standing at a urinal in his bare feet.

That was before Joe started winning big, before his government check had turned into $900,000 in chips by Thursday, April 7, and then passed the million-dollar mark. It was before the casino supplied him with a complimentary room, clothes, security guards and a limousine, and before casino owner Wynn bought the rights to his story for $10,000. Wynn's pal Kevin Costner was said to be present at the signing, and Costner's production company confirmed he was at Treasure Island at that time.

Then, as luck tends to do at the gaming table, Joe's changed. He started losing. Betting as furiously as ever, he is now said to be down to around $60,000 (as of Saturday, he was still playing.)

These details, most of which are unverifiable since neither Joe nor the casino will speak to the press, have proved remarkably accurate to the extent they could be checked.

Fact: Last week, Joe was betting several $5,000 hands at a time.

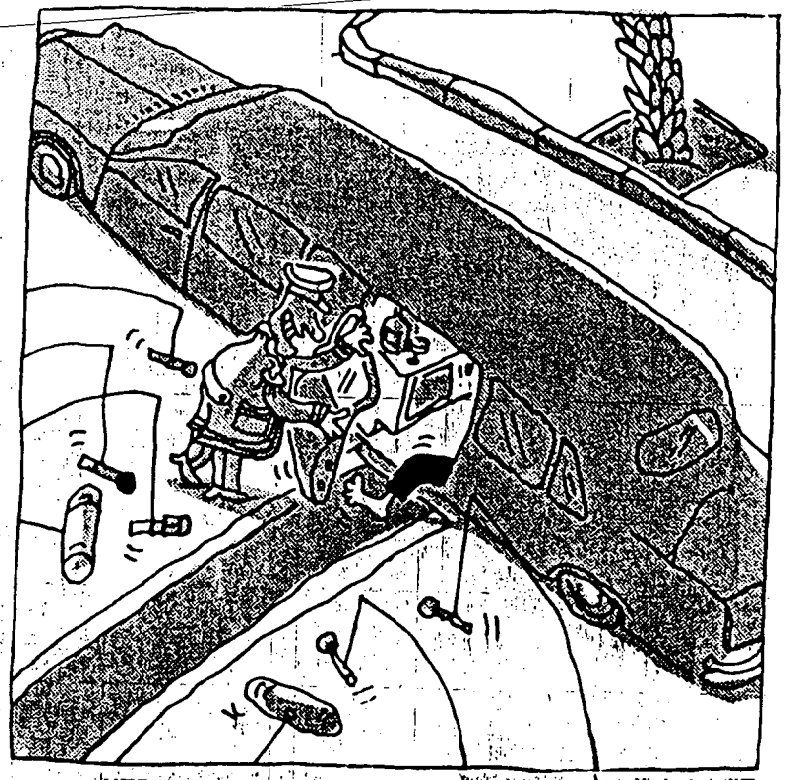
Fact: He was accompanied at all times by several plainclothes security guards supplied by the hotel.

Fact: He had a suite to which he retired between gambling bouts, and a limousine, which he took out on jaunts.

Fact: He had in his pocket a contract for the film and video rights to his story.

Fact: He was still swearing.

Even if the staff of Treasure Island were talking to the press about Shoeless Joe — which they are adamantly not doing — it would be difficult to discern just who is the man currently enjoying perhaps the most incredible streak of luck in Las Vegas history. Many locals say he's homeless, but others claim he is just an old man who lives month to month on government assistance. A dealer at the



Nicolas Asfouri/IHT

Golden Nugget remembers seeing Joe being removed from that casino for his profanity at the table a few weeks ago, but that seems to be as far back as the man's known history stretches.

Everyone in Treasure Island seems to know about Joe. The elderly women with processed hair playing Volcano and Haywire and Quartermania have heard of his luck. The slot cowboys playing Jackpot Jungle and 4th of July tell the story of Joe instructing his limo driver to take him to a local park one evening, where he spent the night sleeping on a bench.

The waitresses wearing pink and purple and yellow at the Battle Bar and the bartenders in black at the Gold Bar can discuss in detail his gambling skills. They say he is a fairly good player, although he is known to veer wildly from accepted strategy: When dealt two 10s, Joe will invariably split them instead of resting on 20.

It is said that his winnings went as high as $1.3 million before he started losing. He is said to have bought two $50,000 certificates of deposit at a nearby bank, then cashed them two days later at a substantial penalty.

When Shoeless Joe plays at the top of his form, he is known to play several $5,000 hands at a time. He never tips dealers. When another player suggested he leave a tip after a big win, he replied, "When I lost $100,000, the dealer didn't tip me."

There are not many tales like Joe's in Vegas — stories of big wins built on such a small investment. Locals remember the gentleman who walked into a casino with $25,000 in a suitcase, put it all on red at a roulette table and a while later walked out with $250,000. They speak of a pit boss from the Golden Nugget who strolled over to the Mint casino one night with $200 and built it up to $78,000 before losing the money, his job, his car and his fiancée.

The most frequent theme in c versations about Joe is his reckl ness, which made him a big win and now threatens to make him a loser. Most gamblers assert that, Joe's place, they'd have stashed av a million and quit when they lost rest. It is this belief that keeps l Vegas thriving. Joe's story provi hope for the dreamers at the tabl who in his place would have kno better.

After spending days attempting uncover Shoeless Joe's "system," sino security finally gave up a started comping him. Casinos do t for big winners in the hope of kee ing them playing until the casino g its money back.

Joe's story may turn out to interesting not because of the mon involved, but because it reveals L Vegas stripped of its pirate sho and its new roller coasters and volc noes that erupt every 15 minut along the Strip. Despite all the acc lades this town has received for new family style, it is still a city bu on losers.

"I've got to go to the bank," J told his guard Thursday, and the l tle gnome with the cigar walked o of the casino while his guard call for the limo. Approached by a r porter, Joe announced gruffly that l couldn't talk about his life or his lu at the casino because Steve Wyn had already bought the rights.

"Here, you want to see it?" Jo asked, pulling a printed contract o of his pants pocket. "They gave m $10,000. I can't talk to you. Where you say you're from?"

"The Washington Post."

"Can't talk to you. What do yo want to give me, money?"

"No, only fame."

"There's only fame in it?"

"That's right."

"Naw, don't want to talk to you.

And retrieving his contract befor the name on it could be discernec Las Vegas's newest legend waved hi cigar, withdrew into his stretch lim and disappeared into the blindin desert sun.

Thomas Heath contributed to thi report.

UBS Service

UBS Service

Mai 1998

N° 1 maggio 1998

Creativa combinazione tra show e sogno

A partire dal 17 settembre 1998, il Cirque du Soleil rappresenta Alegria a Zurigo

Il Cirque du Soleil, un'impresa di fama mondiale con 1250 dipendenti e una cifra d'affari annua intorno ai 150 milioni di franchi, si basa sulla combinazione tanto estrosa quanto virtuosa di rappresentazione artistica creativa e divertente spettacolo perfettamente inscenato.

Dall'improvvisato teatro ambulante...

Il Cirque du Soleil ha avuto origine da un gruppo di saltimbanchi che nel 1982, a Baie Saint-Paul nella provincia canadese del Quebec, su trampoli e con abiti dai colori sgargianti, si trasformavano come giocolieri, mangiatori di fuoco e acrobati tra gli artisti e i turisti. Ufficialmente il Cirque è stato tenuto a battesimo nel 1984 nel quadro dei festeggiamenti per «450 anni dalla scoperta del Canada».

«Uno show straordinario.»
Elizabeth Jacka

...allo spettacolo mondiale presentato da professionisti

Nel 1987 è iniziata la prima tournée nelle grandi città degli USA, da San Diego a New York, che si è rivelata un grande successo: rappresentazioni con il tutto esaurito, critiche entusiasmanti. Guy Laliberté (foto sotto a sinistra), fondatore del Cirque, ricorda: «Se fosse mancato il successo, sulla via del ritorno la fiducia ci avrebbe abbandonati...». Nel 1989 il Cirque du Soleil ha ricevuto l'Emmy Award, un ambito riconoscimento, al quale presto ne sarebbero seguiti altri, come la Rose d'Or de Montreux per la produzione televisiva «Le Cirque réinventé». In Europa, lo spettacolo è stato presentato per la prima volta nel 1990. Nel 1992 il Cirque du Soleil, assieme al Circo Knie, ha rallegrato il pubblico svizzero in oltre 60 città.

Sopra: scena tratta da Mystère; a sinistra: fondatore Guy Laliberté, direttore artistico Gilles Ste-Croix, regista del circo Franco Dragone.

Spettacolo di fama mondiale a Zurigo

La nuova formazione dello spettacolo Cirque du Soleil si chiama Alegria. Acrobati, artisti volanti, clown, mangiatori di fuoco, contorsionisti, equilibristi e trapezisti, musicisti e cantanti, vi si esibiscono con rappresentazioni di massimo livello professionale. Alegria, una parola spagnola che significa entusiasmo, gioia di vivere ed allegria, è l'ottava produzione del Cirque du Soleil. Nell'aprile del 1994 Alegria ha festeggiato la prima mondiale a Montréal, la prima europea il 6 marzo 1997 ad Amsterdam e la prima in Germania il 15 maggio 1997 a Monaco. A partire dal 17 settembre di quest'anno lo spettacolo verrà presentato all'Allmend di Zurigo.

Salti come sulla luna

Più di 100 persone costruiscono la grande tenda per le rappresentazioni (Big Top/Grand Chapiteau) e il palcoscenico. Ogni numero nello spettacolo Alegria pone particolari esigenze. Un apposito trampolino lungo 12 metri viene immesso sul palcoscenico per il vivace numero ▸

Concorso Las Vegas

TIC 2415

D27

In palio 1 settimana a Las Vegas

Se osservate bene la presente edizione di «UBS Service» e leggete attentamente anche questo articolo sul Cirque du Soleil, vi sarà facile rispondere alle nostre 3 domande del concorso sulla cartolina-risposta. Avete così la possibilità di vincere un viaggio a Las Vegas, una settimana in uno degli alberghi più belli degli USA nonché un ingresso gratuito per l'affascinante spettacolo del Cirque du Soleil.

1° premio: 1 settimana a Las Vegas nell'albergo di lusso Treasure Island, con visita allo spettacolo del Cirque du Soleil Mystère.

2°–10° premio: per ognuno 2 biglietti d'ingresso per lo spettacolo del Cirque du Soleil Alegria a Zurigo.

11°–100° premio: 1 CD Cirque du Soleil Alegria.

«Fast Track» e permette così agli attori di saltare con una leggerezza, come se stessero facendo una passeggiata sulla luna.

L'illuminazione crea l'atmosfera

Al Cirque du Soleil, l'illuminazione è il momento creativo con il «punto sulla i». Secondo Luc Laforture, designer dell'illuminazione, il concetto Alegria ricalca l'atmosfera di una sala da ballo del 17° secolo. Le tonalità autunnali di Alegria sono state ottenute mediante l'impiego di moderne tecniche d'illuminazione. Esse creano la singolare atmosfera dello spettacolo.

«Un thriller per ogni età!»
Steven Spielberg

Un'entusiasmante precisione musicale

Nel suo spettacolo, il Cirque du Soleil utilizza la tecnica del suono più moderna. L'eccezionale sound e gli effetti sonori di Alegria sono il risultato di lunghe ore di minuzioso controllo del sound. I musicisti devono sintonizzare continuamente la loro musica live con quanto avviene sul palcoscenico. René Dupéré è il compositore responsabile per le entusiasmanti e vivaci melodie tra jazz e pop. La colonna sonora dello spettacolo Alegria è rimasta per 17 settimane, ininterrottamente, al 10° posto dei US Charts.

Rénald Laurin «Monsieur Fleur» (sopra); scenari Alegria (sotto); tendone

Foto Cirque du Soleil – Alfera

TIC 2416

The show must go on!

Le forze creative del Cirque du Soleil riescono sempre a mettere in scena nuovi e sensazionali spettacoli. Nella tarda estate, a Las Vegas inizierà una seconda rappresentazione con spettacoli acquatici. Inoltre è previsto per fine anno l'avvio di un «resident show» nel Walt Disney World Resort a Orlando (Florida). Nel 1999, una nuovissima produzione marchera a Montréal il preludio alla prossima tournée statunitense del Cirque du Soleil. E infine, per il passaggio al terzo millennio è prevista a Berlino 2000 un'ulteriore permanente produzione del Cirque du Soleil nella nuova capitale federale della Germania.

Nessolo scenario, illuminazione, coreografia e costumi perfetti, bensì anche musica da veri virtuosi.

Ininterrotto spirito pionieristico

In tutte le espansioni, in tutte le rapide evoluzioni lo spirito pionieristico, la forza creativa, la ricchezza di scoperte e la virtuosità sono stati conservati. Da spettacolo a spettacolo queste qualità sono state raffinate e migliorate e condensate in un concetto inconfondibile. Guy Laliberté, fondatore del Cirque, dice: «Siamo e restiamo «merchant of happiness», mercanti della felicità.» Il Cirque du Soleil ha rivestito fin dall'inizio carattere internazionale, soprattutto per quanto riguarda i collaboratori: attualmente sono 1500, tra cui oltre 300 artisti provenienti da diversi paesi e nazioni. Il Cirque non collega soltanto le nazioni e gli spettatori di ogni paese, bensì anche poesia e professionalità.

Qui per i biglietti!

Dal 17 settembre 1998 i professionisti circensi, con la loro nuova produzione Alegria, si esibiscono a Zurigo. Presenting Sponsor dello spettacolo è l'UBS.

Prenotazione/biglietti: Fastbox Ticketservice: 0848 800 800 oppure Cirque du Soleil Ticketline: 01 457 72 72 (lu.–sa. ore 9.00–18.00).

TIC 2417

HILL AND KNOWLTON

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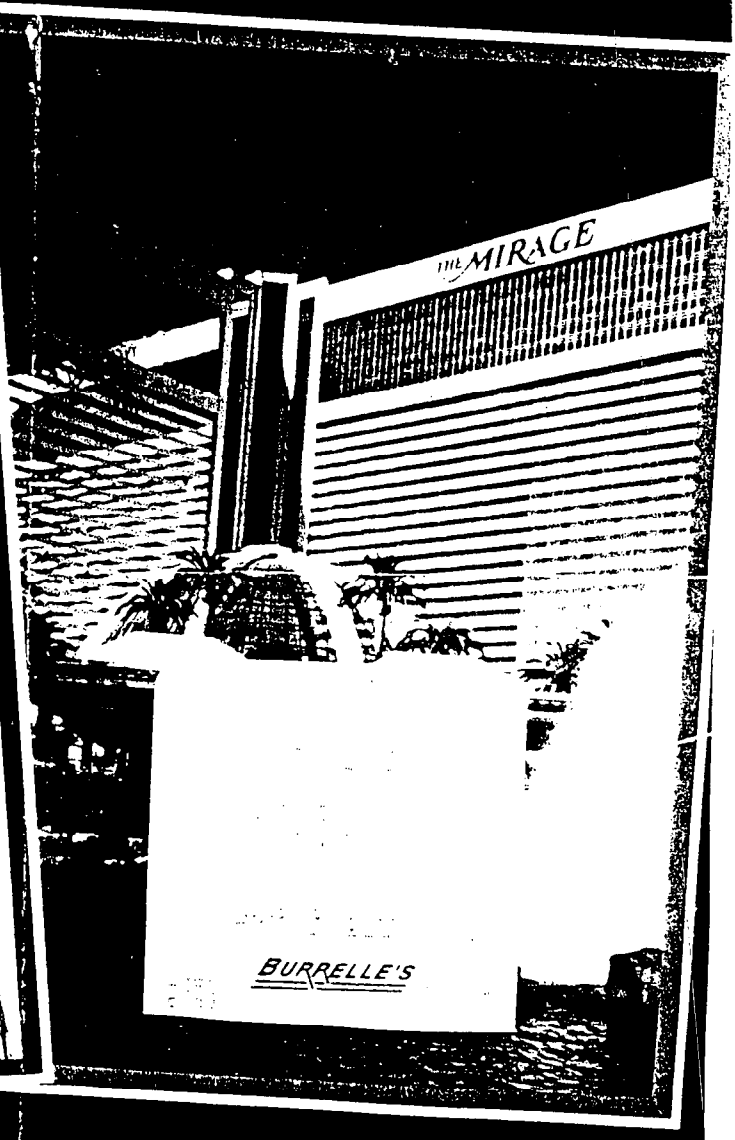
Aus: 55 Schillings / Hol: 10 Guilders / Ger: 10 Marks / Fr: 30 Francs / Ire: 3 Punts / UK: £3 / US: $2.95

CARD PLAYER

The Magazine For Those Who PLAY TO WIN!



MIRAGE RESORTS: LEADING LAS VEGAS INTO A DIVERSIFIED FUTURE

TIC 1839

Mirage Resorts, Inc: Leading Las Vegas Into a Diversified Future

BY MARYANN GUBERMAN

It's no secret that Las Vegas isn't just a gambling resort anymore. Almost overnight, the city has become a complete family-oriented vacation-business-destination resort with the added amenity of gambling. And Mirage Resorts, Inc., parent company of The Mirage and Treasure Island, has contributed a goodly share toward transforming the city's image and creating a true "entertainment capital" in the middle of the desert.

The two resorts occupy a comfortable 103-acre location in the middle of the legendary Las Vegas Strip.

Tropical paradise ... a 90-foot-high, glass-enclosed atrium serves as the centerpiece of the Mirage. The tropical garden, which features royal palms, orchids, elephant ears, banana trees, and canary palms, also has waterfalls, streams, and a computerized misting system.

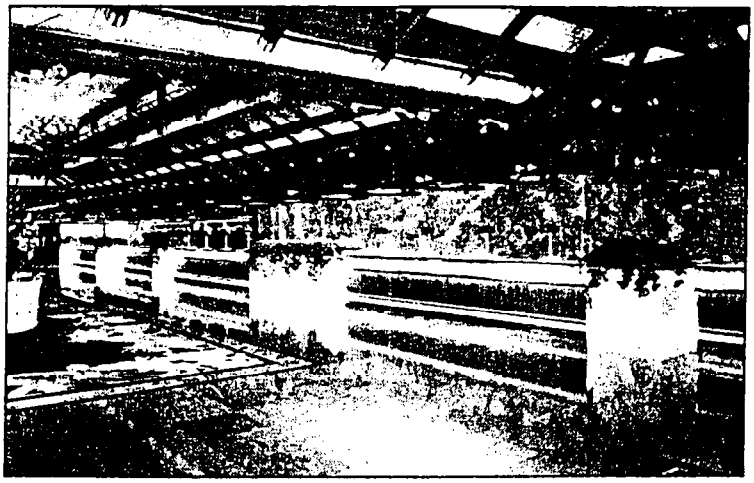
The Mirage is a 30-story complex with more than 3,000 rooms, suites, villa apartments, and lanai bungalows that come with private pools and gardens. From the dramatic, exploding volcano at its entrance, to the walkway leading to the parking garage, the resort maintains a rich, lush, tropical atmosphere that can be both relaxing and exhilarating.

Inside the Strip entrance, guests experience a lush, verdant indoor atrium filled with live palm and banana trees, elephant ears, orchids, and other tropical plants maintained by a silent, unseen computerized misting system. The garden leads up to the front desk where guests are entertained during check in by sharks, manta rays, and angelfish swimming in a 20,000-gallon coral reef aquarium.

All of the guest rooms, with their bright colors and rattan furnishings, continue the tropical illusion.

The illusion of a tropical vacation really comes to life at The Mirage pool and cabana area, where a series of "lagoons" and cliffs link two palm-tree-lined islands.

With the environment alone, The Mirage successfully provides the kind of sensory experience that makes a vacation live up to expectations and a business trip seem like a vacation. So, when the other amenities and attractions are tossed in, they provide a delightful, unexpected bonus. These additional treats include the entertainment and the animal habitats.



A 20,000-gallon saltwater tank and coral reef landscaped aquarium is the focal point of the front desk registration area. Sharks, triggerfish, pufferfish, grouper, and rays are among the inhabitants who call it home.

One of the all-time biggest crowd-drawing entertainment packages in Las Vegas, illusionists Siegfried and Roy have been with The Mirage since opening day. Their white tigers live comfortably in spacious, sun-filled, open-air accommodations at The Mirage. Located inside the moving walkway off Las Vegas Boulevard, the tiger habitat is fronted with slanted, glare-resistant glass so visitors can watch the tigers live and play around their pool and on the rocks and ledges.

After intensive study and research, The Mirage created another habitat that is unique to Las Vegas. The dolphin facility is part of a large-scale plan to provide a healthy, nurturing environment for dolphins while, at the same time, to educate the public about marine life. The habitat is part of a special educational program where students and teachers learn about the animals and marine ecology. The mammals, adopted from other facilities, arrived at their desert home on October 18, 1990. Two and one-half years later, 18-year-old Duchess, one of the five Atlantic Bottlenose dolphins that has provided endless education and enjoyment to thousands of visitors, gave birth to a calf.

So, there definitely is much more than gaming at The Mirage, which preceded its sister property, Treasure Island, by three years.

There are two ways to get into the neighboring Treasure Island: by tram from The Mirage (which runs every four and a-half

A

minutes) or via the "treacherous" Buccaneer Bay, where waves crash against the shore and seagulls chatter loudly to help disguise the noise of pirates unloading the booty they have stolen from ships around the world. Entering this way, however, likely will find you caught up in the battle between the English navy and the pirates — a sea fight punctuated by actual cannon fire, a gigantic explosion, and a ship sinking.

It's a rousing way to become acquainted with the newest of Stephen A. Wynn's gaming-plus properties.

Treasure Island includes three 36-story towers with 2,900 guest rooms, including 212 suites. In addition to other guest accommodations, it houses two well-appointed wedding chapels decorated in a European tradition, and 18,000 square feet of meeting space for convention facilities.

For the younger audience, an entertainment center called Mutiny Bay offers an array of activities in a mysterious, ancient Moorish castle. Surrounded by stone alcoves, skeletons of the founding fathers of the castle, and antiquated treasure maps, visitors can enjoy video and pinball challenge games that reward players with treasures from the redemption center.

In combination, the resorts house a total of 17 different eateries that include a taste of everything from fine steak and seafood, international cuisines, coffee shops, buffets, and pizza kitchens, to snack bars and ice cream parlors.

Time was, a three-day visitor to Las Vegas would wander from casino to casino to participate in games of chance. Today, those same visitors — this time, with family or briefcase in tow — would be hard-pressed to experience everything provided by The Mirage and Treasure Island in the same time frame. They are truly the new, diversified Las Vegas.

BURRELLE'S

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Interactive Poker: A New Concept

From the day it opened, The Mirage poker room has been a success. High-limit players discovered games tailored to their needs while lower-limit players found a comfortable setting to suit their bankrolls. With the opening of Treasure Island, poker players found additional space to play where emphasis was placed on low- and medium-limit games. However, higher-stake games are now available in the Treasure Island poker room. Locals and visitors have been treated to higher-limit games where their opponents have included Hollywood personalities Vanna White, George Hamilton, and Frank Bank (Lumpy on *Leave It to Beaver*).

Recently, the two resorts have joined forces to introduce a new approach to casino poker.

Doug Dalton, who spearheaded the opening of Treasure Island's poker room, has moved to The Mirage as poker room manager. Replacing him is Jimmy Knight, who is helping develop the interactive concept between the two rooms.

Doug Dalton

Dalton, who began his career as a dealer at the Hacienda in 1972, has progressed through the poker ranks as a floor supervisor, a shift manager, an assistant manager, a training manager, and a cardroom manager. He is a familiar face in the Las Vegas poker scene, having worked at the Sahara, Dunes, and Golden Nugget, and at the *World Series of Poker*.

Knight, who learned to gamble from his horse-betting grandmother, worked as a shill/dealer at the Union Plaza in Las Vegas beginning in 1970. Between trips back to his home state of Ohio, he returned to Vegas to deal and supervise poker at the Sahara, the Silverbird, the *World Series of Poker*, and the Golden Nugget. In 1984, he opened the Huntington Park Casino as casino general manager, setting up that facility from the ground floor. After a two-year stint as day-shift poker supervisor at The Mirage, Knight went to work at Barona in Lakeside, California, before returning to Las Vegas to oversee the poker room at Treasure Island.

Jimmy Knight

Having roots as poker players, both Dalton and Knight have that special understanding of what players want and need, and they currently are molding their cardrooms to provide the kind of atmosphere they know players will appreciate.

In order to implement his dedication to customer service, Dalton has appointed Cathleen Toller to be a full-time training manager for the 31-table Mirage poker room. He also is in the process of redesigning the poker room layout to provide more space and easier access to the tables. Limits start at $1-$5 and progress to $300-$600 and higher. The half-kill recently has been introduced to the $4-$8 and $10-$20 Omaha high-low split games.

The 13 tables at Treasure Island are set amidst a spacious, well-appointed room with excellent ventilation. The newest addition to the poker menu there is $55 buy-in tournaments. (See Tournament Trail for schedule.)

Poker always has been a mainstay for Mirage properties, and even though both Mirage and Treasure Island have first-class poker facilities, they are not in competition with each other. Dalton and Knight work closely together to cover a wide range of poker needs for a comfortable mix of locals and tourists. It's a union that's sure to set a new standard for the Las Vegas poker industry.◆

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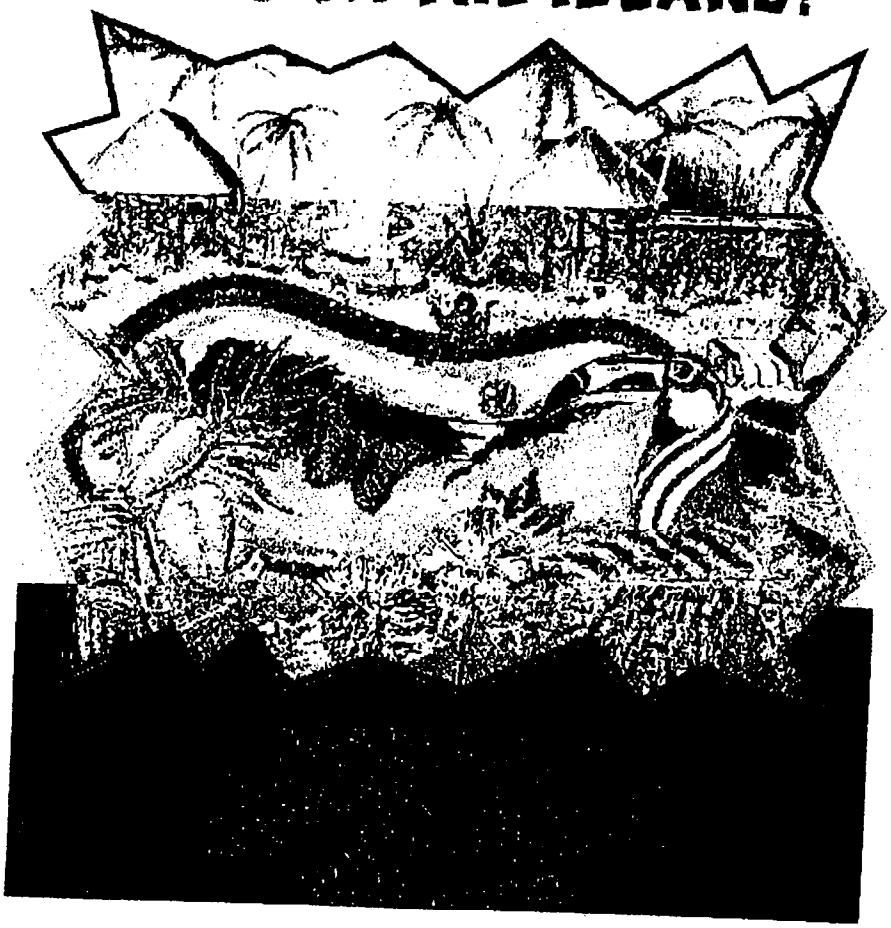

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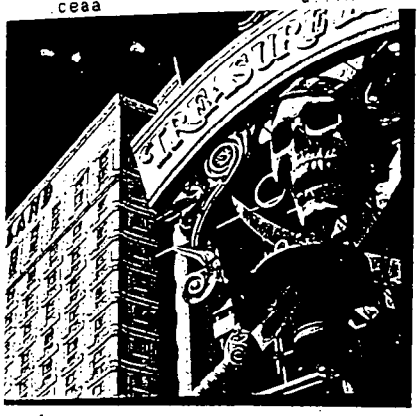

LEFT: An earringed skull and crossed swords establish Treasure Island's theme; the hotel also draws crowds with regular sea battles, staged in an outdoor lake (the pirates always win).

BY MICHAEL CHABON

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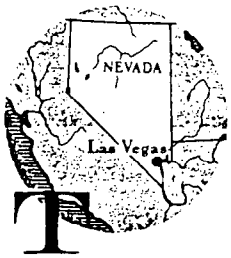
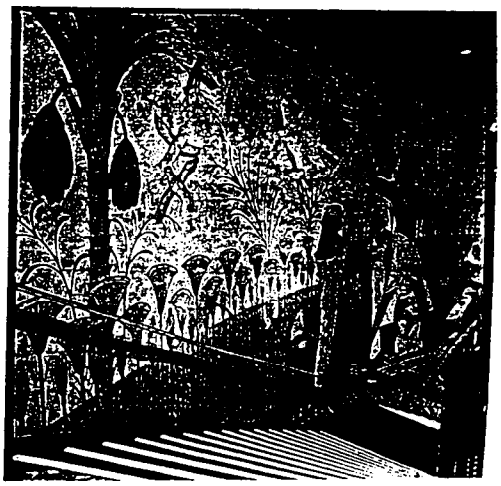
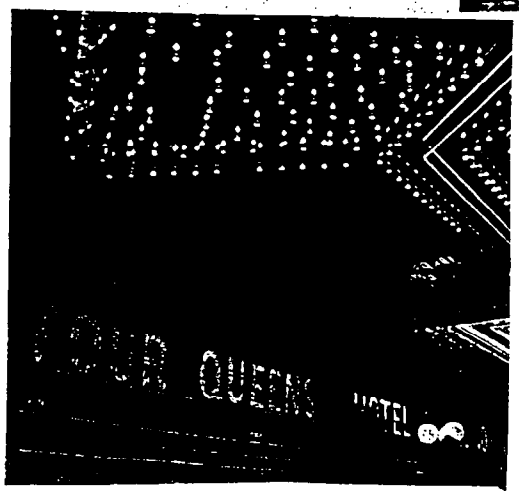
LAS VEGAS: GLITZ AND DUST



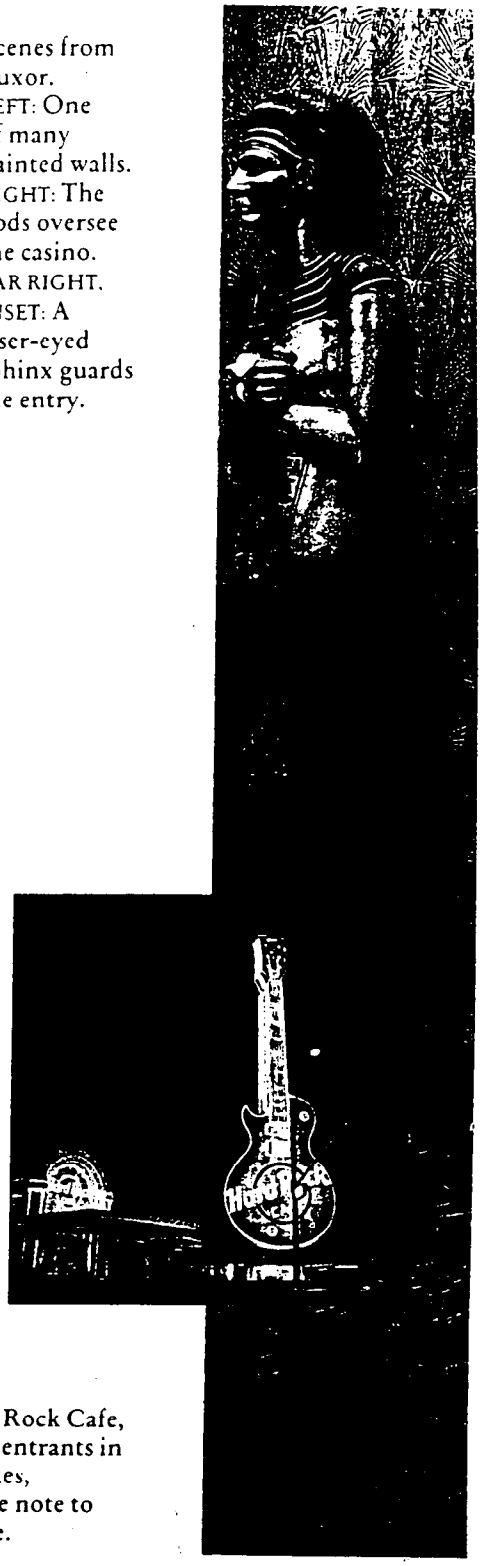




RIGHT: The Four Queens on Fremont Street, the main downtown thoroughfare. Opened in 1965, it expanded with the city, adding a 400-room, 18-story tower in 1983.

TIC 2149

Scenes from Luxor.
LEFT: One of many painted walls.
RIGHT: The gods oversee the casino.
FAR RIGHT, INSET: A laser-eyed sphinx guards the entry.



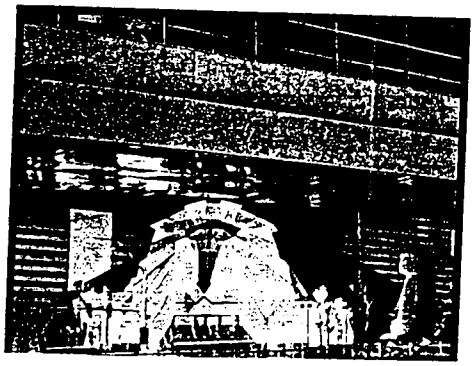
ABOVE: The Hard Rock Cafe, one of the newest entrants in the Las Vegas stakes, adds another grace note to the neon cityscape.

TIC 2150

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIZABETH HEYERT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

'Never has nowhere been transformed, against more brutal odds, with such a monstrous payoff'

ABOVE: An ostrich-feathered confection is only one of the gorgeously excessive costumes enshrined in the Liberace Museum.
RIGHT: The giant MGM lion marks the entrance to yet another casino.



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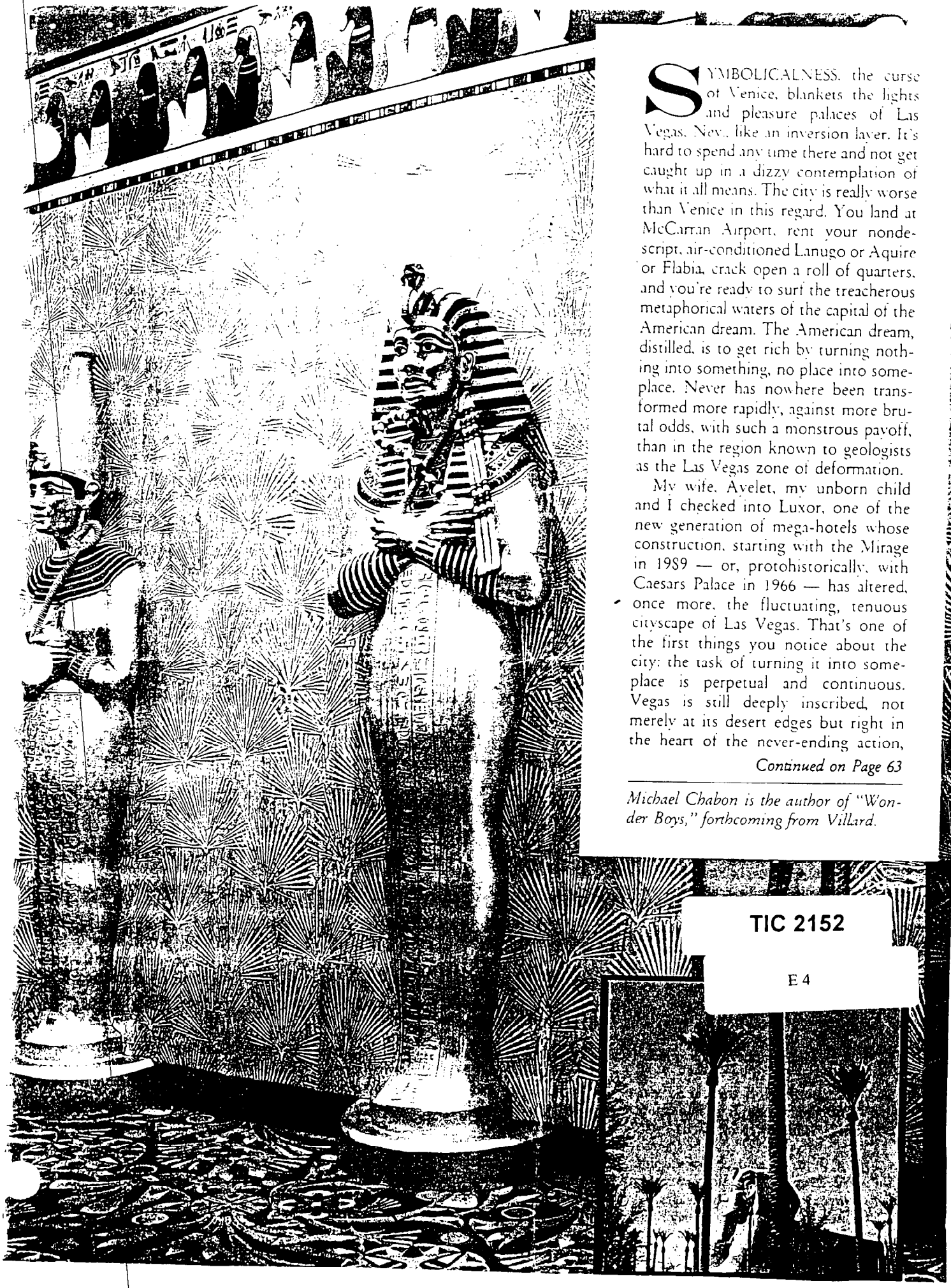

SYMBOLICALNESS, the curse of Venice, blankets the lights and pleasure palaces of Las Vegas, Nev., like an inversion layer. It's hard to spend any time there and not get caught up in a dizzy contemplation of what it all means. The city is really worse than Venice in this regard. You land at McCarran Airport, rent your nondescript, air-conditioned Lanugo or Aquire or Flabia, crack open a roll of quarters, and you're ready to surf the treacherous metaphorical waters of the capital of the American dream. The American dream, distilled, is to get rich by turning nothing into something, no place into someplace. Never has nowhere been transformed more rapidly, against more brutal odds, with such a monstrous payoff, than in the region known to geologists as the Las Vegas zone of deformation.

My wife, Avelet, my unborn child and I checked into Luxor, one of the new generation of mega-hotels whose construction, starting with the Mirage in 1989 — or, protohistorically, with Caesars Palace in 1966 — has altered, once more, the fluctuating, tenuous cityscape of Las Vegas. That's one of the first things you notice about the city: the task of turning it into someplace is perpetual and continuous. Vegas is still deeply inscribed, not merely at its desert edges but right in the heart of the never-ending action,

Continued on Page 63

Michael Chabon is the author of "Wonder Boys," forthcoming from Villard.

TIC 2152

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Continued From Page 29

LAS VEGAS

with nothing, empty space. The southern end of the Strip, in particular, miles from the historic center of town, is still, as you approach it from the airport, a ragged and evocative region of nothingness, a marvelous landscape from which the 30-story black pyramid of Luxor with its attendant hundred-foot obelisk and huge concrete sphinx, the Lego baroque profusion of keeps and battlements at Excalibur just beyond, the huge pair of cross-eyed Easter Island heads that flank the Tropicana and the streamlined golden lion of the MGM Grand rise improbably and thrillingly, like the prospect, in childhood, of a fantastic miniature golf course.

There are, in my experience, very few truly bizarre hotels. Luxor is one of them. It represents better than any other (for the moment) the apotheosis of Concept in Las Vegas (perhaps in the world). The great Vegas hotels have generally had great signs, have often — strung, beaded and tattooed with bulbs and tubing — merged with their signs, been transformed into immense advertisements for themselves; but with Luxor, the hotel-structure component has been boiled away, reduced until nothing is left

PYRAMIDS AND PIANOS

LUXOR, 3900 Las Vegas Boulevard South (telephone: 702-262-4000 or 800-288-1000), has 2,526 rooms and suites. Rates, which are subject to change in accordance with such factors as day of the week, holiday periods and whether or not there is a convention in town, range from $59 to $159 for a standard double and from about $150 to $240 for a one-bedroom corner suite with a Jacuzzi in the bathroom. The hotel has a pool and a health club.

Luxor's seven restaurants and cafes include the **MANHATTAN BUFFET**, where all you can eat is $4.49 for breakfast, $5.49 for lunch and $7.49 for dinner; the **PAPYRUS**, with Polynesian and Chinese fare (cashew chicken, Mongolian beef, and Hawaiian duck, rolled in crushed almonds and served with sweet-and-sour sauce, are each $10.95), and the **SACRED SEA ROOM**, which serves a variety of fresh fish (including swordfish, salmon, Dover sole, grouper, Rocky Mountain trout and ahi), broiled, sautéed in lemon butter sauce, steamed, poached or blackened for $13.95 to $18.95, with salad. The **ISIS** is the grandest of the restaurants. Jackets are required for men, and a dinner for two of such specialties as marinated shrimp and lobster, rack of lamb and, for dessert, a Grand Marnier soufflé or strawberries Romanoff, is about $95, with wine.

