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Part 4 **of** 4

Vegas: Wildflowers and desert panoramas

Continued from Page G1

Las Vegas on Charleston Road, is a remarkable series of red sandstone rock formations. Stop in at the Visitor Center to see the interpretive exhibits and then drive the 13-mile one-way road that loops through the park. The best view is at the stop called Calico Hills.

All along the route in spring, there are excellent places to see wildflowers, such as white yucca, blue indigo and red mallow. Hiking in the area reminds you of what life must have been like for the Indians and early whites who lived here before roads. Willow Springs is a good picnic stop or resting place. After you make the loop drive, a panoramic vista on the main highway synopsizes the experience.

Valley of Fire State Park, an hour and a half east of Las Vegas, offers similar but more extensive red rock and gray limestone formations, plus Indian petroglyphs and petrified wood.

The valley does indeed look as if it were on fire when the light is right. Stop in at the Visitor Center to orient yourself to the park, which promises extensive spring flowering of desert plants, such as yellow blossoms on prickly pear cactus, brittlebush and creosote bush. In the coolness of spring and autumn, the 48 campsites here are attractive, but the summer is searing.

The Las Vegas debate will rage on over a question of identity — gaming versus family entertainment. And whenever Las Vegas is involved, whether in a natural or man-made environment, the observer will puzzle over where illusion ends.

Travel information

Contact the Las Vegas Convention and Visitor Bureau, 3150 S. Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nev. 89109; (702) 892-0711.

TIC 2114

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Casino owner wins

LAS VEGAS — Casino magnate Steve Wynn usually wins when gamblers lose. 49 26 BR

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 of gambling 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.

TIC 2302

E 113

LION'S SHARE

Vegas is a great deal, if you play your cards right.

By JILL SCHENSUL
Leisure Editor

Gambling makes me nervous.

I have enough to worry about. I have enough people sucking money out of my wallet. Why anyone would gamble for fun -- why people would inflict this kind of angst upon themselves in the name of leisure -- is very nearly beyond me. Deciding when to lock in on my mortgage was enough for me.

I spent four days in Las Vegas recently, but just 10 minutes gambling -- and then only because I was killing a few minutes waiting for friends.

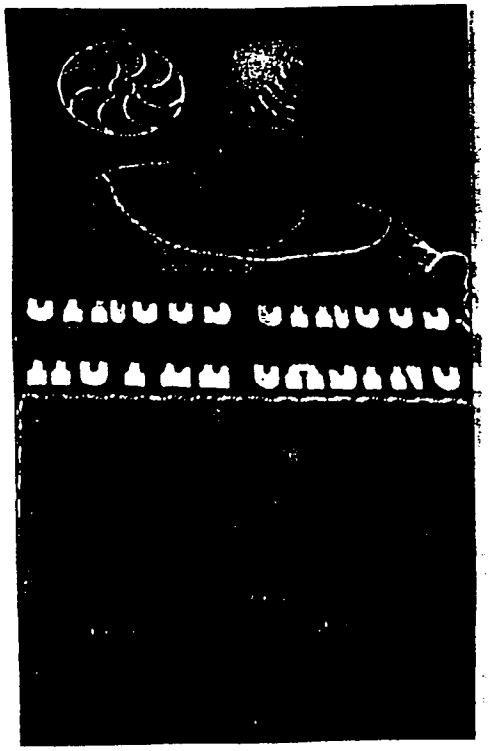
The rest of the time (and believe me, in Vegas you spend very little of it sleeping) was a whirl of entertainment, eating, gawking, shopping, and being stunned at the lengths to which a town will go to get people to gamble their money away. Rarely did I need to spend any money at all.

Vegas was built around slot machines and craps tables. Before that, there was dust. The neon, the dancing girls, Wayne Newton, the white tigers -- they'll do anything to get you there.

You'll run into one-armed bandits 20 seconds after you enter the airport. You'll need to wend your way through the slot machines to get to your room. You'll have to overlook the video poker games on the bar tops when you order a drink. You'll have to exit through the casino if you want to go into the Forum Shops at Caesars. You'll find temptation every step of the way.

But if you're not a gambler, or if you can somehow resist blowing the average $100-plus that most visitors spend gambling there, Vegas is a tremendous deal. From hotel rooms to entertainment, from food

See VEGAS, Page T-8



SUNDAY RECORD

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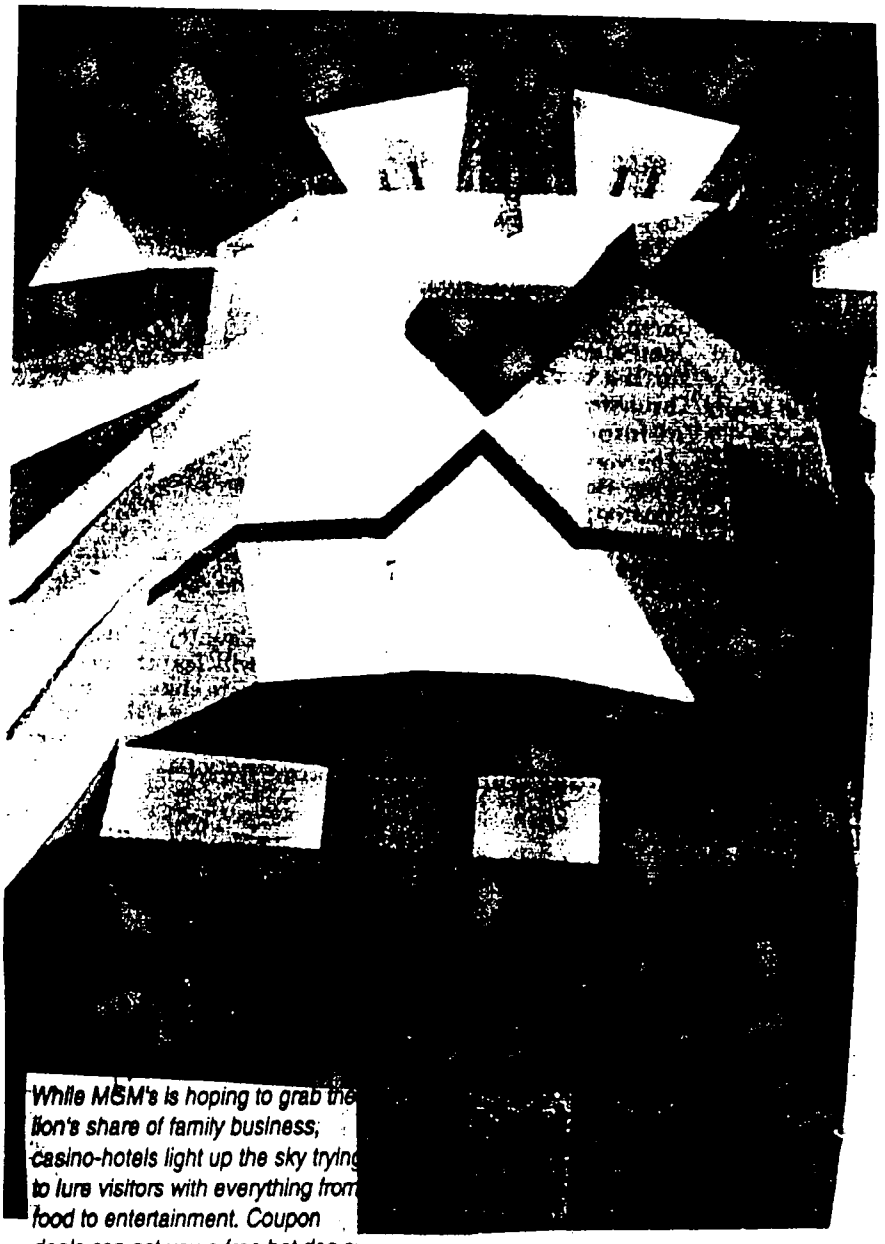


While MGM's is hoping to grab the lion's share of family business, casino-hotels light up the sky trying to lure visitors with everything from food to entertainment. Coupon deals can get you a free hot dog a the Lady Luck casi-

TIC 1922

"Las Vegas' recent metamorphosis has been astounding. In the past few years, more than $3 billion has gone into construction of 20,000 hotel rooms, themed shopping malls and amusement parks."

Anthony Curtis
"Bargain City."

Ogling the neon is a free form of entertainment. Buffets are a great deal, and the Rio's is a best bet.

Photos by JILL SCHENSUL

cc

TIC 1923

Vegas is a great deal if you play your cards right

From Page (1)

to souvenirs, you can make a killing in Las Vegas if you know how to play the games.

It took a ride around Vegas one day with Anthony Curtis, a young man with a mind like a computer and electric gray eyes that you could almost see the numbers whirling in. Curtis grew up on pinochle and rode into Vegas from Michigan to make his fortune as a gambler. In the process, he found he could beat the system not so much by counting cards as by collecting coupons. And cashing in on deals. And playing odds, and playing smart.

Curtis now makes more money in publishing than he did at blackjack (the game with the best odds, he says). In its fourth printing, his "Bargain City" guidebook offers a wealth of information on how to get the most out of Vegas. Curtis also publishes the Las Vegas Advisor, a newsletter with up-to-date bargains, observations, and recommendations on the big city.

"The informed consumer can kick butt in Las Vegas," he said, those dollar signs lighting his eyes.

Herewith, some tips.

Hotels

Stephen Wynn, the chairman of the board of Mirage Resorts, chastised me from my television screen: "Hey, what are you doin' in your room?" he scolded, every 20 minutes or so as his program on the visitor channel played.

Hoteliers in Vegas don't want you to stay in your room; they want you downstairs spending money. You probably won't want to stay in your room, either. While the casinos are all-out glitz and neon, the rooms are quiet and nondescript, and there's too much going on in Vegas to stay there.

Hotel rooms are a major facet of Las Vegas' growth. In "Bargain City," Curtis writes: "Las Vegas' recent metamorphosis has been astounding. In the past few years, more than $3 billion has gone into construction of 20,000 hotel rooms, themed shopping malls, and amusement parks. There are now more than 86,000 hotel rooms in Vegas."

The choices are similar at any of the major casino-hotels, as well as the smaller motels off the Strip. The hotels operate at an extremely high rate of occupancy. The prices are competitive, and all dirt-cheap. The average hotel room costs a mere $49. Compare that with Atlantic City, where the average is $100.

You can opt for better digs, say, at the very festive Rio, where all rooms are suites and will cost you only $70.

Then again, you can attempt to get free room nights. The ways to do this are many. If you are a high roller, of course, you'll get a room free of charge, a very nice room. If you're a very high roller, you'll get a limo, a private jet, even tickets to Siegfried and Roy along with your room. But do not despair, lowly slot player or non-gambler.

There are coupon books that offer one night free with a two-night stay. There are slot clubs that may offer free rooms as a bonus — just for joining.

If you spend any time at all gambling, you may talk to the floor manager and say something like, "I hear there are ways to get a comp room if you gamble enough. How would I go about this?" If you're very nice and you do gamble, you may be able to swing a room. Curtis has lots of examples, some of which he put in his book, of people who talked their way into all kinds of great deals in Las Vegas.

Getting there

Air fares to Las Vegas change with the winds, as do air fares all around the country. A package deal, including air and hotel, may be your best bet. Travel agents can help you find a good deal. Also, check the newspapers.

If your hotel doesn't provide transfers from McCarran Airport, you've got two choices: A cab to the downtown hotels will cost between $10 and $15, and to the Strip hotels, $7 to $10. Airport shuttles cost $4.75

TIC 1924

to downtown and $3.50 to the Strip. While the shuttle is cheaper, it can take a very long time to get to your hotel if you're at the end of the driver's route.

Strategies for deals

The opportunities for freebies and discounts are myriad. Some require planning, legwork or enterprise.

• One of the newer opportunities is the slot club. Slots have surpassed all other forms of gambling in Vegas, and all the casinos want you to play theirs. The clubs are like a frequent-flier program.

You can join a club simply by registering with the casino. You'll get a card, which you insert while you're playing the slot machine. The more you bet, the longer you play, the better your chances of earning such things as free meals, passes that let you cut to the front of a show line, or free hotel rooms.

While simply belonging to one of these clubs could get you future deals, Curtis estimates you need to play for about two hours to "activate" your membership and get the powers that be thinking of you as a person to be rewarded.

• Coupon or "fun books" are another great deal. They're offered only to out-of-staters, so you'll need a driver's license or other form of identification. You can find them, or vouchers for them, at casino cages, welcome centers, or at non-casino motels around town, which distribute coupons from racks. Curtis recommends the El Morocco, across from the Stardust Hotel, as a well-stocked source. A travel agent may be able to scare some up for you, too.

These coupon books include good deals on everything from gambling to eating. Curtis likes the Lady Luck fun book — I think partly because he's a major fan of the foot-long hot dogs that are free with one of the coupons (to be washed down with a 25-cent beer, via another coupon).

At Palace Station, for example, coupons get you a T-shirt for $4.95, three free boards for bingo, a free drink, a two-for-one admission to a buffet, $5 match play on roulette, and more.

Food

Eating is ridiculously inexpensive, espe-

See **BEST BETS** Page T-12

TOP TEN DEALS IN THE BIG CITY

1. BEST FOOD IN ATMOSPHERIC SURROUNDINGS: The 99 -cent shrimp cocktail at the old-fashioned Golden Gate.

2. BEST ROOM RATES: Most all. And then there are comps.

3. BEST BUFFET: The Feast at Palace Station and The Carnival at the Rio.

4. BEST WAY TO PLAY: The Four Queens non-negotiable tokens for slots.

5. BEST FREE CONFLAGRATION: The pirate ship battle at Treasure Island.

6.BEST OVER -THE-TOP ENTERTAINMENT: The Forum Shops at Caesars, with talking statues, five-figure art work, and $700 sunglasses.

7. BEST SOUVENIR: A free photo at Binion's: you with a background of $1 million dollars.

8 BEST SHOW DEALS: "Viva Las Vegas" at the Sands or Allen and Rossi at Vegas World.

9. BEST WAY TO GET FROM THE AIRPORT: Gray Line shuttle buses, half the cost of a cab.

10. THE BEST FUNBOOK: The Lucky Lady's, with discounts totaling $50.

LAS VEGAS, BY THE NUMBERS

THE VISITORS: In 1993, 23.5 million people visited Las Vegas, and the number is expected to reach 25.1 million this year. That would put Las Vegas just behind Orlando, Fla., the No. 1 U.S. leisure destination, which gets about 27 million tourists a year.

THE GAME: Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, has issued 1,199 gaming licenses. There are more than 109,000 slot machines and 3,600 live table games.

THE TAKE: In Clark County, casinos "won" more than $4.7 billion in 1993. Statewide, the casino win exceeded $6.2 billion, a record. The book "Bargain City" noted that the 14 largest Strip casinos in Las Vegas netted a $450 million gambling win in 1992, and of that, returned $260 million in complimentary services.

TIC 1925

A TOP TEN FORMS OF NON-GAMBLING ENTERTAINMENT

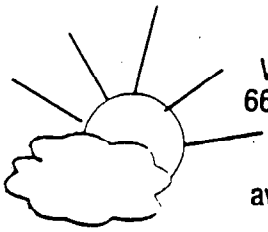
1. Watching the pirate ships burst into flames in battles at Treasure Island.
2. Getting vertigo on the "Search for the Obelisk" ride at Luxor.
3. Being awed by the Cirque de Soleil show at the Mirage.
4. Watching the talking statues on the hour at the Forum Shops at Caesars.
5. Driving into the Valley of the Fire early in the morning.
6. Getting dazed by neon on Fremont Street at night.
7. Sitting at the bar at the Four Queens, drinking $1.50 margaritas.
8. Perusing Liberace's candelabra-festooned limo in the Imperial Palace's Auto Collection.
9. Getting married, or renewing your vows, at a Vegas chapel.
10. Cruising Las Vegas Boulevard, looking for Elvis sightings.

THE FACTS

HISTORY

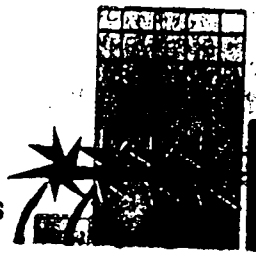
In Spanish, Nevada means "snowcapped"; Las Vegas translates as "the meadows." Discovered by Spanish explorers in 1829, Nevada became the 36th state in 1864. Gambling was legalized in 1931.

WEATHER

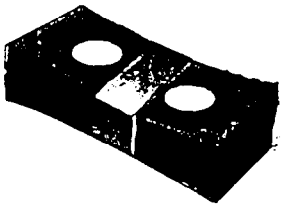


Expect dry, warm weather in Las Vegas. The average temperature is 66.3 degrees, average annual rainfall 4.19 inches, and average daily humidity 29 percent. The city averages 211.5 clear days annually.

ACCOMMODATIONS



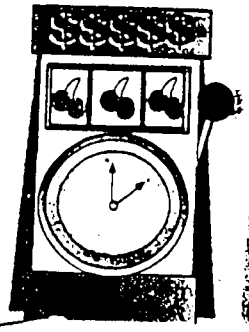
With 69 hotels and 188 motels, the city ranks first in the U.S. in total number of rooms—more than 86,000. And more than 2,900 rooms are now under construction.



MONEY

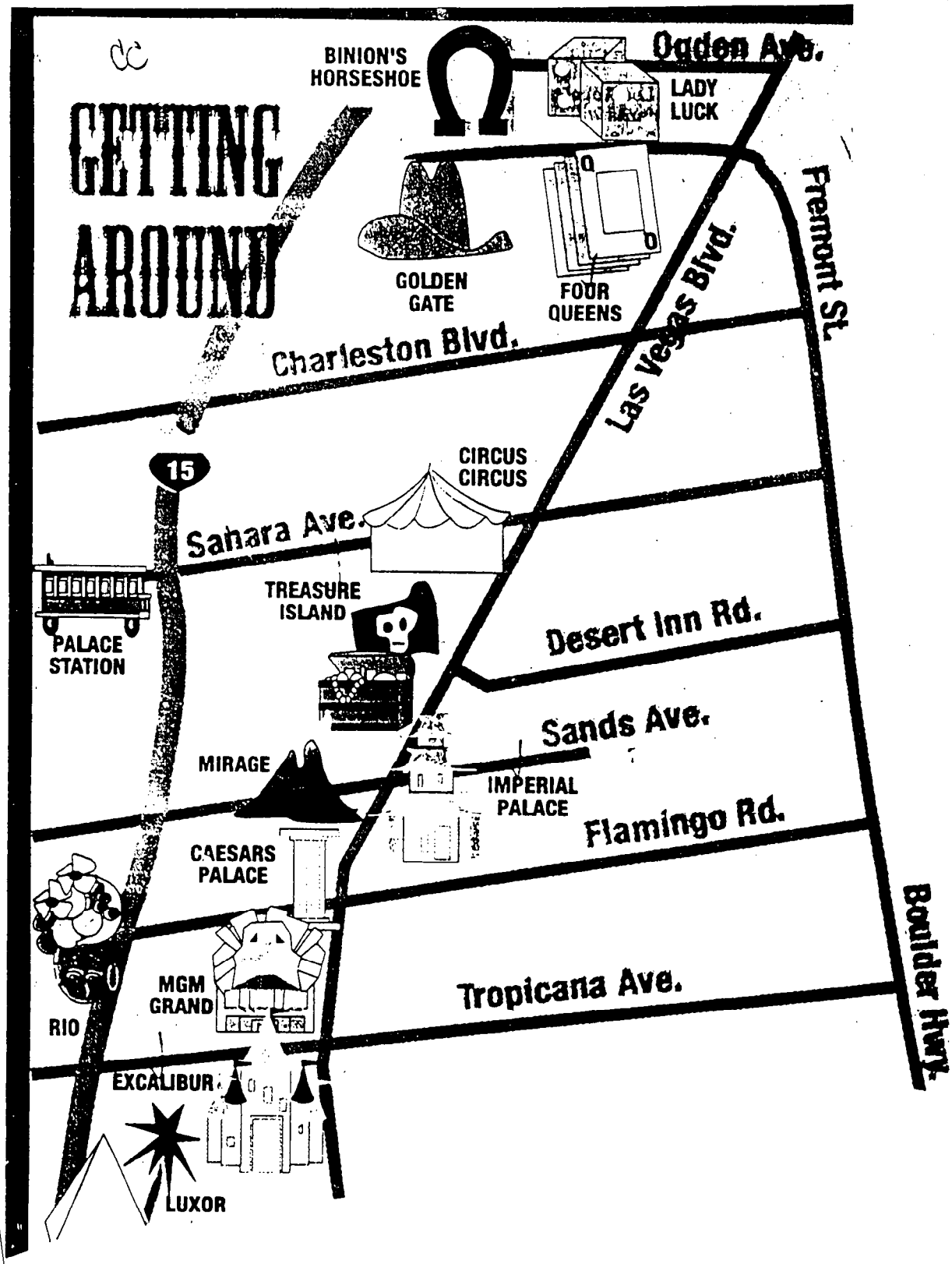
Visitors spent $15.1 billion in the Las Vegas area in 1993.

GAMBLING



About 90 percent of all Las Vegas tourists gamble, and the average daily gambling stint is five hours. In 1992, for the first time, slot machines generated more income than table games on the Las Vegas Strip.

TIC 1926


GETTING AROUND
BINION'S HORSESHOE
Ogden Ave.
LADY LUCK
GOLDEN GATE
FOUR QUEENS
Fremont St.
Las Vegas Blvd.
Charleston Blvd.
15
CIRCUS CIRCUS
Sahara Ave.
TREASURE ISLAND
PALACE STATION
Desert Inn Rd.
Sands Ave.
MIRAGE
IMPERIAL PALACE
Flamingo Rd.
CAESARS PALACE
Boulder Hwy.
MGM GRAND
Tropicana Ave.
RIO
EXCALIBUR
LUXOR

TIC 1927

BEST BETS: Fun for non-gamblers

From Page T-9

cially if you're used to the prices at other vacation spots, or even Atlantic City. They're almost giving food away.

For those into volume consumption or those who just can't make up their minds on one thing, the buffet is your best bet. Enormous spreads, these, from $2.99 for breakfast to $4.95 for dinner.

The only problem with buffets is that the lines are long. The better the buffet, the longer the lines. The best advice is to hit them at off-peak hours.

Among the best in town is the Rio's Carnival World Buffet. Under festive neon lights, diners can choose dishes from five regions of the world. Most popular is the Amazon Grille, where you pick out your meat or fish and have it grilled up on a steaming round grill in front of you. Palace Station also has a good, inexpensive buffet.

A listing of buffets, their hours, and prices is available in the free "What's On" guide to Vegas, available free all around town or in advance for $4 by writing to: What's On Guide, 4425 S. Industrial Road, Las Vegas, Nev. 89103; (702) 891-8811.

Drinking is even cheaper than eating. If you're gambling for any length of time, your drinks are free. There are drink coupons. There are drink specials. As you can imagine, there is something of a drinking problem in this town. If you're not driving, it's no problem partaking.

Entertainment

In Las Vegas, entertainment runs from the ridiculous to the sublime. Well, honestly, it's mostly ridiculous. Hey, this is Las Vegas, what do you expect?

Wayne Newton!

Sure. And all the other personalities who find that it is not detrimental to their careers to be dubbed "Las Vegas entertainers." Englebert Humperdinck, Johnny Mathis, Tom Jones, and David Copperfield are regulars, to be sure, but the list has also broadened to include everyone from Jerry Seinfeld to Dennis Miller and Meat Loaf to Pink Floyd. Who's going to argue with success — and money?

Vegas was also built on those feathery damsels in G-strings, and there is still a lot of that going around. The Flamingo's Folies Bergere is as popular as ever. But many hotels are aiming at the "family" market. The "Splash" show I saw at the Riviera Hotel was topless at 11 p.m., but not at the 8 p.m. show.

Curtis' Las Vegas Advisor rates the dinner and show combination at the Flamingo Hotel, at $15.95, a Top 10 value in Vegas. Much of the entertainment is even cheaper than that.

The Pirate Battle outside Treasure Island — every 90 minutes between 1:30 and 10:30 p.m. daily — is free. The only cost to you may be a couple of bumps and bruises battling your way through crowds to get a view of it. At night, you can also saunter over to the Mirage next door, where the fountain by day turns to a volcano at night, erupting every 15 minutes with fiery bursts.

"Mystere," the Cirque du Soleil Show at Treasure Island, is not to be missed. It is not a bargain — prices range from $26.40 to $52.80 — but the show is well worth it. Hard to describe — the staging and costuming are as otherworldly as the performances.

The new Vegas

Much is being made of Vegas as a "family" resort. The medieval-themed Excalibur, Egyptian-themed Luxor, movie-themed MGM Grand, and pirate-themed Treasure Island are offering up dazzling entertainment, rides, and amusements designed to involve the whole family. They have been successful in some cases, flops in others.

The MGM Theme Park won't have the folks at Disney World quaking in their boots. It has a flume ride that everyone enjoys, especially on a hot day. But the Haunted Mine is truly awful. When the park opened it cost $22 or so to get in. Nobody went. Now it costs $19 for a whole day, $14 after 4 p.m.

One of my favorite features in the New Vegas is the six-minute ride on the "Search for the Obelisk" at the Luxor. The casino-hotel has a three-ride epic journey to find something or other, but it's too confusing to discuss here. The main idea with the Obelisk ride is that through a variety of video tricks, you are dropped down an elevator shaft and hauled to the surface via one of the scariest, most vertiginous rides I've ever been on. Most of the ride is taken from a seat on a platform that shakes and lurches rather violently with the on-screen doings. A journalist friend had to have the ride stopped; and the usher told me at least a person a week throws up. You can take the same ride without the moving seats; make your preferences known when you buy your ticket.