The house specialty drink, available in any of several bars, is called Jewel of the Nile; it contains several kinds of rum, costs $8.95 and is served in an enormous glass shaped like a truncated obelisk.

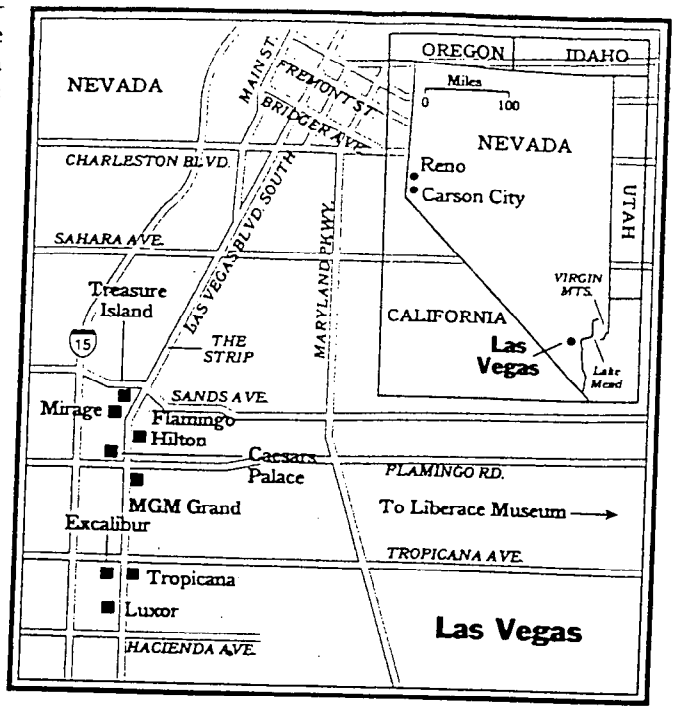
The **LIBERACE MUSEUM**, 1775 East Tropicana Avenue (702-798-5595), is open from 10 to 5 on Mondays through Saturdays, and from 1 to 5 on Sundays, but closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Admission, which is tax-deductible (funds go to the Liberace Foundation, which finances scholarships in the performing arts in 59 schools and colleges), is $6.50.

CARLUCCIO'S TIVOLI GARDENS restaurant, next door to the museum (702-795-3236), was once owned by Liberace and retains some of his signature décor. Its focal point is a mirrored piano bar with a mirror-encrusted baby grand. Dinner for two, with such specialties as crab-stuffed shrimp, veal Florentine and cheesecake, is about $55. Open daily, except Mondays, from 4:30 to 10.

TIC 2153

but a single immense Sign — one that, as if to emphasize its radical nature, breaks with the most ancient of Las Vegas traditions and disappears completely at night. Only its apex, where the eye would be on the back of a dollar, glows in the darkness, sending a pure cool colorless beam of light into the sky.

The pyramid form was never intended, however, to lodge 10,000 fun-seekers, and, while impressive as a Concept, as a hotel the giant Luxor is its own peculiar zone of deformation. Its guest rooms line the outer walls, rising in ever smaller quadrangular stories to the suites of the illuminati and high rollers at the radiant tip. Its elevators ascend, not vertically but diagonally, up the legs of the pyramid, and, despite all the evident cleverness of the engineers, are subject to lurching and odd, not always pleasant, inertial effects. Because of the continuous 40-degree pitch of the walls, the guest rooms — handsome though they are, decorated in a kind of Egypto-Kryptonian Biedermeier style — are all wider along the floor than at the ceiling, producing queasy, head-threatening angles and a great quantity of unusable space. Indeed, aside from the casino buried at its heart — where, in ancient Giza, the mummy's crypt would be — and the slanted guest rooms and suites, the entire building consists chiefly of a great quantity of unusable space, a problem the Pharaonic engineers, in those days before John Portman invented the atrium hotel, never had to address.



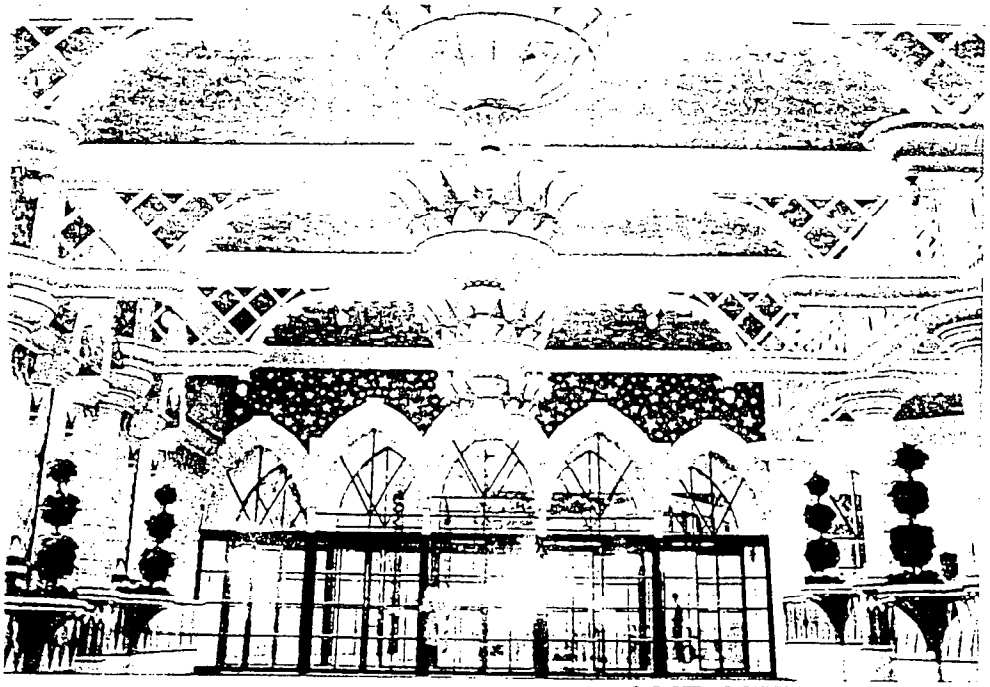
MYRA KLOCKENBRINK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

To the designers of Luxor, however, steeped as they were in the distinctive motifs, outlandish mythology and compelling history of ancient Egypt, the answer to this architectural problem was clear: toss in a miniature New York City. Oh, there are plenty of "Egyptian" attractions and structures scattered across the vast ground floor of Luxor — replicas of tombs, statuesque queens, "sandstone" kings with their long curved beards beckoning like fingers, an imitation Nile, down which platoons of not particularly interested guests sail in robotic barges, while costumed "guides" point out passing plaster landmarks and declaim on the mysteries of Thebes and other such burnished poop. But the dominant feature of Luxor's cavernous interior is that "replica" of New York City on the mezzanine, a jumble of gray skyscrapers plopped down in the middle of everything, a minigolf hazard within a minigolf hazard, inexplicable and cheesy. The effect of all these disparate bits of Concept — there are also a stepped Mayan pyramid and a black-glass virtual reality palace — jammed into the echoing, empty heart of the pyramid, with its musty Nilotic smell, is to give Luxor the feel of being a vast warehouse for the remains of some other, failed attraction — to lend it an undeniable and appropriate whiff, with its craps tables and slot machines interred in their crypt — of the tomb.

Like all great architectural feats — feats rooted, by definition, in human vanity — Las Vegas leaves the ruminative tourist prey to such intermittent bouts of gloom. So much

TIC 2154

power and water and money harnessed in the service of such a fundamentally trivial aim! So many traps for so many fools! The city is filled with mementos mori and the spectral marks of human failure — from Treasure Island, with its grinning skull logo and the delightfully disturbing chandelier in its lobby, made of artificial human tibiae and vertebrae, *painted gold*, to the weedy vacant lot that is all that remains of the first Strip hotel, El Rancho Vegas. Away from the lights of Fremont Street, downtown Las Vegas is a mean, sandblasted, hard-bitten Western town, bleached as the skull of a cow. Main Street is block after block of crummy motels, pawn shops, sinister-looking wedding chapels; the sidewalks are empty except for crawling snakes of dust. In the course of a six-block walk along Ogden Street, I saw two madwomen, muttering, scatter-limbed, their jackpot eyes lighted up, their mouths empty black slots.



ELIZABETH HEYERT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Star-spangled ceilings add to the splendor of Excalibur's lobby.

And then there are the buffets. In a city founded on 10 million tons of concrete slung across the wild throat of the Colorado River, whose two patron saints are a stylish psychotic named Bugsy and a piano player who regularly dressed like a parade float, where even the In-N-Out Burger is lighted up like an airstrip and the municipal anthem is the eternal chiming of dollar coins against a million change buckets, it was probably inevitable that this peculiar culinary institution would reach its horrifying zenith. All the big hotels serve buffet meals, three times a day, and no visit to Las Vegas is complete without one. They range, in price and style if not quality, from the crudely copious and cheap to the grotesquely lavish and relatively expensive. At Luxor's buffet breakfast, we were herded and triaged, in the hyperefficient, radio-controlled manner employed by the operators of modern thrill rides, then whizzed past huge mountains of bacon, prehistoric berms of scrambled eggs, bubbling volcanic lakes of gravy. I have been a vegetarian at various times in my life, and one is always aware, I suppose, that all the things one eats are dead, but I found it difficult to make my way past all those heaps and piles of bones and fat and breast meat and not think, at least briefly, of the word "carnage."

Still, we were Americans, and carnage, if only metaphorical, was our heritage. It's

TIC 2155

as difficult not to feel at home in Vegas as it is to tour the city for more than three days at a time without losing your sanity. Every time I put my hand on my wife's belly and felt the little swimmer scissor-kicking there, I would look around and wonder: is this place, this human buffet, this meta-theme park — the whole world and all of its history replicated, distilled, wired, air-conditioned, scaled down, juiced up and served at high speed, with maximum efficiency, in obscene amounts on a vast steaming desert under the heat-lamp sun — is this what it's all going to be like for my little girl? If we built a colony on Mars, tomorrow, would it look very different from Las Vegas? Will it look very different when we colonize the future?

On my wife's last day with me, we went to the shrine of one of the city's patron saints. Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel's legacy has been completely obliterated from the present-day Flamingo, but you can, if you have the inclination, make the pilgrimage to the Liberace Museum, a complex of three storefronts, one free-standing, in a low, sun-bleached shopping center at the threadbare southeastern corner of the city. Although we had no particular feelings, one way or another, about the man born Wladziu Valentino Liberace, he seemed worthier of an elaborate museum-cum-museum than many of our recent Presidents, and, indeed, the hour we spent here was among the high points of our stay. Any good museum ought to contain items you will never see anywhere else, and in addition to Liberace's collection of pianos, many of them genuinely beautiful works of instrument making; his cerulean fur cape, embroidered czar suits and red-white-and-blue-sequined hot pants ensemble, lined up like the stuffed remains of rocs and giants in a museum of mythical birds; the world's largest rhinestone, and his mirrored Rolls-Royce, you will also see a miniature piano made out of nickels, and another made out of 10,000 toothpicks.

There was almost a kind of poignancy here, as there is in any museum devoted entirely to the display of the things any one man, now dead, had owned in his life. We saw Liberace's toy cars, his awards and trophies, his photographs of himself with other famous and sort-of famous people, an ad he did once for Blatz beer, his family snapshots, his dinner plates, his wine glasses, his knives and cuff links, letters he received, his school pictures. And there was also, as throughout Las Vegas, a region of emptiness, a blank spot, sitting at the center of all that trivial glitter and display: Liberace's death, in 1987, from AIDS. Not a single mention of that, anywhere, in any of those tranquil and reverent rooms. Perhaps this was simply decorum, or perhaps, I thought, it is the essence of this place, of any trip to Las Vegas. There are sequins, music, bugle beads, fabulousness, limousines, hot pants, diamonds and dollar chips, pianos made of 10,000 toothpicks and cowboys made of neon, pirates, sphinxes, Romans, knights, Munchkins and hula girls; but the secret theme of all of it is Emptiness, the heart of all that brilliance is a weedy desert lot; and all of it is almost poignant, almost moving, almost worth the trip.

THEN my wife had to go back to California, and I was left with an evening to myself. I headed down the Strip to Fremont Street, and as I drove past the Flamingo hotel, I thought of Siegel, and Morris B. (Moe) Dalitz and all the other ruthless dreamers in snap-brim hats who had spent and lost so much to turn this uttermost Nowhere into Somewhere. I switched on the radio, and dialed it until I found the local Perry Como station. Dick Haymes was singing "Little White Lies." It was getting dark. I shut off the air-conditioning, and rolled down the window and drove through the brief interval of ordinary light and shadow that lies between the Strip and Glitter Gulch. There was a smell of dust, and hot pavement and something like sandalwood that might have been the Alamo Rent A Car air freshener but that I let myself think of as the night exhalation of some fragrant desert weed. The faded old roadside-Moderne motels and Hollywood Tudor wedding chapels on Las Vegas Boulevard looked good in the dark, and harmonized perfectly with the music on the radio and the ghost of Bugsy Siegel in my thoughts. I started to feel a little better. There really was something here, after all. The city had a past — brief, effaced, uncelebrated, but palpable, at least on this night, with the radio playing Vicki Carr.

I parked on Bridger Avenue, and walked up Main to Fremont, and when I turned that corner, I gasped. I had seen it before, but it was still, absolutely, an incomparable shock: Fremont Street, aflood. Torrents, rivulets, rills and geysers, fountains, jets and cataracts of light, light spilling, trickling, gushing, dripping, bubbling, falling in sheets, bursting, breaking like waves into fingers and spume, drizzling, spraying, pouring across the invisible storefronts of Glitter Gulch, drowning the heart of the city nightly under a hundred million cubic tons of light. And all without a sound. The hot wind from the Virgin Mountains blew ribbons of trash along the empty expanse of the street. The hair on the back of my neck stood on end. I felt that I had seen beautiful sights all over the world, and impressive testaments to hubris and ambition, and that none of them were any more beautiful or impressive than Fremont Street at night. So what if all of it — the river dammed, the power spent, the roads cut, the palaces raised — was done only to entice a mass of fools to drop quarters into a slot machine whose payoff line was three grinning skulls? The Taj Mahal was built to house one woman's bones. The Eiffel Tower serves no particular function at all. For better or worse, this, Las Vegas, was what we are good at, now. And maybe the secret theme, I thought, has always been Emptiness; the lines in the park get longer, and the price of the ticket goes up, but some of the rides are as thrilling as ever. ■

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TRAVEL AGENT
NEW YORK, NY
WEEKLY 52.132

APR 11 1994

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MYSTERE UNFOLDS

■ **Las Vegas**—Treasure Island has become the permanent home of Cirque du Soleil's *Mystere*. The celebrated Montreal-based company has developed a show with 78 contortion artists accompanied by haunting live music. Highlights include a bungee ballet, America's largest high-wire act, body-balancing ballets, Korean plank-jumping and more. Prices are $42 for adults; $21 for children under 12. Show times are 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For more information or reservations, call 702-894-7722.

TRAVEL AGENT
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TREASURE ISLAND ESCAPE

■ **Las Vegas**—Treasure Island has raised the rate on its two-night "Escape to Adventure" package to $170, double, through November. The package is offered Sunday through Wednesday only and includes two buffet breakfasts per person, one buffet dinner per person and two two-for-one coupons for the Mutiny Bay entertainment arcade. Package options include tickets for *Mystere*, the hotel's show, priced at $42 per person, or a round of golf at the Mirage golf club for $100 per person, with breakfast or lunch, green fees and cart. The packages and options are commissionable at 10 percent. Call 800-944-7711.

NEW YORK, NY
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Travel Agent

Desert Discounts

A variety of values highlights the fall and winter seasons in the Las Vegas area

▶ **LAS VEGAS**—Nevada's gaming capital promises a wealth of discounts and values this fall and winter. The following is a sampling:

• **Treasure Island** is offering agents and other industry members a $34 rate per room, single or double, per night, on Sundays through Thursdays from Dec. 11 through Dec. 22. Each additional person will add $10 to the rate.

Treasure Island also is offering two winter packages. The two-night "Winter Escape" runs Sundays through Thursdays from Nov. 27 through Jan. 19 and offers rooms for $69 per person double occupancy. Clients receive a complimentary pass to the hotel's spa, two buffet breakfasts, one dinner at either the Chinese, Italian or American kitchen buffet, and 2 two-for-one coupons good for one free play each on any carnival midway game in Mutiny Bay.

A "Winter Romance" package, available during the same period, includes two nights in either a Caribbean Petite Suite or a Buccaneer Bay Suite. Also included are chilled champagne for two upon arrival, breakfast in bed for two, an 8 x 10 keepsake photo, nightly turndown service and complimentary passes to the spa at Treasure Island.

Rates are $119 per person double for the Caribbean Petite Suite and $140 per person double for the Buccaneer Bay Suite. Call 800-944-7444.

• **The Mirage** is offering a special travel agent rate of $44 per room, single or double, on Sundays through Thursdays from Nov. 27 to Jan. 19, including the weekend of Dec. 16 and 17. Call 800-627-6667.

The property also is featuring "Winter Paradise" packages from Nov. 20 to Feb. 2. It includes two breakfasts and one dinner at the Mirage buffet, a pass to the Dolphin Habitat, a frozen dessert from Coconut's Ice Cream Shop and a plush Siegfried & Roy white tiger cub. The cost is $99 per person double for two nights. Extra nights are available for package rates.

For groups, the Mirage offers one complimentary room for every 20 booked and one Hospitality Suite upgrade for the tour escort. Winter groups can be booked by calling 800-456-7111. For FITs, call 800-627-6667.

• **The Sahara Country Club** is now the **Las Vegas Hilton Country Club**, following a six-year agreement with American Golf Corp. The pact calls for a $1 million renovation of the course and provides groups and guests of the Las Vegas Hilton with guaranteed and preferred tee times and golf packages. Call 800-732-7117.

Treasure Island is offering a special industry rate.

• **The Flamingo Hilton** Laughlin is offering a special $35 "Laughlin Golf Getaway" through April 30. The per person double rate includes one night at the Flamingo Hilton, plus a round of golf at the nearby Desert Lakes Golf Course. The rate is available Sundays through Thursdays. Call 800-FLAMINGO.

—Lark Ellen Gould

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NEW YORK, NY
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TREASURE ISLAND EXTRAS — Treasure Island in Las Vegas is offering two winter packages. The two-night "Winter Escape" includes two buffet breakfasts, a buffet dinner, two cocktails and two passes to the Treasure Island Spa. The cost is $79 per person double. The two-night "Winter Romance" package includes accommodations in a Caribbean or Buccaneer Bay suite, bottle of champagne, breakfast in bed for two and two passes to the Treasure Island Spa. The package costs $119 per person double for the Caribbean Suite and $189 for the Buccaneer Bay Suite, which includes sitting and dining areas. The packages are available Sundays through Thursdays until Feb. 5. Call 800-944-7444.

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TRAVEL AGENT TREASURE—Treasure Island has special trade industry rates available through Feb. 5. Travel agents can stay at the upscale Strip property for $45 per night, single or double (add $10 per person for extra parties), Sundays through Thursdays. Information on the property can be found on its Web page at [www.treasureislandlasvegas.com]. For reservations, call 800-944-7444 and request "travel industry" rate.

Treasure Island is offering a special agent rate through Feb. 5.

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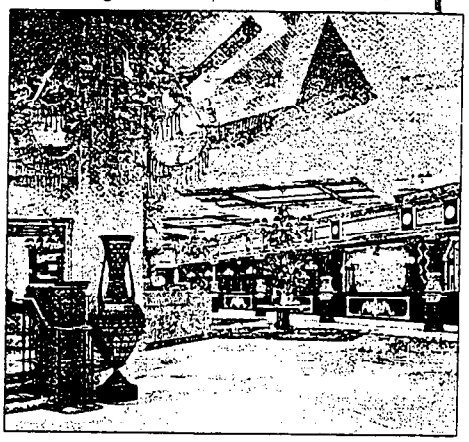
TREASURE ISLAND SPECIALS— Treasure Island has added incentives for retailers and clients. The hotel is offering a travel agent rate from May 24 to Aug. 13. Agents with ARC or IATAN cards can receive a $45 rate in effect Sundays through Thursdays. For consumers, Treasure Island has a two-night "Escape to Adventure" package that includes deluxe accommodations, buffet breakfasts daily and buffet dinner one night. The price is $89 per person double, valid for the same period as the agent rate. Call 800-944-7444.



Treasure Island has new inducements for agents and clients.

Treasure's Measure

Treasure Island inches ever closer to the Mirage and Bellagio in upscale amenities and value

The slogan Treasure Island uses to position itself is "The Adventure Resort." With this information alone, anyone who has never set foot on the property but is experienced in the ways of Las Vegas would probably anticipate an environment supercharged with low-end glitz and faux symbolism. After all, the single fact that most visitors to Las Vegas know about Treasure Island is that every evening a series of mock sea battles between romanticized pirates and the evil British navy are staged.

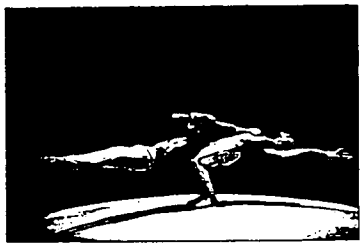
The truth about Treasure Island is more complex. Yes, the casino areas are decked with pirate motifs and treasure chests. But the room designs, parts of the internal architecture and even the artwork selected for public areas give the impression of an upmarket hotel designed more with an eye for style than glitz. In fact, the property seems to be making a transition toward the higher ground, with corresponding higher demographic clients.

This is not such a surprise. The property's full name is Treasure Island at the Mirage, thus associating the hotel even more closely with its sister property and, by extension, with the company's forthcoming mega-luxury Bellagio Hotel. The trend is further confirmed by the property's forthcoming room renovation, set to last for two months and cover the entire hotel.

Already, the hotel's public spaces, including a new lobby and registration desk overlooking the tropical pool, have undergone renovations to the tune of $25 million. "We are definitely trying to go in a more upscale direction," says Sales Manager Nicole Greber.

■ **Target Clientele:** The resort appeals to clients ranging from middle market to low upper end. This is the spot to book more sophisticated clients. It is also a good choice for families—kids will be delighted by the property's pirate theme.

■ **Accommodations:** The move up-market will retain the boutique feeling in the property's 2,679 guest rooms and 212 suites. Many of the cornerstones are already in place. For example, the peach pink facade of Treasure Island creates an optical illusion from street level that each guest room is bordered by white shutters, in the French- colonial style.



***Mystere* at Treasure Island is a matchless attraction.**

Guest room decor, done in earth tones, reflects the tasteful design and elegance expressed in the stylish new lobby area. The nautical prints, maps and Turner reproductions on the wall are a pleasant departure from the pastel abstracts usually featured in hotel rooms. Each room offers floor-to-ceiling glass, affording views of the mountains, the Strip or the pool area.

Inspection Report

■ **Public Areas:** The property has two main entrances. The street-level face of the casino property has all the cartoonish stylization one would expect of a Vegas recreation of a Caribbean pirate village, heavy on colored colonial facades, shutters and terra-cotta fixtures. The famous "sea" battle that employs 56 actors, divers, technicians and stuntmen takes place in a large pool. This is divided by wooden bridges that lead into the main 95,000-square-foot casino, where backlit chests spill "treasure" into alcoves above the gaming tables.

Meanwhile, the hotel property entrance leads directly into an environment that recalls a luxury Old World-style hotel in Eu-

Continued on page 106

Continued from page 104

rope. The new lobby, thanks to the renovation completed last October, is a crescent sweep of marble countertop backed by floor-to-ceiling windows. The area in front of the counter is open and inviting, free from dividing ropes. The result is a far more airy, relaxed and free-flowing space. The entire arrival experience is enhanced further by the enormous fresh flower arrangements.

Treasure Island offers casino-weary guests a pool with cabanas, as well as a health club and spa. Shiny new fitness machines fill up a huge, state-of-the-art exercise room. Staffed by experts, the health club also offers a sauna, steambath, whirlpool and massages. The beauty salon offers a range of services as well. Guests pay a $17 supplement to use the spa facility, although this is deducted from any additional service purchased, such as a massage or facial.

The property offers 18,000 square feet of meeting space, and can accommodate groups as small as five—or as large as 1,000. Two wedding chapels, appointed in European style, seat 30 and 60 people, respectively. The hotel can provide video and photography, dressing rooms and other last-minute needs, such as bouquets and champagne glasses.

Guests can use a conveniently located monorail to travel between Treasure Island and the adjacent Mirage.

■ **Dining:** The range of food outlets covers most tastes and budgets. Francescos—a new Italian-style restaurant—was opened as part of the renovation. The Buccaneer Bay Club serves continental cuisine, along with a view of the battle taking place in the front of the property. Dinner seatings are timed around the onset of the fight. The show can also be watched from the Battle Bar.

The Plank specializes in mesquite-grilled seafood and steak. Other dining options include a Chinese restaurant, an all-you-can-eat buffet and a coffee shop.

■ **Strongest Selling Points:** Treasure Island is one of Las Vegas' most popular properties, and the ongoing renovations can only increase its appeal to an upscale market. An added feature it brings to the table is Cirque du Soleil, currently performing its show *Mystere*. Clients should book tickets for the performance well in advance.

■ **Rates and Packages:** Prices at Treasure Island range from $59 and $349. A "Crown Jewel" wedding package, starting at $3,000, features a wedding onboard the ship with the ceremony performed by a "British captain", a photo package, the bridal bouquet and groom's boutonniere, three services in the salon and spa, dinner at the Buccaneer Bay Club; and two nights in a Buccaneer Bay Suite. TA

Fast Facts

Treasure Island

Address: 3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S., Las Vegas 89109
Rooms: 2,891 rooms, including 212 suites
Amenities: 24-hour room service, wedding chapels, full-service spa, salon, pool and fitness area
Rates: $59 to $349
Fax: 702-874-7446
Reservations: 800-944-7444

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TRAVEL AGENT
NEW YORK, NY
WEEKLY 53,300
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Mirage Resort Deals—Mirage Resorts, which owns Bellagio, Mirage, Treasure Island and Golden Nugget, is offering a number of deals. Rates at Bellagio are much more affordable than originally anticipated in reports that preceded its opening in October. Rates for a deluxe standard room start at $159, for example, and standard rooms can run as low as $109 per night. An agent rate of $99 is available.

Treasure Island is running two winter packages through Feb. 4. The "Winter Escape" offers two nights in a deluxe room, two buffet breakfasts, buffet dinner one night, one cocktail per person and passes to the spa. The rate is $79 per person double. The "Winter Romance" package includes two nights in the Caribbean or Buccaneer Bay suite, chilled champagne, breakfast in bed, a photo keepsake and use of the spa. for $119 per person double (Caribbean Suite) or $189 (Buccaneer Bay Suite).

Monte Carlo is offering golf and wedding packages.

The packages are available Sundays through Thursdays and the weekend of Dec. 18.

Agents can stay at Treasure Island for $45 per night, Sundays through Thursdays through Feb. 4, as well as during the weekend of Dec. 18. Call 800-944-7444 or visit Treasure Island's Web site [www.treasureisland.com].

TIC 2496

Travel Agent
February 8, 1999
Duluth, Minn

Going to the Chapel

For those who want a truly memorable ceremony, wacky weddings await in the glitzy gaming town

By Lark Ellen Gould

Weddings are to Las Vegas what sports news is to CNN. Take it away, and you'll notice something big is missing. Las Vegas may be known for neon, gaming and glamorous showgirls, but it is also the marriage capital of the U.S.—if not the world. About 110,000 couples tie the knot in Las Vegas every year, or about one wedding every five minutes. For most couples it is a cost-effective, expedient way to get the job done while having fun in a resort destination. The ceremony can be handled without going into debt, and after the vows are said the excitement of Las Vegas awaits.

New Year's Day and Valentine's Day are the busiest times in the wedding business. The licensing office at the city courthouse runs around the clock, as the brides line up for their documents like so many satin-clad dolls in an FAO Schwarz display. You see them walking down Las Vegas Boulevard, bustling up their dresses. You see them in the casinos dropping quarters into the video poker machines with their grooms. They can be spotted in the buffets, humoring the relatives behind a bounty of sweets.

Show-Stoppers. So it is not surprising that several resorts not only offer wedding services to their guests, they offer Las Vegas-style weddings to make the marriage the memory of a lifetime. Only in Las Vegas can couples marry on a 25-story arcing swing or an 18th-century British frigate. Where else can brides toss their bouquets from a float above a Mardi Gras celebration or have their vows read by a gallant gentleman in emperor's regalia? If Las Vegas is anything, it is show—and a number of resorts have extended their entertainment services to include the "Chapel of Love."

Caesars Palace opened its new wedding chapel in December. Before that, weddings could be arranged but were usually handled in the honeymoon suite. The chapel offers the usual accouterments—soft pink colors, flowers, an altar and tables for a sit-down or buffet hors d'oeuvres reception. Located on the second floor of the hotel, it features a cascading wooden staircase, separate bar and separate entrance, elevator and lounge for the bride where she can have privacy with friends and relatives, while remaining hidden from her future husband.

But Caesars offers something more: Escorts by Antony and Cleopatra look-alikes that can make any wedding an imperial event. Such appearances are easily arranged by Chapel Manager Adrienne Whisler. "We started offering the option and it has proved to be quite popular," Whisler says. In another wedding she arranged, the bride was carried into the chapel on a divan carried by the emperor's servants, as merry maidens heralded her arrival with rose pedals thrown in her wake.

In Vegas couples can say "I do" at a traditional chapel but often opt for a somewhat more offbeat ceremony.

All wedding packages more than the $775 base "Bella Classica" package at Caesars are commissionable at 10 percent. Packages include use of the chapel, minister services, bridal consultant and wedding coordination, live music, use of a wedding photographer, floral bouquets, wedding certificate holder and limousine services. In addition, such keepsakes as Waterford crystal champagne flutes are given to the couple.

The "Amore Eterno" package adds a photo album with 10 4x6 finished photos, plus a wedding video and limousine use for an hour to go to the courthouse or drive around town. The rate is $1,050 midweek and $1,085 Fridays, Saturdays and holidays. The "Passione Viaggio" adds a special pianist for the procession and a romantic solo selection for the bride and groom. The photo album adds an 8x10 finished portrait and a special cover for the video. It also includes bridesmaid bouquets, and boutonnieres for the groom and best man, as well as white rose corsages for special family members. The couple also has an hour's use of limousine services. The price is $1,695 midweek and $1,750 weekends. Call 877-279-3334.

Novelty Nuptials. For clients who want to add pomp and circumstance to their ceremony, Treasure Island offers weddings onboard the Royal Britannia. As pirates swoop and fires swell, marrying couples can cash in on the excitement of the famous Stripside attraction in a package called the "Crown Jewel." The couple takes their wedding walk past a re-created 18th-century Mediterranean fishing village and "walks the plank" to board the vessel, which sinks into the sea during periodic attacks staged by Treasure Island's famous marauding pirates.

During the ceremony, however, all is calm as the ship's captain delivers the wedding vows, and a host of pirates and sailors roosting in the background serve as witnesses. For the asking, a pirate swings down at the appropriate moment to bear rings for the marrying duo. The ransom: $2,995.

"We have done quite a few of these, and now that they are described on our Web site we'll probably get a lot more requests," says Cynthia Costello, Treasure Island's wedding chapel manager. "It's our most unique package and takes about 30 minutes, with a 10-minute ceremony. Then the party often goes to the Battle Bar for a toast." The package only accommodates two ceremonies a day, at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 a.m.

"Crown Jewel" packages must be booked at least a week in advance. They include the ceremony, bridal bouquet and groom boutonniere, photos, wedding certificate holder and premium champagne with flutes. The package also includes a spa day for the bride with a facial and massage, mani-

Continued on page 70

TIC 2510

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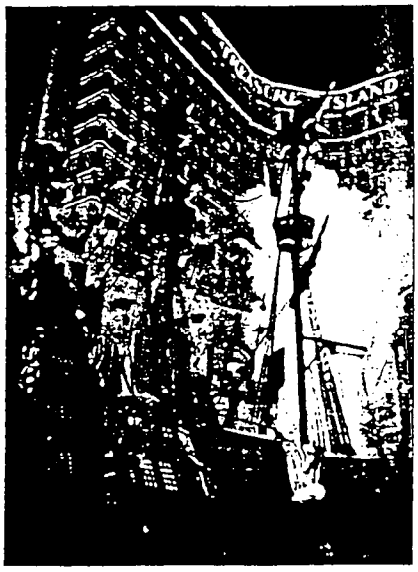
Continued from page 68

cure, and hairstyle and makeup session. In addition, the couple stays in a Buccaneer Bay Suite for two nights and receives a $100 voucher for dinner at the Buccaneer Bay Club. Other wedding packages are available at Treasure Island and range from $379 to $1,399. For reservations and information, call 800-866-4748.

MGM Grand opened the Forever Grand Wedding Chapel this week and, like everything else the resort does, it is doing weddings in a grand way. Although prices and inclusions were not finalized at presstime, the resort announced it will offer three themed ceremonies that promise the wedding—if not the adventure—of a lifetime. For couples who want to get "high" on their romance, weddings on the Sky-Screamer at the Grand Adventures theme park gives them the chance to make their bonding vows 250 feet in the air while arcing on the world's largest "sky coaster." As they profess their love, the couple jumps together into a free fall and sails through the air at 70 miles per hour in an act sure to keep them together eternally—if they survive the ceremony.

Vows taken on this ship give new meaning to "walking the plank."



For those forever stationed in the 1970s, MGM offers the "Studio 54" wedding. The couple say their vows amid colored lights, disco balls and sleek club dancers. Then the dancing duo can boogie the night away during a private party offered on the club's second-floor VIP reception area.

Finally, couples can be wed on the set of "EFX," where they marry within a dream-like atmosphere of waterfalls, trees, flowers and enchanting nymphs, as Merlin conjures the magic nuptials. Call 800-646-5530.

Rio Suites Resort offers a number of wedding packages that can be customized to create an atmosphere of Russian royalty or celebration of Fat Tuesday with a little creative thinking. Recently a couple got married in the ambience of Romanov luxury, as the resort arranged for a Siberian-born bride and her groom to give their vows within the "Treasures of Russia" exhibit (on view through mid-April at the hotel).

The hotel wedding planners have arranged marriages high above the Las Vegas skyline on the patio of the VooDoo lounge, and small weddings that take place on the ornate floats that wind their way above the crowd each hour in a wild salute to sound and costume in Rio's Masquerade Village. "Anything is possible," says Rio Chapel Manager Shirley Fugazzaotto.

Other wedding packages at the Rio are the "Copacabana," which offers a ceremony, minister, a dozen 4x6 photos in an album, bride's bouquet, certificate holder and recorded music, starting at $375. The "Ipanema" package adds one night's lodging, a personalized video, pianist, champagne and cake starting at $875. For $1,575 midweek, the "Rio Carnivale" package throws in a night in a themed honeymoon suite with hors d'oeuvres and champagne, photos, an hour of limousine service, wine tasting for and tickets to ride the Masquerade Village floats. Call 800-PLAY-RIO.

As for the rules of marriage in Las Vegas, licenses cost $35 (cash only), and both parties must be present to apply. No blood test is needed, nor is there any designated waiting period. Courthouse hours are 8 a.m. to midnight daily (702-455-4415). A witness is required. Divorced parties must know the date and place where their divorce was granted.

For more information, call the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority at 702-892-0711, or consult the Web site [www.lasvegas24hours.com].

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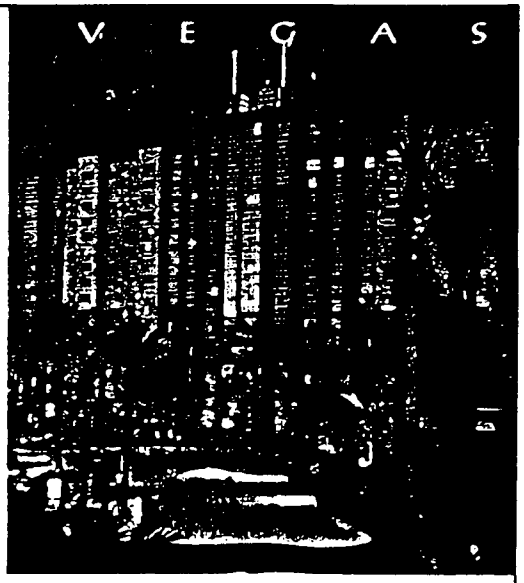

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FAIRFIELD COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL
HAWTHORNE, NY
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MAY 9 1994

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Showtech hit with $1.7 million judgment in Nevada dispute

By DON DZIKOWSKI 492LWBR

A $1.76 million judgment has been entered against Showtech Inc. of South Norwalk in Clark County District Court, Nevada, court documents indicate.

The judgment reflects Showtech's alleged breach of a November 1992 contract in connection with services as general contractor in building the "Pirate Battle Feature" at the Treasure Island at Mirage Casino Hotel in Las Vegas.

The judgment was entered in favor of Atlandia Design and Furnishings Inc., the designer of the project and a subsidiary of Mirage Casino Hotels.

William Mensching, president of Showtech, did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Peter C. Bernhard, a Las Vegas attorney representing Atlandia, also did not return calls.

Showtech, as general contractor on the Las Vegas project, is alleged to have failed to pay wages and benefits to subcontractors, failed to pay suppliers, failed to obtain insurance bonds, failed to obtain government approvals for the project, failed to supervise the project properly, and failed to build the project according to specifications provided by Atlandia, court documents state.

Showtech also submitted "false reports certified under oath" to Atlandia as work progressed, indicating subcontractors and suppliers were being paid when in fact the parties were not being paid all amounts due them, court papers state.

The $1.76 million judgment was entered Feb. 10 after Showtech failed to appear in court to contest the claims, according to court documents. "The judgment is final, conclusive and fully enforceable in the state of Nevada," the documents state.

The judgment was transferred to Bridgeport Superior Court on April 6, and seeks payment from Showtech.

Showtech designs and manufactures stage sets for Broadway shows, rock concerts and other entertainment arenas.

In February 1993, the company announced plans to build a 40,000-square-foot addition to its Belle Avenue facility. However, company officials subsequently shelved the plan after learning that a high-voltage power line planned for the site by a local utility company would interfere, according to Victor Gurvits, a deputy building official with the City of Norwalk Building Department.

Privately owned Showtech expected annual sales of $15 million, officials said in a Feb. 22, 1993, article in the Business Journal. At the time, officials said they believed the company, which employed some 85 workers (and up to 160 during peak periods) had the potential to double its revenue by February 1994.

Since then, United Scenic Artist Local 829 in New York City has filed two lawsuits against Showtech, the latest in U.S. District Court in New Haven seeking $62,359 in allegedly delinquent contributions to union employee benefit plans. Matthew Loeb, a union official, declined to comment on the litigation.

Mirage Hotels' "pirate battle" display is a larger-than-life Broadway-style attraction complete with replicas of two pirate ships, shooting cannons and acrobatic actors who participates in mock battles.

Showtech was selected from among several other bidders to serve as general contractor on the project, court papers state.

Mirage Hotels are owned by Steve Wynn, who has been meeting with Connecticut officials in recent months to discuss plans for a large gambling casino in Bridgeport.

ADVERTISING AGE

NEW YORK, NY
WEEKLY 87,334

JUN 27 1994
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Despite family tug, Vegas reasserts roots

4926BR (M - CKS)

By William Spain

With a multimillion-dollar investment in theme parks, menageries, virtual reality arcades, pyramids and pirate ships, Las Vegas has transformed itself from a decadent adult fantasy retreat into the hot new place for family fun.

Or has it?

There has been a lot of hype about the "Disneyization" of Las Vegas, but a number of marketing executives and others in the gaming industry still view this trend more as a way to keep the little ones amused while mom and dad hit the dollar slots.

"We have to be very careful when we talk about families in Las Vegas," warns Alan Feldman, VP for PR at Mirage Resorts. "The media have turned Las Vegas into a family destination, and it's just not true.

"Las Vegas will always be an adult destination, [but now] if you are traveling with your family, you no longer have to take Las Vegas off the list peremptorily," he says.

Attraction building spree sets tone, but casino-revenue-per-room drives engine

Mirage Resorts, which encompasses the namesake hotel/casino as well as the new Treasure Island and the Golden Nugget, isn't pushing itself to families but rather "seeking new audiences of adults," Mr. Feldman says.

Although Mirage Resorts—like most of the hotel and casino operators in Las Vegas—keeps its cards close to the vest when discussing ad spending, Mr. Feldman allows that they "will be paying more attention to cable" TV in the coming months.

In the past, Mirage has used cable, spot and network TV—along with some print advertising—particularly to support last year's grand opening of Treasure Island. Hal Riney & Partners, San Francisco, handles creative.

Whatever the marketing intentions of the city and its myriad hotels are, the building spree of the last decade seems to be paying off. According to Mike Donahue, media coordinator for Las Vegas News Bureau, the number of visitors has almost doubled—from 12.8 million in 1984 to 23.5 million last year.

"And we are expecting 25-plus [million visitors] this year," he says, adding that hotel and motel occupancy rates have risen from 72.5% to 87.6% in the same period.

The sharp upsurge in visitors, many of whom are attracted by new pleasure domes like Luxor and MGM Grand, is also having an impact on some of the Strip's more mature properties.

The Flamingo Hilton-Las Vegas "made a decision not to join in the family marketing fray," says Terry Lindberg, the hotel's director of publicity and advertising. "We are the oldest property on the Strip and we have built up a marvelous clientele. We wanted to make sure we kept those customers, and felt that the best way to do that is by making a good product even better."