Then again, some of the best entertainment can be had simply by roaming the streets or wandering the casinos, checking out the characters. Downtown, around Fremont Street, is best for this. The little old gray-haired Chinese ladies staring viciously at the slot machines. The bony old man in plaid polyester pants rolling dice in the middle of the afternoon. The overly made up, overweight babes making small talk with the bartenders. Savor it now; Fremont Street is scheduled for a renovation program, and the little children are invading with their yuppie parents all over town.

Musts to avoid

There are some times when your money should definitely, definitely stay in your wallet.

- The boat ride at the Luxor. It's awful. It's boring. It's stupid. •

Grand Canyon plane rides: Ask in advance if the planes are low- or high-wing. If they're low-wing and you want to take photos, you'll be out of luck.

• Paying to get into the Imperial Palace's Auto Collection. The collection is worth seeing, but coupons are available that will get you into the museum for free. Otherwise, it's $6.95, too stiff to see a bunch of cars for 45 minutes.

• Trying to get anywhere on the Strip on Saturday night. The traffic is a nightmare. The sidewalks aren't much better. You can't find a bus to save your life. A cab ride is going to cost a good deal more than it would any other night of the week: You'll either have to wait in traffic or go miles out of the way to circumvent it. Pick a place or two early in the evening to situate yourself, and then walk from one hotel to another.

• Stay far away from the Luxor's "Winds of the Gods" show. It is miserable. And you will feel even worse when you see the elephant who must participate in this poorly done waste of money, time, and life.

Gambling tips

Curtis, who spends a lot of time thinking about these things, says blackjack offers the best odds. He also says the slots at downtown hotels are a bit "looser," as they say, than the slots on the Strip. The slots at the new mega-hotel-casinos have slightly worse odds, Curtis adds.

And one fellow who has read a bit about gambling told me the slots near the door of the hotel and near the dining rooms are "looser than the others; they are planned that way so people entering will hear the clacking of dropping coins, and believe they, too, can be winners.

There are numerous books on this subject. Among them is "Great Betting Systems" by Norman Dash.

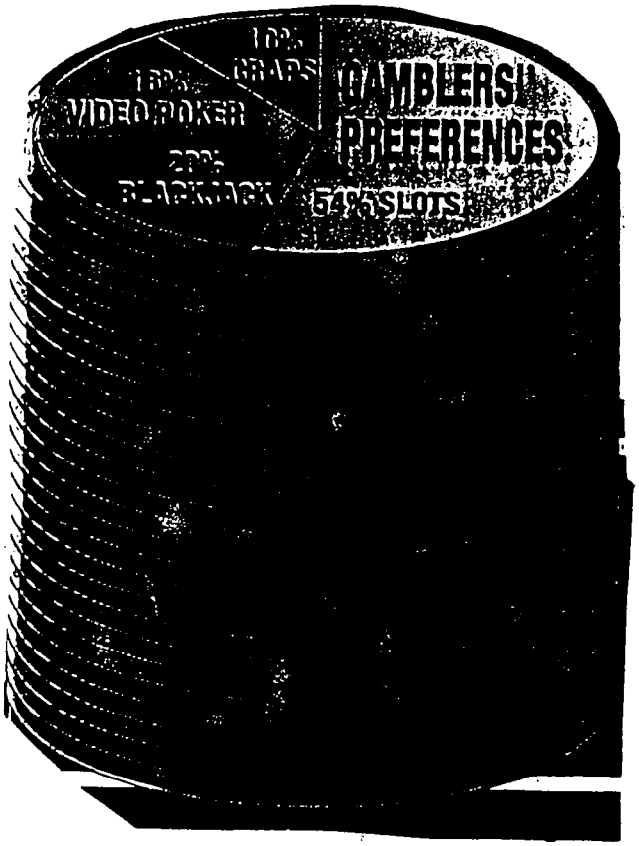
Get out of town

One of the nicest and really most inexpensive things to do is to see the desert that lurks just beyond Las Vegas Boulevard.

Day trips by bus are offered to a variety of the most popular destinations, including the Grand Canyon, the gambling border town of Laughlin, Lake Mead, and Hoover Dam.

I rented a car (inexpensive) and took an early morning drive to the Valley of Fire about 30 miles outside of town. The valley is so named because of all the red rocks, which seem to ignite at dawn and dusk. Stop at the visitor center and pick up a map of the area. There are hiking trails and driving loops galore. It's hot in the summer, of course. That's part of the fun. Bring water and a hat and sunscreen.

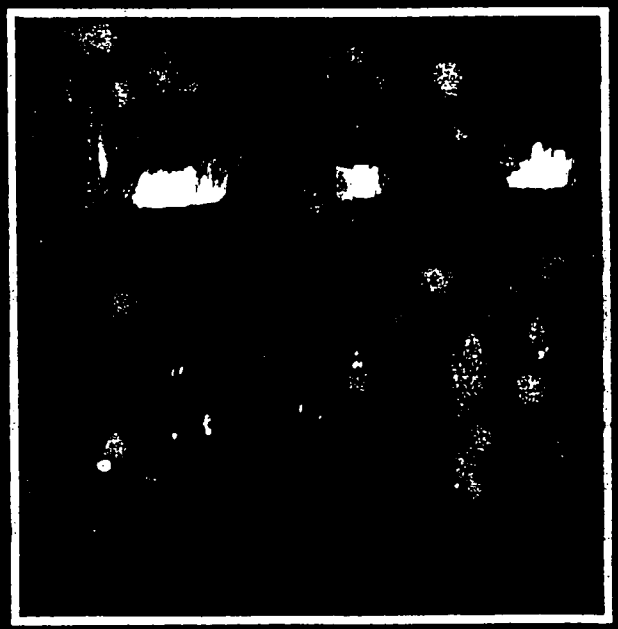
On the ride back, you can take the long way and stop at Hoover Dam, Lake Mead, and some beautiful scenery. Before tooling back into Vegas, get out of your car and drink in the silence and the heat and the nothingness. Enjoy it. In 10 minutes, you'll be back in the throbbing neon madness of civilization shouting "SPEND, SPEND, SPEND!" in your ear.



TIC 1929

E 122

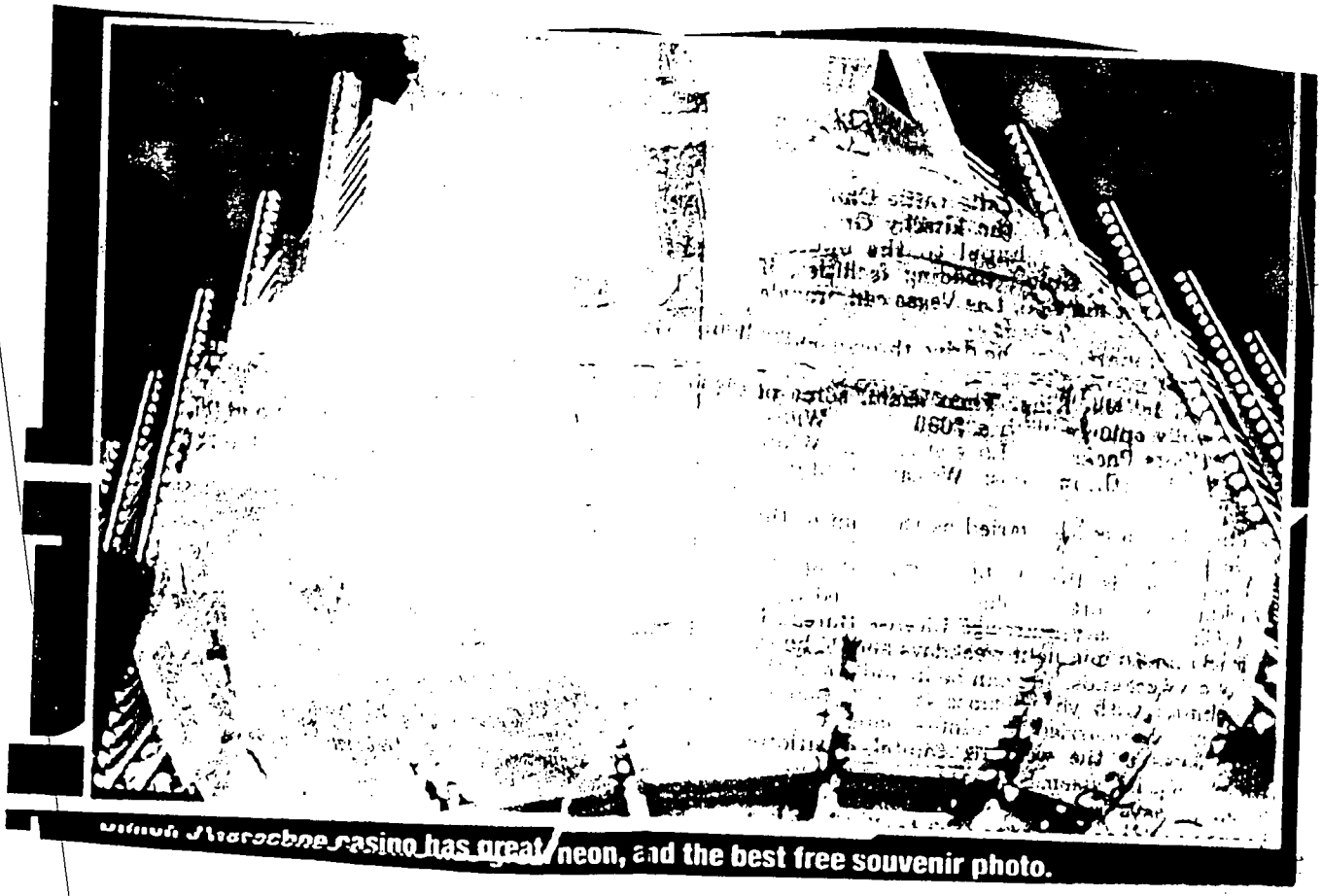
The Folies revue at the Flamingo is your basic Vegas glitz.



The pirate battles at Treasure Island are a good bet for free entertainment.

The Golden Gate stands by its guns: 99-cent shrimp.

TIC 1930



without Fitzgerald's casino has great neon, and the best free souvenir photo.

TIC 1931

SUNDAY RECORD

HACKENSACK, NJ
SUNDAY 246,000

JUN 19 1994

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COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

Circus Circus casino has a special arcade-style mezzanine section for kids.

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The slots can be for video games

1926 BR

EILEEN OGINTZ

TAKING THE KIDS

Now I know how Dorothy felt in "The Wizard of Oz" when she realized she wasn't in Kansas anymore.

We're smack in the middle of Las Vegas at the new MGM Grand Adventures Theme Park, but we can't hear the clang-clang-clang of the slot machines. Instead of gamblers, we see kids and strollers and huge, fuzzy characters everywhere. We're waiting in line for a roller coaster.

Forget Sin City. Welcome to the Las Vegas of the Nineties. This is family territory now.

The MGM Grand Hotel — the largest in the world, with 5,005 rooms — features Las Vegas' first theme park and the Strip's first day-care and children's activities center.

It really does have an Oz-like atmosphere: Treasure Island at the Mirage offers full-scale pirate battles seven times a day and a 40-foot water slide in its pool. The pyramid-shaped Luxor touts its state-of-the-art Sega arcade of video games. Circus Circus' Grand Slam Canyon provides five acres of roller coasters, water rides, laser tag — all under a pink glass dome. People smile at the kids wherever we go.

"The city has come to realize that if it's going to remain popular to adults, it's got to be hospitable [for families]," says Alan Feldman, a spokesman for Treasure Island. "We're saying if you want to bring the kids, they'll have fun, too."

Feldman adds that Las Vegas is a growing city — more than 900,000 people — full of young families who have a vested interest in seeing their city develop kid appeal. "We bring our kids to see the new things, too," says Feldman, a 35-year-old father of three.

Of course, gambling is still what this town is about. The difference in that people aren't leaving the kids at home anymore — even when they come to Vegas. "That's not stopping anyone from coming here with their kids," says Dan Shumny, the MGM's vice president for sales. "There's gambling everywhere." He notes that on some weekends, half of those checking in to the MGM have a child in tow.

Do kids like what Las Vegas is selling? Matt, Reggie, and I, accompanied by our local guide, my 6-year-old nephew, Michael Fieldman, decided to find out. The 33-acre MGM Grand Adventures Theme Park got a definite thumbs-up. Don't expect Disney World. This theme park is small — just seven rides and five other shows and attractions (as well as restaurants and shops) spread across nine theme areas designed to make you feel like you're on an old MGM back lot.

But there's plenty to keep a family amused for several hours. You certainly don't feel like you're in the middle of the gambling capital. (Think twice before bringing a preschooler, though. Except for the characters of Betty Boop, Olive Oyl, Popeye, and others, and the shows, there isn't much for the little guys here. Keep in mind that many of these are thrill rides — ideal for the school-age crowd).

The kids especially liked slamming into each other on the Parisian Taxis bumper cars. They liked speeding through space on the Lightning Bolt roller coaster. "It's really realistic," Matt says.

We all liked the Backlot River Tour through several movie sets, from Civil War Battle to the Temple of Gloom to spooky Bayou. You can go Over the Edge of a waterfall through an old sawmill and deep into a Haunted Mine.