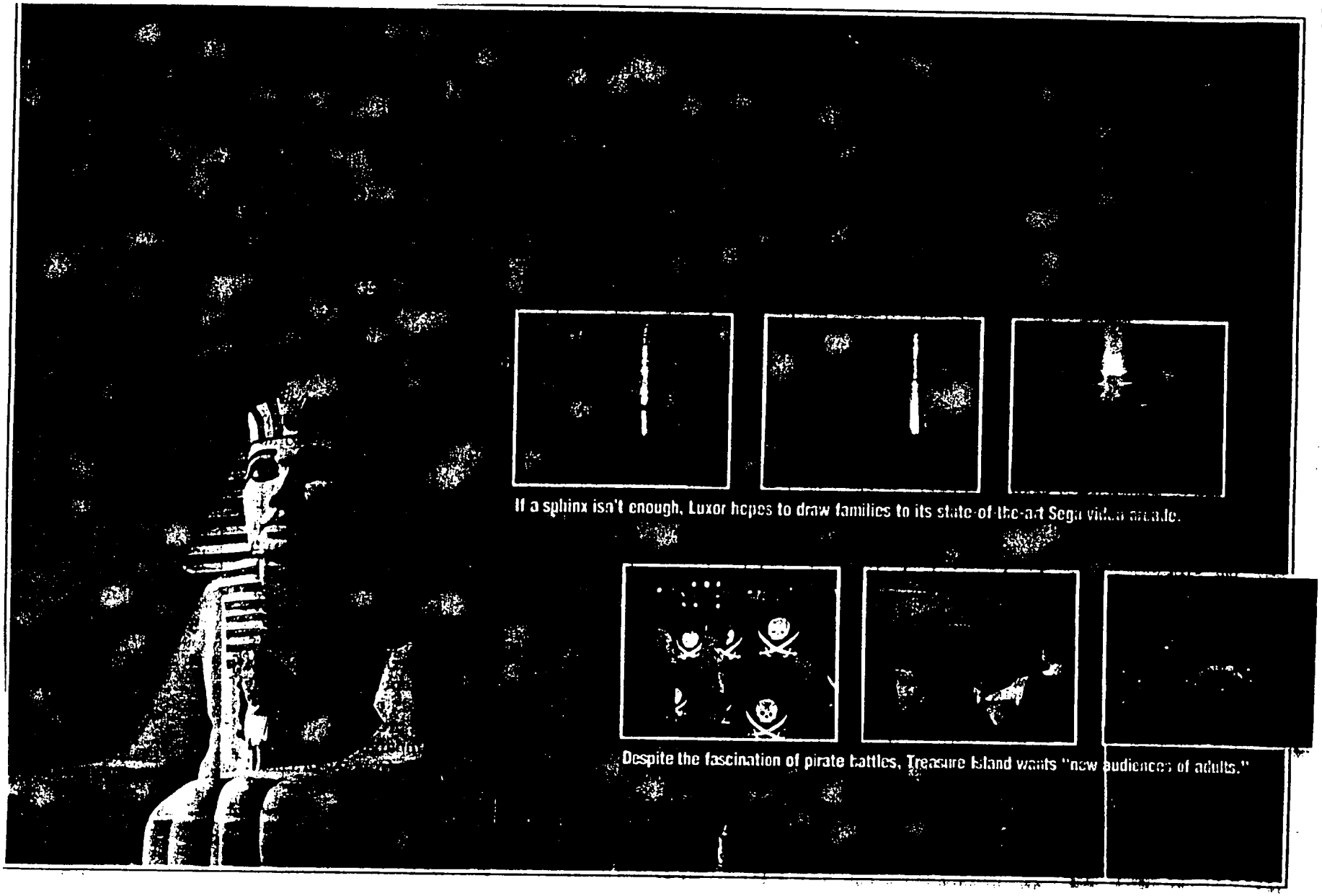
The hotel is spending $15 million on improvements.

To make sure people know about that, "We anticipate spending more dollars in advertising and marketing [what is] almost a new property. The majority of our marketing dollars are spent within the tour and travel industry," Mr. Lindberg says, with the addition of direct mail to keep in touch with regular customers.

Advertising is handled in-house.

Another property, Las Vegas Hilton, is seeking to distinguish it-

(Continued on Page 37)



If a sphinx isn't enough, Luxor hopes to draw families to its state-of-the-art Sega video arcade.

Despite the fascination of pirate battles, Treasure Island wants "new audiences of adults."

TIC 1936

Vegas reasserts roots

(Continued from Page 31)

self by putting much of its marketing budget behind a show, Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Starlight Express," says Michael Ribero, senior VP-marketing & strategic planning, Hilton Hotels Corp.

"We have spent a great deal of money promoting 'Starlight Express' [through a] regional campaign focusing on critical markets," he says, via DiZinno & Partners, San Diego. Spot TV, print and direct mail support this effort to "unofficially position the Las Vegas Hilton as the adult place to play."

The Luxor, with its pyramid and state-of-the-art Sega video arcade, has often been touted as a family entertainment center. But Keith Guyett, an account supervisor at GSD&M, Austin, Texas, which just snagged the resort's ad account, stressed that "we love kids, but we are not positioning the property as a kids' place.

"The name of the game is gambling. [Ad campaigns] will try to show the excitement of the place."

"We are not doing a Disney Channel buy," he adds.

One of the reasons for the increased emphasis on added-value in Las Vegas is demographic. As free-spending baby boomers have children, they're looking for family-friendly places to vacation that also provide an interesting lure for the adults.

Another reason is tied to the growth of casino gambling across the nation, and the fact players now have any number of venues—many of them closer to home than the Nevada desert.

"Gambling is everywhere, and we have to distinguish ourselves from the rest," says William Thompson, a professor of public administration at the University of Nevada/Las Vegas. "We have got to compete with . . . a casino in Green Bay, Wis."

The only "undercurrent of concern" Mr. Feldman so far has seen is in the average casino revenue per room.

"If that revenue starts to drop and is not offset by an equal rise somewhere else . . . then this reach for new audiences will change the fundamental pro forma for Las Vegas," he notes.

As far as promoting non-gaming activities just to fill rooms: "It is like putting candy at the checkout," Mr. Thompson says. "If people just start coming for the theme-park part, we're screwed." □

PRO SOUND NEWS

NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 18,000

JULY 1994
BURRELLE'S

SHIPS AHOY—Treasure Island's Buccaneer Bay in Las Vegas includes a sound system containing Community speakers powered by IQ-controlled Crown amplifiers. See story page 72.

Sound Design Plays Starring Role at Treasure Island's Buccaneer Bay

LAS VEGAS—Situated beneath the Y-shaped towers of the Treasure Island resort, Buccaneer Bay is the site of a larger-than-life extravaganza which replicates an eighteenth century sea battle between pirates and the British Navy. The deadly duel, which takes place against the backdrop of a pirate village straight out of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island*, first opened in October, 1993. Since then, the show has brought crowds onto the surrounding boardwalk to view its unfolding drama and accompanying pyrotechnics. Sound design plays no small part in the performance, with components for the show's system being supplied by Community, Crown, Akai, Rane, Intersonics, and Richmond Sound Design, among others.

Buccaneer Bay sound designer Larry Spurgeon (who was also a major player in adding aural excitement to The Mirage's streetside volcano nearby) spearheaded the project, which in most simple terms, required a sound system capable of reproducing music, dialogue, and sound effects at realistic levels with accurate directionality. In theory, that sounds easy enough. But consider the context in which this must occur.

At the beginning of each hourly show, crowds view the pirate ship Hispaniola docked before the village in Buccaneer Bay. As pirates unl their loot from the 80-foot Hispaniola, British frigate HMS Britannia sails arou Skull Point and into the harbor. Next,

TIC 1948

crowd hears the British captain order the pirates to lay down their arms and prepare to receive a boarding party.

"The only thing we'll receive from you is your stores, valuables, and whatever rum ye might have on board, you son of a footman's goat," the pirate captain retorts. A massive battle ensues, complete with ample cannon and musket fire, pirates being blown from their ship, falling masts, explosions, and flames.

After much carnage, the Hispaniola seems doomed for Davy Jones' locker. A particularly vicious British salvo attempts to bring things to a close, and then only the pirate captain appears to be alive. The British fire a coup de grace shot which strikes the pirate's powder magazine, sending up a great plume of smoke and fire. In a final act of defiance, the pirate captain swings from the main mast and touches off one last cannon shot.

Amazingly, the blast hits the Britannia at waterline and ignites the ship's ammo storage area. The damage is extensive, and the frigate sinks to the bottom...

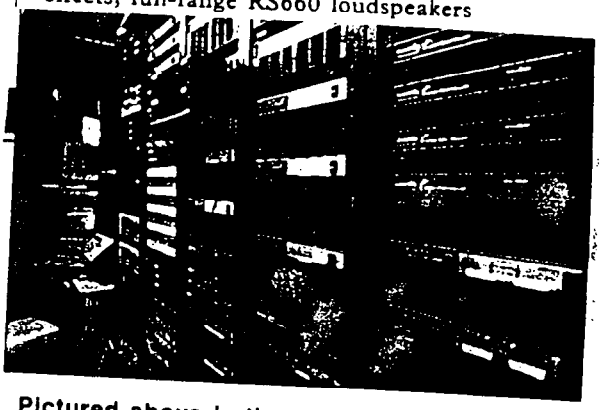
Bringing Sound to the Showdown

The contracting firm responsible for bringing sound to this showdown was Showtech USA, which maintained offices in Las Vegas and South Norwalk, CT at the time of construction. Working in conjunction with Larry Spurgeon and his technician Scott Marcelus, Showtech also retained the engineering services of Las Vegas-based George Kindler.

As the design took shape, it became clear exactly how much impact the sound system would have upon the show as a whole. "We realized early on that the sound would be responsible for the show's direction to a large degree," Spurgeon recalls. "That's because the prime viewing area lies on a boardwalk between the two ships. Watching this show isn't like watching a show onstage where you can get away with a lot fewer sources. Here, the audience actually has to turn back and forth like at a tennis match to stay with the program."

Given this fact, the sound engineering team worked with the director to develop audio cues which would lead the audience in the direction of the action. To reinforce these cues, as well as the rest of the prerecorded soundtrack, which ranged from dialogue to music and sound effects, Spurgeon relied upon a variety of clusters composed of RS Series components from Community.

According to the design, twin clusters of RS880 loudspeakers were installed in the rocky cliffs above the village and hidden among the vegetation. Used for music, the RS880 clusters supply a stereo effect during the show that can be used to swing the audience's attention from one side to the other depending upon where the action is. For dialogue, explosive sound effects, and other background effects, full-range RS660 loudspeakers



Pictured above is the amplifier room for Buccaneer Bay containing IQ-controlled Crown amplifiers and Community processors.

TIC 1949

BUCCANEER

(continued from page 72)

were disguised as bales of cargo on the deck of the pirate ship. Two of the RS660s fired forward from the stern while another pair projected sound toward the stern from a location close to the bow. Adding to the low-end concussive blast of the explosions are Intersonics subwoofers which were also mounted on the deck.

As a final complement to this shipboard system, a cluster comprised of three RS Jr. loudspeakers was added to each of the three masts on the ship. "We use the mast clusters to provide direction to the sound," Spurgeon revealed. "For example, if the dialogue is coming from the stern, we lay on the deck loudspeakers as if they were a single cluster, then provide enough reinforcement from the aft mast cluster to make the dialogue seem as if its coming from the rear of the ship. All of this type of sequencing was done with a 24 x 16 x 24 Richmond Sound Design Command Cue Plus and a Richmond Stage Manager."

Essentially the same sound system was used for the British frigate, with the exception that since it sinks, the deck loudspeakers had to be located behind the ship and camouflaged on shore. "No matter how good a loudspeaker is, I've yet to see one that performs well when completely submerged underwater," Spurgeon notes smilingly. "We tried some of the devices that are made expressly for that purpose, and found that they usually melted when exposed to the flames and heat on the deck. That's one of the reasons I chose Community for this application."

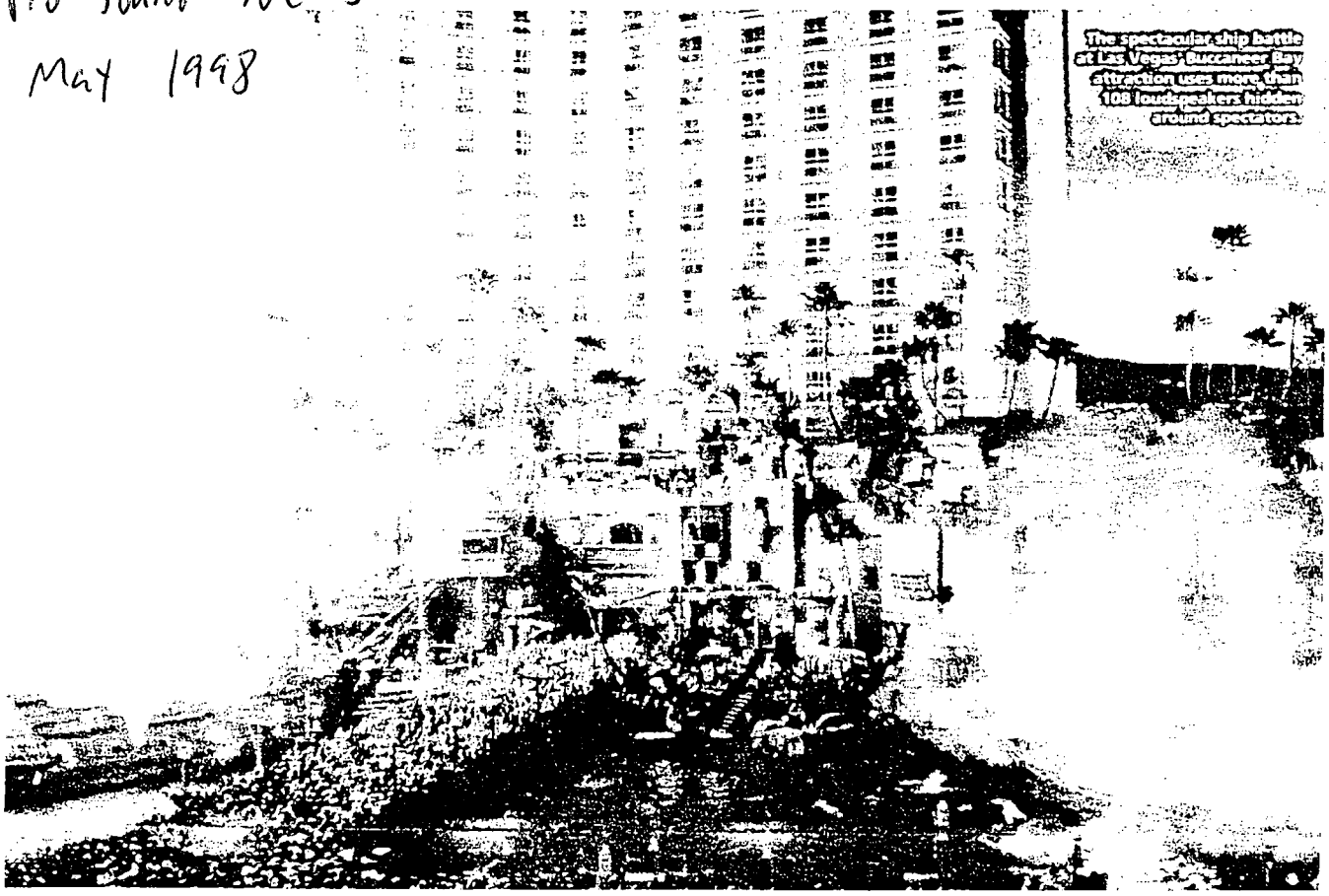
To supplement the RS Series system, a delayed 70-volt distributed system using OWI 702 loudspeakers was installed in every other pylon along the boardwalk for general fill to help reinforce the music and some dialogue. A third system, which is separate from the show systems, is used to reinforce a soundtrack of environmental sounds and other ambient noises from the village, played when shows are not in progress.

Two locations house the 30 Crown Com-Tech amplifiers which provide power. An assortment ranging in size from CT-1600s down to CT-200s, the amps are linked with the main system via Crown's IQ System. The primary location for the amplifiers resides near the pirate ship and also houses the rest of the processing gear; the second location is behind the HMS Britannia.

Created and orchestrated by resident MIDI expert Glenn Grayson (another Mirage volcano sound veteran), the soundtrack is played on a four-track Pioneer LDV-8000 laser disc player (a redundant unit is kept at hand as well). Of the four tracks available, two are used for digital audio, and a third supplies the SMPTE time code which drives the entire show.

TIC 1950

Pro Sound News
May 1998



The spectacular ship battle at Las Vegas' Buccaneer Bay attraction uses more than 108 loudspeakers hidden around spectators.

Buccaneer Bay Watch

by Clive Young

LAS VEGAS—A pair of full-sized, 18th century sailing ships duking it out is not a sight you normally see in the middle of the desert—unless you are at Treasure Island at the Mirage, a unique resort in Las Vegas.

The hotel's main attraction, Buccaneer Bay, is a recreation of a pirate village under attack by a British frigate, the HMS Britannia. The pirates' docked ship, the Hispaniola, returns cannon fire, and before you know it, bodies are flying through the air, buildings are on fire and the respective captains are trading insults worthy of the *Jerry Springer Show*. Meanwhile, audiences are literally at the center of the action, as a long spectator pier sits between the two ships. The show is a fun 12-minutes of spectacle and silliness—and best of all, the bad guys win (this is Las Vegas, after all).

Helping bring this battle to life six times a day are a cast of 20 people and scads of technology. The performing area is about 100 yards across, according to director of lighting and sound, Bill Quinn, who has worked at the attraction for the last four years. As a result, 108 speakers are scattered around the attraction (mostly Community RS speakers powered by 10,000 watts of Crown IQ amplifiers), hidden out of sight, yet very audible to the 2,500 people who attend each show.

"There are poles along the walkway that line the water, and we've got little 15-watt speakers in each one of those," said Quinn. "There are main clusters on the pirate ship and in the crow's nest of the British ship—it sinks, so we have to keep them up out of the way a little bit."

Additionally, there are two main clusters—one north and one south—built into the facade of the village. "They're pretty well hidden, covered in burlap or snuck behind bushes," Quinn pointed out. "The ones that are plainly visible are disguised to look like ship cargo and things like that. We've got ServoDrive subwoofers hidden in the cliff base; there are two little tunnels that have boats and burlap and stuff blocking the way, and those are a pain to repair."

Although the system is running 24 hours a day and is constantly exposed to the elements, Quinn noted that it remains virtually problem free: "We've had a few broken belts in the bass cabinets which were from the heat and the dry atmosphere—they eventually cracked and broke. We've never really had to replace anything big—knock on wood."

Although there are live actors in the show, in fact they are all lip-synching because the entire battle is automated. "Everything in the show—the major mechanical effects of moving and sinking the boat, all our pyrotechnic effects, all the audio and lighting—is linked up to SMPTE timecode," said Quinn. A laserdisk system contains the musical score, while a number of Akai sampling units contain all the dialogue and sound effects. Meanwhile, the entire production is automated via three computers—a ShowControl system, handling all the mechanical and pyrotechnical effects, an audio system and a lighting system. "They are independent," explained Quinn, "so things have happened where one system might crash during a show, and the others go merrily along, unless we lose timecode altogether. However, if one of them crashes, we'll abort the show."

Not surprisingly, the dialogue, which is mostly between the two captains, is set up to emanate from their various points of origin. Because the show covers such a large area, the characters would have to shout to each other, but since loudspeakers are used and the dialogue is canned, a little cheating is done to ensure that the entire audience can hear what is going on. "Say people are on the British side of the pier—we take the sound of the pirate captain and give it them from the pirate side slightly subdued and delayed so that we won't get that bad echo, and they can still understand what is being said," Quinn explained.

When the two sides are not blasting the ship out of each other, the speakers play various sounds and music between shows, including samples of ships creaking, bells ringing and birds, all backed by Caribbean music. "At midnight, after the last show," said Quinn, "we fade out the ambient music and bring up crickets and things like that—wind noises, soothing sounds. The system's up 24 hours a day, but it's been very reliable."

Almost as reliable as the Brits' losing streak, now at 9,100 shows and counting.

VITAL Stats

BUCCANEER BAY

Director of Lighting & Sound: Bill Quinn

House Speakers: Community RS, ServoDrive subwoofers

Equipment: Akai sampling units, Crown amps, ShowControl production system

SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS
NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 77,000
JULY 1994
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Treasure Island

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

-726BR

OVERVIEW

Treasure Island is a unique theme resort, where guests are transported back to the Caribbean, to the days of the pirates. A highlight of the resort is the sea battle every ninety minutes in Buccaneer Bay, in front of the property. Treasure Island pirates and British Naval officers battle aboard full-scale ships amid cannon and musket fire. It's a scene unlike any in Las Vegas.

LOCATION

Treasure Island is located adjacent to The Mirage, sharing its 100-acre site on the Las Vegas "Strip."

ACCOMMODATIONS

The resort has three 36-story towers with 2,900 guest rooms, including 212 suites. Each room has a floor-to-ceiling window with a view of either the mountains, the "Strip," or the pool area.

DINING

Treasure Island boasts seven restaurants: two gourmet dining rooms, The Buccaneer Bay Club and The Plank; three internationally-themed buffets, and a sidewalk bistro. There's also 24-hour room service, a 24-hour coffee shop, and for pirates on the run, there's Smuggler's Cantina, the Seven Seas Snack Bar and the Sweet Revenge ice cream parlor.

ENTERTAINMENT

The theatrical troupe Cirque du Soleil has made Treasure Island its permanent home, and performs in the 1,500-seat showroom. Mutiny Bay, Treasure Island's entertainment center, is an 18,000- square-foot complex with video games, pinball and electronically simulated rides, designed in the pirate theme. The casino, also decorated in the Caribbean pirate style, offers slots, video poker, blackjack, craps, roulette, baccarat, Pai Gow, Pai Gow poker as well as keno and poker. A race and sports book is also available.

RECREATION

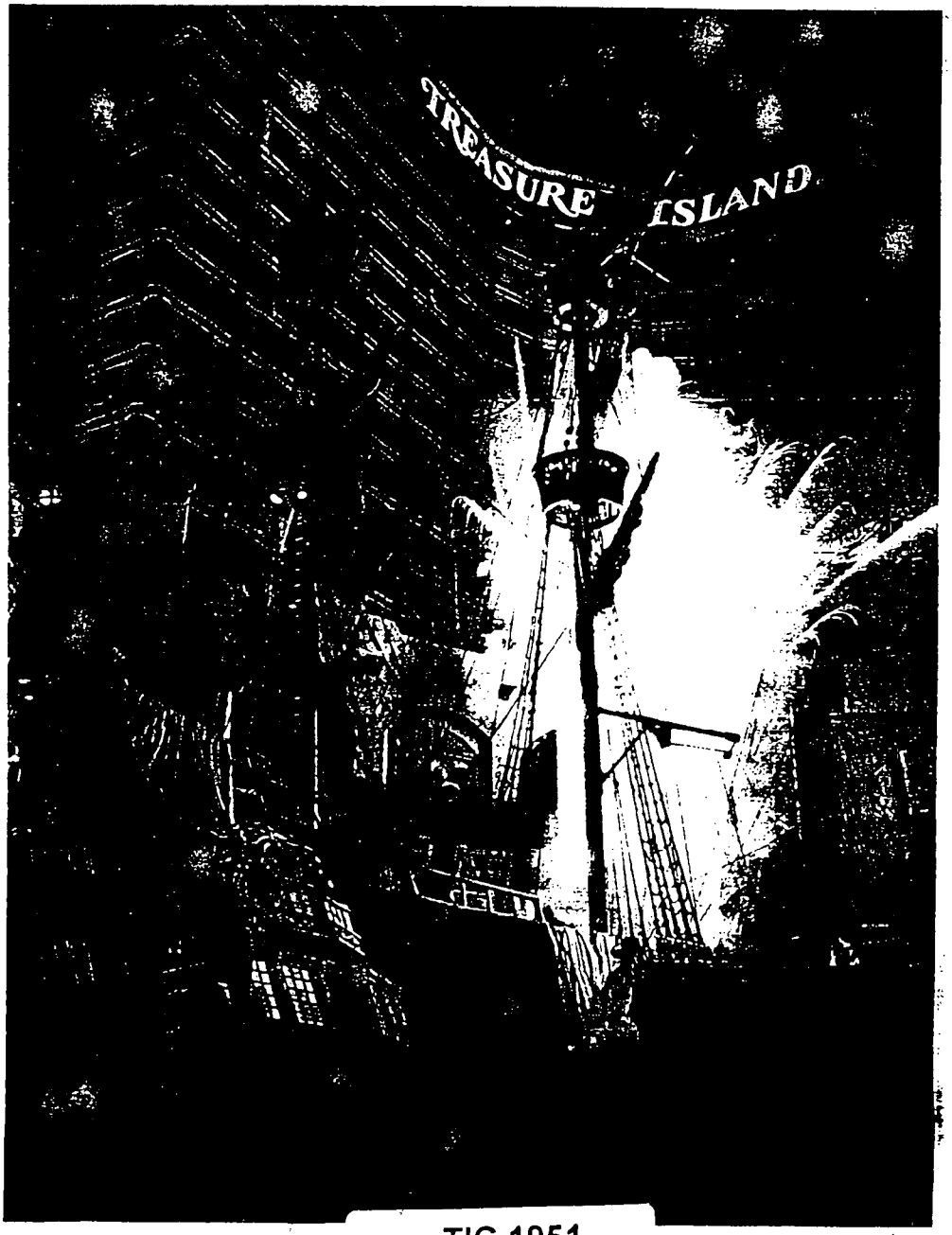
The resort's tropical pool features a snack bar, cocktail bar and an action slide. The health spa and salon has complete exercise and training facilities, sauna, whirlpool and massage.

MEETING AND CONVENTION FACILITIES

Treasure Island's 18,000 square feet of convention space is conveniently located on the resort'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.

CONTACT

Randy Fleitz, Exec. Dir. of Hotel Marketing
Treasure Island
3300 Las Vegas Blvd. South
Las Vegas, NV 89109
(800)944-7711; Fax: (702)894-7788



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JULY 1995

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SPECIAL RESORTS SECTION

TREASURE ISLAND

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

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Overview

Treasure Island is a unique theme resort, where guests are transported back to the Caribbean, to the days of the pirates. A highlight of the resort is the sea battle taking place every afternoon and evening in Buccaneer Bay, in front of the property. Treasure Island pirates and British Naval officers battle aboard full-scale ships amid cannon and musket fire. It's a scene unlike any in Las Vegas.

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(800)944-7711
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TIC 2345

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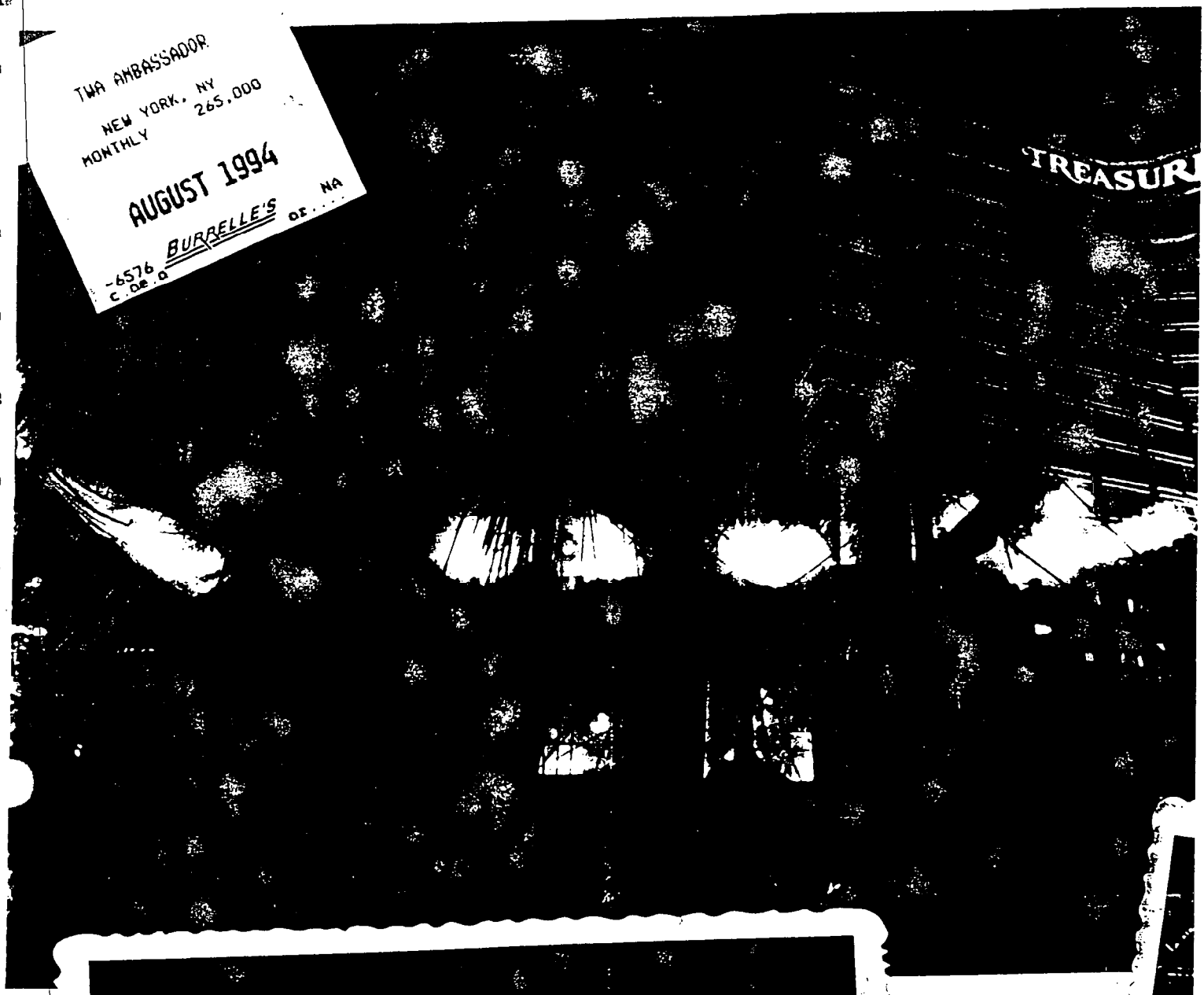

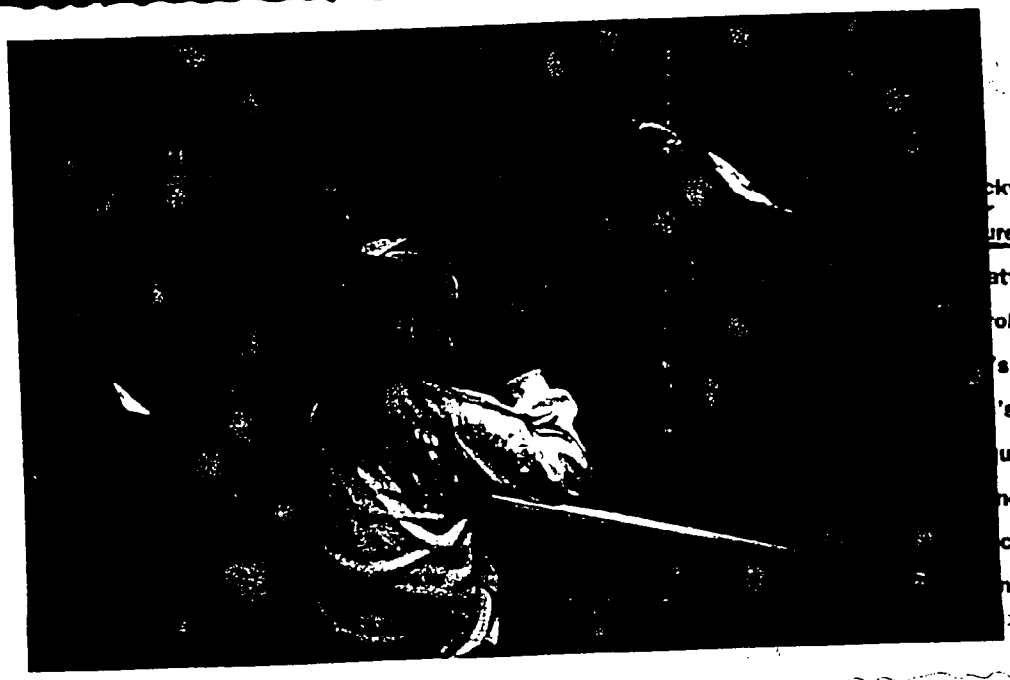

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uasi Jurassic Park;
nose dolphins are free
cruise in the huge
nk at the Mirage.

TIC 1952

Family Action

Las Vegas isn't just for high rollers anymore.

by Betsy Streisand

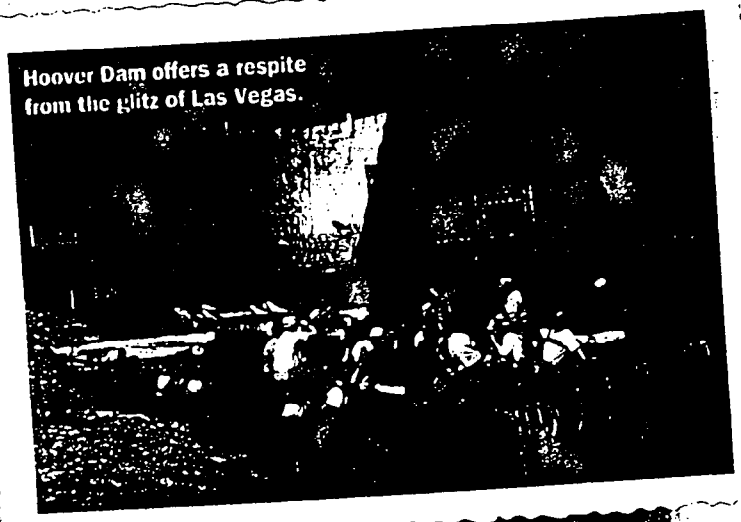
Family this. Children that. The way Las Vegas is selling itself these days with wholesome slogans and resort ads disguised as prime-time TV shows, you'd expect Barney to be headlining at Caesar's Palace next New Year's Eve instead of, say, Sinatra. But the City of Sin as a desert Disneyland, the perfect family vacation spot?

Even by Las Vegas standards, that's overstating it. But the city has added enough entertaining shows, spill-your-guts rides and other attractions for children that parents no longer have to feel guilty about bringing kids. Just in the past year, four family-oriented mega-resorts have opened on the 3½-mile Las Vegas Strip. Visitors can wander from ancient Egypt, with Pyramid, Sphinx and Nile River, to a medieval castle done up in turrets and moats, to a pirate's cove, to Oz. At a hotel in between, two rare white tigers prowl a glassed-in jungle habitat across from the gift shop. Animatronic dinosaurs roam a few blocks away.

"I'm already dying to come back," says 12-year-old Giuliana Maccaferri as she awaits a third turn on the Canyon Blaster, a double-loop, double corkscrew, indoor roller coaster whose speeds of 55 mph make your eyes feel like they're in the back of your head. The Pasadena, California, seventh grader is a child Las Vegas would pay to clone. She's already come back twice and has a stack of casino coin cups in her bedroom.

Giuliana especially loves the Canyon Blaster. It's the big draw at Circus Circus's Grand Slam Canyon, a quasi Jurassic Park under glass with sandstone cliffs, waterfalls and life-size, animat-

ed dinosaurs. Most other Giuliana-type attractions are parts of giant casino-resorts, with separate gambling-free floors devoted to children and families. The entertainment areas mix simulated-motion rides (such as Excalibur's Space Race, an outer-space demolition derby), carnival-style games (such as Skee-ball), state-of-the-art video games and "themed" attractions. And the neon nights no longer belong



Hoover Dam offers a respite from the glitz of Las Vegas.

rated pageants of jousting knights, German magicians and Canadian circus troupes are routinely sold out.

That's not to say the gambling culture is less pervasive. Slot machines are everywhere, Keno cards are tucked between menus and interiors are on the dark side, the better to blur day and night. And hotels stop just short of yelling "Fire!" to get you out of your room. There are no couch-potato-pleasing refrigerators stocked with snacks and drinks, no pay-movie channels, no cushiony chairs.

Of the family resorts, none offers kids more or keeps the 21 tables away from under-21 guests better than the new MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park. While it's no Magic Kingdom, MGM's 33-acre park has plenty of wet and scary rides, hokey themed areas, such as Casablanca Plaza and Tumbleweed Gulch, and roaming costumed character, such as Betty Boop and the Tin Man. Admission is $15 for adults, $10 for kids under age 13. Inside the hotel, the seven-story Emerald City, with its talking trees and life-size animated Oz characters, is irresistible. So, too, may be the King Looey Youth Activity Center, at least to parents who want to send their kids off to learn *Old MacDonald* while they bet the farm. The 3,000-foot center comprises four well-supervised rooms of toys, crafts and games. The cost, including a beeper for Mom and Dad, is $5 an hour for the first child, slightly less for siblings. It's open to kids ages 3 to 12, but best-suited to younger ones. Older children will do better at the theme park. MGM guides will escort groups of eight for $75 per child, which includes the admission price and lunch. MGM's major drawback is its 4.2 million square feet. Visitors need gate assignments, not room keys.

The Luxor, Excalibur and Treasure Island resorts all have a like degree of casino/kid separation—less than MGM's, but enough. It comes down to lifestyle: King Tut, King Arthur or Long John Silver. Treasure Island has the fewest attractions for kids. Its main draw—and a must-see—is the battle at Buccaneer Bay staged in front of the hotel every 90 minutes after dark. An elaborately choreographed face-off between pirates and the British Navy ends with the Brits and their 80-foot galleon going down in a ball of fire. Universal Studios and Disney have nothing on these rogues.

The 30-story Luxor pyramid is a futuristic fantasyland with a seven-story, motion-simulating Theatre of Time, state-of-the-art Sega VirtuaLand arcade (almost redundant in Las Vegas, itself a kind of virtual reality) and Indiana Jones-style "participatory adventures," in which you join in the simulated search for a magic obelisk. The Nile barge ride, which tours the inside of the pyramid and features a lot of amateurish historical scenes and hieroglyphs, is skippable. (A $25 master pass is good for all the major attractions at Luxor, Excalibur and Circus Circus.) The Excalibur, next door to Luxor, trades in pretty horses, mystical magicians, damsels in distress and shining knights. It is also among the most affordable of the resorts, with rooms ranging from $29 to $89. Treasure Island's rooms start at $39; Luxor's and MGM's at $69.

Many resorts are geared to high rollers, not strollers, and are better for a visit than an overnight. The Mirage, where the white tigers pace, can be seen in under an hour. Behind the hotel, five bottlenose dolphins are free to cruise a 1½-million-gallon tank. Guides stress that these flippers are at the Mirage to be "nurtured and studied"; no stupid water-pet tricks here. But their untutored antics are fun and worth the $3 admission, and at night a 40-foot volcano spews flame. The Forum, a tony shopping mall at Caesar's Palace, is worth a quick walk beneath its faux, cloud-dappled sky. Air-brushing and special lighting make it far prettier than the smog-streaked one outside. But then, most visitors won't see much of that anyway. The Strip is such an indoor playground, it may as well be underground. After a couple of days of stale hotel air, the surrounding mountains, Hoover Dam and Red Rock Canyon start to look inviting.

Wherever you spend the night, it works well to start the day at the south end of the Strip near MGM and Luxor, then head to Grand Slam Canyon at the north end and finish up in the middle at Treasure Island and the Mirage. Their big bells and whistles—the ship battle and the erupting volcano—don't kick in until dusk. Those hotels are also home to two of the most popular shows in town. Even at $73 a shot for adults and kids alike, tickets to Siegfried and Roy, the Hans and Franz of magic, with their big cats—the white tigers are theirs—and giant production numbers, are sold out every night at the Mirage. The spectacular 90-minute show is open to children as young as age six, but its fireballs and smoke may be too scary for them. Much of the magic may also

COURTESY LAS VEGAS CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY

TIC 1954

be lost on their youth. *Mystère!*, the new show from French Canadian Cirque du Soleil, is also best-suited to children ages ten and up, who are old enough to appreciate the unusual jugglers, acrobats, singers and comedians in this unique circus. Tickets are $42 for adults, $21 for kids under age 12. Slightly less magical, but more affordable and better for younger children, is King Arthur's Tournament at the Excalibur. The $24.95 ticket includes a sloppily fun, no-utensils cornish hen dinner, as well as a magic show and live jousting tournament.

A decent meal at a decent price is no challenge in Las Vegas. Although gimme breakfasts are rare, hotels use buffets like free booze: to get you within gambling distance. Breakfast at MGM's Oz Buffet, for example, is $4.95; lunch is $5.95 and dinner is under $8. The lines are intimidating, but they usually move fast. Hotel coffee shops and informal restaurants also tend to be quick and reasonably priced and can help offset the damage from the best places, where prices are strictly big city.

But this is to be expected, since that's what Las Vegas is looking to become: a full-blown city. Whether the land of Bugsy Siegel, Howard Hughes and countless Elvis impersonators can change that much is debatable. But these days, at least, it comes with kids' menus. ■

Betsy Streisand is assistant managing editor at U.S. News & World Report, *from which this article is reprinted with permission.*

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TWA offers daily nonstop service to McCarran Airport in Las Vegas from Phoenix and our hub in St. Louis. Passengers can make connections to these locations from numerous TWA and Trans World Express cities. For reservations and information, call your travel agent or TWA at (800) 221-2000.

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A rainbow of sheets unfurled on a white beach . . . gowns unveiled in tiny wedding chapels . . . here, a look at the sites behind this issue's photography, plus how to make them the scene of your dream wedding or honeymoon.

All about Anguilla

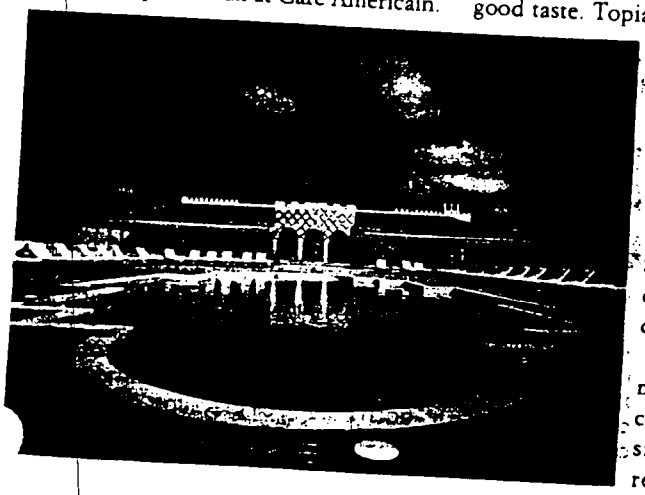
When a home-furnishings editor is in search of sharp blue skies, an aquamarine sea, and a dazzling white beach on which to display the season's freshest bed linens, she could do worse than set her sights on the Caribbean island of Anguilla. (See "The Fresh, New Look of Sheets," page 114.) BRIDE'S photo crew found plenty of inspiration at the island's all-inclusive Casablanca Resort (*below*), an exotic Moroccan-style compound set beside translucent water. Mosaics cover domes and walls, fountains splash in reflecting pools, arched doorways frame palm groves. For honeymooners, the resort's lures include outstanding snorkeling, three miles of breezy beach, and fab food: French with an island twist at the Casablanca Restaurant; lobster and burgers at the Blue Parrot Grille; cocktails, canapés, and music by Sam the piano man at Café Américain.

Until December 16, seven-night all-inclusive honeymoon packages start at $4,900 per couple, including $900 in airfare credits, a room upgrade if available, and a four-hour picnic cruise. Call 800-231-1945.

Vegas Vows

If you're taken with the idea of a Las Vegas wedding but don't quite see your marriage officiant dressed like Elvis, follow in the footsteps of BRIDE'S fashion editors and unpack your gown at Treasure Island at the Mirage. (See "Viva Las Vegas," page 710.) The new resort contains two wedding chapels (*right*), which, though open just less than a year, have already seen over 2,000 couples tie the knot.

Treasure Island's designers outfitted the chapels with a refreshing dose of good taste. Topiaries flank the marble altars, which are topped by lavish floral arrangements. The simple pews can seat 35 guests in one chapel, 65 guests in the other. Videocameras capture the ceremony; a full-fledged photo studio will shoot your wedding and reception.



Each couple is matched with a bridal consultant who will assist in anything from renting a tuxedo to printing cocktail napkins.

Want some primping? The salon and spa can oblige with everything from professional makeup to massage. Is there a special cake you've been dreaming of? Leave it to Treasure Island's pastry chefs. Have your heart set on a particular bouquet? Alert the hotel's florist. The catering department will be delighted to arrange lobster for 20 friends or finger sandwiches for 200.

Wedding packages start at about $250, with ceremony, a bouquet and boutonniere, and a small selection of photo enlargements. Call the chapels at 800-866-4748. Standard rooms range from $45 to $189; call 800-944-7444. □

LEFT: MICHAEL HUNDY; COUPLE SHOT: JEAN PIERRE MAROIS

Cosmopolitan (Spanish Ed.)
EDITION)
NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 34,135
EPTEMBER 1994
BURRELLE'S

Viaje

El león de la Metro en el MGM Grand. Izq. Arriba, la batalla entre ingleses y piratas en Treasure Island. Der., una de las áreas de recreación del Luxor.

Vegas enseña otra cara

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Ahora hay algo más en Las Vegas que casinos, y los *shows* mejores del mundo...

Por María Elena Cros

Island y MGM Grand, no se quedan atrás. ¡Y qué precios! En la primera semana de enero pasado la habitación doble bajó a $39 dólares en el Treasure Island, a $49 en el Luxor y a $79 en el MGM Grand. Y muy importante, tienen capilla para bodas... ¡y hay mucha gente que la usa!

DE TODO POR CASI NADA

Pero en todos los hoteles del "territorio" de Las Vegas pasa más o menos lo mismo. En esa ciudad mágica es posible comer cuanto te provoque, en las tres comidas sin que te cueste más de $7 dólares, inclusive en los mejores hoteles. Y hay que decir que si hasta ayer Las Vegas no se distinguía por su alta cocina, hoy los restaurantes de más fama, están abriendo allí. En el Caesar's Palace, el Spago, hermano del célebre Spago de Los Angeles. Y el Planet Hollywood (de Stallone y Bruce Willis), amenaza con hacer otro tanto. En Las Vegas no hay que preocuparse por el vestuario porque el ambiente es informal. Solo en algunos sitios y a ciertas horas se les exige chaqueta a los caballeros. Pero en general, lo mismo en *jeans* que con una creación exclusiva vas a sentirte "en casa". Otra ventaja, es que los hoteles y las atracciones se concentran en Las Vegas Boulevard (superconocido como el *Strip*). Y se puede saltar de uno a otro, en plena madrugada, sin el menor peligro.

¡Y qué decir de los vecinos de Las Vegas!... Empezando por el Gran Cañón del Colorado, a donde hay ▶89

Las Vegas de siempre

Con los fabulosos hoteles del Strip, Las Vegas sigue enseñando la cara tradicional.

Aladdin: el tema de Aladino y Las mil y una noches.

Bali: famoso por sus shows alucinantes y sus películas clásicas.

Caesar's Palace: Roma antigua, bar en un estanque del lobby: la barca de Cleopatra. Eventos deportivos. Artistas internacionales.

Circus Circus: Una pista central con actos de circo, visible desde los restaurancitos de comida rápida, la sala de juegos de video para niños, las tragamonedas y los bares que la rodean.

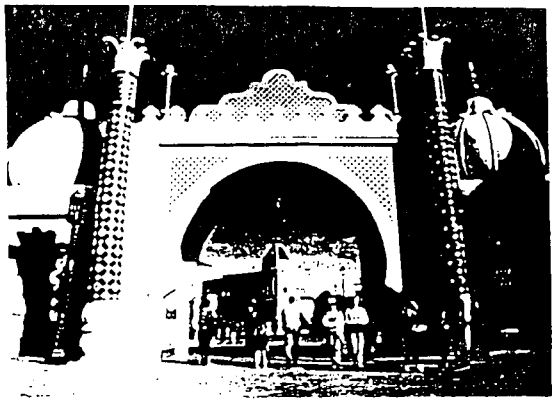
Flamingo Hilton y Las Vegas Hilton: artistas internacionales.

Mirage: ambiente polinesio, es el hogar de los tigres blancos de los célebres magos Siegfried & Roy.

TIC 2007

EL GIGANTESCO MGM GRAND

¡El hotel más grande del mundo! Sus cuatro torres verdes encierran ¡5,005 habitaciones!, incluyendo 751 *suites* de lujo. El hotel tiene 18,000 puertas y 93 elevadores, y lo enfrían 18,000 tons. de aire acondicionado. Dentro, cinco de sus bares presentan *shows*, y hay dos teatros: Grand Theater para producciones espectaculares, y el Hollywood Theater, para estrellas internacionales; y hay un centro de actividades para los niños de tres a 16 años. El jardín, que puede cambiar en cuatro horas, sirve para fiestas y convenciones, y arena de conciertos y eventos deportivos. Once restaurantes le han dado al MGM GRAND fama de buena cocina. El área de casino, es tan grande que tiene cuatro temas: Emerald City, Hollywood, Monte Carlo y Sports. El primero, es todo el Mago de Oz... El Monte Carlo, muy al estilo europeo, es el gran chiste de Las Vegas, un casino con tema de casino.



AVENTURAS Y BODAS EN UN PARQUE DE DIVERSIONES

PARQUE TEMA... EL MGM GRAND ADVENTURES. El parque más completo del mundo y el primero de su clase en Las Vegas. Un día se haría corto para probar la variedad de diversiones, entretenimientos y aventuras que se ofrecen. Dentro de sus 33 acres, se puede navegar por un río, lanzarse por los rápidos del Gran Cañón, explorar el centro de la tierra, visitar una mina encantada, pasear en un taxi parisiense, presenciar un duelo de piratas, estremecerse al borde de un precipicio con la electrizante experiencia *Over the Edge*, y "embarcarse" una montaña rusa a tan alta velocidad que al aparato lo han bautizado *The Lightning Bolt* (El relámpago centellante).

El MGM Grand Adventures presenta cinco *shows* diferentes entre ellos *The Cartoon Show* (El show de cartones), *You Are in the Movies* (Estás en las películas) y *Kaleidoscope* (Caleidoscopio). Y otro patentado por MGM, *The Three Stooges*™. En los terrenos existen nueve calles temáticas que van desde una plaza en Casablanca y un pueblecito del Asia, hasta una calle en Londres o en Nueva York y la cantina Río Grande de sabor mexicano. En el MGM Grand Adventures puedes ir al cine y al teatro, comer en diez restaurantes (uno de especialidades a bordo de un barco), y comprar en once tiendas.

¡Y te puedes hasta casar!, porque, para que no falte nada, hay dos capillas nupciales en pleno parque. Caminando por las calles, te vas a tropezar con "gente" de la talla de Betty Boop y Popeye, o con cualquiera de la multitud de personajes de su mundo de ficción que se han mudado para Las Vegas y se han convertido en anfitriones habituales del Grand Adventures. Y todo, por el precio de la entrada.

VIVIENDO ENTRE PIRATAS

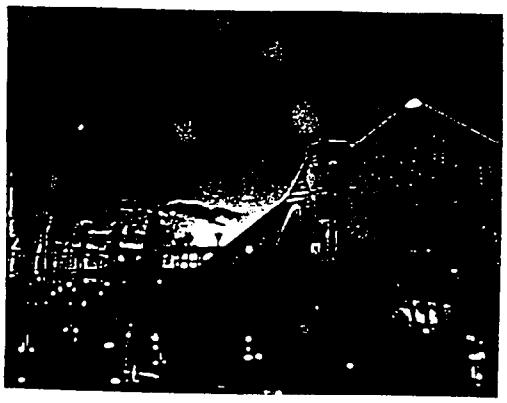
Junto al hotel The Mirage (con la misma forma de Y), a la entrada del Treasure Island, te sumerges en un pintoresco pueblo pirata del siglo XVIII, con las fachadas de los negocios de la época. El hotel tiene 2,900 habitaciones (decoradas con el tema) y 36 pisos, galería de tiendas, más de media docena de restaurantes. Y un *buffet* especial con platos americanos, italianos y chinos. El casino recoge la tradición de las suntuosas salas de juego de los Mirage, con el ambiente de una guarida de piratas. Pero "el cañonazo" del Treasure Island es Mutiny Bay, imitando un castillo, tiene su toque de misterio, mapas para encontrar el tesoro, viajes simulados, juegos de video. En la *Enchanted Chamber* (Cámara encantada) los "piratas infantiles" encuentran juegos para ellos.

E 36 **TIC 2008**

DE REGRESO AL ANTIGUO EGIPTO

El Luxor es una pirámide de 30 pisos con un gigantesco casino, siete restaurantes temáticos, gimnasio, y tres niveles de aventuras y emociones escalofriantes. Lo último en técnica cinematográfica, la galería Virtualand, ambientación exótica y una réplica a todo tamaño de la tumba de Tutankamen. La estructura única del hotel permite que todos los cuartos ofrezcan una excelente vista del perfil de Las Vegas y de las montañas que la rodean. El casino hace renacer la vida del antiguo Egipto de los faraones, con reproducciones de artefactos, columnas y tumbas, encontrados en los templos de Luxor y Karnac. Todos los adornos y jeroglíficos son copias fieles de los originales localizados en lugares como el Valle de los Reyes y el Valle de las Reinas. Uno de los cuatro restaurantes que se encuentran en este nivel, está decorado con motivos del museo egipcio de El Cairo. En la entrada principal, una esfinge de 10 pisos lanza por los ojos rayos láser, mientras abajo el agua de un estanque hierve, y aparece una pantalla de agua proyectando temas sobre Tutankamen. En el interior, hay una impresionante "puesta en escena" del legendario río Nilo.

LAS VEGAS



La pirámide del Luxor, con el rayo de luz más potente del mundo. El hotel está decorado con motivos del antiguo Egipto.

18 ▶ excursiones por tierra y aire, para ir y volver en el día, o pasar la noche en un albergue. San Francisco y Los Angeles quedan a pocas horas de carretera, y a corta distancia, Lake Tahoe y otros centros para esquiar en el invierno. Es curioso como, casi en un pestañazo, se pasa del paisaje llano y desértico en las cercanías de la ciudad, a una montaña nevada.

UNA PIRAMIDE DE 30 PISOS

Para tener una idea sobre el **Luxor**, imagínate una pirámide de cristal negro de una altura de 30 pisos, una esfinge y un rayo de luz en la cima (dicen que es la luz artificial más potente del mundo), que se ilumina al caer el sol y se ve hasta en Los Angeles. En el interior del hotel, las barcazas navegan por el vestíbulo convertido en una réplica del Nilo. A la habitación, con motivos egipcios, se sube por los inclinadores (elevadores que funcionan en un ángulo de 39°). Al salir, puede que haya que caminar unas cuatro cuadras para alcanzar la habitación, según el piso, porque los inclinadores están a los lados de la pirámide.

En el Luxor, se puede vivir la emoción del suspense con "Los secretos de la pirámide de Luxor" por $13, una odisea con efectos fantásticos ¡hasta temblores de tierra! Por $4, te vas de viaje en una cápsula sellada con ocho pasajeros más para, entre todos, combatir las fuerzas del mal.

La alfombra negra del casino de **Treasure Island**, estampada en cadenas de oro, sartas de perlas y piedras preciosas, es impactante. A semejanza de los cofres donde los ladrones del mar atesoraban sus botines, el Gold Bar del hotel, está repleto de joyas de fantasía. El restaurante principal, Buccaneer Bay Club, consta de una serie de salonciitos con media docena de mesas, y es muy popular porque desde allí se presencia el *show* de los piratas. Si no tienes ganas de moverte del hotel después de la cena, la alternativa es "jugártela" en el casino, o ir a ver el *Cirque du Soleil* ($42), un espectáculo excelente de acróbatas canadienses. Por la mañana el desayuno en el *Lookout Cafe* es un menú abierto con lo que quieras comer, por $5.

El león de la Metro "en persona" te aguarda en una de las entradas del **MGM Grand**, para invitarte a conocer su parque tema con 33 acres de entretenimientos, *shows*, diversiones, restaurantes, tiendas... y ¡grandes aventuras! Una de las más emocionantes, es la visita al centro de la tierra. El parque merece verse, la entrada (alrededor de $20, depende) te da derecho a todas las atracciones del parque, y los temas lo mismo te transportan a un pueblo de Asia que a una calle francesa o una plaza en Nueva Orléans. El hotel tiene cuatro torres con cuatro temas, entre ellos Hollywood y Marruecos; cuatro casinos, y en cada bar te espera una sorpresa que puede ser un robot, una camarera vestida como un personaje de Hollywood o algún motivo original.

COMBATES DE PIRATAS Y MOMIAS VOLADORAS

De noche el gran espectáculo del Luxor es *The Winds of the Gods*, en el comedor-anfiteatro Pharaoh ($19.95). En una hora, el Nilo se desborda y corre por el medio del teatro, y la carrera de carros tirados por caballos tiene una coreografía sensacional, hay elefantes, bailarinas. Y unos acróbatas... ¡las fabulosas momias voladoras!

El Treasure Island presenta un combate entre una fragata inglesa que patrulla la laguna del hotel, y un barco pirata. El primero es a las 3 p.m. y se repite seis veces al día. Durante 15 minutos los piratas sitian la plaza, y los cañonazos retumban en la entrada del hotel, los edificios arden en llamas y el fuego es tan real que hasta genera calor. Y como estás en Las Vegas... ganan los piratas.

Como en el MGM Grand todo es en grande, el Grand Theater ofrece una *extravaganza* musical montada a un costo de $57 millones con lo último en técnica de espectáculo e iluminación.

Después del show, los hoteles te invitan a pasar al casino, y, tú sabrás... pero allí también se divierte uno.

BUFFALO NEWS

BUFFALO, NY
SUNDAY 382,054

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Las Vegas' split-personality dilemma

Will gaming hold its reign, or will family resorts steal the crown?

BY LEE FOSTER
Special to The News

Two opposing rationales are wrestling for the soul of Las Vegas.

Will this city remain America's premier gaming capital, as it has been? Or will it evolve into a predominantly family-travel destination, emphasizing entertainment?

Can the two identities exist side by side?

With the recent openings of three new mega-resorts — 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," 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, or 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 the $3 billion gaming industry produces tax revenue for half of the state budget.

Though the future will answer these questions, the first season of the new resorts 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 resorts 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 sea created with 2.5 million gallons of water.

Luxor, a 30-story, pyramid-shaped hotel that approximates Egyptian King Tut's tomb, offers an entertainment floor that, unusual for Vegas, can be accessed without going through the gaming area. Luxor presents its own theme ride and movie show adventure, a sort of Indiana Jones excursion, plus a boat on the River Nile. The sphinx in front of 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.

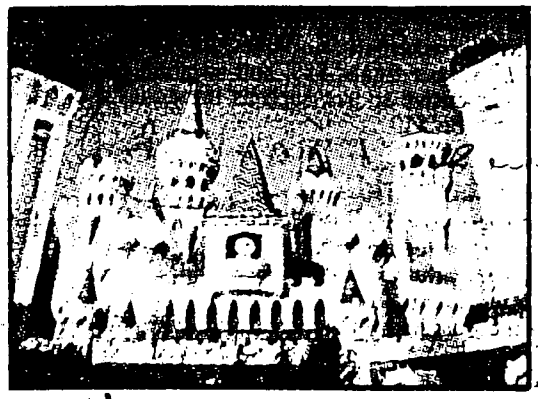
Beyond the major new mega-resorts, there are also other resorts with spectacle appeal for the family. At Caesars Palace, the marble statues come to life and talk. Kids find this intriguing. Adults joke: Caesars is where the statues talk to you even before you've had a few drinks.

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 a consumer see a performance so original.

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.



The Excalibur resort in Vegas.

Some observers thought that Las Vegas would suffer when every Indian reservation and Mississippi River town, it seems, opened up gambling casinos. However, just the opposite may be the long-term effect.

Twenty states now have some form of casino 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 gaming. That public will go to Las Vegas when they graduate 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 mega-resorts have gone up on the Strip, away from downtown, the downtown casinos along Fremont Street have languished. Gaming revenues have declined.

The downtown response is creation of a new Fremont Street Experience, due to be finished in 1995. Fremont Street will be enclosed with a barrel vault. A state-of-the-art light show will entertain visitors.

Both the glitter of Las Vegas and the outdoor wonders of southern Nevada first appear before the visitor as a mirage in the desert.

Las Vegas itself is a neon oasis where life is possible only because of dam-stored water and the 1931 Nevada state law allowing gambling.

Without the water, life would be extremely difficult here and the human population would be low, as it was when Paiute and earlier Pueblo Indians survived here. The pervasiveness of the desert is obvious when flying into the region. The first water source was artesian water pumped from aquifers below the city. Then came Colorado River water trapped by Hoover Dam.

Hoover Dam, the major man-made creation in the area, is so immense and so effective in controlling the Colorado River that it ranks as one of the major engineering feats of the human animal.

While floating on a houseboat on Lake Mead, which extends 105 miles behind Hoover Dam, one can't help but feel surrounded by a mammoth body of man-made water, a mere mirage in the minds of all but a few visionaries until the late 1930s.

Hoover Dam is a major attraction a half-hour drive south of Las Vegas. As you approach the dam, stop in at the Alan Bible Visitor Center to see a 15-minute film on the construction of the dam. By the way, the center is not a theological institution, but a park service interpretive center honoring a Nevada politician named Alan Bible.

At the dam, walk around the conerete structure. Then stop at the Exhibit Hall for the 10-minute narrated show. It spotlights different places on a topographical scale model of the 1,400-mile Colorado River Watershed and explains the river's history.

Untamed, the Colorado oscillated between years of flood and drought. Hoover Dam now regulates the flow, providing irrigation water for three-quarters of a million acres, drinking and industrial water for 12 million people, electrical power divided two-thirds for California and one-third for Nevada-Arizona, and water recreation opportunities on Lake Mead for 7 million people per year.

The main natural attractions around Las Vegas also contain elements of illusion and imagination. The two major parks nearby, Red Rock Canyon to the west and the Valley of Fire to the east, have a flaming red appearance because of iron oxide in the soil. Fingers of rock reach skyward, as if on fire.

The parks are spectacular places to visit, but be forewarned that the heat of summer makes them difficult to enjoy unless you have an air-conditioned vehicle.

Red Rock Canyon, a half-hour west of

See Vegas Page G4

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Resort Slates Discount Rates for Agents, Planners

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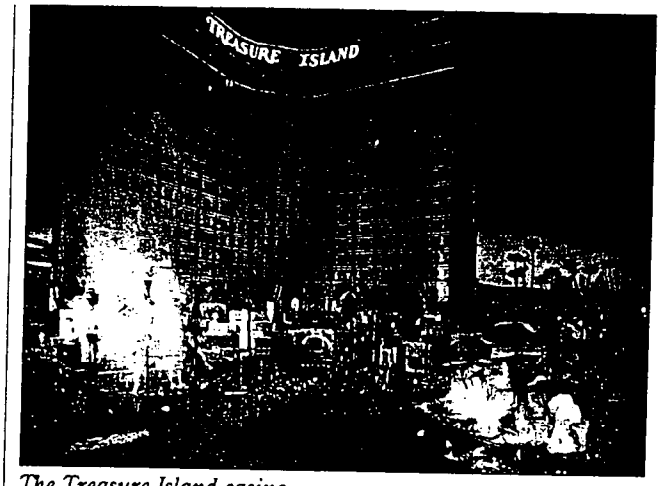
LAS VEGAS — The Treasure Island casino is celebrating its first year of operation by offering special rates to ARC-approved agents and meeting planners.

A $34 room per night rate, single or double, is offered Sundays through Thursdays, from Dec. 11 through Dec. 22.

"We wanted to acknowledge the hard work of our friends in the travel industry who have contributed to [our] success," said Randy Fleitz, executive director of hotel marketing.

"This special offer seemed an appropriate way to do so."

Reservations can be made by calling (800) 944-7444. A business card must be provided on arrival for verification.



The Treasure Island casino.

There is no minimum-stay requirement period for this offer.

Rates are noncommissionable to agents.

An additional charge of $10 for triple and $20 for quad occupancy will apply.

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Treasure Island Casino Introduces Two Winter Packages

LAS VEGAS — The Treasure Island casino has introduced two winter packages, both of which are available Sundays through Thursdays from Nov. 27 to Jan. 19, and are subject to availability.

The Winter Escape plan, at $69 per person, double, enables guests to experience a three-day, two-night stay.

Included in the package are:

- A pass to the facilities at the Treasure Island Spa.
- Two buffet breakfasts per person at the Treasure Island Buffet.
- One dinner per person at the Treasure Island Buffet.
- Coupons that allow clients to play carnival games at the resort's entertainment center.

The Winter Romance package includes three days and two nights in either a Caribbean Petite Suite or a Buccaneer Bay Suite.

For a Caribbean Petite suite, the price is $119 per person, double; for a Buccaneer Bay suite, the cost is $140 per person, double.

Included in the package are:

- Chilled champagne for two upon arrival.
- Breakfast in bed.
- A keepsake photo.
- Nightly turndown service.
- Spa passes.

As an option to both packages, tickets may be purchased to the French Canadian performing troupe Cirque du Soleil's performance of "Mystere."

The cost is $52.80 per person, including tax, subject to availability.

For information regarding availability and reservations, call (800) 944-7444.

These packages are commissionable to ARC-approved agents only.

This offer is not valid for persons attending meetings or conventions in the city.

It is also not valid during major holidays.

For groups needing 20 or more rooms, agents should

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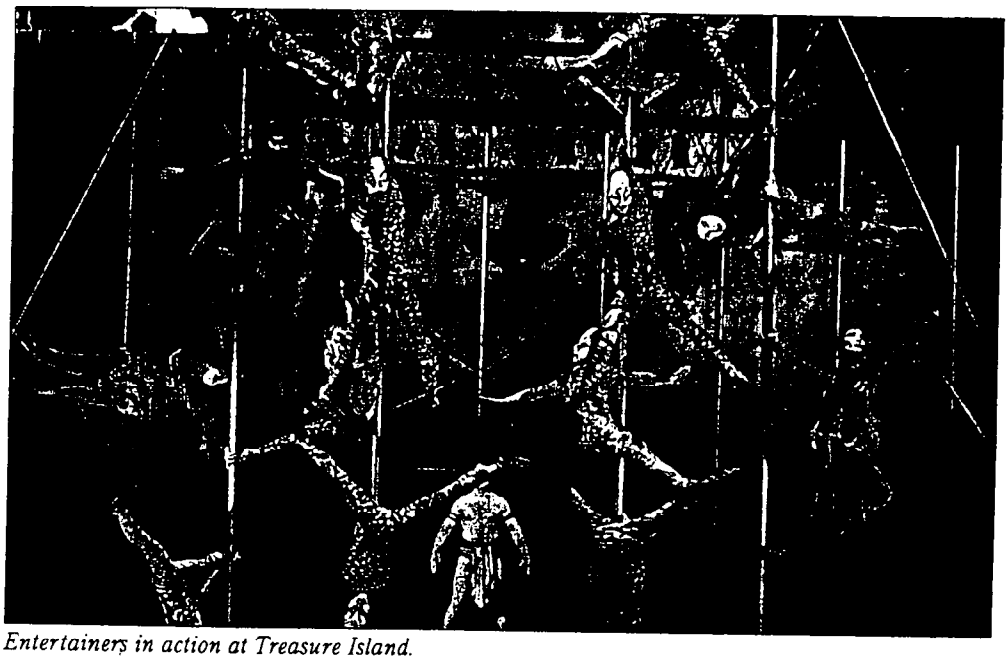

Entertainers in action at Treasure Island.

book through the group sales department at (800) 944-7711.

The management of the Treasure Island resort is also making this offer available to clients seeking extended stays.

Agents should call for specific information about three- and four-night stays.

Single, triple and quad occupancy rates are available for the Winter Escape package only.

For promotional materials, call (702) 791-7147.

TIC 2137

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LAS VEGAS

Treasure Island Offers Nuptials Aboard Replica of Warship

BY AMY BARATTA
Reed Travel Features

LAS VEGAS — These days, a wedding on board a ship isn't all that unusual — unless the ship in question just happens to be the Britannia, a replica of a 18th century British warship that battles daily with the pirate ship Hispaniola at the Treasure Island resort here.

Starting this year, the Britannia joined the property's two traditional wedding chapels in hosting marriage ceremonies.

"We were looking for something that ties to the romantic feeling of the resort," said wedding chapel manager Jacqueline Montoya.

"We have this beautiful bay [Buccaneer Bay] out front, and we started thinking about how we could tie in the ships."

The result is the Crown Jewel wedding package, which starts at $2,995 per couple.

Included in the price is a wedding ceremony conducted aboard the Britannia by an officiant in British captain's garb; photographs; bridal bouquet and groom's boutonniere, and three services from the property's beauty salon and spa.

The HMS Britannia is Treasure Island's newest wedding venue.

Also covered are a keepsake wedding box with bottle of champagne and toasting flutes; dinner at the Buccaneer Bay Club, a restaurant that overlooks the site of the pirate battle, and accommodations in a Buccaneer Bay Suite for two nights.

Other options can be included, such as pirate attendants, a traditional sword salute or a pirate who swoops down from the crow's nest during the ceremony with a brocade ring pillow that he presents to the bride and groom, Montoya said.

Each couple also will be assigned a professional bridal consultant, who assists in all the arrangements, including reception planning, formal wear rental and securing the officiant to perform the ceremony.

Wedding chapel personnel can help fulfill special requests.

Although most couples Montoya deals with book their weddings six months in advance, she said the resort can handle immediate requests.

So far, Montoya said, just one couple had celebrated their nuptials on the ship — in a promotion paid for by the resort.

The first couple actually paying to use the Britannia for their wedding have booked the vessel for April 18.

"We're just barely starting to sell [the package], but we expect it to be popular," she said, noting that the plan was eight months in the making.

Because the Britannia is needed every evening for the mock pirate battle in Buccaneer Bay, Montoya said that wedding ceremonies can only be scheduled for 10:30 a.m., noon and 1:30 p.m.

For couples who will have family or friends watching the wedding, Montoya suggested putting the guests in an outside viewing area off the ship that can accommodate more than 60 people.

"Ideally, you really want — minimum — the bride and groom and the maid of honor and the best man on board," she added.

And even though the ceremony will be taking place on the deck of a ship moored outside one of Las Vegas' largest and most popular resorts, Montoya said the event itself will be fairly private.

Wedding Chapels at Treasure Island
Phone: (800) 866-4748

Clients purchasing the Escape to Adventure package can opt for tickets to Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere."

Hotel Sells 'Escape to Adventure'

LAS VEGAS — This summer, Treasure Island welcomes clients with a two-night Escape to Adventure getaway.

Available from May 24 to Aug. 13, the package includes deluxe accommodations, two buffet breakfasts, a buffet dinner and cocktail.

The cost is $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 night, single or double, plus tax.

The rate is available to all Airlines Reporting Corp.-approved agents, who must present an International Airlines Travel Agent Network or ARC card upon arrival.

An additional charge of $10 for triple occupancy and $20 for quad occupancy will apply.

Treasure Island
Phone: (800) 944-7444
Web: www.treasureisland.com

Couples Also Will Find Traditional Wedding Chapels

BY AMY BARATTA

Reed Travel Features

LAS VEGAS — Couples who may want to take a more traditional route down the aisle can do so in either of Treasure Island's wedding chapels.

The rooms, which can accommodate 65 people each, "are mostly decorated with a European flair with peaches, cremes, mauves — soft tones," said Jacqueline Montoya, the resort's wedding chapel manager.

"There is marble and fresh flowers throughout. The rooms have almost an antique look [to them] with sconces on the wall and wallpaper done [to look like] tapestry."

Apparently, they are popular.

Between 3,500 and 4,000 couples per year get married at the resort, according to Montoya.

The following is a rundown of wedding plans — that have prices ranging from $399 to $1,499 — that are available this year:

• The Ruby Treasures plan includes the services of an officiant; the chapel fee, which includes a half-hour of chapel time and photos.

• The Silver Treasures package features all of above plus the bride's bouquet and the groom's boutonniere as well as a wedding keepsake box.

• With the Gold Treasures package, couples receive all of the amenities listed in the Silver Treasures plan plus a wedding video.

• The Diamond Treasures plan includes all of the features of the Gold Treasures plan plus a Treasure Island wedding certificate holder and accommodations in a standard deluxe room for two nights.

• The most expensive of the wedding chapel packages, the Platinum Treasures plan, includes the services of an officiant; the chapel fee, which covers one hour of chapel time; the bouquet and boutonniere; photos; a wedding video and champagne flutes.

PHOTO CREDIT - LEI

As many as 4,000 couples per year tie the knot in Treasure Island's two wedding chapels.

Also, choice of two services at the spa and salon; dinner in the Buccaneer Bay restaurant; a Treasure Island wedding certificate holder; a wedding keepsake box and a two-night stay in a Buccaneer Bay suite.

The Wedding Chapels at Treasure Island
Phone: (800) 866-4748 or (702) 894-7700
Fax: (702) 894-7701

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TRAVEL WEEKLY
NEW YORK, NY
MONDAY 50,511
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Treasure Island rolls out 2 plans for winter season

LAS VEGAS — Treasure Island is warming up to travelers this winter by offering two packages.

The two-night Winter Escape includes deluxe accommodations; two buffet breakfasts; buffet dinner; one complimentary cocktail per person, and a pass to use the spa facilities.

The plan is priced at $79 per person, double.

The Winter Romance plan features a two-night stay in either a Caribbean or Buccaneer Bay Suite; a chilled bottle of champagne; breakfast in bed for two; nightly turndown service; a Treasure Island souvenir photo, and a spa pass.

The property features a Winter Escape and a Winter Romance.

Package prices run $119 per person for a Caribbean Suite or $189 per person for a Buccaneer Bay Suite.

Clients who book either package also can opt to buy tickets to Cirque du Soleil's production of "Mystere" for $69.85 per person.

Both plans are available Sundays through Thursdays from Nov. 22 through Feb. 4 and the weekend of Dec. 18.

Additional nights may be purchased for each package, and single, triple and quad occupancy rates are available upon request.

Treasure Island
Phone: (800) 944-7444
Web: www.treasureisland.com

TIC 2489

TOUR & TRAVEL NEWS
MANHASSET, NY
WEEKLY 48.000

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-7601 BURRELLE'S OP

➤ **Treasure Island** at the **Mirage** in Las Vegas has announced two winter packages. "Winter Escape" is available Sunday-Thursday, Nov. 27-Jan. 19,. Pricing is $69 per person, double occupancy, for two nights, one spa pass, two buffet breakfasts and one buffet dinner (all per person). Coupons for Mutiny Bay midway games are also included. The "Winter Romance" package includes two nights and is available Sunday through Thursday for the same period. Included are: champagne for two on arrival, breakfast in bed for two, a photo keepsake, nightly turn-down service and one spa pass per person. Pricing for a Caribbean Petite Suite is $119 per person, double occupancy, and $140 per person, double occupancy, for a Buccaneer Bay Suite. (702) 894-7111

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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. Cosat 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.

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Treasure Island
at The Mirage

Known as *The Adventure Resort*, Treasure Island is the ideal escape from the rigors of daily life. This 100-acre site on the famed Las Vegas Strip features beautifully landscaped grounds, and an extensive array of entertainment and recreational amenities.

A nightly sea battle between the pirate ship *Hispaniola* and the *HMS Britannia*, a British frigate, makes Treasure Island's front entrance one of Las Vegas' most dramatic and exciting spots.

An elevated tram conveniently transports guests between Treasure Island and its sister property The Mirage.

Accommodations

A 36-story tower offers 2,900 guest rooms, including 212 suites. Decorated in soothing earth tones, its European fabrics provide an elegant backdrop to whitewashed wood furnishings. Each room has floor-to-ceiling glass with a view of either the mountains, The Strip or the pool area.

Dining

Treasure Island features nine restaurants. Four specialty dining rooms: The Buccaneer Bay Club, The Plank, Madame Ching's and Francesco's; and five casual outlets: a buffet, a sidewalk bistro, a 24-hour coffee shop, The Delicatessen and the Sweet Revenge ice cream parlor. There is also 24-hour room service.

Entertainment

Cirque du Soleil has made Treasure Island its permanent home with their show Mysteré, a surrealistic celebration of music, dance, acrobatics and comedy. This production takes place twice nightly in a spectacular 1,500-seat theatre. The show will be dark June 8th through June 16th and again August 10th through August 13th.

Recreation

Guests can be pampered by Cabana Hosts at the resort private pool-side cabanas. A snack bar offers an array of pool side snacks and a cocktail bar featuring frosty tropical drinks. Treasure Island's shopping promenade has a variety of shops and boutiques which cater to every need. The Spa & Salon offers the latest in fitness, health and beauty. Separate men's and women's spa facilities include sauna, steam baths, whirlpools, massages and a fully-equipped exercise room staffed by fitness experts. The Salon staff offers services for men and women.

The Wedding Chapels

Choose from a selection of five all-inclusive wedding packages, or the newest and most adventurous ceremony aboard the *HMS Britannia*.

TIC 2418

Special Rates and Packages For Clients

Sizzlin' Summer Rate Offer

$49 per room, per night, based on single or double occupancy. Offer includes one complimentary spa pass per person.
Caribbean Petite Suites available at $99 per suite, per night, based on single or double occupancy. One complimentary spa pass, per person included.
Offer available Sunday -Thursday, from May 24, 1998 to August 13, 1998.
$10.00 per person, per night, will be assessed to all rooms with triple or quad occupancy.
Offer subject to availability.

Summer Escape Package

$89 per person, based on double occupancy.
Three days, two nights deluxe room accommodations.
Two buffet breakfasts per person at the Treasure Island Buffet. One buffet dinner per person at the Treasure Island Buffet. One cocktail per person.
Single, triple quad rates available upon request.

Special Summer Travel Industry Rate Offer

This special offer is for ARC-approved travel agents, airline and cruise line employees, and meeting and convention planners.
$45 Sunday-Thursday (subject to availability).
Rate is per room, per night, based on single or double occupancy. $10.00 per person, regardless of age for triple and quad occupancy. Valid identification or industry affiliation must be presented upon check-in.
Offer valid May 24, 1998 through August 13, 1998.
Ask for the "Travel Industry Rate" when making reservations (800) 929-8762.

Package prices are per person, double occupancy, taxes and gratuity included. Subject to availability. Some restrictions apply. Limited number of packages available. Package price and inclusions subject to change without notice. Offer not available to persons attending meetings or conventions or on major holidays. Three and four-night packages available. Commissionable at 10% to ARC approved travel agents only. Cirque du Soleil's Mysteré is non-commissionable; price subject to change.

October 1994

Volume 39 No.10

M SUPPLIES

A Monthly Magazine for Sanitary Supply Distributors and Manufacturers' Agents

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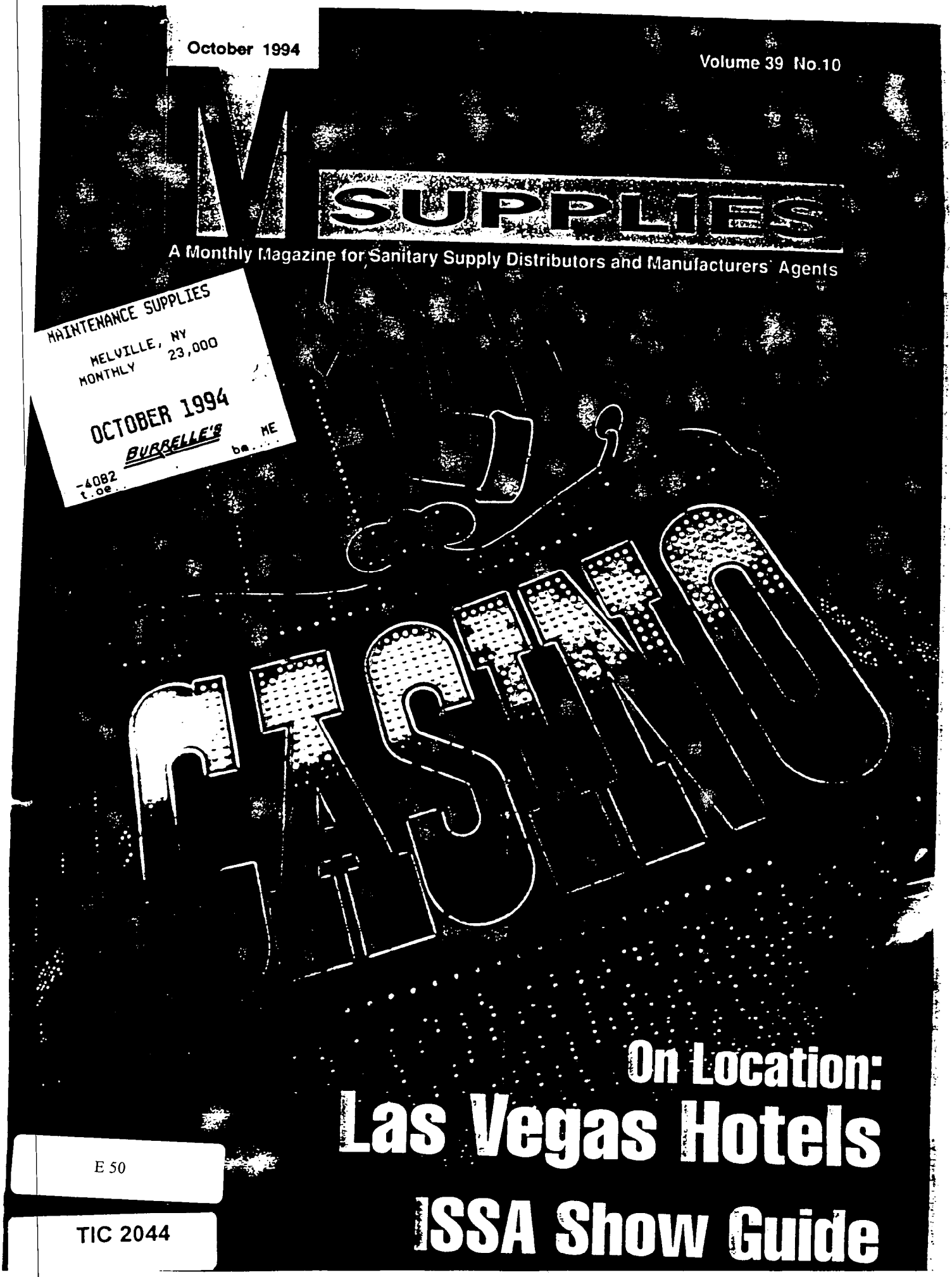

On Location: Las Vegas Hotels

ISSA Show Guide

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TIC 2044

By Keith W. Strandberg

On Location:

Las Vegas, the site of this year's ISSA show, is one of the most demanding hotel markets in the country—if you can survive here as a distributor, you can make it anywhere.