A plus for any parent is the lack of long lines: The MGM is controlling the crowds, selling no more than 7,500 tickets a day in order to keep the waits under 25 minutes. (For that reason, you may want to consider buying theme park tickets ahead, as you would for a show. Call (800) 929-1111. Admission until Sept. 1 is $18.95 for adults, $13.95 for children ages 4 to 12, $12.95 for senior citizens. Children under 4 are free.)

We checked out the MGM Hotel, too, gaping at the sheer size of the place. The 3,000-square-foot King Looey Youth Activity Center looks impressive. It's stocked with toys for every age group, from Duplos to Super Nintendo. Even better from a parent's perspective is the enthusiastic young staff — just 25 chosen from 500 applicants.

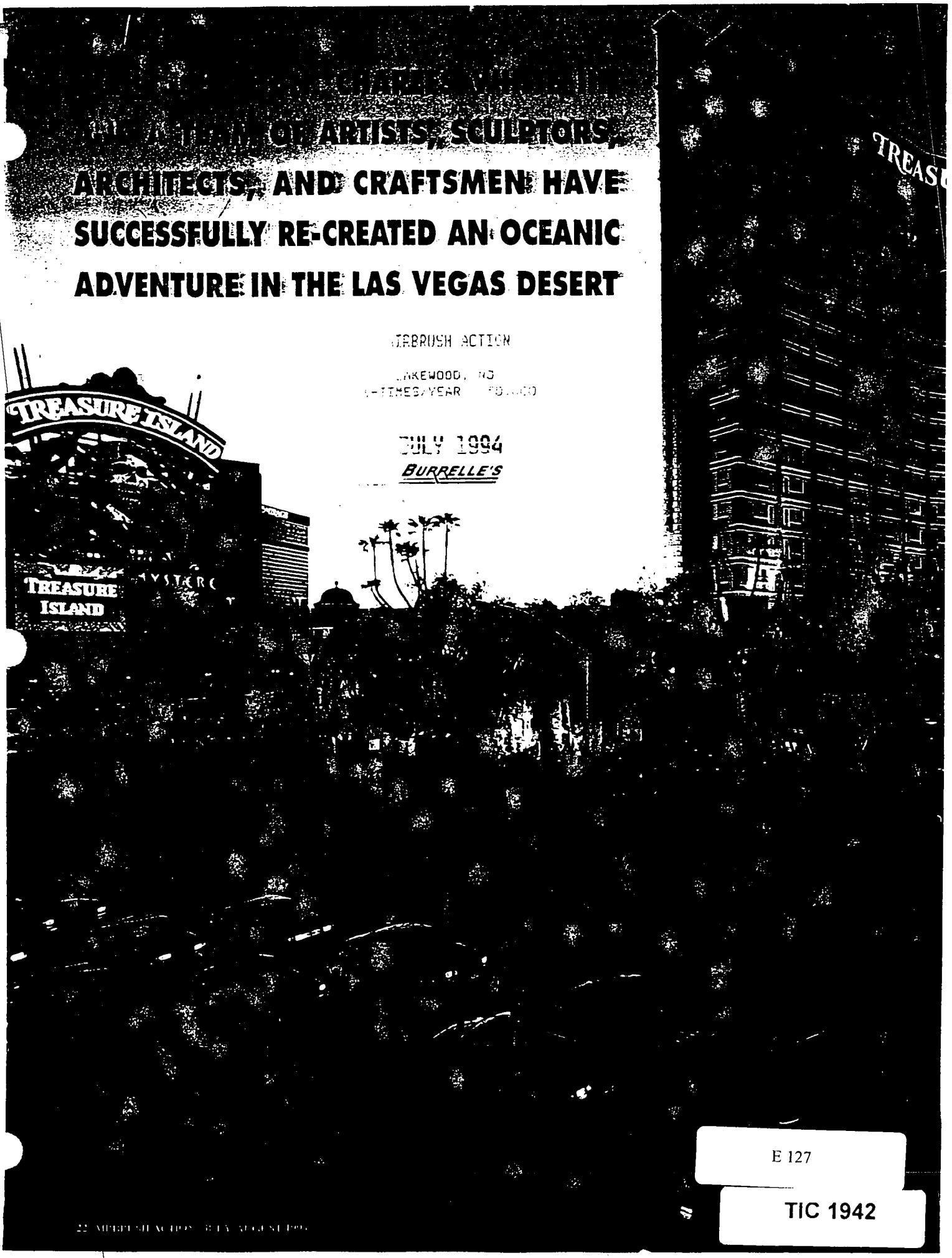
My team of reviewers was just as enthusiastic at the Treasure Island. The boys especially liked Mutiny Bay, the hotel's 18,000-square-foot arcade complete with (fake) skeletons in the wall. There's pirate memorabilia everywhere in the hotel.

Outside in Buccaneer Bay we watched British Naval officers battle the pirates aboard the Hispaniola. They fire cannons. They fall overboard. It's good entertainment (albeit hard to see because of the crowds). Get there early.

Over at the Luxor, the boys beg to stay longer at the 18,000-square-foot Sega Virtualand, which features some of Sega's most advanced games. Beware of arcade mania. It can be insidious. It's wise to give your arcade-goers a dollar limit — and stick to it.

But we weren't impressed with the other much-touted attractions at the Luxor. The lines are long and we were confused by the story line, which takes us deep into the pyramid and a battle between good guys and bad guys. Not worth waiting on line for, we decided.

TIC 1933



E 127

TIC 1942

by Bettie Johnson

In a city that keeps reality at bay with glitter, neon, and gleaming dreams of hitting the big payoff, Charles White III had to create a spectacular fantasy that would stand out amid the luster of Las Vegas.

The solution was a pirate town that hadn't existed for over 200 years. It really never existed except in the facile imaginations of White and others involved in the concept. White had to bring it to life, painstakingly drafting his original visions of the city, designing it, and then creating a three-dimensional Caribbean town right in the middle of a Las Vegas resort. Think Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean on steroids.

It was a project that took more than two years and at one time included the labor of 50 airbrush artists to put the array of details on Buccaneer Bay.

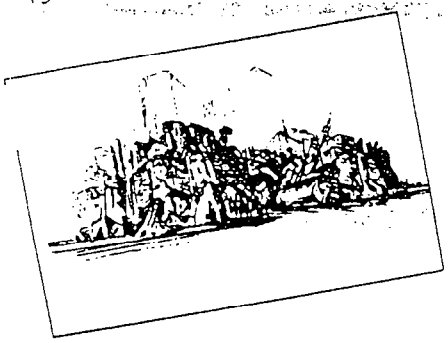
The project is part of the Mirage resort's re-creation of Robert Lewis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. It joins the Mirage's 50-foot volcano and tiger and dolphin displays as a magnet for tourists.

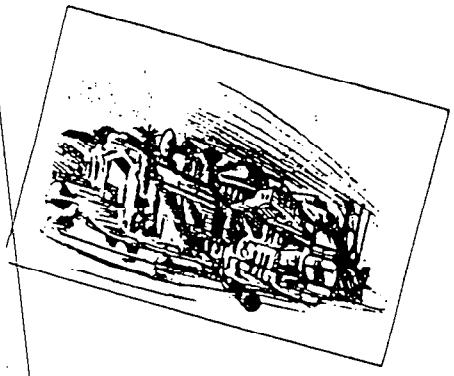
White started by drawing illustrations of a small Caribbean town that had been captured and occupied by pirates. But there was more than a captured city. The Treasure Island project also features a sea battle between a pirate-crewed Spanish galleon and a British frigate. White's company, Olio, drafted a hand-picked staff to help bring his two-dimensional paintings to three-dimensional reality.

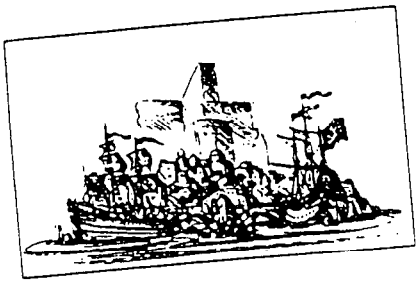
Treasure Island at the Mirage opened October 27, 1993. In addition to the pirate town Buccaneer Bay, its interior covers 80,000 square feet with a casino area called Mutiny Bay, a restaurant complex, a shopping promenade, a theater, and a hotel with nearly 3,000 rooms.

TIC 1943

E 128







From these conceptual drawings (above) and models (below) emerged the three-dimensional fantasy world of Buccaneer Bay at Treasure Island.

"We wanted it eclectic. We wanted a Spanish theme," explains White, adding that the process for a project this size was a first for everyone. Even the scale of his initial conceptual drawings was unique. They spanned 15 feet and were immediately adopted by Steve Wynn, CEO of the Mirage, who first conceived the project.

Before he began designing, White first developed a story line for the town to anchor the creation in his mind. It also helped keep the vast project running on the same theme with so many people involved. They didn't want it to look like a mosaic of different concepts. He used facts and knowledge of the pirates who plied the Spanish Main and wove them into the story of his village.

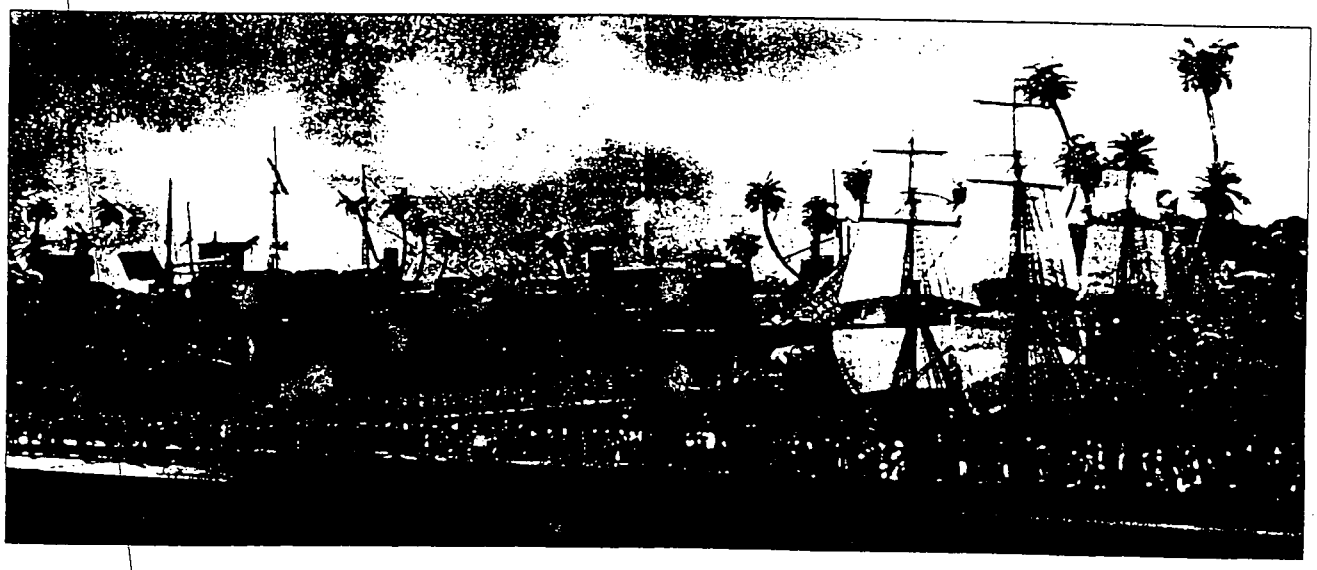
For instance, White says that pirates never built their own ships. Instead, they used captured vessels. So he designed a Spanish galleon that was redecorated by its new buccaneer owners, who encrusted the 40-foot stern with sculptures. He also included part of a fort where the ships would take their plundered gold.

The attraction is an eclectic mix of buildings, including a merchant's house, a foundry, and a pavilion where rich people lived, which contrasts with the uphill shacks. There is even a tinker. White said that everything he designed had a reason to be there; nothing is intended as decoration. White's team also designed the costumes.

What they got were houses and shops, many of them second-story structures supported by columns over the resort floor. They have the air of Spanish design and masonry work, the look of wrought-iron balconies, and surprising architectural additions and decorations from the pirates. They front on a lagoon for the two vessels.

"Pirates adorn, never build. They would add figureheads on a building. After the Spanish took over, they expanded the walled city; then the pirates came in and captured it," White says of his mythic city. "Then it became more gaudy, more layered. The British found the island and tried to get the pirates to surrender."

Any creation of a pirate town will have to bear the inevitable comparison with Disney's ride. But the Buccaneer Bay that White and his company designed surpasses that. While Disney's ride is a fun, visually delightful depiction of pirates looting a city, it's more cartoonish in its details. It's also passive. You travel through it on little boats moving along a track.



TIC 1944

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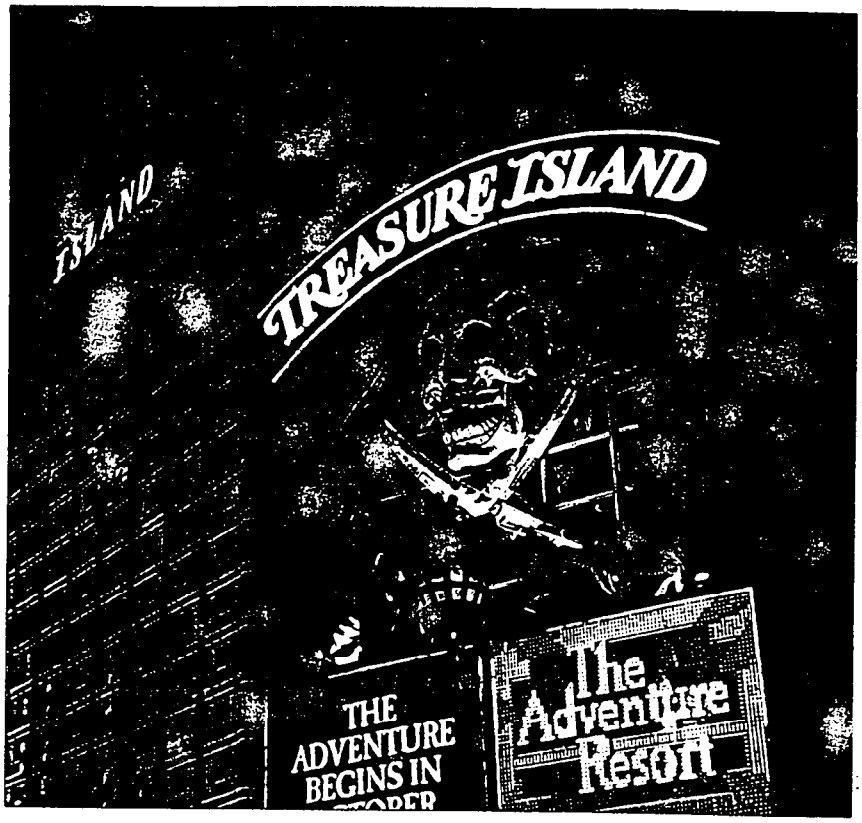


A 160-foot-tall sign, complete with a huge sculpted skull and 60-foot-long swords, welcomes visitors to the Treasure Island adventure.

In contrast, the town at the Mirage has a patina and texture closer to what the real thing might have looked like. It exists around you.

And what's a pirate town without a pirate ship?

White was not content just to design a 90-foot pirate ship or the 70-foot British frigate under full sail. He wanted them to do something. He and his team came up with an idea of a confrontation, ending with one of the ships sinking. An engineer was hired to simulate the ship being hit and sunk by a fake cannonball as part of a ten-minute show that is repeated several times daily. The fiery show also contains dialogue from the captains of both ships. The scripts came from the collaboration of a number of writers involved in Buccaneer Bay.

Taken from White's drawings, the ships were carved from foam and cast with fiberglass.

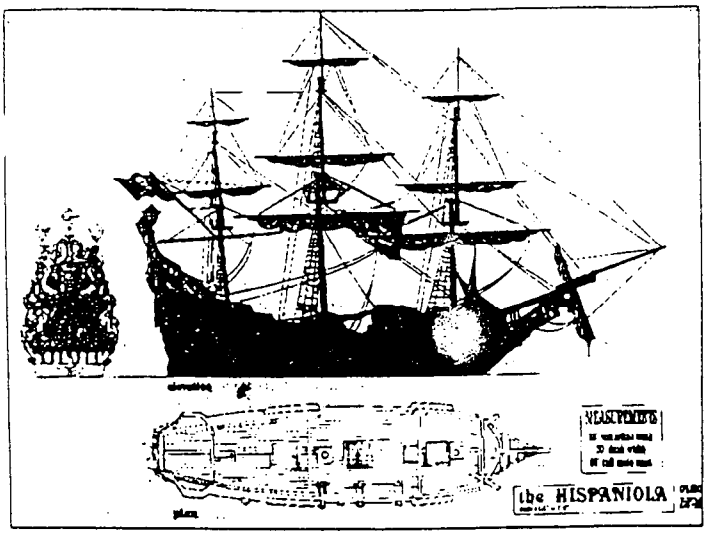
There is also a sign that's 160 feet tall, a 34-foot-tall sculpture of a skull and 60-foot long swords, pirate figureheads from 8 to 12 feet long, and a skull chandelier.

White admits it was a "consuming project." The first year he was at the site seven days a week. After construction began, he cut the time down to three or four days a week. "I was excited about the idea, but not the job," he admits. "But once I got close and personal, I made it mine. I had a ball."

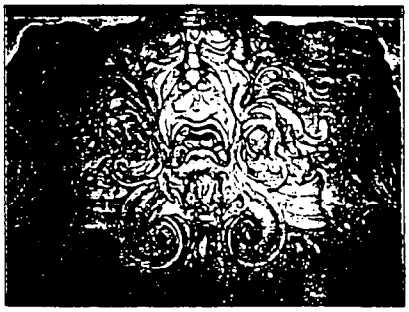
Because everything was done so quickly, White did a lot of drawings with colored pencil. At one time, because so many of the buildings, boats, and structures included ornate work, a staff of 50 airbrush artists were working on the project.

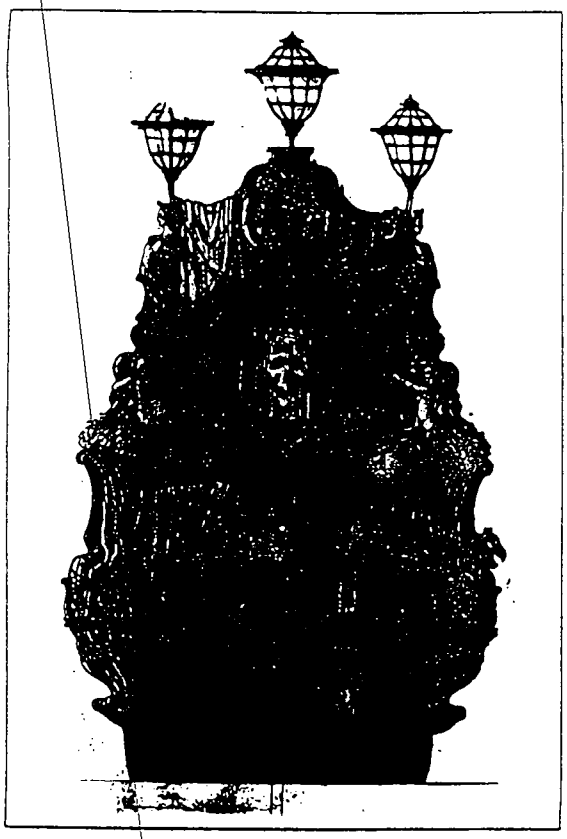
"I drew as fast and as best as I could. I never drew so much in my life," says White. A lot of the drawing was done on-site in heat often reachng 110 degrees.

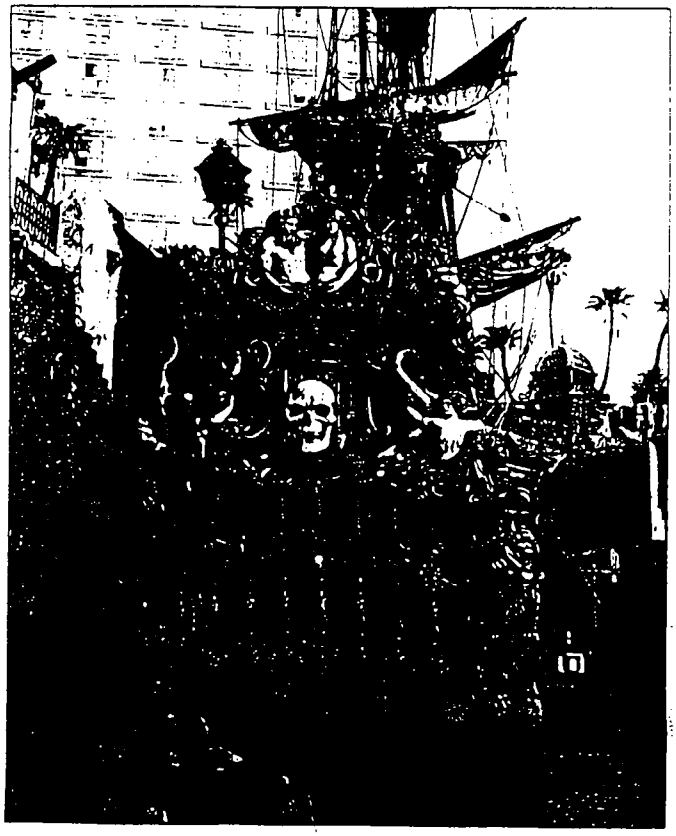
White said that the project would not have been as successful without the Olio team. Three years ago, White chose the name Olio, which he explained refers to a "mixed stew" or "an act between vaudeville skits." The group is a collection of artists, writers, sculptors, filmmakers, and architects. This project also included scenic artists and computer and graphics experts.



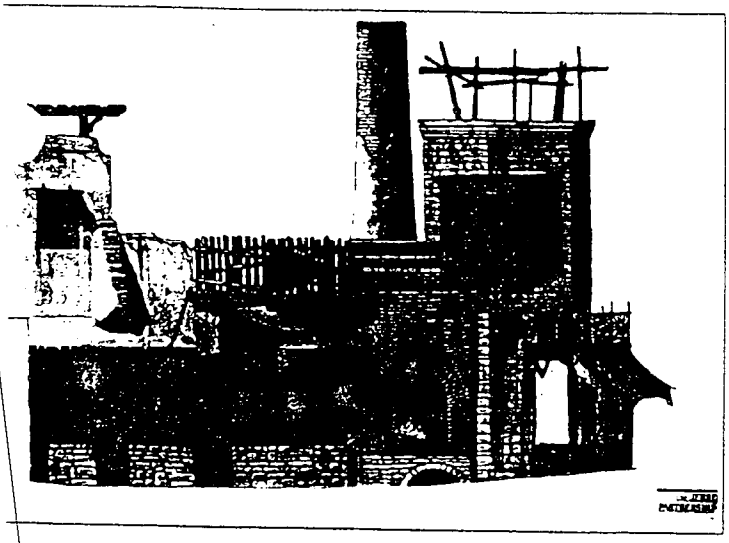
Bringing these pirate ships to life required the talents and skills of numerous artists, draftsmen, sculptors, painters, engineers, scenic designers, and of course a swashbuckling crew. Several times each day, the ships exchange cannon fire in a mock battle that culminates in a dramatic sinking.







TIC 1946



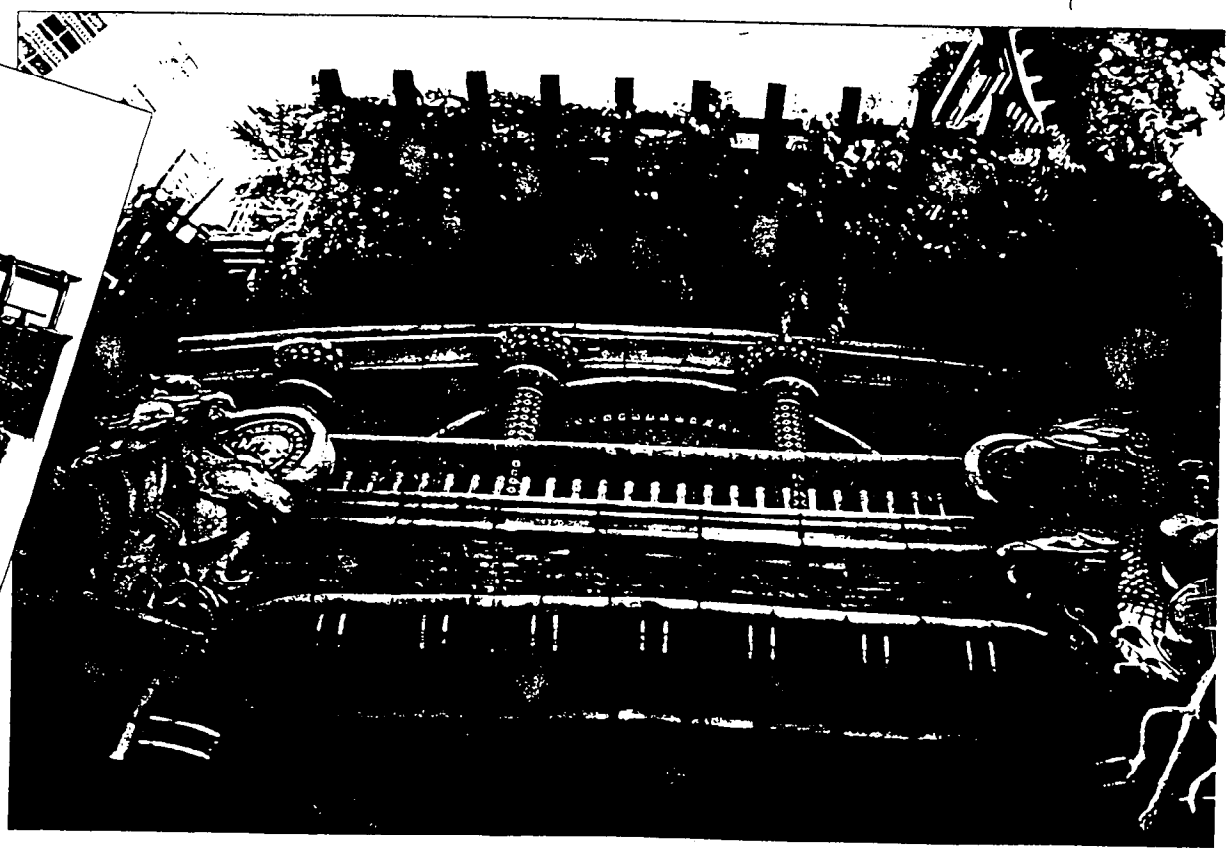
The core group on the Treasure Island job included illustrator-architect-designer Bob Bangham; scenic painter Jay Fisher; set designer Allison Yerba; painters Chris Hopkins and Bruce Wolfe; illustrator Robert Jew; and sculptors Martin Smeaton, who did the ships, and Kent Jones. The front gate pieces were done by José Fernandez and Cam DeLeon. John Jerde Partnership, known for their master plans for cities and malls, such as the gigantic Mall of America, were the architects in charge. Joe Bergman was the head architect.