Las Vegas is a city that never sleeps, and that's great if you're a gambler. You can always find another gaming table, a first class show, a great meal or an available slot machine—a gambler's paradise.

Being a hotel manager or a maintenance supplier to the Las Vegas hotels is a different story—it's a continual challenge because these hotels never close. Just routine maintenance becomes problematic. There is always something going on: Just stripping and waxing a hallway, for example, becomes a several day job, due to the fact that there is no opportunity to just close down the hall. The hallways always have to be open and available for guest use, so only one side can be closed off at a time.

Add to this the fact that these hotels are showpieces, and have to be kept spotless in order to make the best possible impression and to ensure that guests will keep coming back. Dirt and anything less than immaculate is unacceptable.

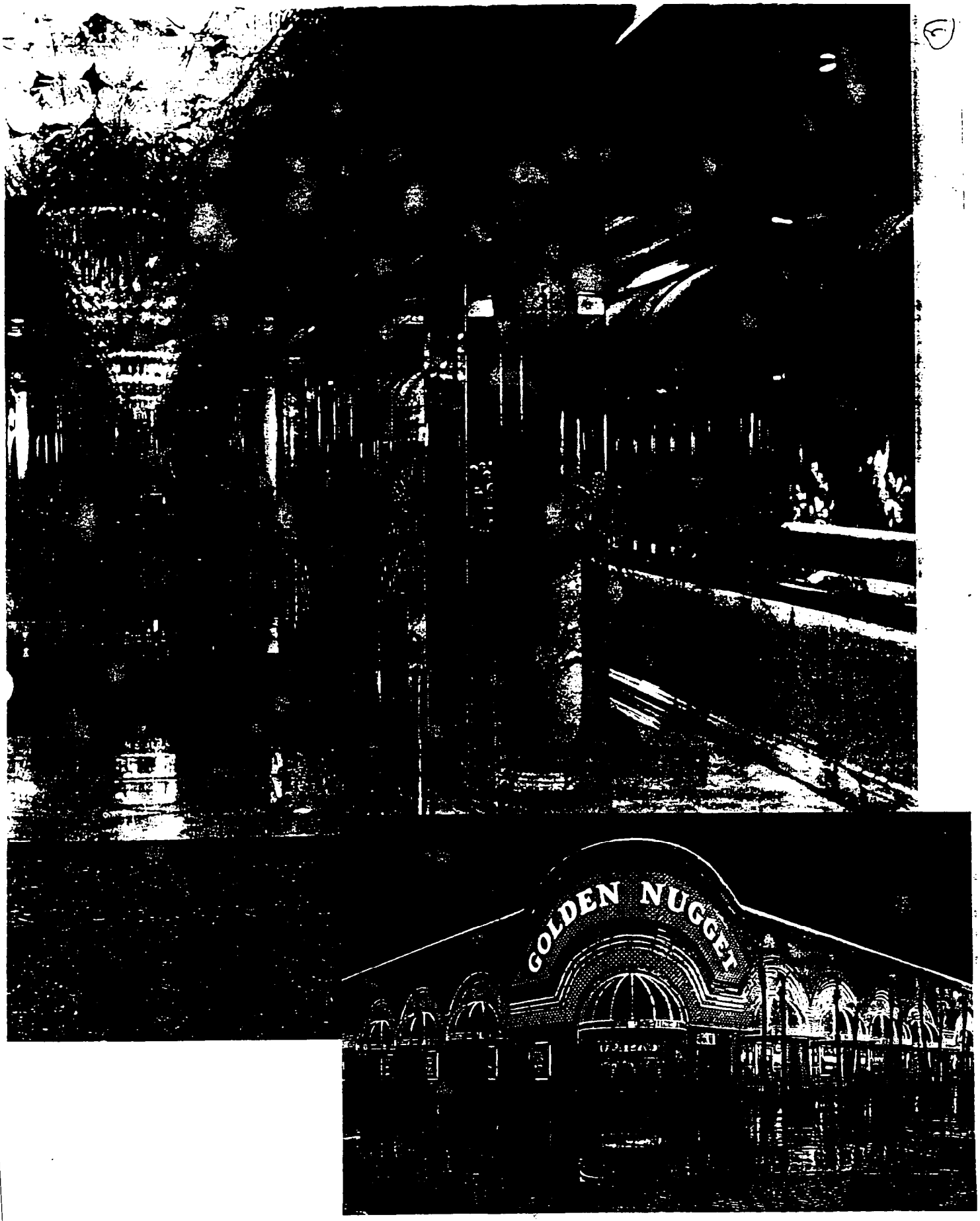
It makes for quite a challenging environment, and one that puts a great many demands on service from both distributors and manufacturers.

More Of Everything

Most of the hotel housekeeping directors contacted pointed out that, while there is nothing unique about their market—there is more of everything (more rooms, more square footage, more customers, more pressure) with less time to do all the maintenance and cleaning needed.

"All of our cleaning is done on the graveyard shift and in between our customers gaming," says Monica Morrow, director of housekeeping, Golden Nugget. "We have no down time. It is so critical that the products are durable and do the job. The suppliers can help us by making sure we are using the right thing for the volume we have. We want something that we don't have to keep reapplying, something that works the first time it's used. We need products that are compatible."

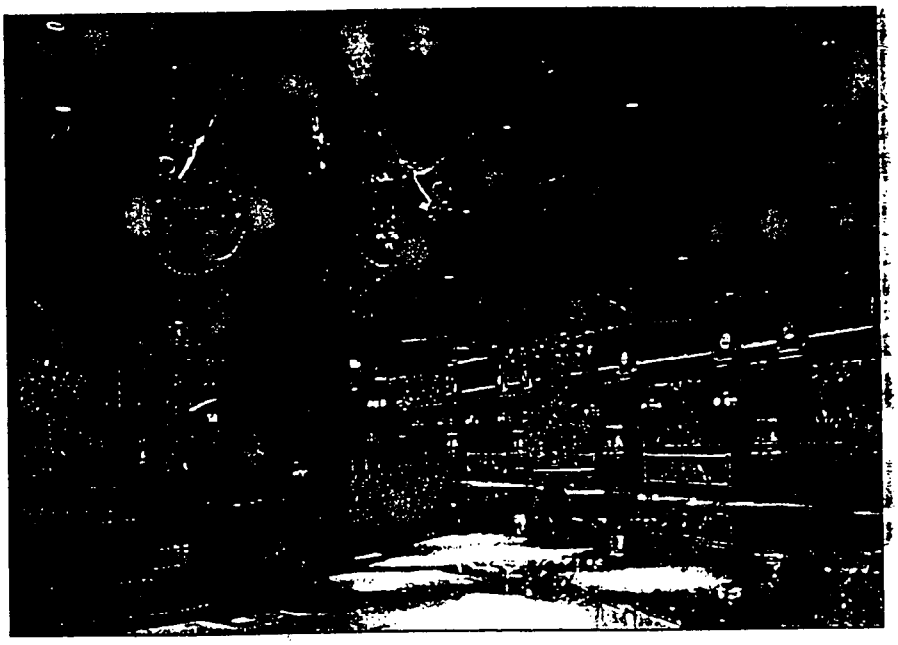
"We can't usually close down the halls," adds Jeff Nicholl, director of



TIC 2046

busiest restrooms can be used by up to 2,000 people an hour. Keeping up the maintenance and re-stocking is extremely difficult because, in the hotel industry, image is everything. The hotels want people to continue to come back, so making a good first impression and keeping a lasting image of quality is vital. The restrooms are maintained during the day, and the heavy cleaning is normally done during "graveyards." In one major hotel, all the toilets and sinks are cleaned every 35 minutes!

The amount of activity takes a huge toll on carpeting, as it is being used and abused constantly, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The carpet is used so heavily that, even though it's cleaned continually, most hotels replace their carpeting at ten month intervals.



"The carpet is the hardest to keep clean, because of the volume of people walking through the doors," says Treasure Island's Nicholl. "Most of the roads are asphalt here in Las Vegas, so the black oil is tracked right in and it takes constant attention and care. There is always carpet cleaning going on, seven days a week in the guest rooms and the casino area. We usually replace carpet every ten months to a year in the casino area."

Even in the guest rooms, carpets are a big challenge. Some of the hotels

TIC 2047

TIC 2048

Treasure Island resort, opened in 1993, is surrounded by a Buccaneer Bay village featuring a life-size pirate ship, a British frigate and a full-scale battle where the pirates always win. Inside the hotel is Mutiny Bay—an arcade featuring state-of-the-art video and electronic games. Photos courtesy of the Mirage

enjoy a 99.9% occupancy throughout the year, the traffic is very high, and the house count is very high (as many as 8,000 guests daily, or more), so it's very hard to keep the carpets clean. One hotel puts rooms off market for approximately five hours, and makes sure that the carpets are not damp when a guest checks in. If a carpet is bad, the room goes off market and it does not get released until the carpet is dry.

Other hotel problem areas, from a cleaning and maintenance perspective, include marble and natural stone. "The Las Vegas hotels have a lot of marble that you wouldn't typically find other places," says June Campbell, general manager, Brady Industries, Inc. "Since the hotels are open 24-hours a day, they have to be able to shampoo carpets and strip and wax floors while they are open and there is traffic. There is never a down time, so you have to figure ways to wax floors while there are people coming in and out the doors. That is unique to Las Vegas. A lot of the hotels and casinos don't even have doors. You have to develop techniques so that they can clean without closing things down."

The Mirage, which shares a 100-acre parcel of land with Treasure Island, has three 29-story towers with 3,049 rooms and 7,500 employees. Its volcano, waterfalls, grottos, dolphins and rare white tigers simulate a tropical Polynesian paradise. Photos courtesy of the Mirage

Hotel housekeeping directors and purchasing managers need companies that they can depend on, that will be with them through the long haul. These hotels have been in Las Vegas for many years, and plan to be there for many more.

"I'm looking for someone I can form a partnership with," says the Golden Nugget's Morrow. "As of this year, as for the past 17 years, we've

been awarded the "Triple A Four Diamond Award," and for the past 10 years, the "Mobil Four Star Award." We look for a supplier, as well as a manufacturer, who really have the same high standards that we focus on. Basically, we are looking for a company that has a lot of honesty and a lot of service ability."

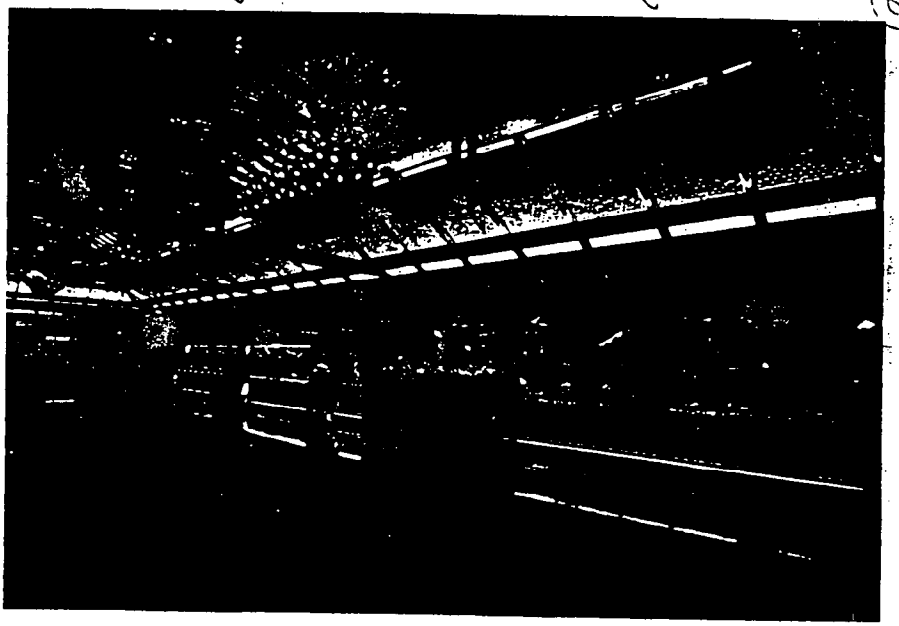
Extremely Demanding

Hotels, especially hotels in Las Vegas, can be extremely demanding. They want quick turnaround on products they need. If they run out, they don't want it next week, they want it within 12 hours. Distributors who can't do that aren't distributors there very long.

"The hotels are seven days a week, 24-hours a day, but our business is eight hours a day," Brady Industries' Campbell says. "We keep things meticulously organized to meet their needs. On janitorial equipment, some hotels are using their equipment three shifts a day, seven days a week. They want quick turnaround—they want something fixed within hours, not days. We provide inside service, and because some of the major properties are very demanding, we have an outside person who will do the repairs whenever they want it."

"Distributors have to be responsive to our needs, and provide backup service when requested," says Treasure Island's Nicholl. "If something breaks, it needs to be repaired right away, even if it's on a Sunday. They have to keep an inventory of parts. We can't afford to be down."

Another demand is for quality products that do what they are billed to do. As mentioned above, there isn't a lot of time available to anyone in the hotel industry, so the products that they do buy have to perform well the first time around. There aren't any second chances for products that don't perform.



Popular Products

One of the products gaining good acceptance in the hotel industry is dispensing systems. These help hotels control costs by controlling the amount of product dispensed. They also help improve safety for the employees, as they don't have to touch any of the chemicals being used—all they have to do is fill up a bottle and then go do their jobs.

"Dispensing systems give the hotels quality control and cost control," concurs Brady Industries' Campbell. "The employee is never dealing with the product itself, so it's safer. It's always diluted, so they never have to deal with the concentrate. We designed a spray bottle dispensing system so that they go right into the bottle."

Concentrates are becoming extremely popular. Buyers for the hotels have gotten away from 55-gallon drums and moved towards the smaller concentrate bottles—they save on shipping and material handling, and they can help the environment.

"There are a lot of new methods for distribution of the products. They are coming out with the super concentrates, and that seems to be in the forefront—decrease in costs overall and decreases in storage and shipping."

says Treasure Island's Nicholl. "You're not just buying water now. It doesn't seem to be a big deal for people to walk up to a dispensing system and fill up a bottle."

Packaging is being downsized, allowing for easier handling of products. "We've gone from the days of the 55-gallon drum to more economical packaging, which also makes the product more cost efficient, just from a shipping standpoint," says the Golden Nugget's Morrow. "We buy everything in three liter bottles—a case which has four bottles provides us with 768 usable gallons of product. It's much easier to ship, store and apportion it. The packaging is tamper proof, and the dispensing is consistent, so you eliminate the waste. The chemicals that we are using become very cost effective."

The environment is an issue for most of the directors contacted. They seem to be very much aware of the environmental consequences of the products they were purchasing, though the performance of the product in question was still the most important consideration. Recyclable bottles and packaging rank high on the list of needs, following quality, price, service and ease of use.

"We specifically request green products," says Treasure Island's Nicholl. "With the water treatment system out here, most hotels are switching to environmentally-friendly products, as well as to the proper disposal of waste and recyclable plastic bottles. This is another reason why the super concentrates are very popular."

Some hotels have switched to non-acid cleaners in an attempt to increase safety for their employees. "Non-acid cleaners have been very well accepted here," Campbell of Brady Industries says. "We have very hard water here, and you often need acid cleaners to clean. Non-acids are a big deal for the safety of their employees—non-acid bathroom cleaners to minimize the exposure of their employees, and to minimize the damage done to the faucets, fixtures, and carpeting."

Complaints

Hotel personnel don't have a lot of time, and most of the complaints voiced focused on attempts by salespeople to impinge on the time of the housekeeping director, maintenance manager, or even the housekeeping employees.

"My biggest complaint is suppliers that contact us and try to circumvent me," the Golden Nugget's Morrow says. "They will ask questions of the line employee indiscriminately. Then they come to me and feel like they are loaded for bear as to reasons why I should consider their product. I don't like that because it's indiscriminate. I don't think they get complete information that way. I have a staff of about 550, it would be unrealistic to think that all 550 perform at the same level or know as much about the products and equipment."

The way to go in most of the large hotels is through the purchasing department. They are always looking for new products and new and better ways to do things, and most are extremely open-minded when the procedure is followed.

"We would like to have appointments set up, rather than having people stop by cold and ask for a couple of minutes," says Treasure Island's Nicholl. "We normally don't allow that, and the salespeople get frustrated. There are quite a few people selling chemicals these days, and we may want to see what they have, but we can't give them time that is unscheduled."

The way to go in most of the large hotels is through the purchasing department.

Breaking Into The Market

The formula for breaking into the market is not that difficult: know your products, do your homework on the needs of the market, understand the nature of the market, and go through the right channels. Sound easy? It is, provided your company is in a position to meet all the demands of hotels.

"Start with a brand new idea," advises Edith Varley, president, James Varley & Sons, Inc. "Go to management, housekeeping, purchasing and security and sit them down and ask them—if they were putting together a program that would meet their requirements, what would their wish list be? Once you've secured some information from them, offer them information back with regard to their requirements. Let them know you understand them and the challenges any business in today's environment has. They are asked to produce more, manage fewer people more effectively, improve performance and results, all with less of a budget. Let them know you are there to help them meet these challenges, and then go over your plan to help them. Thorough and on-going training is the law, and you will ensure they have the total lowest cost, and the highest rating for cleanliness and sanitation.

"If you want to get into these properties, you need to start at the top, take all the key positions that are essential, and ask for their permission to sit down because you have a better idea,"

she continues. "Many of the distributors want to start at the grass roots and push products, I think we are better served by partnering with the hotels to solve their needs."

Loyalty and trust are big issues, according to Brady Industries' Campbell. "The most important thing is be worthy of their trust," she says. "That's our overall belief as a company. We need to be very trustworthy to the people that we sell to. They deserve it, and I believe that applies to any marketplace. Any business needs to be worthy of the business that they receive, by being reputable and honest to their clients. I think that's why Brady Industries is as successful as it is."

Product knowledge and confidence in the product is also essential. "As a distributor, you have to believe in the products you are presenting, and you have to be knowledgeable," says Golden Nugget's Morrow. "You have to have the flexibility to work with us—work with us to demonstrate and show our employees how the product works. Our employees have to buy into using the products—their input is very important."

"They have to do their homework," says Treasure Island's Nicholl. "We've had vendors come in that have no application whatsoever. We take the information and keep it on file in case it eventually becomes a need. Most of the time it's a courtesy interview, which is a waste of time. If they were to go to purchasing, they could inform them of our needs and interests. Service is the main ingredient. We've had vendors who have had good products, but couldn't service, and it's caused problems on our end, and we'll usually go to another vendor."

The maintenance supplier has to ask the question, "Why should a hotel choose my products over other products?"—the price has to be right, the performance has to be right, the color and smell has to be right, it has to be as safe or safer. Most hotel people will admit that one particular factor doesn't outweigh all other factors. They do look for safe products, but they have to do the job.

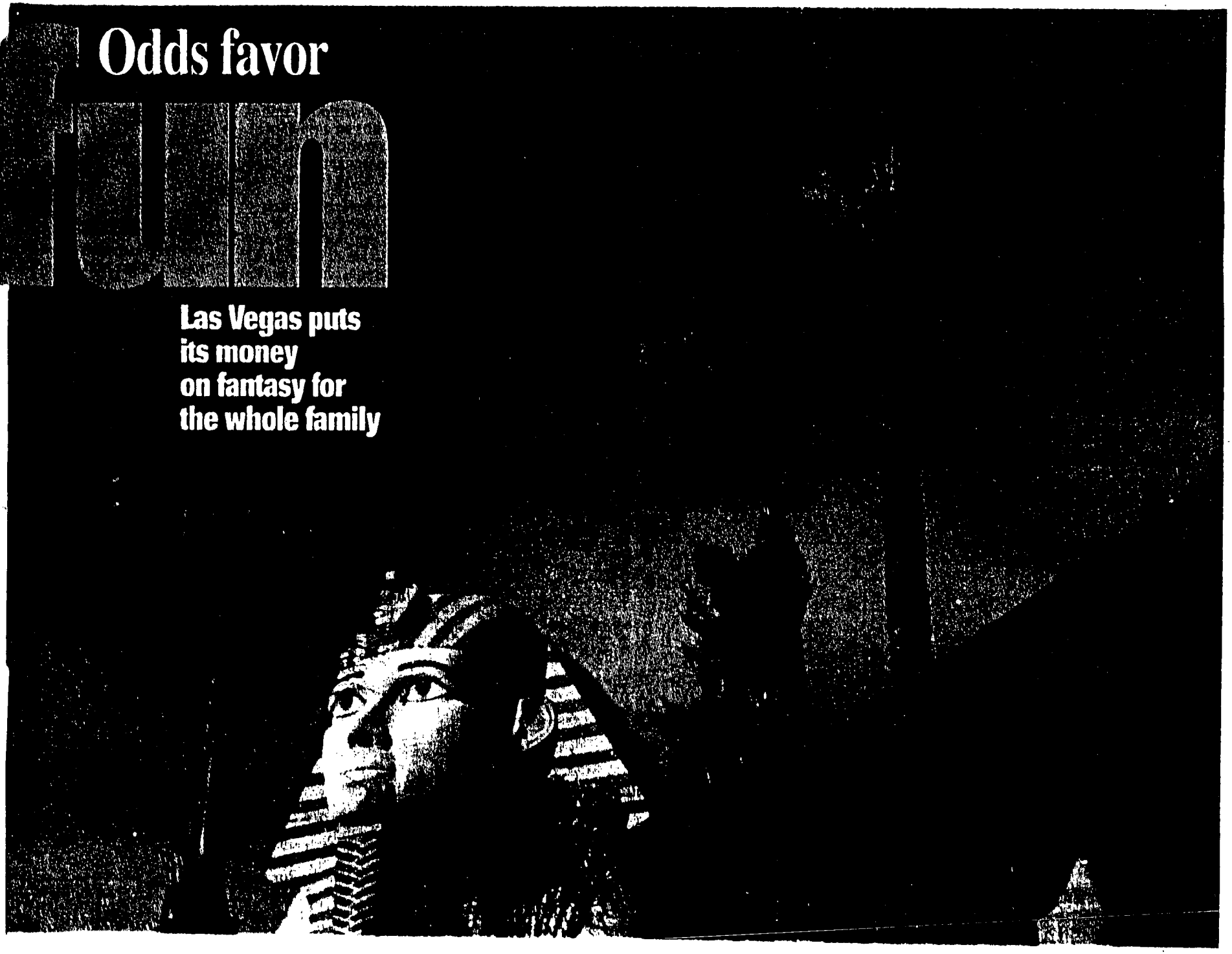
Las Vegas is a unique market as it represents the excesses of American society. The hotels are open all day every day, and things are happening 24-hours a day. They can never shut down an area to clean it, and if they run out of something, it's a major problem that has to be solved right away, not next week when the next convention comes to the city that never sleeps.

Keith W. Strandberg is a freelance writer who frequently contributes to Maintenance Supplies.

TIC 2051

Odds favor fun

Las Vegas puts its money on fantasy for the whole family



TIC 2230

GAMING & WAGERING
BUSINESS MAGAZINE
NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 12,000

MARCH 1995

BURRELLE'S

CASINO DESIGN

Treasure Island: Fantasy by design

4926BR

By Jeff Burbank

LAS VEGAS—Design architect Jon Jerde was driving in Los Angeles in 1992 when his car phone rang. The caller was Steve Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts Inc.

The first time they'd met, the two discussed the idea of creating "a complex urban neighborhood, where residents live in inhabitable movie sets," Jerde remembered.

But Wynn had a more specific project in mind for Jerde, a new casino next to The Mirage, Wynn's $730 million casino hotel that opened on the Las Vegas Strip in 1989.

"He had a tower location and a back of the house design, but didn't have a story for it yet," said Jerde, designer of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and the Horton Plaza district in downtown San Diego.

"We had tossed around a variety of themes. He said (on the phone), 'Pull over.' I pull over. And he said 'Pirates!' And I said I could do that. The next day, I sketched out a lagoon and an island. It's a building as an island."

Wynn's $325 million, pirate-themed Treasure Island hotel-casino, which opened in October 1993, was the product of a design that combined the elements of a costume epic film script, a Disneyland ride and male fantasy.

Wynn's technique for exciting theming is sure to be pirated.

TIC 2231

So far, the experiment seems to have worked. The 8 1/2-minute free-live cannon battle outside the hotel—involving a pirate ship, a British ship and 30 actors and stunt men—attracted about seven million people in 1994, hotel officials say, and hotel revenues have exceeded expectations, according to gaming analysts at Las Vegas-based USA Capital.

For the Treasure Island project, Wynn and his designers went the full nine yards, with theme entertainment directed toward family vacationers. Offering high-tech, mass-appeal entertainment has been the name of the game for Las Vegas casinos since the debut of The Mirage (featuring dolphin and white tiger exhibits, and an erupting fake volcano) and the opening of Circus Circus Enterprise Inc.'s medieval-themed Excalibur hotel (including live jousting matches between armored knights) in 1990.

"We had to have a story," Jerde said. "The island was actually a volcano that had collapsed, with residences going into the core. The idea was to have it be the 'JFK Airport' of piratedom—the crossroads of all pirates in the world. Men have a prearranged opinion of pirates, and we figure if it got 20 times more provocative, they would be more likely to come in. Men actually imagine themselves in these situations. Actually, I don't want to say we didn't have women in mind."

"Treasure Island is an imagineered design, which is a specific technique, that if not invented, was defined by Walt Disney," said Roger Thomas, interior designer for the project, whose father, E. Parry Thomas, was Wynn's banker starting in the late 1960s. "Among designers, it's a recognized and viable technique. The first thing you do is create the story line of what you're designing."

Wynn himself was the idea man for most of the specifics of the project, said Thomas, who works for Mirage Resorts in-house design firm, Atlandia Design. "The whole village concept was his, that there is a pirate ship in port

TIC 2232

and a British man o' war comes and does battle is his, that one of them sinks the British ship is his," he said.

Disney theme park alumni were recruited to do drawings for Jerde's conceptual design group, Thomas' interiors group, and for Los Angeles designer Charles White III, hired by Jerde to draw up the plans for the $35 million Buccaneer Bay village, pirate ship "Hispaniola," British vessel, "HMS Britannia," and the hotel's sign facing the Strip.

"They worked for Disneyland, Disney World, EuroDisney," Thomas said. "These were people who are not strictly trained in architectural drawings. When they do a drawing of a stone wall, it's fully rendered with all of the shadows and shading and texture and technique, so it really completely communicates to the craftsman exactly what's expected of him. They are very expensive, these guys, but they are worth it."

White researched 18th Century ship design and rigging for the two vessels and worked with three sculptors from England who carved the sterns and figureheads for the 80-ft. faux ships.

"We wanted to have a real village, as real as you could make it," White said of Buccaneer Bay. "Wynn said he wanted to outdo Disney this time. Buccaneer Bay probably is the world's most elaborate sign, because it is basically a sign to have you come in to the casino."

The pirate village theme is carried into the hotel's interior, with balconies and windows of simulated rooms lining the walkways toward the casino and continuing into a line of retail stores and an 18,000-sq.-ft. entertainment center, designed as a Moorish castle with video and carnival style games.

Open treasure chests with gold, silver, strings of pearls and other simulated pirate booty sit in niches beneath the ceiling throughout the casino. In the lobby are two large chandeliers made of simulated skulls, leg and hip bones, based on a real one White saw in a monastery in Czechoslovakia.

"Steve wanted to bump

The Treasure Island design team

Concept: **Steve Wynn**
Design architect: **Jon Jerde, Jon Jerde Partnership**
Architect: **Joel Bergman and Atlandia Design**
Interior design: **Roger Thomas and Jane Radoff**
Lighting: **David Hersey**
Ship construction: **Showtech**
Battle show director: **David Sosna**
Landscape design: **Lifescapes**

TIC 2233

it up," White said. "His attitude is to fulfill the promise of Buccaneer Bay on the inside of the hotel."

The story line Wynn and his people developed for Treasure Island to aid in its design centered on a tropical island discovered in the 1700s by pirates from throughout the world who "decided it was the tropical paradise perfectly situated for the means of their pirate capital," Thomas said. "They laid siege on the island, they captured it and began making it to their own environment."

That served as the starting point for designing the Buccaneer Bay facade facing the tourist-heavy Strip. The simulated port includes a village on a carved stucco hillside with various shops that may have been opened by pirates in the 18th Century. Thomas said the design team figured that, to build this fantasy village, the pirates "used ship parts and the booty and plunder from around the world to alter, add to and make more comfortable their pirate capital."

The group then set out to find original objects of the period and use them both to build the village and as models for artificial objects.

"The first thing we did was go to various points and places and bought 300-and 400-year-old doors and windows and stair railings and terra cotta architectural parts and carved marble architectural parts, and just any architectural part that had the romance and could be identified from a far distance," Thomas said. "We wanted it exotic and beautiful.

Wynn's concept centers on a tropical island theme, populated by pirates.

"As the design was going on, we already knew it was a collection of buildings," he said. "In the center was a blacksmith's area, so we had to go and find huge bellows, and blacksmith's tools and implements. We knew there was a merchant's house and a baker's house and tinker's house and those were in the wealthier area of town, and we knew we had to have various stairways that had to be accommodating.

"So we bought pieces and shipped them all to a warehouse here, where we photographed and measured them to within an eighth of an inch. We knew if we'd bought one window shutter and actually needed eight, we were going to be better off casting or reproducing from the original than creating them from scratch."

In the end, the project came in within the budget, "but we make sure to set our budgets realistically," Thomas said.

TIC 2234

"I mean, you can really insult the customer by trying to make him believe something that's second rate, that's thin. I really think the customer is a very sophisticated person now. There is a far higher level of education. These people travel further and have more exotic experiences when they travel. So if you are going to give them a French interior, or an Italian interior, or a pirate interior, you have to be superbly educated in that theme. It takes a commitment to authenticity."

Joe Milanowski, a gaming analyst for USA Capital, described Treasure Island as "a top-notch property, very well finished. If you ask visitors about Las Vegas casinos, Treasure Island is probably for and away a favorite."

According to Milanowski, Mirage resorts officials privately say the pirate battle should have been placed in the rear of the hotel, so viewers would have to walk past the casino first to see it, prompting more to gamble on the way. Many who watch the outdoor pirate show simply turn and walk back south on the Strip toward The Mirage and Caesars Palace.

Treasure Island will $335 million-$350 million in 1994, thanks to an unexpectedly good cash flow from the 36-story hotel's 2,900 rooms and entertainment, Milanowski said. ■

MEETING NEWS

JERICHO, NY
18-TIMES/YEAR

MAR 20 1995

BURRELLE'S LA

LAS VEGAS

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Las Vegas Continues Its Mega-Resort Winning Streak

Last year, Las Vegas hit the jackpot: Gaming revenues in the county reached an all-time high of $7 billion, visitor volume jumped 20 percent and hotel occupancies hit 89 percent.

Las Vegas can attribute its winning streak in large part to the first full year of operation of three mega-resorts: MGM Grand Hotel, with a 33-acre theme park; the Luxor, featuring boat rides on an indoor river, and Treasure Island, with a live-action pirate show featuring a full-sized ship. But what new possibilities do these three resorts, and two more under development, hold for meeting planners? Although the three properties offer a total of over 10,000 sleeping rooms, they don't have extensive function space.

Still, incentive groups, sales meetings and other gatherings can find their niche. "Meetings and conventions do figure into our marketing plan here," said Cathleen Genova, manager of convention sales for the MGM Grand Hotel, Casino and Theme Park. "They're 15 percent of our total business, and they're important in filling rooms during the Sunday-to-Thursday slot."

Treasure Island views incentive groups as an important market, even for weekend bookings, said Randy Fleitz, executive director of hotel marketing. Weekday meetings of up to 300 attendees are also an important segment, he said, adding that Treasure Island's sister property next door, The Mirage, can accommodate larger meetings.

The Luxor, on the other hand, relies largely on leisure business and has no meeting space.

It's uncertain what type of function space two new mega-resorts now under development will contain, but both will undoubtedly broaden Las Vegas' appeal. New York-New York, a 49-story resort being built on the Las Vegas Strip, is set to debut in early 1996. The $300 million resort will feature depictions of Manhattan landmarks and offer 2,100 guest rooms.

Another mega-project under development by Steve Wynn, who masterminded The Mirage and Treasure Island, is moving forward. Wynn's company plans to construct a 50-acre lake and then build the Beau Rivage, a 3,000-room hotel, on an island in the middle of it. A completion date is currently undetermined.

— BETSY WIESENDANGER

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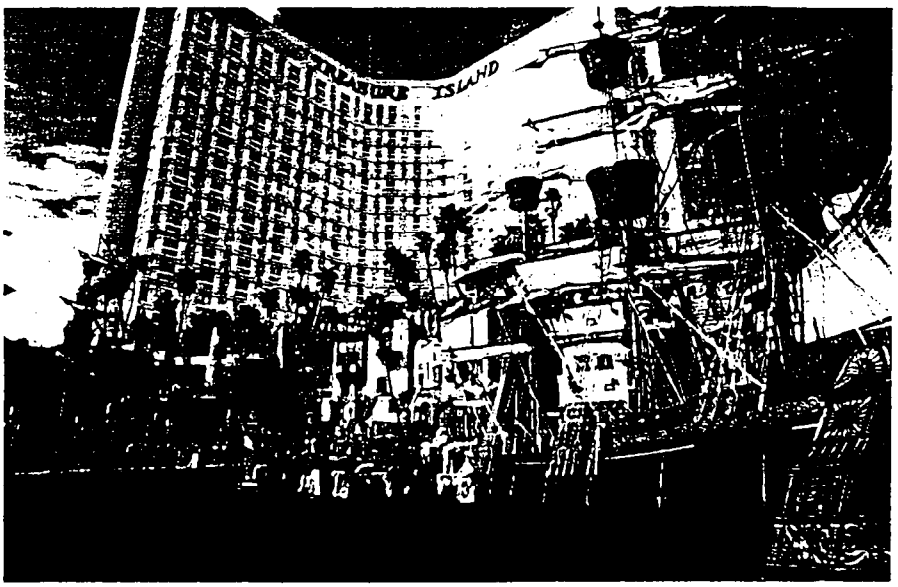

Live actors wage a ship-to-ship battle in "Buccaneer Bay" several times a day at Treasure Island. The resort features 2,900 rooms and 18,000 square feet of meeting space.

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LEISURE TRAVEL NEWS
MANHASSET, NY
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■ A travel agent rate of $45 per night plus tax, single or double, will be available for ARC-approved agents at Las Vegas' **Treasure Island at the Mirage** resort May 24-Aug. 13. The resort recently underwent a $25 million redesign. It includes a spa, shopping and entertainment and a beauty salon and a tropical swimming pool. Visit the resort's Web site at **ww.treasureisland.com** or, to reserve, call (800) 944-744 and request the travel agent rate.

TIC 2401

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NEW YORK, NY
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JULY 1998

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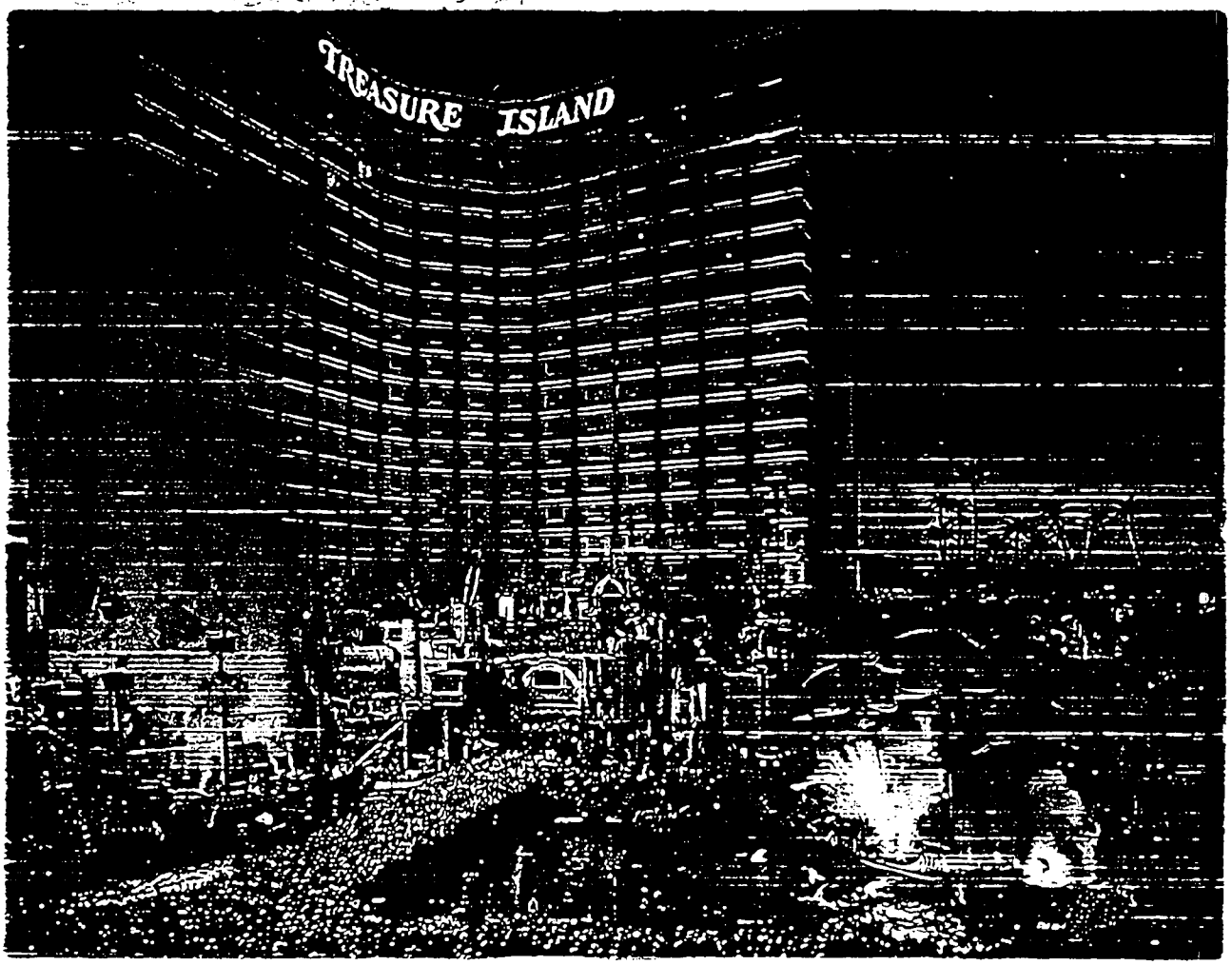
Nevada



Planning a meeting or an incentive trip often involves taking chances. Just like a game of blackjack, the next card dealt

TIC 2438

could make you a winner or loser. But, like any game of chance, you can improve your odds at winning by choosing the right place to play. Nevada is one of those places where planners don't have to gamble.

"Whether your visit takes you to our fabulous gaming capitals of Las Vegas, Reno, Lake Tahoe, or Laughlin, or to our quieter rural areas where you'll find action and excitement in a

By Lynn Seldon Jr.

more relaxed setting, there's no place like Nevada," said Gov. Bob Miller. "Here you'll enjoy an extraordinary mix of history and culture, wide open spaces, magnificent ski resorts, challenging golf courses, and our legendary brand of gaming and world class entertainment."

This extraordinary mix has kept meeting and incentive travel planners happy for decades, as Nevada has become one of the world's most popular places to meet and play. From the glittering resort, gaming, and entertainment centers to the great out-

TIC 2439

doors, Nevada provides perfect venues for any group or individual. Add to this a wide array of state-of-the-art resorts, hotels, and meeting facilities, and it's easy to see why Nevada has made a winner out of many meeting planners.

"Nevada has everything," said Thomas G. Tait, executive director for the Nevada Commission on Tourism. "Our action is 24 hours a day. We are the only state that can consistently offer round-the-clock entertainment, food, and activities to visitors."

Las Vegas

If you haven't been to Las Vegas lately, you'll find a new age of resorts and amenities has evolved. "Las Vegas has emerged as one of the world's finest meeting and incentive destinations," said Manuel J. Cortez, president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. "The city continues to reinvent itself, adding five major new resorts, 20,000 rooms, and more than two million square feet of corporate meeting space."

The dawn of the new era emerged with the opening of theme mega-resorts like Caesars Palace, Circus Circus, Excalibur, and The Mirage. When the Luxor Hotel & Casino, Treasure Island Hotel & Casino, MGM Grand, and Grand Slam Canyon opened at a cost of more than $2 billion in late-1993, the face and ambiance of Las Vegas meeting and incentive travel changed forever.

Rave reviews of the Hard Rock Hotel (1995), Monte Carlo and The Orleans (both in 1996), and New York-New York and Sunset Station (both in 1997) have continued the success of the mega-resort era. The Fremont Street Experience added more to the mix in 1995, turning five blocks of downtown's Glitter Gulch into a traffic-free dynamic pedestrian zone lined with world-famous casinos and wrapped in stereophonic sound and light shows.

Synonymous with extravagant stage shows and non-stop nightlife, Las Vegas is just one feather in the cap that Nevada can offer meeting planners.