"We wanted to make it better than Disney. No one had ever done anything like this before," says White.

Olio is now working on sets for the 30,000-square-foot Sam Goody mega-record stores. They are also working on billboards and signs for MCA that involve a lot of airbrushing.

White, who is often called "the grandfather of airbrush," says he finds this new type of work more rewarding than illustration.

"This is everything I've wanted to do. It's something I can get my teeth into. It's harder than illustration. These things are so big," says White. "This project has been quite extraordinary fun. It's a challenge. This is the first time I've been happy with what I do." AB



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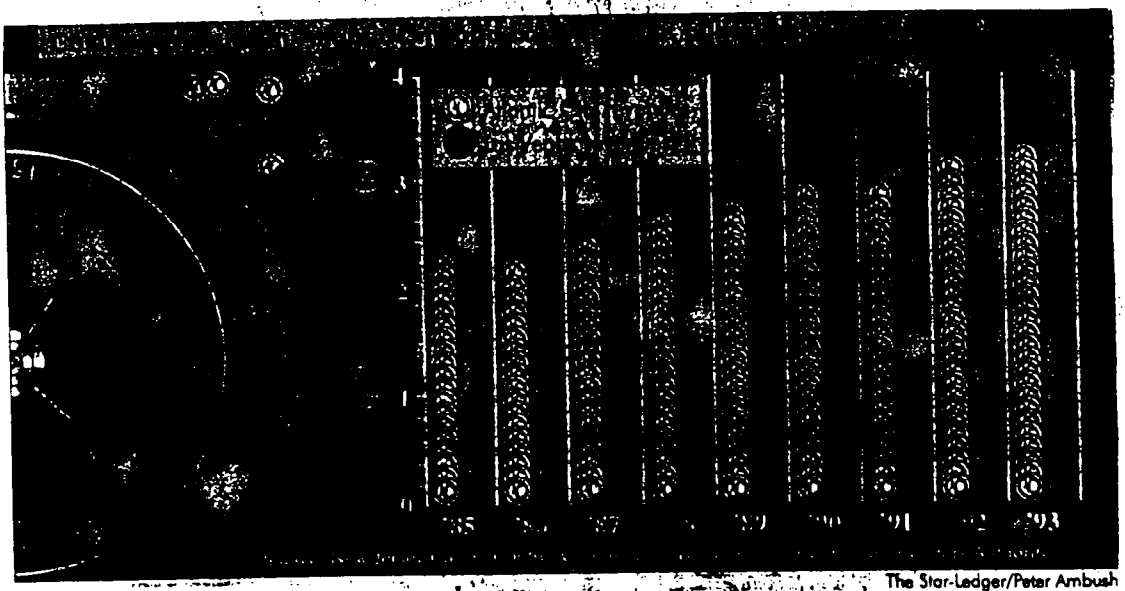

The Star-Ledger/Peter Ambush

FICKLE FORTUNES

Desert spa enjoys advantages over shore

1926 BR FRONT PAGE

TIC 2072

By DEBRA DOWLING

Atlantic City, once known as "the world's playground," has 12 casinos, more than 14,000 hotel rooms and a vast Boardwalk stretching along one of the Jersey Shore's more expansive beaches. So, why is everyone in such a hurry to leave at the end of the day?

Despite many attractive amenities, the city's natural surroundings are generally overlooked. So is its seamier side.

The 30 million people who visit every year are, in effect, sheltered from the other Atlantic City—the inner city, the slums and the decay that casino gambling was supposed to reverse when voters gave it the nod 18 years ago.

Today, its casino industry grows slightly—1.9 percent annual revenue growth—attracting mostly daytrippers; gamblers who might toss a coin between a trip to the racetrack or the East Coast's only developed casino town.

STAR-LEDGER SPECIAL REPORT

WHERE THE CHIPS FALL

FIRST OF A SERIES

Atlantic City is a far cry from Las Vegas, its sister city in the desert that's zooming along with record growth, but it also doesn't have to be another Las Vegas, industry leaders say.

When Nevada's exclusive hold on casino gambling ended in 1976 with the opening of Atlantic City's first gaming hall, the industry wondered what might become of Las Vegas. Indeed, Atlantic City did make significant inroads, growing so rapidly during the early years of gambling in New Jersey that some Las Vegas operators feared for the city's long-term outlook.

Las Vegas gambled literally billions of dollars on changing the city's casino-only image. The new crop of entertainment-oriented hotels that also offer casino gambling, combined with attractions like golf courses and elaborate shopping malls, has enhanced the desert city's reputation as a destination resort with something for the entire family.

Las Vegas is now the nation's fastest growing city and, according to the American Society of Travel Agents, its fastest growing summer vacation spot.

Meanwhile, Atlantic City has kept

Please turn to Page 8

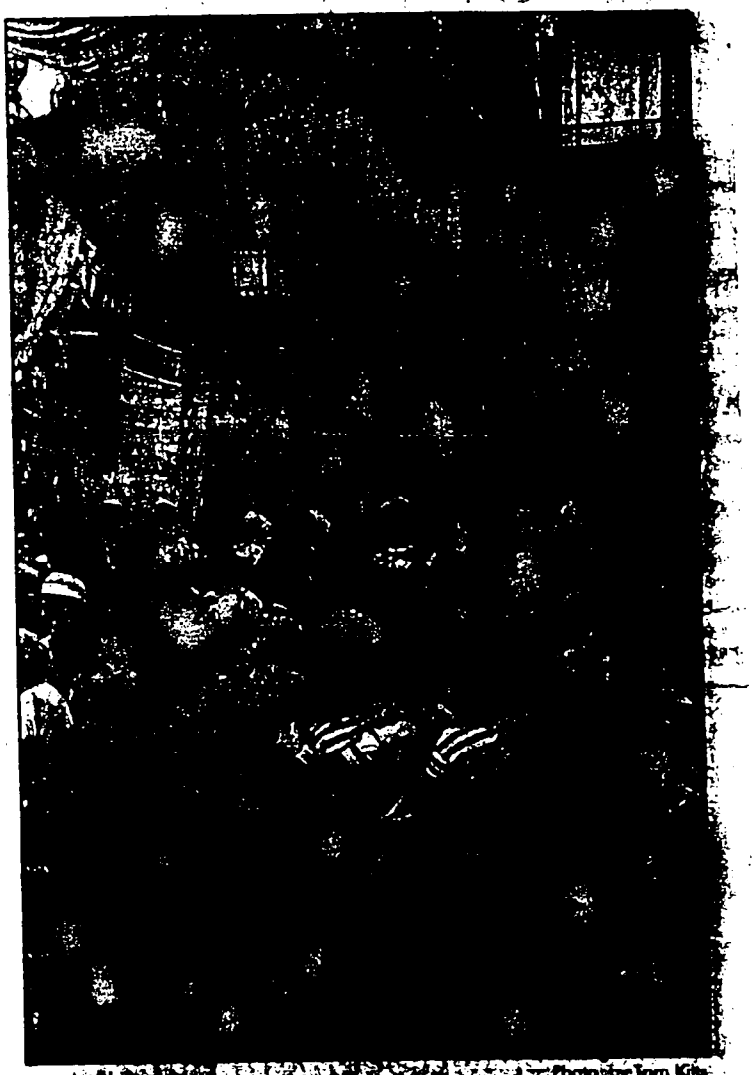

Photo by Tom Kiss

Las Vegas continues to add family attractions such as the Treasure Island Casino Resort, which stages several full-scale pirate battles between 4 p.m. and midnight.

Photo by Patti Sapone

Atlantic City still relies heavily on day trippers who play the slots.

TIC 2073

Boardwalk, Strip vie for a piece of the action

Continued from Page One

gging along. Its boardwalk and ma-
ina casinos keep attracting visitors
who risk far more money than Las
Vegas' gamblers. But relatively few
who visit Atlantic City stay overnight
and the New Jersey resort does not
have the rooms or the facilities to han-
dle major conventions like Las Vegas
does. That doesn't necessarily mean
there's something terribly wrong with
Atlantic City, New Jersey casino exec-
utives said.

"They're different cities and
they're superficial comparisons," says
Paul E. Rubeli, chairman, president
and chief executive officer of Aztar
Corp., which owns TropWorld Hotel
Casino in Atlantic City and Tropicana
in Las Vegas.

"It's a hopeless contest and At-
lantic City never wins," Rubeli said.
"You can't compare a 100 year-old
East Coast city with a western city,
most of it built up in the last 20 years."

Las Vegas lacks the obvious so-
cial problems that haunt Atlantic City
two decades after voters approved
legal gaming there – with the under-
standing that funds would jump-start
urban renewal and benefit New Jer-
sey's senior citizens and the disabled.

Today, the gaps between Atlantic
and Las Vegas remain wide. Fun-
damental differences between the two
begin with geography, history, popula-
tion centers and markets. Should At-
lantic City even try to copy its western
counterpart?

"You can't recreate Las Vegas. It
can't be done," said New Jersey native
Darrell A. Luery, president and chief
operating officer of Bally's-Las Vegas
Casino and a former Atlantic City ex-
ecutive.

"There's a phenomenon to Las
Vegas," agreed Sebastian Sinclair of
Christiansen Cummings Associates, a
New York consulting firm to the casino
industry.

Atlantic City's main industry is
nevertheless not suffering. As Rubeli
said, the city is doing just fine serving
the market it serves and not apologiz-
ing for its different spin.

Last year Atlantic City casinos
had a combined operating profit of
$4.7 million, up 3.8 percent from 1992
earnings of $52.7 million. Gross reve-
nue increased nearly 2 percent to $3.7
billion, from $3.6 billion the year be-
fore.

"That's about the same as the
rate of inflation, meaning they've had
normal growth," said industry analyst
Harvey B. Roffman of Roffman Miller
Associates in Philadelphia.

Until 1993, Las Vegas's gross reve-
nues were also growing steadily
though unspectacularly, $4.5 billion
last year compared to $4.1 billion in
1992.

Photo by Eugene L. Boyers

Atlantic City's Boardwalk area, shown here, keeps attracting people while Las Vegas enjoys record growth

Helped by high rollers

Analysts estimate gaming revenue will rise to about $5 billion by the end of 1994, due in large part to the opening last year of three "megaresorts," the MGM Grand, Luxor and Treasure Island, that boosted the number of visitors to the entire city.

Combined, the three properties alone have more rooms (10,431) than all of Atlantic City's hotel casinos, which total 8,833 rooms.

Every Atlantic City casino, however, is about to add rooms. And a new $250 million convention center and accompanying $300 million Corridor Project linking it to a new, improved Boardwalk are generally seen as proof of the city's turnaround.

But the facts remain.

Atlantic City has 12 casinos. Las Vegas has 264. Sixty of those are major casino properties considered full-fledged gaming operations.

The rest are classified as "restricted," a Nevada term meaning smaller, mixed-use businesses – everything from roadside motels with a handful of slot machines to convenience stores and the airport.

There's more.

To attract convention-goers, a vital revenue source of high wage-earners with lots of disposable income, Atlantic City has relied on an aging facility with 300,000 square feet of space. Las Vegas can offer 1.7 million square feet and 86,000 hotel rooms to put up conventioneers and others. Atlantic City's current hotel room count (casinos and other inns) is 14,360.

On a roll

Las Vegas is expected to draw 29 million visitors this year, way above original estimates, and spectacle casinos like MGM and Excalibur are drawing record crowds and outdoing each other in dazzlement.

Two thousand miles away, Atlantic City is growing marginally, and is generally seen as more vulnerable to encroaching competition than Las Vegas. In the last four years more than 20 states have decided to get in on the action, and casinos or riverboats are now authorized or operating in 23 states. Atlantic City could be facing competition from Pennsylvania or New York in the near future. Its location alone almost makes Las Vegas immune from the growing competition. There are other factors that make it easier on Las Vegas.

"The infrastructure is better in Las Vegas," said Scott Beeman, general manager of Harrah's Las Vegas casino. Beeman formerly worked in Atlantic City. "There are showrooms, food, other things to do in Las Vegas. Atlantic City never built that infrastructure. It's been here over 50 years in Las Vegas."

Hector H. Mon, general manager and executive vice president of Harrah's Atlantic City, agreed. "It's not a fair comparison because Atlantic City has problems that are much more deeply ingrained."

Slum by the sea

Harrah's is one of Atlantic City's more consistently profitable casinos. Mon attributes location – on the bay away from the teeming Boardwalk – as one of the reasons. A marketing draw is that it is safely distanced from the main drag.

Is this any way to promote a resort town?

Steve Wynn, owner of the former Golden Nugget Casino in Atlantic City and head of three successful casinos in Las Vegas – Treasure Island, the Mirage and Golden Nugget – made headlines years ago when he called Atlantic City a "slum by the sea." Saying he'd had it with the strict regulatory climate, Wynn pulled out of Atlantic City vowing never to return.

The contrasts in Atlantic City are stark. A block or two from most of the glamorous Boardwalk casinos, deteriorating buildings and housing projects abound.

But there has been progress. Since 1978, some distressed areas have been leveled and others given facelifts.

"Even if they can never become another Las Vegas, they still have to clean up their act quite a bit," said casino consultant Sinclair. "I've been to Atlantic City. I had a good time in the casino – but I didn't dare leave."

That's not to say Las Vegas does not have crime. But urban blight stands out in Atlantic City, and experts say such conditions are natural contradictions in any town touting itself as a resort.

TOMORROW: Casino regulation

While public responsibility has improved – most notably via the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority's oversight of casino tax disbursement to projects, and intensified city redevelopment and beautification efforts – Las Vegas' advantage is that it does not have social problems of such magnitude in the first place.

"Atlantic City works when it's positioned as an East Coast getaway, drawing people who are coming from similar areas," noted casino operator Rubeli, of Aztar. Last year, about 30 million people came to Atlantic City, 23.5 million to Las Vegas. But the average visitor spends about seven hours in Atlantic City and about two to three days in Las Vegas.

Yet, Rubeli said, Atlantic City outperforms Vegas in some ways.

Although there are fewer rooms in Atlantic City, Rubeli cited an internal Aztar study that found the average hotel guest in Atlantic City has a far greater per-capita spending pattern.

An Atlantic City casino will gain $906 in daily casino revenue or "win," from one day's hotel stay compared to $180 in Las Vegas, according to the study. Aztar tracked Atlantic City's 12 casinos with 15 like casinos in Las Vegas to arrive at the figures.

Rubeli believes Atlantic City would have more overnight visitors if it had the rooms to lodge them.

"The demand is there, the supply isn't," he points out.

TIC 2075

Orlando West

Another phenomenon in Las Vegas is its push in the last few years to become a family resort, seen by some as the adverse of what this city – known for its high rollers and low morals – is all about.

"I think you have to take the whole notion of Las Vegas turning into a family destination with some caution," said Rubeli. "We have to remember that adult activity is the product that we sell."

Still, a Las Vegas guest can amuse himself without ever pulling a slot machine handle; by watching a pirate ship sink a British frigate in front of Treasure Island or seeing a volcano erupt regularly outside the Mirage, for instance.

Not far away, a giant fire-breathing dragon takes on Merlin the Magician at the Excalibur.

The latest player to deal itself into this game is ITT Sheraton Corp., which announced it will build a $750 million Desert Kingdom, a 3,500-room hotel/theme park adjacent to its Desert Inn property in Las Vegas.

The jury is still out on whether children will be the next major market in Las Vegas, but, more importantly, the new theme pleases adults, noted Sinclair.

Despite the roller coasters and volcanoes, Dennis C. Gomes, president and chief operating officer of the Trump Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City, said he believes Atlantic City has more room to grow.

(Photo by Tom Kitts)

Claiming the infrastructure is better in Las Vegas, Scott Beeman, senior vice president and general manager of Harrah's Casino Hotel in Las Vegas, stands outside his elaborate strip hotel

"There have been a lot of evolutionary changes in Las Vegas, but I think Atlantic City has more long-term potential," said Gomes. "Back when I was in Las Vegas, people thought Atlantic City would hurt Las Vegas and it didn't hurt Las Vegas at all."

Both can exist among gaming's proliferation nationwide, he believes.

"They are very different markets focusing on very different customer bases, they both succeed at what they are," Rubeli said.

"But does Atlantic City match up to Las Vegas? Heck no. But considering the convenience of it ... that's why people go there. You go to get away for awhile and to have fun. Atlantic City has $5 billion of invested facilities in its casino infrastructure.

As a consequence, we have big showrooms, beautiful room accommodations – all kinds of activities. I just don't buy the argument that Atlantic City is worse than Las Vegas," he said. "But I know it's a losing argument."

TIC 2076

Casino Journal New Jersey (NJ)
May 3, 1995

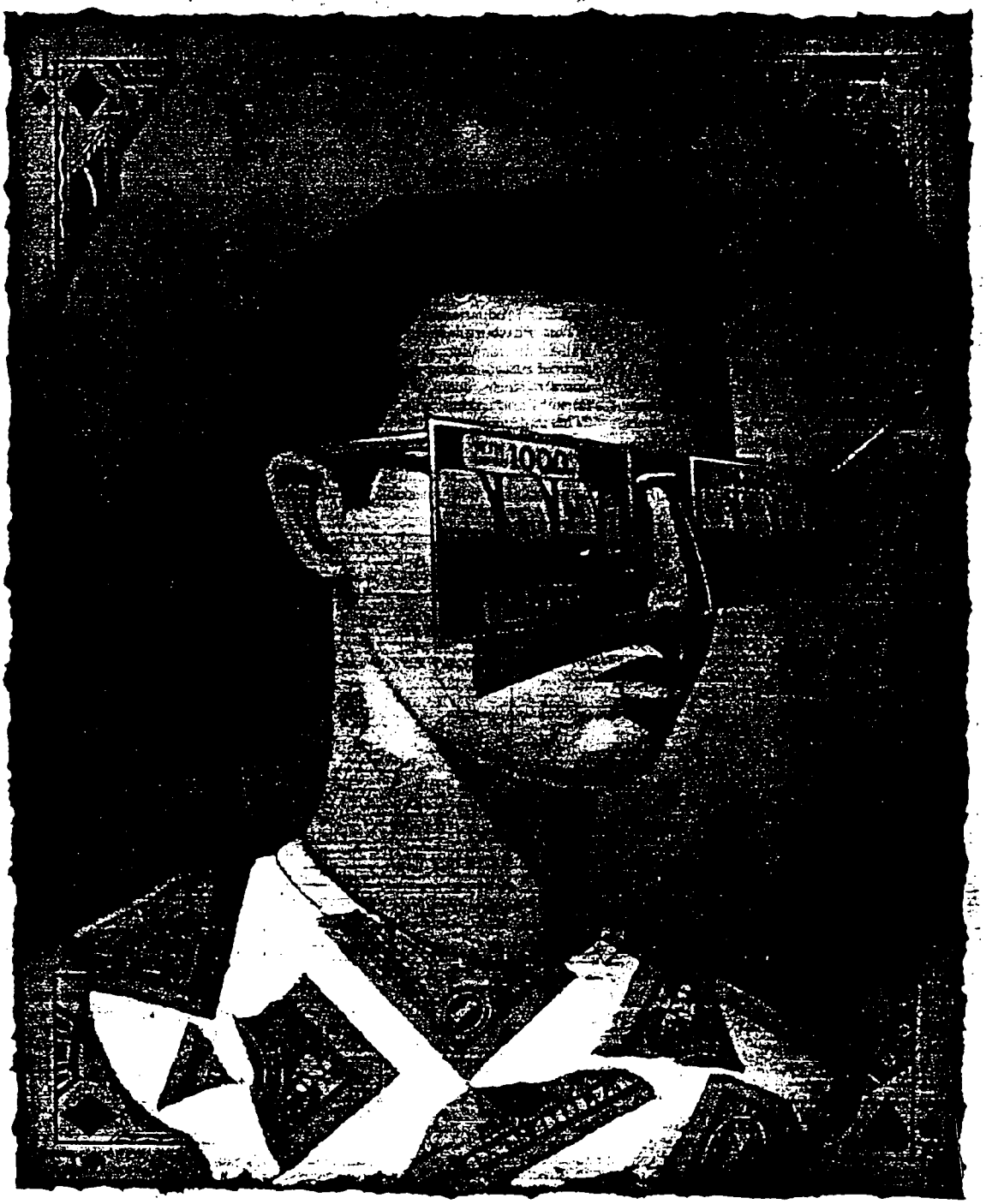

Illustration by JOHN LABBE/ For The Times

Risky Business

Some go with the folks. Others, believing it's easy money, go by themselves. Either way, Vegas has its hands full with underage gamblers.

E 138

TIC 2311

CASINOS

By KRISTINA SAUERWEIN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

LAS VEGAS—The 17-year-old boy beamed into the glare of his cup full of quarters and prayed they would save his face.

Normally, the Tustin teen-ager mocks prayer. But after losing the $200 he "borrowed" from a cousin, he'd do "almost anything" to get it back.

"I'm busted. He's going to knock me out if he finds out," he said that Tuesday afternoon, the day he ditched school and drove to Vegas to "maybe get me a little extra money."

So he popped in and out of casinos at the southern end of the Strip. And four hours later, he calmly related what happened: He stalked video poker and slot machines until security guards wandered away. He fed machines quarters. He lost it all.

It's easy to see why casino employees apparently never suspected him of being younger than the legal minimum of 21. He's 6 feet, 1 inch; big boned, and fighting fat cells that bloat his belly. He wears a white button-down shirt, navy slacks and glasses with thick, dark frames. His olive skin is bleached with the weariness of a working man three times his age. And he is book smart—eagerly and effortlessly explaining scientific theories disproving rumors that the pyramid-shaped Luxor hotel-casino is sinking.

"I got to get more money and try [gambling] again," he said in a matter-of-fact tone. Otherwise, "I got nothing—nothing to look forward to except maybe a broken nose."

Walk through any major hotel-casino in Las Vegas and you'll see gamblers who have yet to reach their 21st birthday. At any given moment, gaming officials estimate there are handfuls to hundreds of them betting anywhere from 5 cents to

Please see CASINOS, E4

Continued from E4

had three documented incidents since August, 1994. One included a security officer inspecting a youth's California driver's license—which stated that he would be 21 in 1995—and allowing him to continue gambling, said Bill Bible, chairman of the board.

Bible told of a time, years ago, when many gaming establishments allowed youths to place bets on horse races provided kids were tall enough to reach the window.

"Times have changed," he said, "and I think that's good. [The board] will not tolerate youths and the places that let them gamble."

A fear of fines has sent many casinos scurrying to implement mandatory training programs for its employees—dealers, cocktail servers, floor personnel—on how to weed out underage gamblers. Officials have warned security guards to keep a sharper lookout. And some have even begun to track the number of youths caught gambling or loitering.

It's the least regulators can do as more Native American tribes, cities and states—including California—consider casino-style gambling, said Assembly Speaker Willie Brown (D-San Francisco). And with California ranked as having the most compulsive gamblers in the nation, "It's important, it's necessary to control [gaming] and reduce the amount of abuse going on," he said, "especially among the young people."

On July 14, the parents of Jerry Pozucek Jr., 19, awoke to what they "desperately wished" was a nightmare. Pozucek barged into their Las Vegas bedroom at about 6 a.m. and, in a panic, told them he needed $5,500 to pay back his friend.

Earlier that morning, Pozucek told his parents, he and two friends—Derek Crisafulli, 20, and Jeremy Troike, 19—sneaked into Bally's. Pozucek, feeling lucky because he had repeatedly won at blackjack on his home video-game system, placed $25 to $1,000 bets at a casino table while Bally's served him alcohol.

One of Pozucek's friends had supplied him with some money and wanted it back, but Pozucek didn't have it because he had lost a total of $6,300, Pozucek told his parents in one breathless breath.

Pozucek's parents contacted Las Vegas lawyer Robert J. Kossack, who called Bally's to inform officials that they had a legal obligation to refund the youth's money because a casino is not allowed to accept it. Bally's refused, claiming that the three youths looked to be in their mid-20s and had told casino employees that they were military men from nearby Nellis Air Force Base.

Bally's, which caters to affluent adults, was a victim of casinos that promote family entertainment, said Robert A. Ostrovsky, the hotel-casino's vice president of human resources. "It's impossible to stop every underage gambler because there are so many [in Las Vegas]," he said. "Bally's would never willfully violate the law."

But that doesn't matter, according to a Nevada statue that states: "It is no excuse for the licensee [casino], employee, dealer or other person to plead that he believed the person to be 21 years old or over."

Tony Badillo sympathizes with Bally's. After 37 years of dealing at the Sands, he said he still has trouble spotting underage gamblers.