More recently, The opening of the mile-long MGM Grand-Bally's Monorail is the start of what futurists hope will eventually link Las Vegas resorts, McCarran International Airport, and the Las Vegas Convention Center. Other unique attractions, like the 1,149-foot-high Stratosphere Tower (America's tallest free-standing observation tower and the tallest building west of the Mississippi), and Star Trek: The Experience, have continued the enhancement of the new era in Las Vegas.

On the eve of the new millennium, builders are creating new mega-resorts and attractions to explore the worlds of space, magic, romance, and elegance. Las Vegas had more than 105,000 rooms in early 1998, but the number of rooms and attractions never seem to stop growing. Openings on the horizon now include Italian-themed Bellagio (1998, 3,000 rooms), French-themed Paris Casino Resort (1999, 2,900 rooms), and ex-

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pansion plans for the MGM Grand (more than 2,000 new rooms and many new amenities). Also scheduled to open are the huge Mandalay Bay hotel-casino-entertainment complex (1999, 3,700 rooms), the Venetian Casino Resort (3,036 rooms in 1999 and 3,000 more rooms later), and the Aladdin Hotel Casino and Planet Hollywood Music Hotel (late-1999 or 2000, 3,600 rooms).

The Las Vegas McCarran International Airport has also played a major role in the success of southern Nevada meetings and incentive trips. With more than 800 flights a day and direct connections to 62 U.S. airports and nine international destinations, it's among the 10 busiest airports in the world.

Meeting Facilities

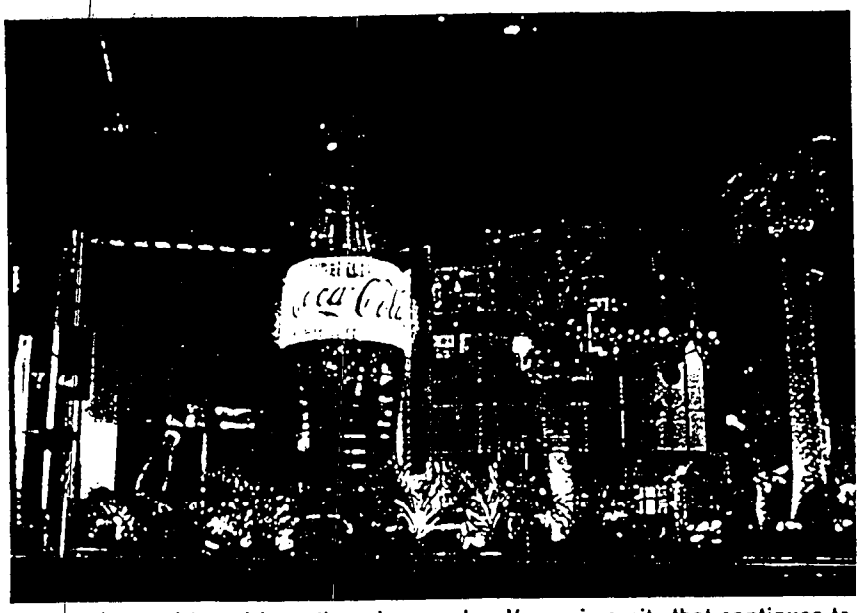
But all of this wouldn't draw meeting and incentive business without great business-oriented facilities. As expected, Las Vegas has facilities on a grand scale.

The bustling Las Vegas Convention Center has a total of 1.6 million square feet, with 1.3 million square feet of meeting and exhibit space available in 97 meeting rooms. An additional 100,000 square feet of space is available at the Cashman Field facility, and the Sands Expo Center (one million square feet) will eventually be connected to the Venetian Hotel in the first half of 1999.

A $44.6 million expansion of the convention center will be completed later this year, adding 279,000 square feet of exhibit space and 42,000 square feet of meeting space. A visitor center will be built with a walkway connecting it to the main center.

On the resort front, the space options are nothing short of phenomenal. The Las Vegas Meeting & Convention Planning Guide lists 62 hotels with meeting and convention space totaling more than 1.8 million square feet.

"Las Vegas is always improving its product," said John Yaskin, south-



To meeting and travel incentive planners Las Vegas is a city that continues to reinvent itself, adding five major new resorts, 20,000 rooms, and more than two million square feet of meeting space over five years. Many of the hotels being built will have modern meeting facilities.

ern Nevada chair of the governor's conference planning committee and vice-president of hotel sales at Caesars Palace. "The new era of resorts and entertainment options will continue into the next millennium."

As can be expected, there's always something new coming in Las Vegas.

The MGM Grand Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip recently opened an elegant and well-appointed 380,000-square-foot conference center at a cost of $80 million. The target market is generally Fortune 500 companies. MGM Grand CFO Jim Murren said, "It is our most important competitive weapon for 1999."

According to Martie Sparks, assistant vice president of convention services, the average conference attendee will earn more than $75,000 a year and will spend 40%-50% more on gambling than do tourists. The center, which has 45 meeting rooms, is trimmed in wood and offers artwork, elegant hallways, and views of the Strip. It eventually will be linked to the 1,500-room Marriott Hotel, which will open in 2000 behind the existing MGM Grand.

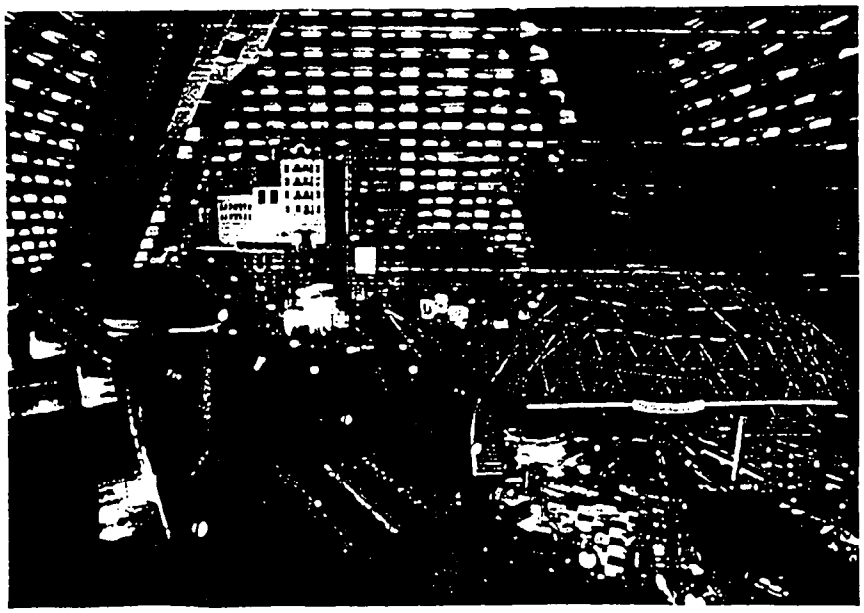
The Riviera Hotel & Casino on the Las Vegas Strip plans to open an 85,000-square-foot convention and visitors center in late 1999. The new facility, located behind the famed Strip hotel, will accommodate up to 5,700 people with bleacher seating and sky boxes. The center is designed for conventions and entertainment events. Of course, many of the hotels slated to be built in the next five years will have modern meeting facilities. Like all of Las Vegas, you have to see all of the facilities and changes to believe them.

"Years ago, we didn't consider Las Vegas a viable meeting site," said Kim Gutierrez, director of meetings and conventions for Abbey Carpet Co., Inc., a large franchiser of carpet stores based near Naples, FL. "But, they've enhanced and expanded their facilities and services so much we went there and already have plans to go back. For example, we were able to do everything right at Caesars Palace."

Along with great resorts and meeting spaces, the city's famed entertainment options draw many first-time and repeat visitors. Quite simply, Las Vegas marquees are the envy of other resort cities and it's easy to see why the city calls itself the "Entertainment Capital of the World."

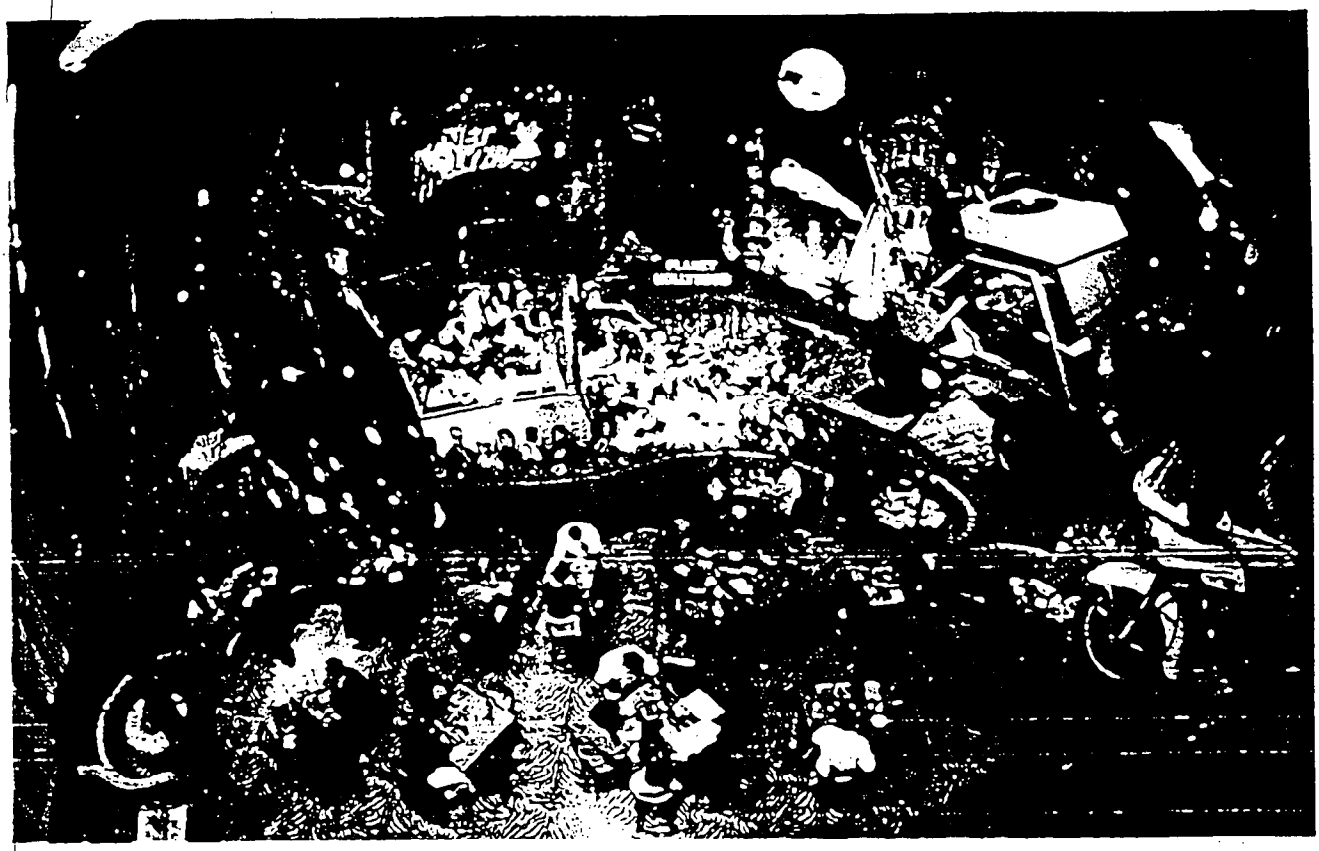
Marquees announce performances by Celine Dion, Natalie Cole, Bill Cosby, Liza Minelli, Julio Iglesias, Siegfried and Roy, David Copperfield, Tom Jones, Barbara Mandrell, and virtually every other name on the nightclub and concert circuit. Long-running production shows booked at several resort hotels allow visitors a wide variety of choices, ranging from EFX, a special effects spectacular, to the lavishly costumed Folies Bergere, which has been on the Las Vegas Strip since the 1960s.

Lounge entertainment and the wide range of resort shows, shopping, dining, museums, and more mean there's never a dull moment inside any Las Vegas resort or attraction. As can be expected, there are a wide range of con-



The pyramid shaped Luxor hotel and casino is a dramatic landmark in Las Vegas.

TIC 2442



Planet Hollywood, located in the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace, offers planners seating for 525 meeting attendees.

vention services and operators to arrange unique events. There are more than 50 destination management companies in the city, and with names like Inventive Incentives and Convention Ease you can see there's help available.

The unique facilities and entertainment options in Las Vegas may keep many meeting attendees indoors day and night, but others could be attracted to outdoors activities just outside the city. There are day-trip outings to Red Rock Canyon, Lake Mead, the Hoover Dam, Mt. Charleston, the Grand Canyon and much more.

Laughlin

Just 90 miles to the southeast of Las Vegas, Laughlin is a great meeting and incentive destination in its own right and is also an ideal multi-day excursion possibility. The year-round playground basks in near-perfect weather while offering 11,000 resort hotel rooms, big name entertainment, a number of world-class casinos, the natural wonders of the Mohave Desert, and the water-related activities of the Colorado River.

Don Laughlin envisioned building a resort when he first flew over the area in 1966. He bought a boarded-up motel that evolved into the 28-story, 10,405-room Riverside Resort Hotel and Casino, the cornerstone of one of the fastest-growing resort destinations in the state.

By 1972 there were three casinos and a permanent population of 100 persons in Laughlin. Now more than 14,000 Nevada and Arizona residents work in the Laughlin resorts — the Riverside, Golden Nugget Laughlin, Pioneer Hotel & Gambling Hall, The Regency Casino, the Edgewater Hotel & Casino, Gold River Gambling Hall and Resort, The Colorado Belle Hotel/Casino, The Ramada Express, Harrah's Laughlin, Flamingo Hilton Laughlin, Bay Shore Inn, and Crystal Palace Motel.

The city's founder built a $3.5 million bridge to Arizona. Downstream, another bridge connects Arizona to the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation in Nevada, site of the Avi Hotel & Casino. Because of the popularity of Laughlin, officials now are studying sites for a third bridge.

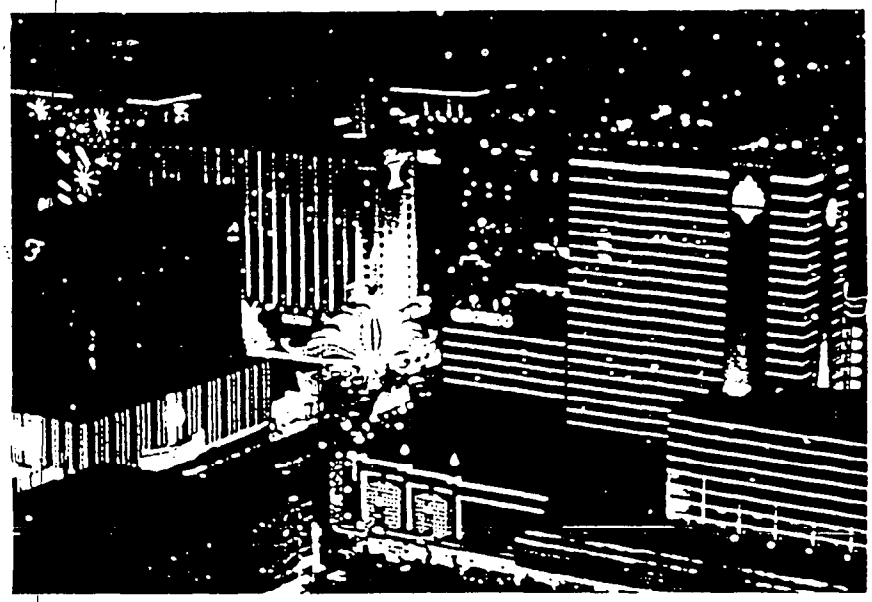
Laughlin's meeting facilities total almost 50,000 square feet at five resorts. There's 16,248 square feet at Gold River Resort & Casino, 12,200 at Riverside, and more than 5,000 square feet each at Ramada Express, the Flamingo Hilton, and Harrah's Laughlin.

Though there are no current plans for new resorts or facilities, the current line-up is ideal for small groups or planners looking for something unique in Nevada.

Al Guzman, sales executive for the Laughlin Visitors Bureau, said, "Laughlin is the perfect place for a small meeting. It has ideal weather, a totally safe environment, light traffic, and, most importantly, resorts and meeting staff that really want your business."

Outside the resorts, Laughlin has much to offer the meeting attendee. The 250,000-square-foot Horizon Outlet (shopping) Center in the heart of the gaming district on Casino Drive opened in 1996, providing great prices to visitors on a wide range of items. Of course, there's a variety of outdoors things to do just outside town, too.

TIC 2443



Reno with its plentiful convention facilities provides a pleasant alternative to Las Vegas for Nevada-bound meeting attendees.

Reno & Sparks

Options in the Reno-Sparks area just keep getting bigger and better. From the 370,000-square-foot Reno-Sparks Convention Center to a wide array of resorts, casinos, and entertainment centers, the Reno-Sparks area seemingly has it all. "Of course, convention facilities are just empty space without the services to back them up," said Reno-Sparks C&VA president and CEO J. Phillip Keene III. "Rest assured that Reno-Tahoe's highly experienced convention and visitors bureau staff is here to help you with every detail."

More than 25 years ago, the Peppermill Hotel Casino started as a coffee shop and lounge. Now it boasts 1,070 rooms and more than 30,000 square feet of flexible meeting space. The resort regularly hosts groups from 15 to 1,000 and offers popular poolside events.

Boomtown Hotel Casino, just west of Reno, is living up to its name with expansion plans that will wow meeting planners prospecting for a good time. Work is under way on a seven-story, 200-room addition as well as an additional 9,000 square feet of meeting space. In 2000, groundbreaking is planned for a 2,100-room tower that will also enclose 100,000 square feet of gaming space, six new restaurants, and shopping. Outside will be an amusement area and an 18-hole golf course. Completion of the project in 2004 will make Boomtown northern Nevada's largest resort/gaming entertainment complex.

Those who haven't seen famed Circus Circus Hotel Casino in a while should look at it anew. A $50 million renovation resulted in all 1,572 guest rooms, 84 mini-suites, and 24 suites being decorated in the style of the elegant European circus period of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Five conference rooms provide lots of meeting flexibility.

Big changes are in the cards for tropically-themed Atlantis Casino Resort. Conveniently located across the street from the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, the 600-room resort will be adding 900 rooms, three restaurants, more casino space, and a 40,000s-square-foot convention and special events plaza.

After meetings at the Reno Hilton, guests can enjoy the new show, Aireus, which takes place on the largest proscenium stage in the world. The Reno Hilton is the largest hotel/casino in northern Nevada with 2,001 rooms, 140,000 square feet of meeting space, a shopping mall, two movie theaters, and a state-of-the-art electronic amusement center.

Meeting attendees will be amazed by Silver Legacy's new 120-foot-high automated mining machine that simulates the silver mining process. Northern Nevada's premier themed resort, it keeps making exciting changes. The new 7,500-square-foot ballroom augments 30,000 square feet of existing convention center space. Other new amenities include a laser show, a high-limit slot pavilion, and Sunday brunch.

The Ramada Plaza Hotel near downtown Reno recently reopened

At Lake Tahoe, meeting goers can enjoy sailing and scuba diving as well as fishing, swimming, and hikes along the shore.

TIC 2444

under new management and following a $5 million renovation and the opening of an on-site casino. The facilities include a 5,600-square-foot conference center, and there are plans to expand to 10,000 square feet in the works.

John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks, NV leaves nothing to chance when it comes to pleasing meeting planners. The hotel recently added 30,000 square feet of meeting space, bringing the total to 110,000. A new 802-room tower brings the total number of rooms to 1,600 and an eighth eatery is opening at the resort this summer.

Besides the Convention Center and hotel meeting spaces, there's the Reno Livestock Events Center (35,000 square feet) and the National Bowling Center (80 lanes, 800-seat grandstand, 172-seat theater, and plans for a removable floor to add floor space).

One of Reno's finest theaters also is available for meetings. Reminiscent of San Francisco and New York theaters of the 1930s and '40s, the new 580-seat showroom inside the Eldorado Hotel/Casino has an art deco-inspired decor. With the recent addition of 12,000 square feet of space, the Eldorado is a perfect meeting site. After meetings, groups can head to the theater for a special event or a performance of the smash-hit Broadway musical "Smokey Joe's Cafe."

The downtown areas of Reno and Sparks are also going through dramatic changes. Redevelopment is taking place along the Truckee River in Reno and there are plans for renovation of the historic Riverside Hotel Casino.

The city of Sparks, which is adjacent to Reno, is extending its downtown Victorian Square are to include a movie theater, English Victorian gardens, shopping, dining, and entertainment.

Lake Tahoe

Just 38 miles to the southwest, this area offers a wide array of options on the Nevada side of the lake. For example, Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort & Casino boasts outstanding facilities and beautiful mountain scenery. The 458-room resort has 23,000 square feet of meeting space and a brand new Lakeside Lodge, a $5 million lakefront meeting facility.

The Cal-Neva Resort on the north shore of Lake Tahoe has been beautifully remodeled. The historic landmark features 15,000 square feet of convention space and the renowned Frank Sinatra Celebrity Showroom — a perfect venue for awards dinners and presentations.

A small number of executive retreats also are available on the Nevada side of the lake. Top ones include the All Seasons Resort, Aspen Grove, Club Tahoe Resort, Crystal Bay Club Casino, Diamond Peak Ski Resort, and Third Creek Townhomes and Conference Center.

From Glitter Gulch rising out of the desert in Las Vegas to the peaks around Lake Tahoe, Nevada is never a gamble to meeting and travel incentive planners. 12 C&IT

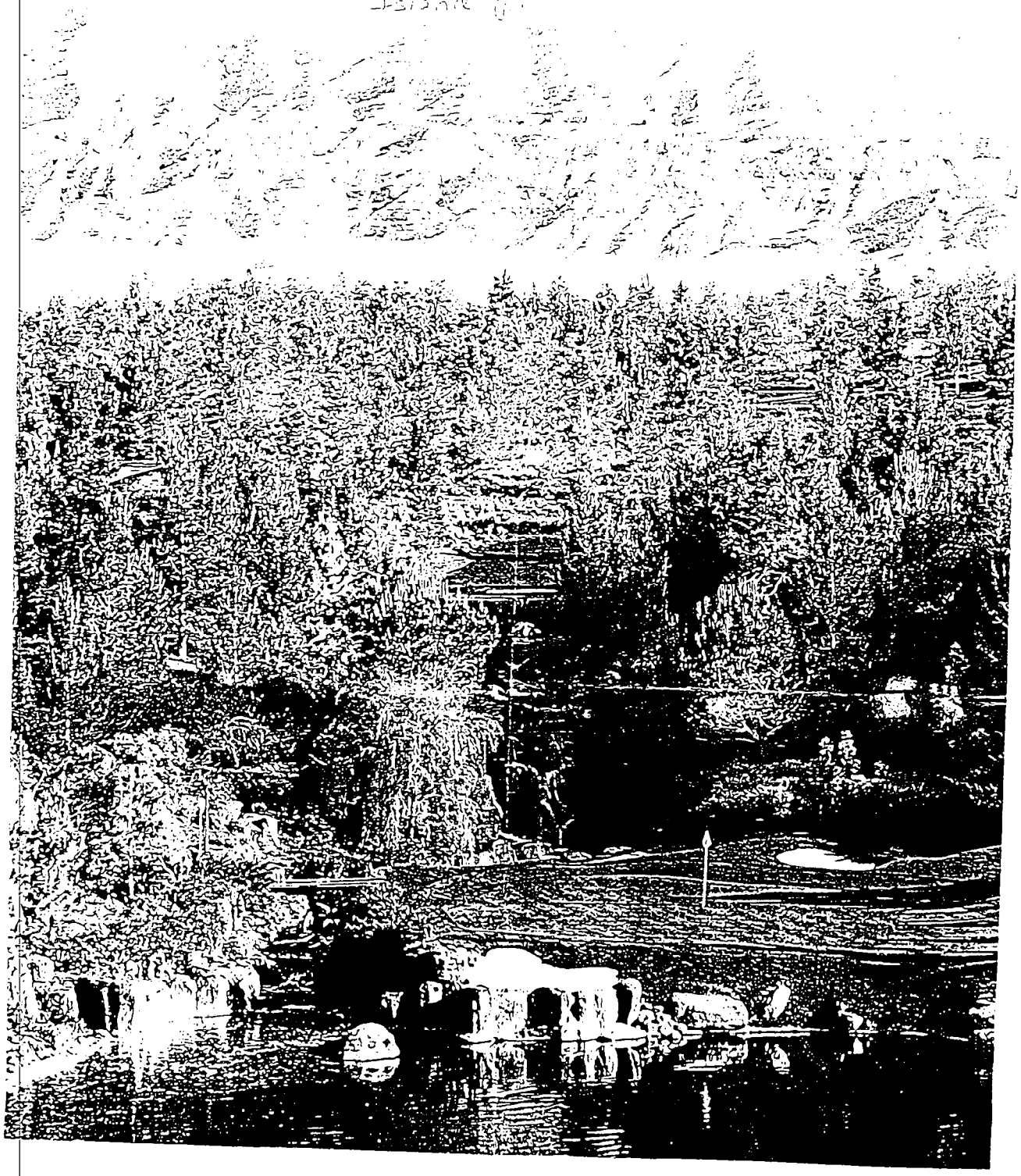
TIC 2445

MET GOLFER
NEW YORK, NY
6 TIMES/YEAR 100,000
OCTOBER 1998

BURRELLE'S

TIC 2476

E 75



Grand SLAM!

How much is the steepest greens fee in America? One thousand buckeroos, to play Shadow Creek in Las Vegas— but at least you get a suite and a limo

COURTESY OF TREASURE ISLAND

It was with no small sense of dread that on an insanely hot Las Vegas day in the middle of this past August, I sat in the back seat of an enormous, champagne-colored, air-conditioned limousine for a ride to Shadow Creek Golf Club and the most expensive round of golf in America.

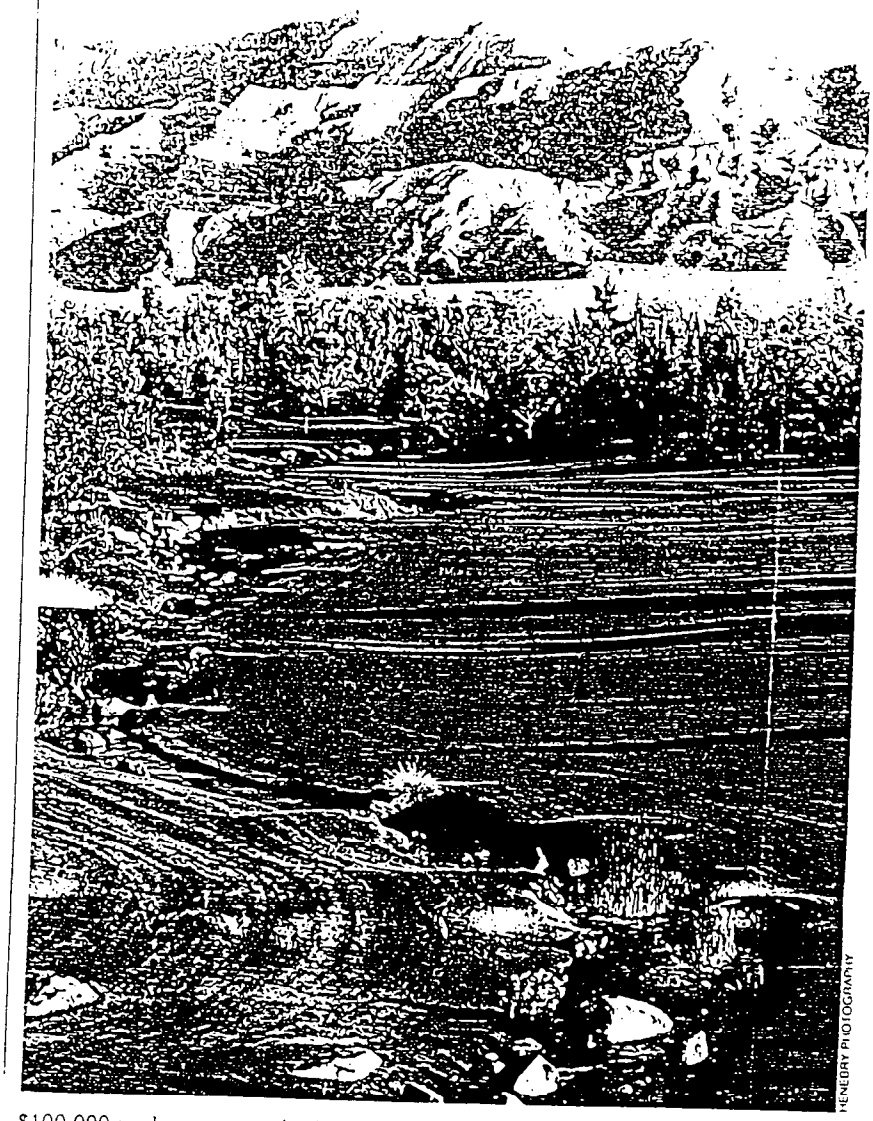
One thousand U.S. dollars it would cost to play one of the most select golf courses on the continent, perhaps the world: Steve Wynn's intensely exclusive oasis in the middle of the desert, just north of funtown.

For years I had heard stories about Shadow Creek. That they used to have wallabies happily hopping about until an errant shot hit one between the eyes and killed it, whereupon the unfortunate executioner tried to hide the evidence by burying the pygmy kangaroo under a tree. That one of the course's few-and-far-between members, a gazillionaire oilman who had paid $100,000 just to join, insisted on putting a fivesome off the first tee, despite the protestations of the pro, and that when Wynn was informed, he sent a cashier's check for

The lush beauty of Shadow Creek, a stunning mix of greenery and water in the middle of the desert, is in stark contrast to the glitter of Vegas itself (above).

by Mike Monroe

TIC 2477



HENEBRY PHOTOGRAPHY

The 15th hole at Shadow Creek, a long par four on which water comes into play on both the drive and the approach.

$100,000 to the course and told the pro to inform the miscreant his membership had been terminated. That there is a chef at the turn who will whip up whatever your grubby little gourmet heart desires. You name it.

At any rate, I took these stories, and a few others, to be apocryphal, determined to discover the course on its own terms. What on earth, after all, could merit a cool grand for a single round?

To begin with, your $1,000 also gets you a deluxe suite at one of Wynn's casino hotels—The Mirage, Treasure Island, or The Golden Nugget. Then there's that limo ride to and from the course. And a caddie. And a cart—one with a compartment filled with ice and the cold drinks of your choosing. Are we approaching value per dollar yet?

Perhaps. Here's what the "grand slam" golf experience was like for this confessed "chop." You decide.

Thursday, 1:17 p.m. My wife Cathy and I fly in from our home in Denver and touch down at McCarran International Airport. It is approximately 14 miles from the brand new D concourse to baggage claim.

2:51 p.m. The bellhop at Treasure Island asks where I will be playing. He brightens up when told I have a tee time at Shadow Creek, but darkens when I tip a buck a bag.

8 p.m. We squeeze into the throng in front of the hotel to watch the pirate

TIC 2478

set battle that has become one of The Strip's top tourist attractions. My vigilant wife points to a sign alerting visitors to carefully guard their belongings during the show. Professional pickpockets just love big crowds in Vegas, and this show, staged every 90 minutes, draws one of the biggest. I watch the battle with my hands firmly in my pockets, clutching my cash. The pirates won again, but not the pickpockets.

Friday, 10 a.m. After showering in my bathroom—we have "His" and "Her" versions, of course—I head to the bellstand to retrieve my clubs. By 10:05 I'm on my way to Shadow Creek, in air-conditioned comfort—but on my own. A sheet of course policies received from VIP Services read, "Cameras, cellular phones and beepers are not permitted on the course. No extra persons allowed as spectators." Have to leave Cathy and the camera in the suite.

10:22 a.m. We arrive at Shadow Creek. I'm confused. Where did all the pine trees come from?

10:25 a.m. I am assigned locker No. 27. There's no name on it, unlike No. 25, which belongs to Will Smith, the Fresh Prince and MIB himself, or No. 23, which belongs—of course—to Michael Jordan. If anything, the clubhouse is understated—but intensely comfortable. Sinking into one of the leather sofas and spending the afternoon in front of a hotel can make just about anything happen.

2 p.m. I'm boiling. Looks like a double-digit-Gatorade round. Double-digit-Titleist, too, as I'm discovering the depth of Shadow Creek's rough, not to mention some of the lakes and streams.

2:55 p.m. I hole out for a seven on the par-five 18th, a truly gorgeous hole, with Wynn's estate off to the right side of the fairway, well out of reach of even the most horrendous slices. My 47 on the back gives me an even 100 for the day—or ten bucks a stroke.

3:30 p.m. Back in the limo to the hotel. Conclusion: This luxurious desert golf is all very impressive, but would I pay $1,000 for it? Probably not—at least not when I can go the East Coast and play Bethpage Black for $25, or even to the West Coast and play Pebble Beach for $350.

But you have to remember who Shadow Creek was built for, before the $1,000 package became available: People who don't pay. Unless they're invited guests, known as "whales"—high rollers with a $100,000 line of credit at Wynn's casinos who may take a sudden hankering to chase a golf ball. What do you tell them? "We'll ask the Desert Inn if they can squeeze you in?" No, Shadow Creek is exactly as it should be.

Mike Monroe, a Denver-based sportswriter, has won more in an evening at the blackjack tables than he ever will playing golf.

FIVE MORE THINGS THAT COST A COOL GRAND

- An 18k Tiffany "Heart" charm bracelet
- A first edition of "The Art of Golf," written by Sir Walter Simpson in 1892
- A 1989 Hyundai Excel Hatchback
- A case of 1992 Domaine Laflaive, Puligny Montrachet
- A pure-bred Great Dane pup

THE SHADOW CREEK PACKAGE

The Shadow Creek package costs $1,000 at the Mirage and Golden Nugget, and $800 at Treasure Island. Rates include one night's suite accommodation, one round of golf, a limo to and from the course, and golf cart and caddie. It's not available on on Saturdays. Call (888) 627-6667

TIC 2479

INTERNATIONAL GAMING &
WAGERING BUSINESS
NEW YORK, NY
13-TIMES/YEAR 25,000
NOV 1 1998

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BURRELLE'S

TIC 2484

ENTERTAINMENT

Treasure Island seeks market niche

Executives of Mirage Resorts Inc. are considering whether or not to transform Treasure Island's 9,000-square-foot game arcade into a cabaret-style theater that will seat as many as 500 people.

Mirage Resorts' new entertainment director, Sandy Gallin, is among the executives pushing for the property's move to a "more adult appeal," according to an informed source.

The cabaret would be across from the Cirque du Soleil Theatre and would offer a mix of Broadway-type entertainment, the source said.

The five-year-old Treasure Island is in the midst of an $80 million remodeling effort that when completed will see the upgrade of Treasure Island's 2,900 hotel rooms and the addition of as many as 100 suites.

Earlier this summer, Mirage Resorts conducted focus groups to determine how to transform the megaresort.

With the mid-October opening of its upscale Bellagio, Mirage Resorts is attempting to define Treasure Island's niche. When it opened in October 1993, the $430 million property was considered to be an appendage to the company's then four-year-old resort, the Mirage.

It was designed to compete with Circus Circus Enterprises' family oriented Excalibur. But Mirage executives soon realized that customer demand allowed them to charge more than the average nightly room rate they had expected to generate at Treasure Island.

Sources familiar with the property's operations said that Treasure Island became something of a stepchild, with the resort that was named for a popular Robert Louis Stevenson novel becoming a steady moneymaker that did not demand much attention from Mirage Resorts' management team.

"It does have an identity crisis right now," said Jason Ader, a Bear Stearns & Co. Inc. gaming analyst. "It's like the middle child. The middle child's always searching for an identity."

In 1997, Treasure Island's cash flow fell to $110 million from $117 million a year earlier.

Construction work on the addition of a new lobby and Italian restaurant contributed to the decline, as did increased Strip competition, sources said.

The June 1996 closure of the Sands on the opposite side of Las Vegas Boulevard also cut into business with a decline in foot traffic on the east side of the Strip, sources said.

Among the most radical options considered: a name change and re-theming.

The source, however, said Treasure Island will retain its name and storybook theme.

Mirage Resorts is spending $80 million to upgrade the five-year-old resort.

KINGS COURIER
BROOKLYN, NY
WEEKLY 118,000
NOV 30 1998

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BURRELLE'S
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Run Away With the Circus

Cirque du Soleil's website, which has been visited by millions since its creation in 1996, has undergone major modifications. With three languages to choose from, French, English and German, net surfers will find the site easier to navigate and experience a more interactive approach to updated attractions.

Cirque du Soleil's Internet site was designed as a communications tool to keep Cirque enthusiasts informed on a worldwide basis. Visitors can even take virtual tours of the Studio in Montreal, and Mystere in Las Vegas. Additionally, they can view clips from Cirque du Soleil's shows Quidam, Mystere and Alegria, and even listen to musical excerpts.

Visitors will also find complete information about the Cirque du Soleil shows playing around the world, as well as details about the organization's history and mission, its arts programs and philanthropic activities, the audition schedule and job openings within Cirque du Soleil.

Cirque du Soleil's online shop allows visitors to choose from over 50 items of merchandise, including clothing, accessories, CDs and videotapes. A virtual jukebox is available to play excerpts from the various Cirque du Soleil soundtracks.

Over 2,000 people worldwide surf Cirque du Soleil's website daily. The most frequently visited page at www.cirquedusoleil.com is the "Ticket Info" section which includes an interactive seating plan that allows guests to view their potential seats under the Big Top.

ROAD SMART
NEW YORK, NY
4-TIMES/YEAR 1,500,000
JANUARY 1999

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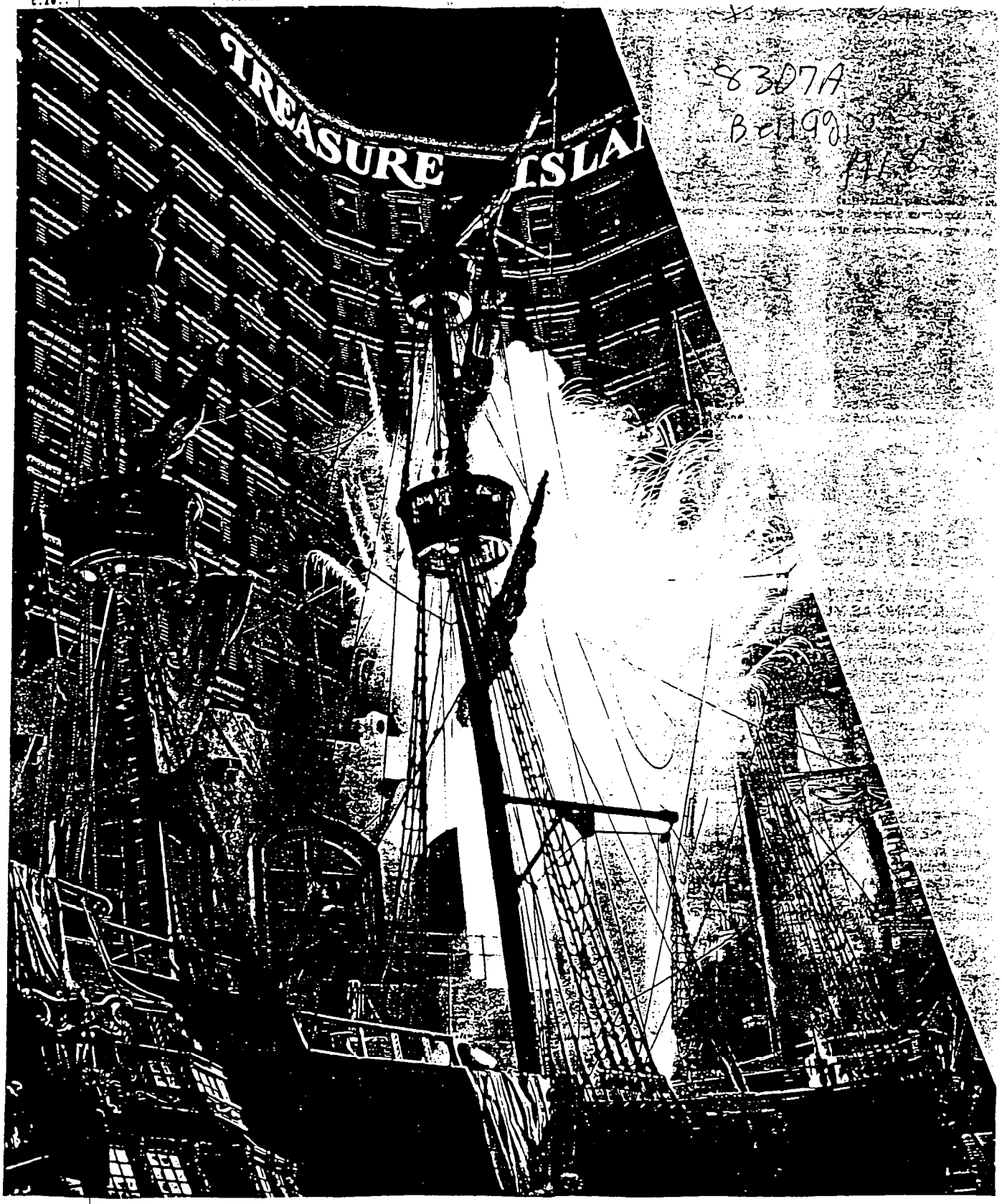
BURRELLE'S

TIC 2500

E 81



TIC 2501

E 82

The neon fantasy land's new look is guaranteed to wow you!

The Latest in Vegas

Startled by the loud explosion, we rushed to the window to see flames shooting into the night sky as men scurried around and bellowed at the top of their lungs. While we gazed transfixed upon the chaotic scene below, another blast followed, drawing exclamations from the crowd gathered along the sidewalk in front of the building. But this wasn't some real-life disaster we were witnessing — rather, a mock sea battle between the British man-of-war *HMS Britannia* and the pirate ship *Hispaniola* on the grounds of the Treasure Island hotel/casino resort along "the Strip" in Las Vegas, Nev. (see photo at left).

From our vantage point on the 14th floor of the hotel, we were afforded a superb view of the action in Buccaneer Bay, whose deep lagoon is overlooked by an elaborately designed pirates village of 18th-century Caribbean vintage. Within a few minutes of occupying our room, we had been presented with spectacular evidence of the dramatic transformation that Las Vegas has undergone since our last visit several years before. The neon party capital in the Nevada desert that mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel founded with the construction in 1946 of the Flamingo Hilton today abounds in amusements other than slot machines and gaming tables.

BY JACK MCQUARRIE

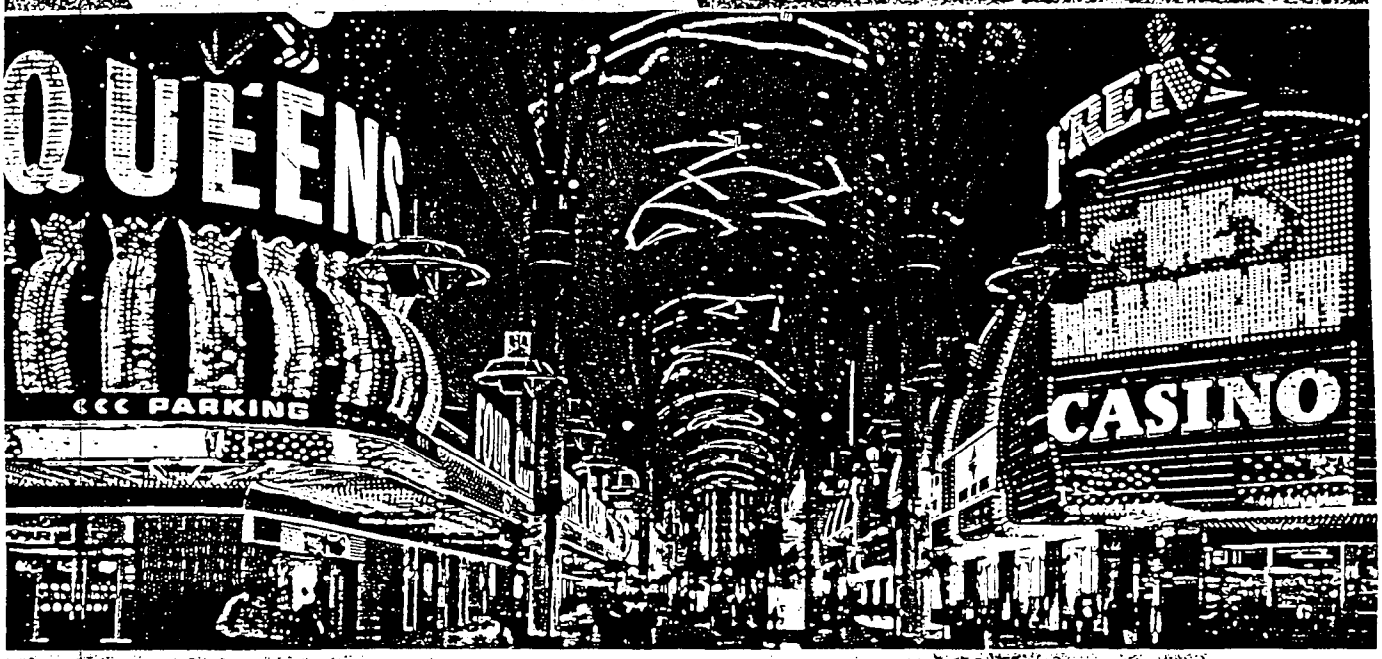
With the construction in recent years of many giant resorts that resemble amusement parks, each with its own theme and wondrous architectural design, Las Vegas has been reinvented as an adult fantasy land, with plenty of entertainment for families as well. Whereas once upon a time visitors felt pretty well sated on the city's charms after a few days, today this surrealistic playground offers so many fascinating side attractions that when it comes time to head home you may wish you had allowed for a little longer stay.

And the excitement is not limited to the Strip. Fremont Street, in the heart of downtown Vegas, has experienced some dramatic changes that make it well worth a visit. Most notably, a $70 million transformation has converted four blocks into a traffic-free pedestrian mall covered by a 90-foot-high canopy — called a sky frame — with 2.1 million lights producing colorful animated images for a spectacular multisensory experience. The millions of lights come to life hourly after dark in six-minute computer-driven shows. The former Glitter Gulch is today known as the Fremont Street Experience — one of-a-kind venue for outdoor festivals, street performers and holiday celebrations. Plus the old favorites are still here — from the Golden Nugget and Binion's Horseshoe casinos to the world-famous 50-foot-high cowboy known as Vegas Vic and his cowgirl companion, Vegas Vicky — probably the most photographed couple in all of Las Vegas.

Soon after viewing the pirate battle from our window — which takes place every 90 minutes between 3 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. — we took a stroll down the Strip, but didn't get far. Another of the city's most popular high-tech spectacles is featured in the very next block in front of the Mirage. We had stopped to lean on the railing and admire the hotel/casino's beautifully landscaped grounds, which boast a Polynesian theme complete with a man-made volcano, palm trees, waterfalls, lagoons and the sounds of tropical birds. As we basked in the tranquil beauty of this exotic setting, the bird calls suddenly ceased, replaced by an ominous rumbling that gradually mounted as smoke began emanating from the top of the volcano. The smoke soon gave way to flames that leaped high into the air as lava appeared to flow down the sides of the volcano and into the water, with a hissing sound, while ribbons of fire spurted across the lagoon toward us.

After viewing the volcano eruption, we toured the interior of the Mirage, which features a host of unique attractions, including a 20,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, a glassed-in enclosure harboring two of the rare royal white tigers featured in the famed *Siegfried and Roy Show*, and Atlantic bottlenosed dolphins that frolic in a 2.5-million-gallon saltwater habitat.

From the Mirage and Treasure Island, it's a short jaunt to Caesars Palace and the replicated palatial splendor of ancient Rome. Much of the nongaming fun here is experienced at the Forum Shops, a posh fantasy setting reminiscent of an ancient Roman town, complete with ornate fountains, marble reproductions of classic statuary and impressive columns and arches all housed beneath a painted Mediterranean sky that changes



(Above) Fremont Street's new look. (Opposite, center) Excalibur and New York-New York. (Far right, top to bottom) Caesars Palace, the Mirage volcano and the Stratosphere Tower.

TIC 2502

From daybreak to sunset before your eyes. The fun is enhanced hourly when the Festival Fountain comes alive with a laser show and animated statues that invite passersby to join them in revelry.

Another popular attraction is the famous auto collection just across the street from Caesars Palace at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino. The display with more than 300 vehicles includes cars owned by such notables as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Al Capone and Adolf Hitler.

Several more mega resort casino complexes are located within easy walking distance of one another on the south end of Las Vegas Boulevard. One is the MGM Grand, with a 20-acre theme park and the world's tallest sky coaster, which sees fearless fliers pull their own rip cords and free-fall at speeds up to 70 mph.

Directly across the street from MGM's New York, New York, a recreation of the Big Apple's most prominent landmarks and attractions. A 48-story replica of the Empire State Building is one of 12 high-rise buildings that form the classic Manhattan skyline. Other highlights include a 150-foot-tall Statue of Liberty, a Coney Island-style roller coaster and a 300-foot-long model of the Brooklyn Bridge.

On the other side of Tropicana Avenue from New York, New York is the Excalibur, which has an entrance reminiscent of the Middle Ages, complete with a moat and fire-breathing dragon.

As you step across the drawbridge, you're whisked back in time to the days of King Arthur into a medieval village with shops, restaurants and roving singers, jugglers and musicians.

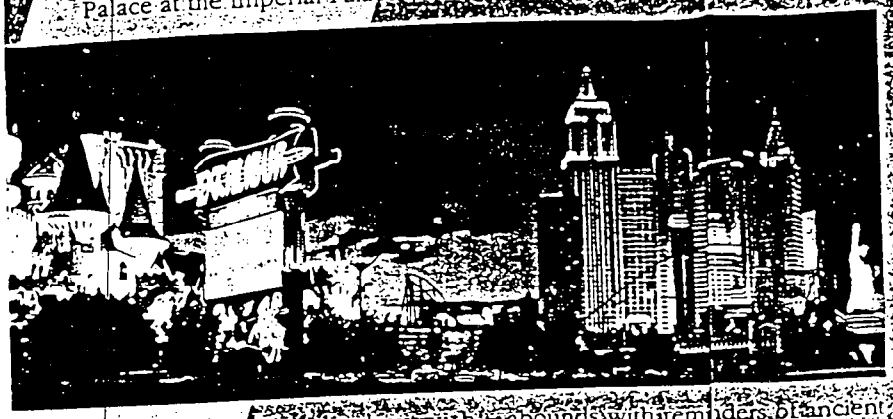
Next door to the Excalibur is the Luxor Hotel, shaped like a massive pyramid with a massive sphinx marking the main entrance. Luxor abounds with reminders of ancient Egypt, from a life-sized replica of the great temple of Ramses, which dominates the hotel's atrium, to the impressive Egyptian murals inside.

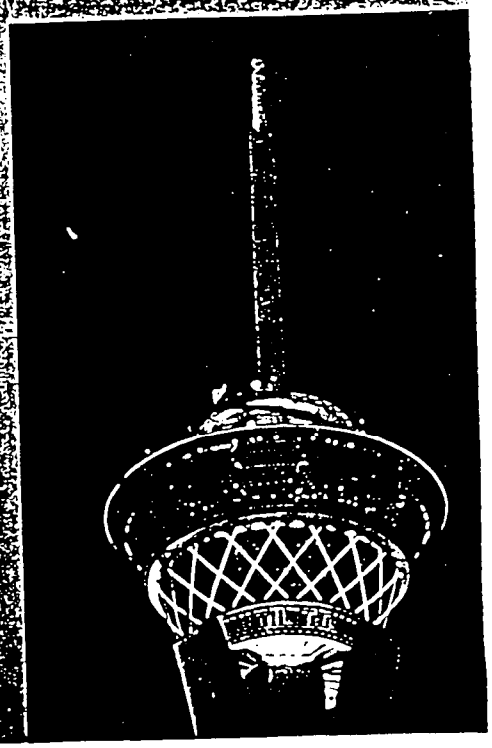
The Luxor's other popular attractions include the popular IMAX movie theater, which shows 3-D movies on a screen that is almost seven stories high and Imagine: A Theatrical Odyssey, which will take you along a journey through time featuring mystical illusions, aerial stunts and jesters.

Also on the south end of the Strip is the new Monte Carlo, modeled after the Place du Casino in Monte Carlo, Monaco, with its numerous recreations of ornate fountains, chandeliered domes and grand promenades.

The north end of the Strip is lighted with more fun and eye-popping wonders. For example, Circus Circus, the first Las Vegas casino-hotel to cater to families, still provides free circus acts, including trapeze artists, as well as a midway with carnival games.

The Grand Slam Canyon Adventure Dome, situated on the west side of Circus Circus, is a scenic amusement park with a nine-hole golf course, five rides, including 140-foot-tall replica mountains, water-slides and fire-breathing dragon.





TIC 2503

(Left) The Luxor, a 30-story-high bronze pyramid at the south end of the Strip, has more than 2,500 rooms and a full-size reproduction of King Tut's tomb.

walls and special effects theaters. From Circus Circus, it's just a short walk north along the Strip to the Sahara and Speedworld, an virtual reality raceway where you climb into a 3/4-size scale-model Indy car and experience the sensation of competing at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway for over a Grand Prix course along the Strip.

Around the corner from the Sahara is the Las Vegas Hilton, and another outstanding example of fantasy entertainment, Star Trek: The Experience. And what an experience it is, as you step aboard the *USS Enterprise* and embark on an exciting mission through time and space. The $70 million interstellar adventure uses exact reconstructions of sets seen on TV, a motion simulator and hydraulic rotors to introduce you to the 24th-century world of Klingons, Romulans and interstellar warfare. Speed voyages through the galaxy.

Just north of the Sahara is the $500 million Stratosphere, Least America's tallest free-standing observation tower — 1,149 feet — for a spectacular view of the city and the surrounding valley. Dominating the city's skyline, the Stratosphere Tower has a revolving restaurant and interest-

ble as it may seem, a roller coaster running around the top.

The newest addition to the Strip is the Bellagio Casino Hotel. Opened this past fall and inspired by the village of the same name overlooking Lake Como in northern Italy, the elegant resort boasts soothing water falls, classic gardens and a world-class art collection. But even that's not all.

Inside the Paris Casino Resort, with replicas of the Arc de Triomphe, Champs-Élysées and a 50-foot Eiffel Tower, Mandalay Bay featuring a 10-acre tropical lagoon with a sand and surf beach and a swim-up shark tank, and the Venetian, which when completed will be the world's largest resort hotel and convention complex with 6,000 suites, 116,000 square feet of casino space and the Grand Canal Shoppes — 500,000 square feet of shopping and dining set beneath a dramatic 70-foot ceiling along a quarter-mile of re-created Venetian streets — whether exploring the downtown area or the Strip, you're assured an endless variety of wondrous attractions. With the number of visitors having doubled in the past decade, the city is in the midst of a boom, continuing to sprout new mega-resorts with increasingly imaginative attractions. The result is an ever-expanding feast for the senses.

On the Side

Hoover Dam, one of the world's most remarkable engineering feats, is just 30 miles southeast of Las Vegas. The dam, which was built in the 1930s, blocked the Colorado River to form Lake Mead. There's an impressive new $125 million visitor center, and guests can take an elevator 525 feet down to the heart of the power plant, which has 17 generators producing the flood of electricity required to bathe Las Vegas in glitter.

On the way to Hoover Dam, stop in and see how the candy is made — and try some free samples — at the Ethel M. Chocolate Factory, makers of the Mars Bar, M&Ms and other famous confections.

Red Rock Canyon, with unique sandstone cliffs of various shapes and hues, is located about 20 miles west of Las Vegas. Its cliffs rise 3,000 feet and attract rock climbers from all over the world.

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WASHINGTON SUNDAY TIMES

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Las Vegas growth is a sure bet

By Marcia Levin
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Las Vegas is a numbers game. Not just at the roulette wheel, craps or blackjack table or in the sports book at any of the major hotels. No, the biggest numbers in Las Vegas concern the city's unprecedented growth. Those digits mean the desert destination is big business.

Tourism figures for 1994 are up 19.8 percent. Gaming numbers also increased last year. Last year's explosion of new hotels — 10,000 rooms opened at MGM Grand, Treasure Island and Luxor — and renovations at the other established hotels were a major factor.

Vegas' 87,000 hotel rooms are more than any other U.S. metropolitan area. The projected number for the turn of the century is 123,000.

An estimated 27 million passengers passed through McCarran International Airport in 1994, an increase of more than 17 percent compared to the 22.5 million passengers who used the airport the year before.

Population of Las Vegas (Clark County) is expected to near the million mark by the end of 1996. And the number of companies relocating to Las Vegas from California was up 20 percent from the 1993 level.

It's no mystery that one of the city's newest attractions —"Mystere," Cirque du Soleil's production at Steve Wynn's Treasure Island Hotel — is one of the strip's biggest draws. Tourists from all over the world flock to the show.

"Mystere" opened officially in January 1994 and has helped change the face of entertainment throughout Las Vegas. "Mystere" has been created by Cirque du Soleil's original production team: artistic director Gilles Ste. -Croix; director Franco Dragone; composer Rene Dupere; choreographer Debra Brown; costume designer Dominique Lemieux; set designer Michel Crete; lighting and special effects designer Luc Lafortune and sound designer Jonathan Deans. Three additional creators have been hired for the Treasure Island production: Pavel Brun, Basil Schoultz and Michael Moschen.

If you don't recognize "cirque," the French word for "circus," the smell of popcorn in the air is a dead giveaway. The show — a blend of mime and magic, ballet and burlesque, acrobatics and art — features 70 performers from around the world. There are stilt-walkers and jugglers, hand-balancing acts and comics. The result is world-class entertainment.

The first Cirque du Soleil was created 10 years ago in Quebec.

"Cirque is the ideal complement to Treasure Island," says Mr. Wynn, chairman of the board of Mirage Resorts Inc. "Our international guests will find Cirque to be a special delight with no language or cultural barriers. People from all over the world will enjoy the wonder and pleasure to be found at a Cirque performance."

Time magazine says "the grand ethereal Cirque du Soleil is really primal theater, an age-old blend of music and motion. . . . It's an out of Broadway experience."

Mr. Wynn created a 1,525-seat theater at his Treasure Island Hotel specifically for the show. The theater has a 36-foot-diameter ring with a revolving turntable that can move at speeds up to 10 revolutions per minute. Cirque combines technology and circus skills and includes a computer-controlled hydraulic rigging system.

The theater is dark on Mondays and Tuesdays. Two shows each night are scheduled at 7:30 and 10:30. Tickets are $57.20 for adults and $28.60 for children under 12.

From March 11 to Sept. 11, "Saltimbanco," an earlier production that also played in the Washington area last year, will be presented in Tokyo, during Cirque's second visit to Japan.

And there's still more that's new in Glitter Gulch:

■ A toll tale: The Federal Bureau of Land Management says it will begin charging $5 per car for visitors driving into Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, an extremely popular scenic area west of Las Vegas. Known for their vivid red stripes, the rocks look as though a drunken monster had gone on a binge, painting the town red with bold, broad strokes. Monies collected will be used to offset costs of managing the natural wonder.

■ Hotel hype: Mr. Wynn is planning to build a 50-acre lake and erect the "world's most romantic hotel" on a 17-acre island at his new Beau Rivage (where the Dune stood until 1993.) The full-service resort is due in late 1997. Spokesman Alan Feldman says it will be more upscale than the Mirage, offer "the excitement and dynamism of this market" and nonstop romantic details. The Beau Rivage will be marketed to the sophisticated traveler who likes the finer, more elegant amenities found in posh hotels on out-of-the-way Caribbean islands.

■ Where's the turkey? Cranberry World, outside of town, opened in mid-January. Believe it or not, Cranberry World is an Ocean Spray-sponsored theater, exhibit hall, museum, juice sampling center, demonstration kitchen and gift shop. It's Thanksgiving every day.

■ Way back: Forum Shops at Caesars may open the world's first permanent large-scale 3-D ride next year. "Back to the Future" will be enclosed in a dome theater with an 82-foot hemispherical screen. Imax Corp. and Forum Venture Partners will develop the theater and build the simulator ride.

■ Animal story: If you think all the animals are in the casinos, take a short ride to the Southern Nevada Zoological Botanical Park on Rancho Drive and see the tigrina, a small tropical cat.

The only park in North America exhibiting this endangered species also has an African lion, Bengal tiger, Barbary apes, monkeys, wallabies, flamingos, a king vulture and more.

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A really grand time

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By BETTY HARRIS

For The Muncie Star

LAS VEGAS — There's a constant chiming from slot machines and jangle of paid-out coins 'round the clock from early morning to early morning in Las Vegas.

Food is great and inexpensive. Themes and decor of most hotels are beyond the wildest imaginations of the average guy or gal. And, if you don't gamble (perish the thought), it won't cost an arm and a leg.

(My plane fare was about $280, and the room at the Aladdin — double occupancy and conference rate — was about $200. Food, bus fare, van, $3 in the slot machines etc., cost another $100. I shouldn't feel guilty. Except for family stays, it was my first recent real vacation.)

The occasion for the trip was the 1995 Senior Theatre, U.S.A. conference in company with other members of Muncie's Third Age Theater. Third Age, Indiana's only senior theater group and one of only 200 in the nation, had been chosen to perform on the University of Nevada Las Vegas stage.

We'd seen the Mirage, Excalibur, Caesar's Palace, Golden Nugget and Circus Circus during the '93 conference. A thousand older thespians attended it and the one in this year.

Third Agers had various reactions to the city. Barbara Wagner liked "the pulse and excitement." Nellie Holt wished "everyone could see it some time." Denzel Crist liked the car show at the Imperial Museum. Louise Hanks "loved' Siegfied and Roy's white tigers show.

The newest hotels — MGM Grand, Treasure Island and Luxor — were impressive.

■ Entrance to MGM Grand is between the paw of a gigantic

TIC 2240

golden lion. Behind it, a faceted "emerald" is a dome that soars over the Emerald City from the Wizard of Oz. It doesn't cost to see Dorothy, Toto, the Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, Scare Crow and Wizard. Stars, a moon, rainbow, witch and lights cross the "sky" as passages from The Wizard of Oz book are broadcast.

The world's largest hotel, casino and theme park, MGM Grand is like a small city. Several Third Agers got lost.

Costing $1 billion, it has 5,005 rooms, 751 suites, four distinctly difference casinos larger than two football fields, a 15,200-seat event center, 33-acre theme park with 12 major attractions in nine areas, shops, 10 restaurants, five lounges, two wedding chapels, etc.

For reservations, call (800) 929-1111.

■ Treasure Island, Mirage Resorts Inc.'s new hotel, casino and adventure resort, shares 100 acres with its sister property, The Mirage. Old world shops are in the pirate village in front of it.

But attracting hundreds of visitors Sunday-Thursday, weather permitting, is a lifelike, free, 10-minute battle between two lifesize ships, a pirate galleon and British frigate. Battles begin at 4, 5:30, 7, 8:30 and 10 p.m.

Heat from the flames is intense and has seared black the pirate side of the watery cove where the ships fight. The pirates sink the frigate. It goes down with its captain on the deck — and rises minutes later and sails around the corner, where it stays 'til the next battle.

Vacation packages are available from $89 at Treasure Island. It has 2,900 guest rooms, including 212 suites, seven restaurants, three cocktail lounges, convention and entertainment centers and two wedding chapels. It features the French Canadian circus, Cirque du Soleil's Mystere. For reservations, call (800) 944-7444.

■ Luxor, the world's only 30-story, pyramid-shaped hotel, has three levels of entertainment. Visible from the airport, it and the sphinx and obelisk in front of it are located south of its sister property, Excaliber.

It cost a king's ransom to build and took 36,000 workers 18 months to complete. It covers 48 acres.

The area within the pyramid is a huge atrium. Visitors travel a mile within the Luxor on a "Nile River" trip on the first level. Three *Back-to-the-Future* style participatory adventures, including a virtual reality freefall, are on the other two levels. A full-size replica of King Tut's Tomb, Egyptian frescoes and other adornments were made in Egypt and put together in squares on-site.

The crystal "eye" atop the pyramid is a $2,000, 315,000-watt bulb that can be seen 260 miles away — and by astronauts. Keeping it lit costs $1 million a year.

In the Luxor are 2,526 rooms, 14 suites, 237 Jacuzzi suites, seven restaurants and seven lounges. Four inclinators take guests to their rooms. While a guest might get a special 1-night rate of $79 weekdays, depending on several factors, the two suites at the tip-top are $3,500 a night. They are reserved for the year.

For reservations, call (800) 288-1000.

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IT'S THE LAST theater trip to Vegas for Third Agers for a while. The 1997 Senior Theatre, U.S.A., will be in June in Ohio.

Then, as previously, beautifully costumed older adult dancers, singers and actors will appear in revues of about a hundred-or-so people or in small-group dramatic presentations. And there might even be some Hellzapoppin comedic bits that explain PMS (post-morteum syndrome) or why

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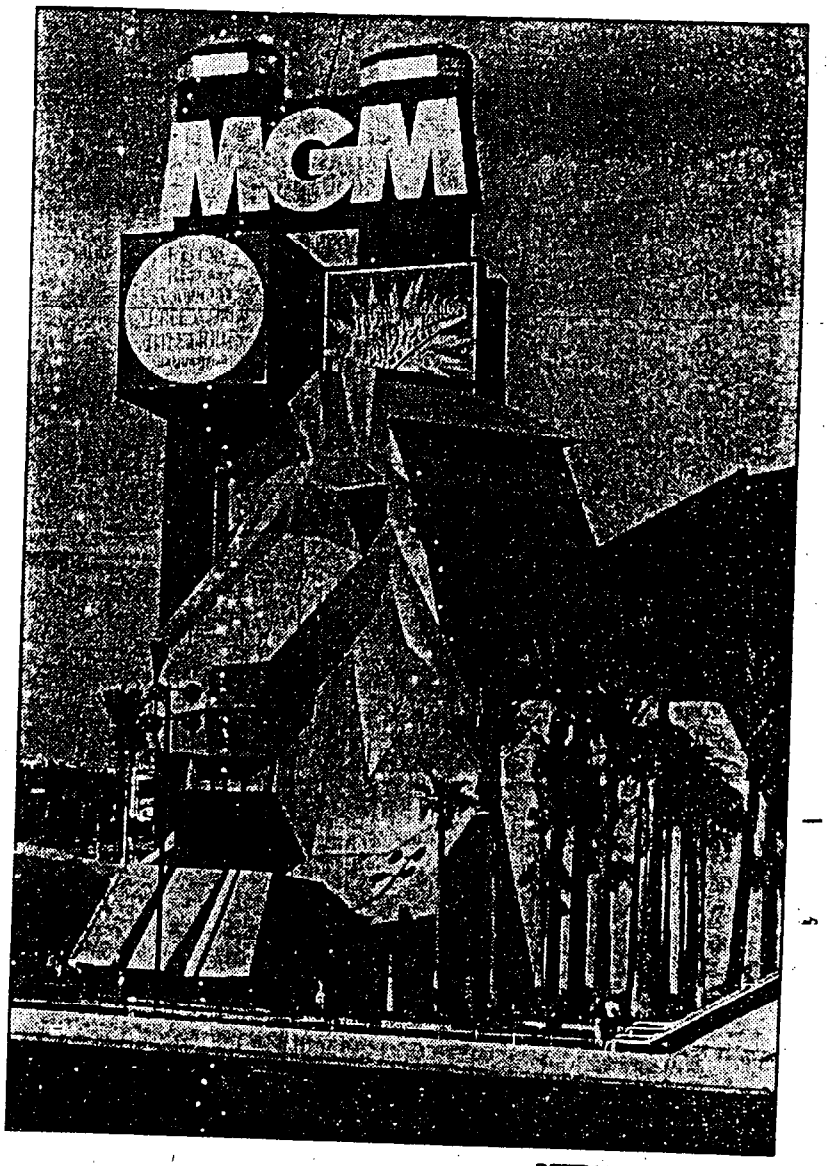

BETTY HARRIS PHOTOS

Some of the attractions at the new MGM Grand are its 5,005 rooms and 33-acre theme park. Pictured is the huge, golden lion and entrance to the hotel.

dancers gave up wearing fishnet hose ("bulging varicose veins").

Now, if only Tony Bennett would show up. Though I think I sat by him in the lobby of the Mirage, where his show opened later, he never answered my call requesting time for an interview. He shoulda. After all, he bought me a Coke in the '40s when he was in service and I worked in a PX — and didn't know who *he* was.

Luxor, a 30-story, pyramid-shaped hotel, has three levels of entertainment and cost a king's ransom billion to build.

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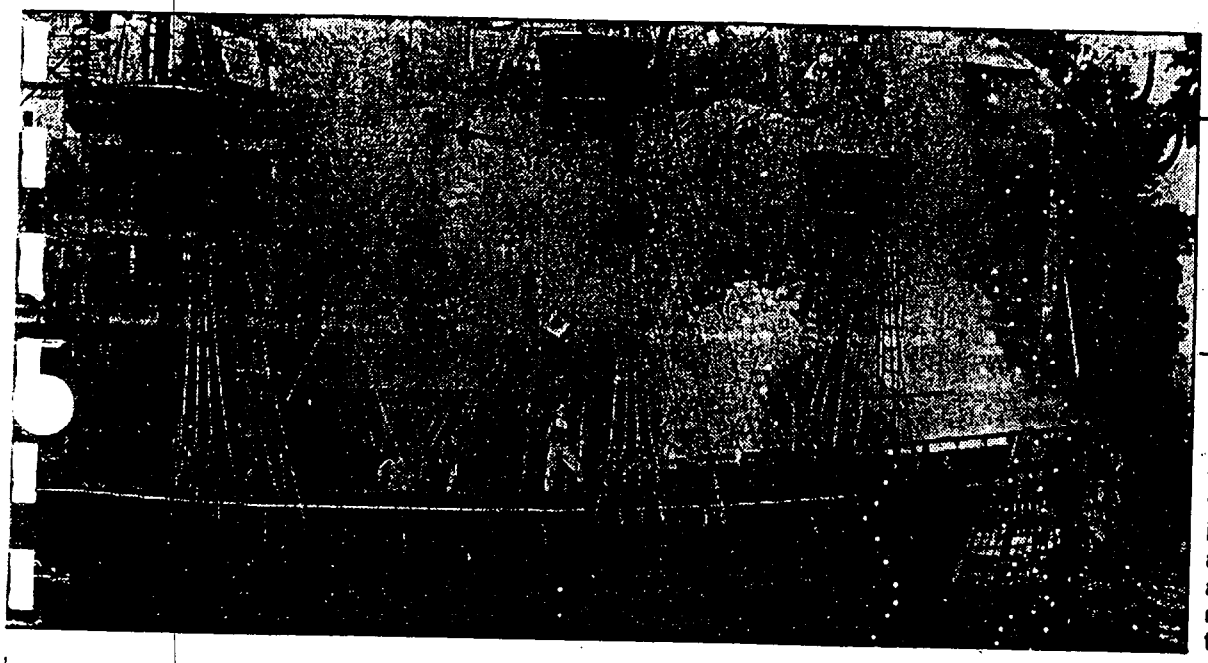

At the new Treasure Island in Las Vegas, a lifelike, free, 10-minute battle between two lifesize ships — a pirate galleon and British frigate — is featured. The pirates sink the frigate. It goes down with its captain on the deck — and rises minutes later and sails around the corner, where it stays until the next battle.

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TIMES &
POST-INTELLIGENCER

SEATTLE, WA
SUNDAY 517,742

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Las Vegas keeps making big-time plays for the kids

4926BR

BY JAY CLARKE
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

LAS VEGAS — Lions and tigers. Growling dinosaurs and scary roller coasters. Ancient Egyptian mysteries, jousting knights, a mock naval battle on a hotel lake.

This is Las Vegas?

What happened to the one-armed bandits, the craps shooters, roulette wheels and blackjack? What about the $2.99 lunch buffets, the great nightclub shows, the sexy come-ons that Vegas is famous for?

They're all still very much a part of Las Vegas, but Sin City's got a big bet down on a new kick: family entertainment.

Suddenly, with the opening of three huge new hotels in as many months, family attractions have taken the limelight here.

Never mind that this kid-friendly bent has only one purpose: to lure mom and dad into the casino. The Vegas line is "bring the kids: They'll play while you play."

What better place for such an oxymoronic marriage of non-stop gambling and family togetherness? Vegas is a place where anything seems possible, and some of the new family attractions are fantasies taken to the ultimate.

Mom and Dad can spin the cherries while the kids dive and dart on a flight simulator ride through an ancient Egyptian city "discovered beneath the Las Vegas desert."

Or watch the Wicked Witch of the West swoop over the skies above a six-story Emerald City. Or play laser tag in a darkened maze.

You name it. When Las Vegas goes after something, it goes big time.

MGM Grand, the largest of the new hotels at 5,005 rooms, has plunked down the biggest gamble — a cool billion dollars in the construction of the biggest hotel in the world, and a good chunk of that went for a 33-acre, Disney-like theme park called MGM Grand Adventures.

Luxor, which encased its 2,526 rooms in a 30-story pyramid, dedicated a lot of floor space to shows and games aimed at the underage set.

FAMILY TRAVEL '94

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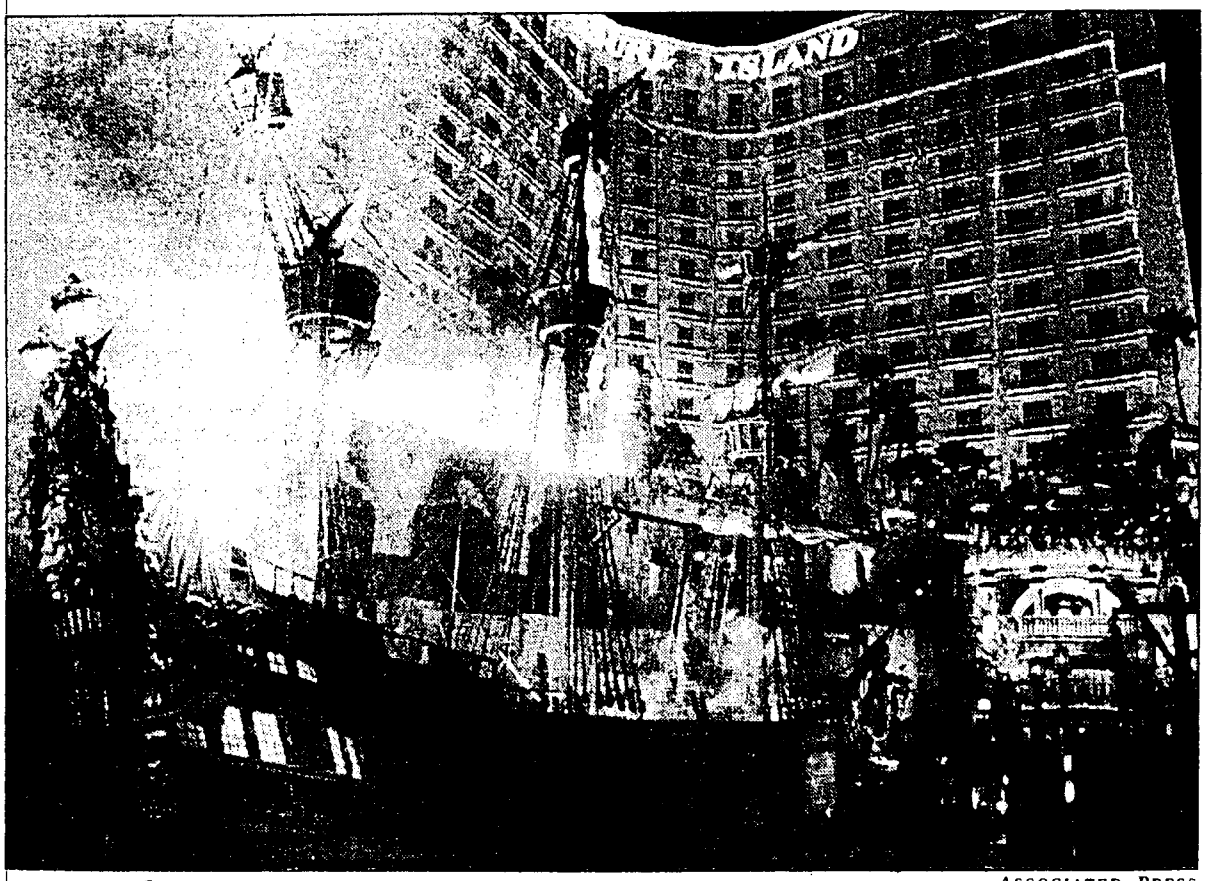

ASSOCIATED PRESS

At the Treasure Island hotel, mock naval battles are staged on an artificial lake in front of the hotel.

Treasure Island's big crowd-pleaser is a mock sea battle in the lake at the entrance to the 2,900-room hotel, a full-sized pirate galleon trading cannon fire with a full-sized British frigate.

This being Vegas, the pirates always win, sending the frigate down to a watery grave.

The real Circus

Then there's Circus Circus, which recognized the family tie-in years ago when it started staging high-wire and trapeze acts and opened an RV campground. Last August it opened Grand Slam Canyon, a $90-million domed theme park that offers roller coaster and log flume rides, laser tag and animated dinosaurs that look like they came out of Jurassic Park.

Excalibur, the hotel that looks more like a castle than most castles do, lures youngsters with jousting tournaments and a floor full of midway games — the latter a feature found in all the newest hotels as well. Mirage's white tigers and a volcano that erupts every 15 minutes have been tantalizing visitors for several years.

While the whole object of this fulminating feast of family attractions may be simply to get parents into the casinos, there are two other less obvious goals.

"It's more to attract the non-gambling spouse than kids," said Anthony Curtis, publisher of the respected Las Vegas Advisor, a monthly consumer newsletter.

"I've had friends from Detroit come in who I haven't seen in years. When I ask how come, they say, 'Well, now you've got something for my wife to do.'"

Another end is to give their children a taste of gambling glitter.

"Don't forget that in six years that 15-year-old playing in the arcade is going to be at the craps table," said Don Payne, a longtime Vegas publicist.

Meanwhile, though, the children have to be content with the non-gaming side of Vegas. Parents mesmerized by spinning cherries may applaud that, but they may also find it a bit expensive.

While an arcade with midway games like ring toss may indeed attract children, $1 a shot is a lot for a child to pay for one second's worth of entertainment. One ring toss, one buck. One catapult-the-frog-into-a-frying-pan, one buck.

If a child spends a buck every other minute in the arcade, it puts $30 in the hotel coffers while you're trying to beat the odds in the casino. That's pretty expensive baby-sitting, even if the kid wins a stuffed toy.

Finding the bargains

If parents can keep their offspring out of the midway arcades, though, they'll find Vegas' new family attractions a bargain.

Children, ages 4 to 12, pay only $10 to enter MGM Grand's theme park. Adults pay $15, seniors go in free.

MGM Grand Adventures, as the theme park is called, is an ambitious place, featuring themed areas, rides,

free shows, eating spots, shops and, this being Las Vegas, even a working wedding chapel.

The most popular rides are an indoor roller coaster, a log flume and a raft trip.

The Back-Lot River Tour takes visitors on a pre-programmed boat journey featuring movie effects. Like Disney's river adventure trip, the dialogue is inane. Haunted Mine, a chair ride, is so poorly conceived it should be avoided by all except tots.

Inside the hotel, but not a part of the theme park, is the Emerald City of Oz, its six-story-high green spires a backdrop for the Yellow Brick Road and various Oz characters, including Dorothy and her friends.

The Wicked Witch flies around the domed sky every now and then,

If parents can keep their offspring out of the midway arcades, though, they'll find Vegas' new family attractions a bargain.

and similarly now and then below a magic show is performed; it isn't worth the $3 admission.

Luxor, the pyramid hotel with a sphinx straddling its motor entrance, offers dozens of video games, machines that spin you in 360-degree loops and a couple of flight simulators in what it calls VirtuaLand.

It also has a three-episode attraction called "Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid" that is sometimes puerile (the plot must have been a reject from the Grade B sci-fi movies of the 1930s), sometimes thrilling (a bouncing, jerky flight simulator ride through a supposed ancient Egyptian city buried beneath Las Vegas), and sometimes mystifying (there's a good disappearing trick in one episode).

Admission to the three episodes, plus a boat ride on the "Nile River" that runs on the perimeter of the pyramid and a visit to a replica of King Tut's tomb, costs $15.

TIMES &
POST-INTELLIGENCER
SEATTLE, WA
SUNDAY 502,395
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VEGAS OFF THE DEEP END

By Misha Berson / *Seattle Times theater critic*

Let's call this a tale of two Las Vegas fountains. One is an ultra-gaudy replica of an ancient Roman pool in the Caesar's Palace Forum Shops mall. Outfitted with giant marble statues of classical figures and spritzing jets, the fountain also boasts a hefty tropical fish tank.

Once an hour, the mall mavens gather round, as the Roman statues are plunged rudely underwater, and computerized action figures shoot up in a blitz of colored lights and rumbling music to re-enact the last days of Atlantis. A rotunda of video screens stops playing sports news, and spews fire and flood images.

Look, ma! It's the fall of two great civilizations, in 15 minutes!

The other fountain, an outdoor affair the size of small lake, sits in front of the upscale new Bellagio Hotel. Equipped with more than a thousand individual water jets arrayed in criss-crossing lines and circular grids, it spurts into action after dusk. To the strains of pop oldies, the fountain's plumes, whirls and arcs of water dance in graceful combinations and interlocking patterns, illuminated from below with enough radiant white light to power a residential neighborhood. It's exquisite, yet oddly restful.

Welcome to Las Vegas, where everything is Show Biz: the fountains, the restaurants, the casinos, the bars, the malls, the lobbies of theme-park mega-hotels, the exploding mock-volcanos and ersatz pirate-ship attacks. And, of course, the lavishly flamboyant stage shows.

If you see Vegas as the zenith of glitz-overkill, the shrine of schlock, the titan of tacky, the last refuge of headliners who still can "work a room," bingo.

That Vegas persists. Only now it's not just the domain of Wayne Newton, Don Rickles and Elvis impersonators, but also of graying rockers: the Coasters, Frankie Valli, and (gulp) Crosby, Stills and Nash, who are all appearing on the Strip this month.

But that's not the whole Vegas entertainment story — not by a long shot — as those contrasting fountains suggest.

This desert city dedicated to the 24-hour pursuit of ostentatious pleasure is, by degrees, changing its image to attract visitors who wouldn't have been caught dead vacationing here a decade ago.

The celebrity-crooner-with-opening-comic shows of Old Vegas are dying out as a generation of stylish saloon singers (Sinatra, Dino, Sammy, et al) fade away. And the spangled, peekaboo girlie revues are being eclipsed by G-rated displays of high-tech magic and spectacle.

Vegas is also making forays into, pardon the expression, more kinds of "cult-cha." We're not talking avant-garde theater or cutting-edge opera here. But a new Vegas resort, the Mandalay, opens soon with the sizzling Broadway musical "Chicago" in residence. Operatic tenor Luciano Pavarotti has a concert scheduled. A "Lord of the Dance" troupe steps lively at the New York-New York hotel.

A CITY KNOWN FOR FLASH AND TRASH GETS SOME SPLASHY NEW SHOWS

Please see *Vegas* on M 4

TIC 2514

A flashy city gets some splashy new shows

VEGAS

CONTINUED FROM M 1

And most influentially, the Quebec-based Cirque du Soleil has two hit shows on the Strip (the new aquatic spectacle "O," and "Mystère"), both as artistically pleasing as they are technically astonishing.

Recently I made my first foray to Las Vegas, to sample the city's latest wave of whiz-bang entertainments.

Certainly, flamingly bad taste abounds in Vegas. And there's something weird and dispiriting about turning humankind's pinnacle achievements into a shamelessly vulgar, eco-nightmare of theme park kitsch, designed to distract you from reality and hurl you into debt. (See Umberto Eco's book "Travels in Hyperreality" for details.)

Then again, one can't help but marvel at the very size and audacity of the Vegas aesthetic, with it's eye-popping derring-do that out-glitters even Broadway razzle-dazzle.

And, as for Cirque du Soleil, there's something more: glitz with scale, soul and imagination.

Here's a sample of ongoing, big-ticket Vegas shows now playing:

"Master Magician Lance Burton," at the Monte Carlo

The new Vegas superstars aren't singers or comics. They're quipping, telegenic magicians like Lance Burton. The cheerful Valley Boy of hocus-pocus, Burton's not as hip as Penn and Teller — but easier to take than David Copperfield.

Not that Burton's show is a model of enlightenment. It's partly a throwback to the male-adolescent-fantasy school of magic, complete with statuesque "assistants" in skimpy costumes ("Daddy always told me to travel with a six-pack"). There's also a lot of cape-swirling, smoke-billowing, sawing gals in half (or just making them vanish). And getta load of that levitating model sports car!

But this is late-'90s Vegas, pal. So there's heavily synthed canned music. Video-game lighting. And gothic-romantic touches out of "Phantom of the Opera," chandelier and all.

The bottom line: the tricks stick. How does Lance make that car float in space without visible wires? "I'd tell you, but then I'd have to kill you," he answers an inquiring patron genially. And how do all those scarves pouf into live doves and ducks?

Who knows? Ultimately, who cares? You can try to figure it out yourself by catching Burton on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" on Feb. 22, or in his own NBC-TV special on Feb. 24.

"EFX," at the MGM Grand

When it premiered in 1995, "EFX" was a $50 million bomb. Then ex-teenybopper idol David Cassidy

Ticket information

For popular Las Vegas shows (especially "O" and "Mystère") advance ticket purchase is advised. Note in that in most cases a computer will assign non-refundable, non-exchangeable seats; be sure to ask precisely where you are sitting before you agree to the sale. Some ticket prices include drinks:

"Master Magician Lance Burton," *Monte Carlo Hotel; $34.95-39.95, 702-730-7160*

"EFX," *MGM Grand Hotel; $37-72, 800-929-1111*

"An Evening at La Cage," *Riveria Hotel; $21.95, 702-794-9433*

"Siegfried & Roy," *Mirage Hotel; $89.35, 702-292-7777*

"Mystère," *Treasure Island Hotel; $69.85, 702-894-7722*

"O," *Bellagio Hotel; $90-100, 702-693-7722*

TIC 2515

took over the lead, the show's 250 special effects mingled with music, dance and comedy got whipped into better shape. And now a million people have seen it — at up to $70 a pop.

For some, the snazzy effects alone are worth it. But enduring the wildly overblown mishmash of garish flash and hokey fantasy between techno-stunts is the real trick.

Cassidy has left the starship, and now ace Broadway showman Tommy Tune is the lead. But Tune was down with the flu recently, and his eager but bland young understudy barely registered on the charisma-meter.

Whoever stars in it, "EFX" shamelessly raids, accessorizes and entirely cheapens popular legend and myth — making it, perhaps, the quintessential Vegas show.

After a portentous intro by Darth Vader (that is, James Earl Jones on laser disc), there's a hodgepodge time-travel spree of production numbers evoking King Arthur, P.T. Barnum, Houdini and H.G. Wells.

You suffer cornball songs, pumped-up taped music, new-age bromides, faux-exotica and banal chorus lines, to drink in the visuals: fire, flood, a dragon attack — all with swell costumes and monster sets. Coolest: a trippy 3-D space voyage.

With Tune on hand (and foot), 90 minutes of this extravagance of mindless superficiality might be easier to take. Without him the ratio of groaning absurdity to techno-thrills in "EFX" runs pretty high.

"La Cage," at the Riveria Hotel

Joan Rivers *is* Frank Marino. Or vice versa. Molded into about a dozen changes of "Dynasty"-style, Bob Mackie-designed frocks, Marino is so good at doing Joan that the real Rivers tried suing him for persona-infringement. She shoulda been flattered: Marino looks ab-fab, dahling.

Those inclined can still find topless girlie revues on the Strip. But for a spoofier splash of sexual innuendo, the glossy, mildly naughty drag shows like "La Cage" may be more fun.

When I went, the patrons were mainly older guy-girl couples whooping it up for this retro-drag spree — a Vegas bargain, at $21.95 per ticket (including two watery drinks).

Marino's X-rated intros lead into standard lip-syncing bits. Look, there's Cher. And Whitney! Diana! A great Judy Garland. And a moonwalking Michael Jackson.

Jackson as a transvestite alter-ego? Hey, if the glove fits . . . .

"Siegfried & Roy," at the Mirage

So you really want to go for the gusto of full-out Vegas-ness? Then Siegfried and Roy are your boys.

With their 33 pet white tigers, seven white lions, three-ton elephant, "Dieter" accents and leather-clad egos, S & R are master showmen — and flagrant camp-maestros.

Their creature-love theme song is by Michael Jackson (that should tell you something). And their impressive feats of illusion come wrapped in soft-core S & M fantasies, with chorus boys in Hercules gear and a scarlet, heavy-metal, all-gal gladiator brigade battling a fire-breathing dragon. Look out, Xena!

Now in their 28th year of riding around on striped tigers, this indestructible and hilariously deadpan German duo keep their faces suspiciously youthful and their act *au courant*.

Classic levitation and disappearing bits are boosted with the latest wows of laser lighting, post-Cirque costumes and eco-sentiments. But whether you're laughing at Siegfried and Roy or with 'em, they rock.

"Mystère," at the Treasure Island, and "O," at the Bellagio

At last, technical genius in service of imagination.

Disparaged by some of its nouvelle-circus competitors as "McCirque" due to its expansion into the resort market (including a just-opened show at Orlando's Disney World), Cirque du Soleil still weaves entrancing, astonishing pipe dreams.

Ensconced at its own beautiful theater in the Treasure Island since 1995, "Mystère" is a wondrously whimsical celebration of life, death and rebirth, which seamlessly incorporates thrilling spates of Chinese pole-climbing, trapeze-soaring, teeterboard-flipping and an unbelievable two-man, hand-to-hand balancing act (by Portugese acrobats Marco and Paulo Lorador).

But what makes "Mystère" more vibrant and awe-inspiring than the usual Vegas spectacle is the gorgeously integrated look and spirit.

The clown crew in the this wonderland includes two oversized babies, a perturbed puppetmaster in scarlet tails and a prankster usher who drags patrons into the action.

Yet enfolding them is a wonderland of pastel-palette lights, mercifully live music propelled by Taiko drums, and the fantastic-creature costumes of Dominque Lemieux.

The charm isn't all in packaging. A warm-hearted fable that works its spell via dazzling imagery and skill rather than scripted clichés, "Mystère" delights. Yet the Cirque show to see, if you can only see one, is "O" — an elemental epic that may alone justify a Vegas trip.

While "O" isn't as warm, fuzzy or even circus-y as other Cirque pageants, it's unique as a panorama evoked around, in and above a con-

TIC 2516

stantly rising and draining body of water. (For some of the technical secrets, see the accompanying story on this page.)

In this vivid world of Fellini fantasia and Esther Williams water ballet, director Dragone, costumer Lemieux and a fearless corps of acrobat-swimmers create images of rippling, enigmatic beauty.

Red-skirted lords-a-leaping ride on carousel horses. Mermaid-like creatures with Godiva hair half-emerge from the water for eerie synchronized ballets. A towering, hunchbacked clown sets sail in an upturned umbrella. And in an amazing pyrotechnic act, a man is set ablaze from head to foot, yet remains intact and sanguine.

There is so much more — the exceptional world-beat music, mingling traditional African and Chinese instruments with synthesizers and Brazilian song. The zebra-skinned acrobats. The epic headgear. The 20-foot butterfly plunges by world-class divers. And a surreal landscape that keeps the eyes darting as it evolves.

Dragone has called "O" (a play on the French word for water, "eau") an "homage to theater." And so it is in all its stunning variousness.

It's a concept entirely new for Las Vegas — yet something maybe only Vegas could have inspired.

High-tech trickery gives 'O' its dazzle

Knowing how the ingenious, custom-built performing space at the Bellagio Hotel works makes "O" seem like even more of a technical marvel.

The functional centerpiece of the production is a massive onstage pool that holds up to 1.5 million gallons of 85-degree water. It contains seven hydraulic lifts that constantly reconfigure the pool throughout the show — making it range from a 25-feet-deep mini-lake suitable for high-board diving to a dry, level stage surface.

Many additional effects are controlled by a "telepherique" (overhead conveyer), mounted on a huge carousel 60 feet above the stage. This computerized instrument operates six tracks, each equipped with two winches, which seamlessly transport scenery, rigging and dozens of performers onstage and off.

As for how cast members manage their underwater exits and entrances: all are scuba-certified, and able to breathe during long periods submerged in the pool, thanks to 18 underwater oxygen stations.

Two "dive safety officers," who communicate via microphones mounted on special masks, assist the cast. And to time their entrances, performers rely on a dozen underwater speakers piping in music and other cues.

To keep all of this running safely, the backstage area is equipped with 45 video monitors, including nine showing the underwater area.

Then there's the climate-control system. To maintain a comfortable temperature for patrons in the 1,800 seat-auditorium, while ensuring a warmer climate for the mermaids onstage, each seat comes equipped with vents that silently emit streams of cool air.

5

— *Misha Berson*

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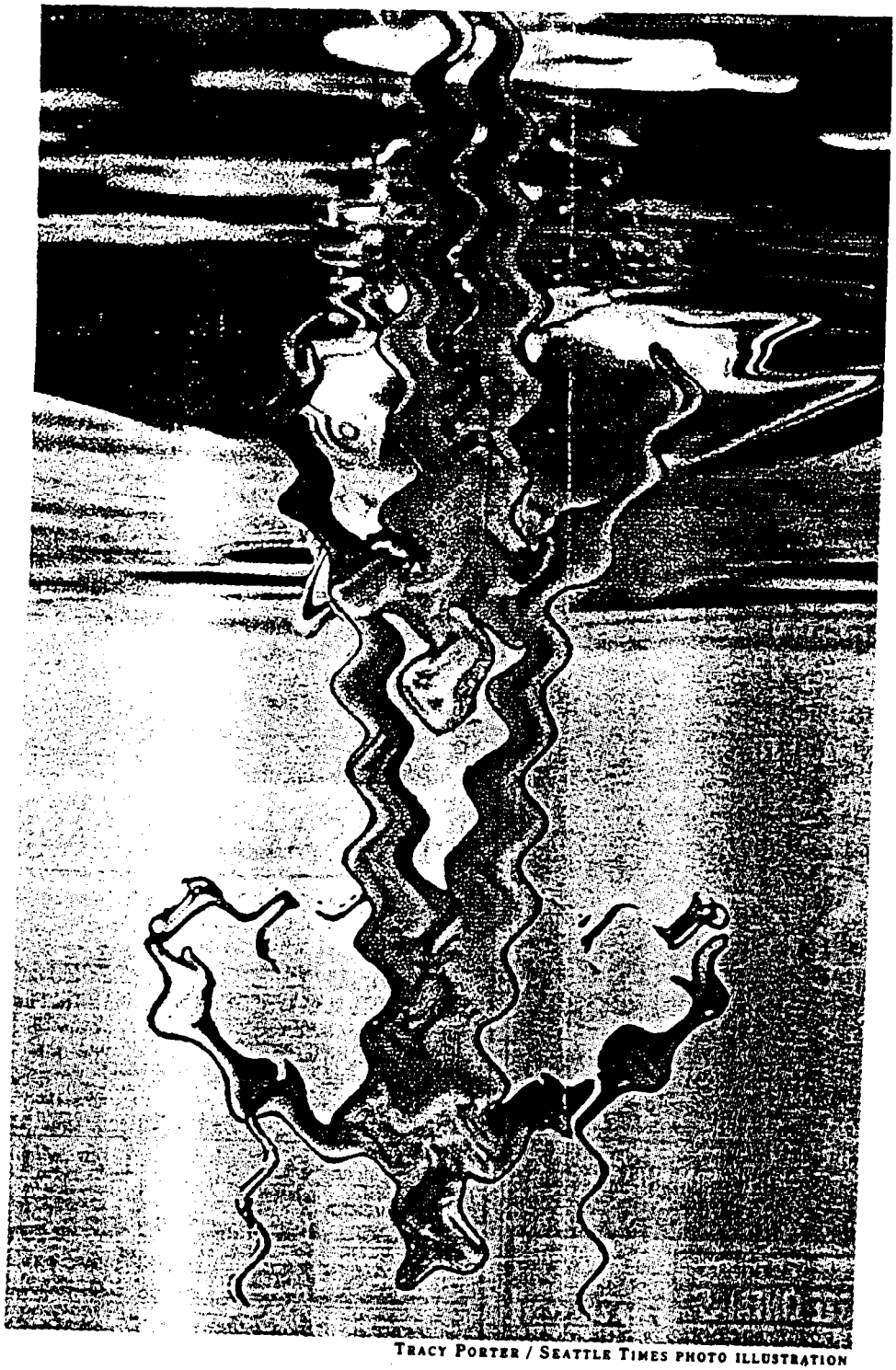

TRACY PORTER / SEATTLE TIMES PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

TIC 2519

TRENTON REPUBLICAN-TIMES

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BURRELLE'S

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Vegas a Family Town?

With the recent opening of three new attractions, Las Vegas, Nevada, is expanding its entertainment scope, offering something for all ages.

Treasure Island, which is located on the famed Strip, is a towering hotel-casino fronted by an 18th-century port and pirate village. There, two 90-foot frigates engage in a full-scale battle to the finish, with cannons blasting and masts snapping. It isn't even necessary to enter the casino to see the show, which plays at 90-minute intervals from 3 to 10 p.m. daily except during windy or inclement weather. Inside, besides the casino, there are several restaurants, a shopping mall and performances by the famous Cirque du Soleil.

Luxor, a 30-story pyramid encased in glass, is a hotel-casino reached via a replica of Egypt's Sphinx. A laser light show, seven themed restaurants and high-tech interactive theaters await inside.

MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park, the world's largest hotel and casino, is the newest facility. At its Wizard of Oz theme park, visitors can follow the adventures of Dorothy, Toto and their companions on the Yellow Brick Road.

The Luxor and GM Grand are located at the southern end of Las Vegas Boulevard.

—*Robert Longsdorf Jr.*

TIC 1836

BURRELLE'S

Watching people is half the fun

49 30 BR

The Daly Planet

By RUSS DALY

For many years, I could not figure out the fascination my father had for watching human behavior.

While my mother shopped, he would always sit in the mall's court areas or wait in the car--either spot perfect for viewing one of the most entertaining shows in the world.

After our trip to Las Vegas over Spring Break, I have a better understanding of how he could spend his time just sitting back and watching the crowd go by.

We went to see the streetside show at Treasure Island, one of Vegas' newest attempts to make the city a family-oriented vacation spot.

Two ships are positioned in front of the hotel, waiting for the action to start. A few minutes before showtime, the pirates and the British seamen unobtrusively board the ships and proceed to act out a pirate conquest of the royal vessel.

In heady anticipation, we accepted the drive up to the sixth floor of the parking terrace and marvelled at the sights and sounds as we traversed the hotel and casino to get to the front door.

The crowd didn't deter us as we all walked along like sheep toward the main attraction. We were not prepared, however, for the mob already lined up outside the doors.

We thought we had allowed plenty of time to get to the hotel well in advance of the performance. We found out that the show started a half hour earlier than we thought, and we found ourselves in the middle of mass confusion.

People were lined up three or four deep on the front edge of the walkway nearest the water, and two or three deep against the rope fence of the outer edge of the walkway, leaving a space in the middle for people to walk through, theoretically.

Too many people tried to fit through that space, a few tried to walk against the flow of traffic, and several obnoxious animals thought they should be farther ahead of anyone in line.

We finally found an empty space where we could stop to see the show, or at least the tops of the ships. (We were counting on the pirates climbing up to the crow's nests.)

Although we had secured our spot, we still had to deal with the myriad people trying to walk through.

I almost laughed at one lady who complained about the standstill, and I wondered why she thought she should complain when she probably knew beforehand that the hotel offered that show. Why did she choose to walk in that spot at that time? I didn't feel sorry for her.

None of my children could see, and my five year old was nearly trampled. Being only slightly above knee level, she finally decided to kick anyone who stepped on her.

We did see part of the show, like the fireworks and the fire, and we saw the top of the British ship go down as the ship sank. All in all, we were very disappointed, but we had been there.

Later that night, I saw another facet of human behavior: "selective illiteracy."

In the hotel lobby, a beautiful marble-topped table had two items on it -- a massive floral arrangement and a small sign that asked people not to sit or lean on the table.

My children quickly and loudly pointed out that someone was violating the directions printed on the sign by leaning on the table.

That's when I explained what illiterate meant, then added that some people choose to ignore what they read.

I remember when my father used to get exasperated during his people-watching because the hair styles in the 70s caused him to not know the gender of the people he was watching. During our trip, I finally figured out why that was a problem.

While we were in the mall, we saw a guy with matching earrings. I have seen guys with one earring, guys with several earrings, and guys with different earrings on each side. But I had never seen a guy with a matched set.

Later on, we saw another person with a matched set of earrings and a purse as well. My eleven year old asked if it was a man or a woman, and I couldn't give him an answer.

While we were looking in the pet store, I watched a woman and her daughter perusing the gerbil box. The rabbit box at the front of the store asked customers not to pick up the bunnies, but invited people to pet them.

Given that message on the bunnies, I was shocked to see this woman pick up a gerbil. When she turned away, her daughter followed her example and picked one up herself. (Do as I say, not as I do?)

The next thing I saw was a gerbil on the floor, and a mother picking up the still form and putting it back in the box.

Falling from 500 gerbil yards, the animal probably died on impact, and the other rodents quickly crowded around the victim to see if they could help.

I felt bad for the gerbil, but I was outraged that this woman would be so ignorant about teaching her daughter proper ways to behave in society.

The vacation was as interesting as it was relaxing, and now I appreciate my father's interest in the human activity he so enjoyed.

TIC 1837

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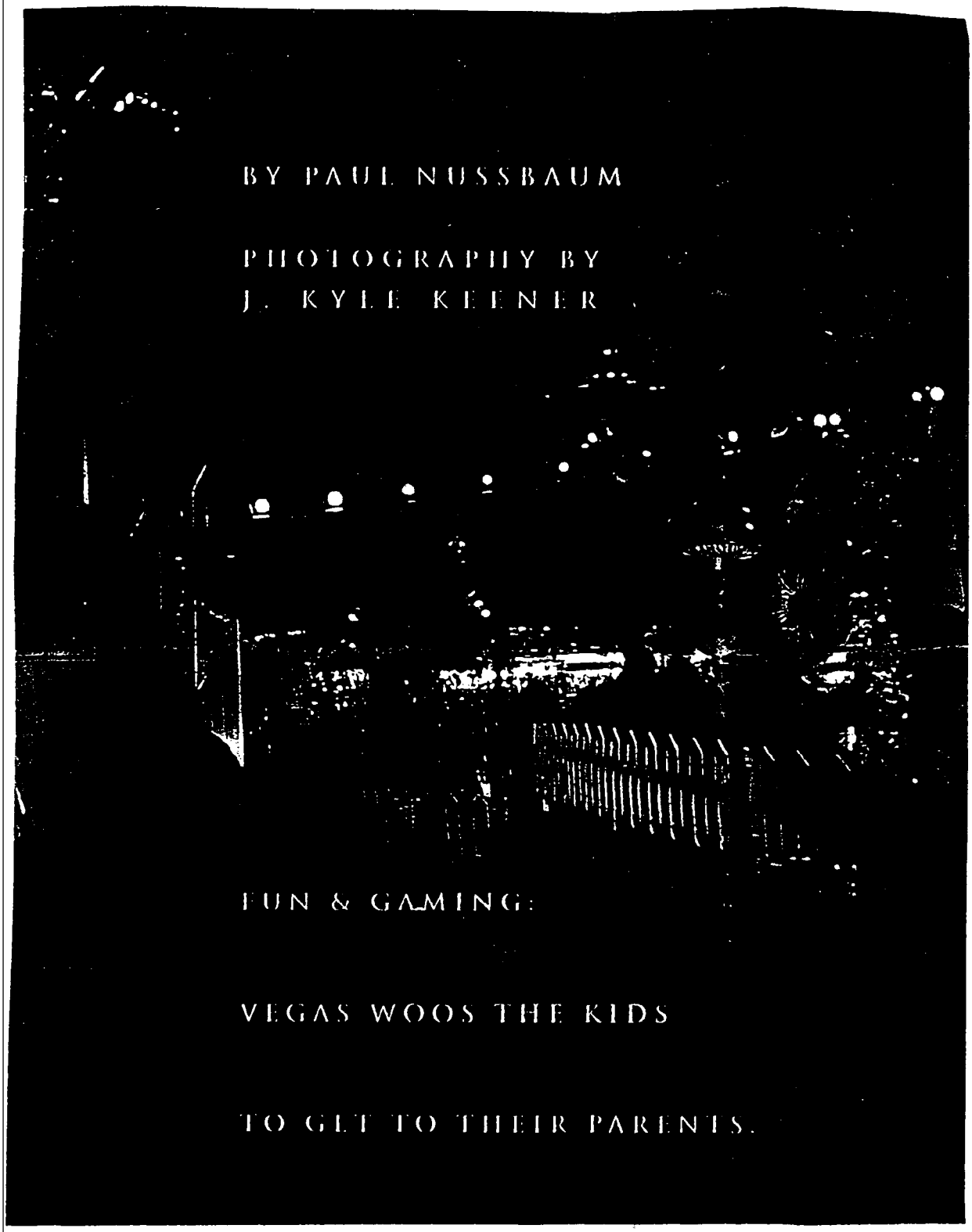
BY PAUL NUSSBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
J. KYLE KEENER
FUN & GAMING:
VEGAS WOOS THE KIDS
TO GET TO THEIR PARENTS.

TIC 1902

IN ETERNAL ELECTRIC TWILIGHT, BENEATH the glow of green lasers, a mesmerized teenager strapped inside a wildly gyrating jet-fighter simulator twirls and spins and somersaults as she tries to blast enemy planes from the video sky.

Twenty feet away, eight young strangers are sharing a yawing, bucking ride in a mock spaceship, each of them trying to shoot down the most computer-generated bandits on their communal window into space.

Nearby, eight adolescent race-car drivers, in Indy-style machines only slightly smaller than the real thing, are screeching through high-speed turns, passing each other on short straightaways and careering out of control into the retaining walls on the curves. They shudder, they bank, they bounce, but their eyes never leave the six-foot screens in front of them.

This is VirtuaLand. The Japanese video-game-maker Sega has fashioned this mega-arcade, Chuck-E-Cheese on steroids, where children don't so much play video games as inhabit them. Here, above the casino floor of Las Vegas' new $375 million Luxor Hotel, "virtual reality" reigns. Drive a virtual car, fly a virtual plane, shoot virtual guns, fight virtual aliens. Only the money is real.

Outside, just across the Las Vegas Strip, rises the new $1 billion MGM Grand, with a golden 88-foot lion at the door and a 33-acre theme park out back, where, for $25, you can ride the Lightning Bolt, the Grand Canyon Rapids and the Haunted Mine. Or wander New York Street, Tumbleweed Gulch or Casablanca Plaza. Pretend, for a moment, that you're in Orlando.

Or meander up the Strip, where, shimmering on the desert horizon is the seven-month-old, $475 million Treasure Island. There, in a faux Caribbean bay just in front of the casino door, a full-scale pirate ship and a British man-o'-war wage six daily duels, complete with blazing cannon, burning decks and sinking vessels. The pirates always win.

In the past six months, three vast new casino-hotels have opened in Vegas, each dedicated to the proposition that the best way to shake loose money from Mom and Dad is to attract Junior, too. The city that elevated wretched excess to an art form has found new worlds to conquer — and new weapons with which to win. Having taken the guilt edge off of gambling, Las Vegas is now presenting itself as a playground for the minivan set. And it's working: Vegas is one of the hottest vacation tickets in the country, with air-hotel packages sold out months in advance. The new hotels have been running at 96 percent capacity since they opened.

Behold the new Las Vegas: gambling mecca as family resort. Bugsy Siegel meets Mickey Mouse.

Children, once a rarity along the Strip, are quickly becoming commonplace: wandering wide-eyed through the jangling casinos, clutching cups of quarters for their slot-playing parents, ogling walls of TV sets tuned to horse races and basketball games in the

continued on next page

PAUL NUSSBAUM is an editor on The Inquirer's foreign desk. J. KYLE KEENER is an Inquirer staff photographer.

At MGM Grand's casino, the slot machines get a workout inside a seven-story mock-up of Oz, the Emerald City.

Las Vegas

continued from previous page

sports-betting parlors, waiting to feast in the ubiqutous all-you-can-eat buffet lines, spending their own rolls of quarters in the kiddie arcades that now seem a part of every casino, gawking at the ever-more-extravagant spectacles and light shows and virtual volcanos and animated statues.

But even for the grand illusionists who run Las Vegas, this image of a combination gambling playground/gamboling resort may prove a challenging one to maintain. Can they successfully peddle Sin City *and* Main Street, U.S.A.? Free booze *and* bonded babysitters? Streetwalkers *and* strollers? How, after all, do you get a G rating for an R movie?

"JUST THIS MORNING at breakfast, I told my wife I never, ever thought I'd be bringing the kids to Las Vegas."

Ken McKenzie of Appleton, Wis., is at the tail end of a child-dominated day in MGM Grand Adventures theme park, loitering with his wife, Marla, in front of the King Looey Theatre on New York Street while their three pre-adolescents rummage through a souvenir shop.

The McKenzies' one-day stop in Las Vegas on the way home from Phoenix has been a cornucopia of junk food, water rides, and ersatz scenery. In this miniature knock-off of Disneyland and Universal Studios, there are live "Three Stooges" shows, a mock Chinatown that spills into a pretend Paris, a 25-minute wait for a one-minute roller-coaster ride, a shooting gallery, and (this is still Las Vegas, after all) two wedding chapels next to "Central Park."

The crowds are thin, by design: With a limit of 9,000 customers a day, the MGM can reduce the time visitors spend waiting in lines — and increase the time they spend in the adjacent casino.

Some glitches remain in Grand Adventures. Only six of the seven rides are operating. The seventh, "Deep Earth Exploration," remains technologically challenged.

But no matter. The McKenzies' skepticism has been erased.

"I don't think we'd come just to Las Vegas," says Ken. But, combining it with something else, like Phoenix, it works.

"I've got to admit, it was a positive experience. We'll be back."

Gary Reich, 43, a hotelier from Baltimore, is idling in nearby Casablanca Plaza with his wife, Ann, 33, and their 6-year-old daughter, Jenny. They've been in Las Vegas and environs for a week, and their raves

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The $475 million Treasure Island (above) features a faux Caribbean bay out front, where a pirate ship and man-o'-war (right) wage six daily battles. At the $375 million Luxor (below), the accent is on ancient Egypt, complete with a giant sphinx. At the MGM Grand (far right), a family leaves the lobby with its mirrored ceiling.

would make the tourist board blush.

"This is incredible," says Gary. "It's been a great vacation. The Luxor was great, Ceasar's Palace was amazing." And then he utters the words that bespeak the New Vegas: "I'm not a gambler. Oh, maybe a quarter in the slot machine while I'm waiting for my wife. But we came for the family-oriented stuff. Hoover Dam. Siegfried and Roy — they're great! This theme park."

"And it's 80 degrees and sunny," says Ann. "You can't beat that."

The Luxor, across the street and just a silver dollar's throw from the mock castle that is the Excalibur Hotel, is an elaborate Vegasian version of ancient Egypt. Once you get past the giant sphinx at the door to the 360-foot black glass pyramid hotel, there is the half-mile-long indoor "Nile River," complete with wisecracking guides on Cleopatran barges ($3 a head). There is the full-size replica of King Tut's tomb (admission, $2). There are the talking mechanical camels. A trio of "participatory" movies in which viewers take virtual rides into the screen on a vaguely Egpytian-themed trip into time. Pharoah's Dinner Theater. And, of course, a kosher-style deli.

In the theme parks and children-friendly attractions, parents can spend the tuition as quickly as at the craps tables. For the price of five VirtuaLand race-car rides, a driver could rent a real auto for the day. The three participatory movie-rides at the Luxor cost $13, and there's no popcorn. The family attractions are defintely not loss-leaders for the casinos; they're money-makers in their own right.

GAMBLING, ONCE THE PROVINCE OF only the mob and the state of Nevada, is now almost as universal and legitimate as death and taxes. State governments that until recently arrested gamblers are actively encouraging them; with lotteries, race courses, riverboats, and casinos, 48 of the 50 states have some form of gambling (only Hawaii and Utah remain exempt). From the phenomenally successful Foxwoods casino on a Pequot Indian reservation in Connecticut to the frenzy of riverfront casino speculation in Philadelphia, gambling is a booming and increasingly respectable business.

None of this has been lost on Las Vegas. As gambling becomes available nationwide, Las Vegas figures it needs to be more than just another place to play the quarter slots. Hence, the children's crusade.

"We didn't spend $1 billion just to steal market share from the existing market," says Thomas A. Bruny, director of advertising for the MGM Grand. "We're going after a broader base."

And the Vegas marketeers are quite frank about who makes up that broader base.

"Our primary target," says Bruny, "is the baby boomers, who are now in their prime earning — and prime spending — years.

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At VirtuaLand, above the casino floor at the Luxor, eight racers (right) shudder, bank and bounce toward the checkered flag, their eyes glued to the screens in front of them.

continued from Page 13

"They take shorter vacations. Both parents work, and they already feel guilty about their time away from their children, so they don't want to go on vacation without the kids. They want something with action — they're adrenalin-driven. If they can get that and bring the kids along . . . well, the theme park takes Las Vegas to a whole different level."

In his windowless office tucked above MGM's casino, Bruny is surrounded by computer printouts, the tangible accounting of a nation's appetite for Vegas' latest lures. The printouts are records of the phone calls received at the MGM's information and reservations number, collated by area code and state and city and region.

"Look at this." Bruny hauls out a stack of printouts a foot high. "This is just January — 220,573 phone calls."

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority estimates that 85 percent of Americans haven't been to Las Vegas. Yet. And that 94 percent of the visitors are over 21. So far.

"Gambling doesn't have the connotation it used to have," says Bruny. "It's much more seen as an OK thing to do. You can tell your friends and neighbors that you're going to Las Vegas and taking the family. It's OK to do that now."

It seems to be. Last year, the number of visitors to Vegas was up 7.3 percent, to 23.5 million. (Atlantic City, by comparison, continued to lose visitors; the number was down in 1993 by 2.3 percent, to an estimated 30 million.) To make room for them all, Las Vegas has built itself into the biggest bedroom community in the world — there are now 87,000 hotel rooms in and around the city. All by themselves, the hotels at the intersection of Las Vegas Boulevard and Tropicana Boulevard have more rooms than the whole city of San Francisco.

The MGM is, for the moment, the world's largest hotel, with 5,005 rooms. To accommodate families, the MGM reversed Vegas tradition and furnished 75 percent of its rooms with two double beds. Demand has been so great that the hotel is considering increasing that percentage.

"But Las Vegas is not Orlando," says Bruny, "and it is not going to become Orlando. Gambling is still the number-one revenue-generator, and it will be for years and years to come. In fact, as gambling spreads around the country, more and more people will want to come here to see the real thing.

"We're seeing a very rapid transformation of Las Vegas to a total resort destination — with gambling as an integral part of that."

"THIS IS A FELONY, MAN, SO KEEP YOUR money out of sight!"

Dale, the bandit cabbie, is apoplectic. He makes a furtive living by poaching passengers from overcrowded Strip bus stops. His approach is unsubtle: He swerves his old blue Ford hatchback over to the curb and hollers out the window, "First four riders, $1 each!"

But he absolutely doesn't want the money until he's safely back into traffic. In a city where it's perfectly legal to spend $500 on a single pull of a slot machine lever, it is against the law to charge $1 for an unlicensed ride down the street.

"OK." A quick look in the rear-view mirror. "Now give it to me."

Dale shoves the four dollars in his shirt pocket and relaxes a bit.

"I've only made $17 since noon. I've gotta do better than this. I already paid my rent for the week, which is a good thing, 'cause I'd never be able to make it up today. What's wrong with these people? They wait 45 minutes for a bus, the next one pulls up, it's too full for anyone to get on, and then they look at me like *I'm* crazy when I offer 'em a ride!"

In a town built by unabashed hustlers, Dale is a bottom feeder. He'll make less in a day than a blackjack dealer may make in tips in an hour, less than a hooker will make in half an hour. But he is true to Vegas type, always looking for an angle, always on the make.

"I can tell you where the best of everything in this town is. Best buffet, the Rio. It's $12.95, but it's worth it, food's great. The best girls are at the Crazy Horse Too. Well, they're not totally nude like at the Palomino, but they're a lot cheaper."

Ah, yes. The girls. Sex is still a big seller in Las Vegas. Topless shows remain standard fare at most of the hotels. Prostitution, legal in much of rural Nevada, is technically illegal in Las Vegas, and streetwalkers are less in evidence than they were a decade ago. But they have been replaced by armies of hired hawkers who line the Strip, pressing sex-for-sale fliers on every passing pedestrian. It's almost impossible to find a newspaper box, but you can't go 50 feet without kicking through abandoned copies of "Las Vegas at Night" and "Vegas Starlets."

"We're dealing with one basic thing here — greed," says the Rev. Bob Ryan. ". . . They could care less about kids. Kids just open up the adult market for them a whole lot."

WITHIN THE 30-STORY BLACK PYRAMID that is the Luxor Hotel and Casino, beyond the 100-foot, blue-eyed sphinx that guards the entrance, construction crews have hastily created an illusion within a mirage. They've built a temporary television studio in front of the Luxor's mock Manhattan skyline at the gateway to VirtuaLand — a sort of phony artificial virtual reality.

The set is for *This Week With David Brinkley*, ABC's news show that has abandoned Washington for Las Vegas this week. David and Sam and George and Cokie have left Whitewater for the moment, hot on the trail of gambling.

They're grilling Stephen Wynn, the English lit major from Penn who has gone on to become the marketing force behind some of the most extravagant casinos on earth — the Golden Nuggets in Las Vegas and Atlantic City and, more recently, Las Vegas' Mirage and Treasure Island.

Wynn, the son of a compulsive gambler, is adroitly defending gambling as entertainment and Las Vegas as family entertainment.

"This is a service industry . . . it provides entertainment for people."

"Who's to say that there's something immoral or decadent about spending $100 playing a slot machine when you go out and buy a French wine or a fancy dinner for $150? Or pay $150 to a scalper for a football game or a rock concert? I think it's a dangerous thing to be judgmental about how people dispose of their disposable income."

But, no, he says, he doesn't think casinos are a place for children. No, he has never consciously tried to appeal to children ("I don't think anybody who's not earning a living should be gambling with their allowance").

"We build our places to delight the adults, and, as Walt Disney said, the child in each of us."

What he tries to do, Wynn insists, is make Las Vegas more attractive for people to come enjoy what's being

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TIC 1906

sold here: "And what's being sold here, loudly, unceremoniously, without any subtlety whatsoever, is a party and fun."

ON THE SAME WARM, DAZZLINGLY BRIGHT Sunday morning that Steve Wynn is extolling the virtues of vice, the Rev. Bob Ryan is counting the cost.

At the modest First Southern Baptist Church, just north of Sahara Boulevard, Mr. Ryan is between sermons, musing on the notion that the attractions of the Strip are becoming family-oriented.

"You've got to remember that we're dealing with one basic thing here — greed. They're interested in one thing, money. They could care less about kids. Kids just open up the adult market for them a whole lot."

"Some of the people who bring their children here are going to end up at our church, saying, 'We ran out of money. Can you help us?' "

It happens all too often, Mr. Ryan says: A father or mother will spend the family housing money, grocery money, gas money at the tables. Then, broke and desperate and often with a concocted story of woe, they'll show up at the church, where much of the congregation's energy and money is devoted to salvaging gambling's jetsam.

"We have one of the highest per capita homeless rates in the United States. All our social institutions are broke. Las Vegas is not going to tell you about the gangs or the crime or the welfare needs. They want people to think everything is bright and glittery."

Mostly, Mr. Ryan doesn't preach about the ills of gambling. In a company town, he knows that the gambling industry provides thousands of jobs and much of the foundation for fast-growing Las Vegas' prosperity. With a heavy Mormon presence, the "real" city beyond the casinos is a relatively conservative, family-oriented place, where Little League and swimming pools and well-watered suburban lawns predominate, despite recent incursions of Los Angeles crime gangs. Usually, the two worlds of Las Vegas can avoid speaking to each other.

But Mr. Ryan admits he worries about the morality of casinos pitching Las Vegas as a family destination.

"What kind of lesson are we teaching our children — that you can get something for nothing? They have sensitized the kids to the idea that there is no problem with this."

THE INTERIOR ENTRANCE TO THE MGM Grand's casino is dominated by a seven-story mock-up of Oz, the Emerald City. The wicked witch flits overhead, through laser flashes of lightning, above 75-foot green crystal spires, sky-writing "Surrender Dorothy."

Children line up on the edge of a putative Kansas cornfield, just this side of the Flying Monkey Bar and the Double Down slots, for a magic show by the Wizard.

For families to travel from here to the MGM theme park requires negotiating 171,000 square feet of roulette wheels, craps tables, blackjack tables and slot machines in all the themed casinos-within-the-casino: the Emerald City Casino, the Hollywood Casino, the Monte Carlo Casino and the Sports Casino. For many, it's not a nonstop flight.

One weary father wandered as far as the sports betting area, a 2-year-old in one hand and a Budweiser in the other. Two older boys tagged along close behind, dragging stuffed animals. At the bank of 16 television screens, flickering with endless images of simultaneous college basketball — Temple versus Drexel, Boise State versus Louisville, Texas Southern versus Duke — they all plopped down against the back rail.

"Who's winning, Dad?" one of the older boys asked.

Dad sighed.

"The house," he said. ■

DEMOLITION AGE
DOYLESTOWN, PA
MONTHLY 4,000

TIC 2111

SEPTEMBER 1994

E 109

BURRELLE'S

4926 BP

DUNES TO DUST . . . AGAIN!

In the January issue of *Demolition Age* we covered the spectacular implosion of the old Dunes Hotel performed by NADC-member Controlled Demolition, Inc. for Olshan Demolishing Company. The project is the stuff of which movies are made and sure enough you were able to see the implosion as part of a feature length film which ran at the Mirage in March of this year at the Association's 21st Annual Convention.

Phase I of the Dunes implosion took place on October 12, 1993 in front of a national audience orchestrated by Mirage chairman Steve Wynn himself.

Following a six minute fireworks extravaganza, provided by the Grucci Family, Mark Loizeaux of CDI brought down the 18 story Dunes marquis followed by the 22 story hotel itself. Using approximately 364 pounds of explosives, 300 special effects charges and 460 gallons of aviation fuel, CDI pulled off one of the most spectacular shoots in demolition history.

In little more than eight seconds the Las Vegas landmark was gone. Now it was time to complete the job.

On Wednesday, July 20, 1994 at approximately 4:00 a.m. CDI used some 222 pounds of explosives to bring down the 17 story south tower of the complex. While this second phase of the demolition did not enjoy the crowd of 250,000 spectators that witnessed the first Dunes implosion, Mr. Wynn was present to watch Phase II. He decided to leave the honor of setting off the charges to his daughter, Kevin.

The "second" Dunes tower required a different type of plan than the first implosion. As the structure was newer and had a "post-tensioned" design, CDI president Mark Loizeaux stated that he felt this second building would be easier to bring down.

The structure was soft-stripped by NADC-member Three D Services of Pomona, CA working a local Las Vegas firm, Goldie Enterprises.

Mr. Loizeaux believes that it will take approximately 4 to 5 weeks to clear the foundations and debris from the site.

Mirage Resorts plans to build two resorts and a huge man-made lake on the 163-acre site.

DEMOLITION AGE
DOYLESTOWN, PA
MONTHLY 4,000
SEPTEMBER 1994
BURRELLE'S

TIC 2112

E 110

4926 BP

DUNES TO DUST . . .

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AGAIN!

Photos by LEE FOSTER

The sphinx at the Luxor, one of the newest mega-resorts in Las Vegas, puts on a nightly laser-from-the-eyes light show.

At Treasure Island, a pirate ship and a British frigate do battle.

E III

TIC 2113