"Some look twice their age, and most of them come in with fake IDs," said Badillo, president of the Nevada Casino Dealers Assn. "I'm not an expert in fake IDs. . . . This is a responsibility that should be left to [casino] security."

Ostrovsky won't go as far as agreeing with Badillo that the problem is only up to security guards. After all, underage gambling is illegal.

"No one likes to be the first example," Ostrovsky acknowledged shortly after gaming authorities fined Bally's. "But some good things have come out of this."

Bally's, for instance, hired an outside company to train employees in detecting youths and fake IDs. Bally's also requires all workers to ask for identification if a customer looks 25 or younger.

Additionally, officials from Circus Circus, Treasure Island and Excalibur—to name a few—said employees emphasize explaining Nevada's underage-gambling law in detail to parents, particularly those from other countries.

"A parent might know that a 10-year-old isn't allowed to gamble," said Alan Feldman, spokesman for Mirage Resorts Inc., which operates the Mirage, Treasure Island, Golden Nugget and Golden Nugget—Laughlin. "But that parent might not know that it is against the law for Junior to sit quietly near a [gambling parent]."

The MGM Grand mega-resort has more than 60 signs warning visitors about underage gambling, spokesman Tom Bruny said. It also encourages adult customers to allow employees to entertain kids in its supervised youth activity center, arcades and theme park. (Still, on a midafternoon in February, a 10-year-old boy from Hartford, Conn., plunked coins into a video-

TIC 2312

What's at Stake?

- There are four to six times as many gamblers today than 20 years ago.
- An estimated 1 in 10 high school students nationwide suffers from a gambling problem.
- About 90% of New Jersey youths questioned in a survey admitted to gambling in the past year. More than one-third said they gambled once a week.
- Atlantic City casinos forbid youths to enter the gaming area. The design of most Las Vegas casinos, however, requires youths to walk among the betting tables and machines to get to their hotel rooms, restaurants and amusement areas created for them.
- In Nevada, the Gaming Control Board has 85 agents to monitor an estimated 2,400 gaming establishments; there are 86 for Atlantic City's 12 casinos.
- No gaming establishment has ever lost its license for allowing youths to gamble—unlike restaurants and stores that sell alcohol to minors.
- In 1974, gaming was a $17-billion industry. In 1993, the total reached $394 billion.
- In 1994, 125 million U.S. households visited casinos. That was second to theme-park visits, which totaled 146 million.

For Help

- In Southern California, call (310) 478-2121 for information on Gamblers Anonymous.
- Call (800) GAMBLER from anywhere in the country.

Sources: The Council of Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, New Jersey's Division of Gaming Enforcement, Nevada Council on Compulsive Gambling, Nevada Gaming Control Board, Harrah's, a 1989 study on teen gambling

poker machine while his mother watched for security.)

Gaming friends and foes praise Harrah's as one of the first casino companies to have extensive programs warning employees and the public about compulsive and underage gambling.

Embarrassment encouraged one Southern California teen-ager to rob four banks, said his psychologist, Robert E. Hunter, whose clients often travel to Las Vegas from California and all over the country for help with compulsive gambling.

Hunter said the teen-ager was "a golden boy of sorts: intelligent, moral, kind"—words often used to describe compulsive gamblers. Because they need to hide their habit, it usually becomes out of control in ways contrary to their personalities. They might steal. Lie. Fight.

"Their thinking is, 'If I can get some more money, my problem will be solved. No one will have to know,'" he explained.

Gamblers fear that they will disappoint loved ones. They feel trapped in a habit that usually doesn't end until a person bottoms out, which is unlikely for youths who lack money and independence, Hunter said.

The first national study on teen gambling, conducted by Redlands psychologist Durand Jacobs in 1989, found that at least 7 million youths gamble for money, and 33% of students surveyed said they had wagered bets before their 11th birthday.

Furthermore, it found that an estimated 13% break laws to fund their habit or to pay off a debt. Gambling also encourages truancy, alcoholism, depression and other ills. These facts especially distress Jacobs, because gamblers 18 and younger are twice as likely as adults to become pathological.

"I don't see many efforts to prevent [underage gambling]," said Jacobs, executive director of the California Council on Problem Gambling and vice president of the national council based in New York. "Gambling is big money. Casinos [and other forms of gambling, such as the lottery] make out pretty good.

"It's a win-win situation: for them to allow underage gamblers," he said, explaining that casinos usually keep the money that kids lose or win.

Jacobs advocates education. So does Roger Svendsen, director of the Gambling Problems Resource Center in St. Paul, Minn. That's why Svendsen co-authored "Improving Your Odds," a guide for high school and college students that's being used in Minnesota.

"We need to start teaching students the risks of gambling like we do with drugs, alcohol and cigarette smoking," he said. "This is not something that can wait."

Most likely it *will* wait in Southern California, according to educators from several school districts. No officials knew of gambling problems, but they said school counselors could help a student who had one.

"I don't believe there is a need for [special attention]," said Patrick Spencer, a spokesman for the Los Angeles Unified School District. "I've been here for 15 years and haven't heard of students having [gambling] problems."

TIC 2313

M&C (MEETING &
CONVENTIONS)

SECAUCUS, NJ
13-TIMES/YEAR 80,279

MAY 1 1995

-4226 BURRELLE'S ML
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NEVADA

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

TREASURE ISLAND
AT THE MIRAGE

Felix Rappaport
VICE PRESIDENT OF HOTEL OPERATIONS

4926 BR

Treasure Island at The Mirage is an idyllic getaway based upon the village created by Robert Louis Stevenson in his famed novel, Treasure Island.

Treasure Island at The Mirage is an idyllic getaway based upon the village created by Robert Louis Stevenson in his famed novel, *Treasure Island.* Located adjacent to The Mirage, with which it shares its 100-acre site on the Las Vegas Strip, Treasure Island is comprised of three 36-story towers with 2,900 guest rooms including 212 suites. Each room features floor-to-ceiling glass with a spectacular view of either the mountains, the Strip or the pool area.

TIC 2331

E 141

Mutiny Bay, Treasure Island's entertainment center, is an 18,000-square-foot complex offering an array of activities set in an atmosphere of drama, mystery and fantasy. Treasure Island also is home to the world famous French-Canadian performing troupe Cirque du Soleil. The resort's Casino gives the feel of an old Caribbean pirate hideaway and features slots, video poker, Pai Gow tiles, mini-baccarat, Big Six, Red Dog, Caribbean Stud, Keno, craps, blackjack, poker and a race and sports book.

For relaxation, they can treat themselves to a day in the spa including sauna, whirlpool and exercise room, or an afternoon in the beauty salon, which offers a hair, facial, manicure, pedicure, massage and make-up treatments.

Treasure Island's 18,000 square feet of convention space is located conveniently on the second floor and can accommodate groups of up to 1,000.

Diners can choose from The Buccaneer Bay Club, where they can enjoy such specialties as Cornish Game Hen and sautéed Chilean Sea Bass while taking in a view of the battle below and the Vegas Strip in the distance. There's also The Plank, serving steaks and seafood; The Black Spot Grille, a mesquite grille, or an international buffet serving Italian, American and Chinese cuisines. A 24-hour coffee shop, food court, snack bar and ice cream parlor round out the dining options.

P.O. Box 7711
Las Vegas, NV 89193-7711
Phone: (702) 894-7111 or (800) 994-7474
Fax: (702) 894-7788
Contact: Randy Fleitz

M&C (MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS)
SECAUCUS, NJ
13-TIMES/YEAR 80,154
APR 15 1998

[redacted]

BURRELLE'S
-4226 KA
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M&C GOLD PLATTER

The M&C Gold Platter Award was established to recognize quality food service, voted by planners as one of the most important considerations in selecting a hotel.

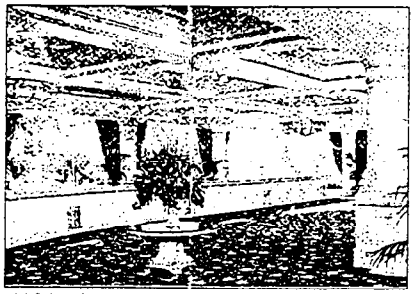
Winners of the coveted award are nominated and chosen by M&C subscribers.

Selection is based on the following criteria:

- Enthusiasm and professionalism of catering manager and department
- Quality of food presentation
- Creativity of menu
- Originality of theme party concepts
- Excellence of waiter's service
- Ambience of dining rooms

LOOK FOR GOLD PLATTER WINNERS THROUGHOUT GAVEL

TREASURE ISLAND AT THE MIRAGE



3300 Las Vegas Blvd S.
Las Vegas, 89109 702-894-7711
Toll Free Phone: 800-944-7711 **Fax:** 702-894-7788
Internet: www.miragenesorts.com
Location: 10 minutes from airport, 15 minutes from downtown
Sales Contact: Gary Wikos
E-Mail: moniquemichaels@themirage.com
Total No. Rms.: 2,679 **Suites:** 112
No. Mtg. Rms.: 3 **Cap. of Largest:** 1,116
Exhibit Space: 18,000 sq ft
Avg. Group Rates: SGL/DBL 59-359; STE 109-800

Room Name	Treasure Island Ballroom	Caribbean Room	Mediterranean Room
Square Feet	11,808 sq ft	3,120 sq ft	598 sq ft
Ceiling Height	18 ft	18 ft	18 ft
Floor Cover	carpet	carpet	carpet
Portable Walls	Y	Y	Y
Capacity:			
Auditorium	1,116	280	32
Classroom	672	204	24
U-shape	n.a.	83	24
Reception	1,000	300	40
Banquet	750	210	40

See advertisement on page 174

HERALD & TRIBUNE

JONESBOROUGH, TN
WEEKLY 4,500

JUN 29 1994
BURRELLE'S

Patty's Corner

Patty Smithdeal Fulton
author of the books ...and garnish with Memories and
I Wouldn't Live Nowhere I Couldn't Grow Corn

49:26EK

I will forever be grateful to Oldham Travel for suggesting we stay at Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas. It is a new 32-story hotel with more than 2,000 guest rooms and suites, it has a variety of establishments offering good food and shopping, a theater with two nightly performances of "Mystery". There is a casino, tram service to the Mirage which is next door, and a pleasant helpful staff. My son and I had a comfortable room with two queen size beds, a spacious bathroom and the rate we paid was lower than any quoted for other hotels we considered. Treasure Island is new and clean and I loved being there.

One interesting aspect of the island is the bay where guests of the hotel and visitors along the Strip gather to watch the battle of two ships at sea which takes place each afternoon and evening. Complete with pirates, dialogue and sound effects, we saw the British score a hit which set fire to the pirate ship. We saw clouds of black smoke and felt heat from the flames. The pirates retaliated, and as the British ship sank before our eyes, the crew jumped into the sea and swam for shore. As the pirates celebrated their victory, lo and behold...the British ship rose from the depths of the sea and a dripping wet captain stood on the bridge, bowing to a large appreciative audience!

That evening at dinner, a lady at the next table asked the waitress if she might have breakfast. I heard the answer, "You can have whatever you want whenever you want it. This is Las Vegas!" And I thought, "I am in another world. I am on another planet. There are no clocks on the wall. I am not on a schedule. I like it!"

One night I remarked to my son, "It is ten o'clock and we are going to eat supper. It's one in the morning at home!" Later that same night, he unlocked the door to our room and I was amazed when I looked at my watch. "Good heavens! It's two in the morning."

He smiled, "Back home, Dad's getting up now."

I could tell you what others tell you about Las Vegas...they have a host of good shows, a cocktail waitress recently hit a five or six million dollar jackpot on a slot machine, somebody in Johnson City supposedly won enough money to buy a new Cadillac or somebody said to shoot craps and not play the slot machines, or somebody said Keno is a simple game and it's easy to win, or somebody said they go and never gamble...

I will tell you I was impressed with the tremendous number of people who are employed in Las Vegas...cab drivers, waiters and waitresses, maids, kitchen help, hotel personnel to say nothing of those employed by the casinos. I am impressed with the intelligence of those who work the gaming tables — poker, roulette, craps — these games require extraordinary math skills.

As the plane left Las Vegas, I looked down on that little spot in the middle of a picturesque desert and wondered how it all came about...why did the 89-year-old man in the next seat decide to come from Puerto Rico to see some shows; why did the lady from England decide to become a hostess in a restaurant; why did a white-haired woman from Tennessee make the trip?

Who cares why? It was interesting and fun. And there's no place like it.

ERWIN RECORD

ERWIN, TN
WEEKLY 5,000

JUN 29 1994

BURRELLE'S

38 SZ

Patty Smithdeal Fulton

Author of the book . . .
and garnish with Memories

4926BR

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TIC 1941

KNOXVILLE NEWS-SENTINEL
KNOXVILLE, TN
SUNDAY 174,375
FEB 14 1999

BURRELLE'S
166 PK
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Circus as theater point of the Cirque du Soleil

8307A

By Jerry and Jan Michaelson

SMART TRAVELER SECRETS

It's not a circus. It's not theater. It's not a musical. And yet Cirque du Soleil (pronounced sirk du so-lay) is all of these and a great deal more. It is a theatrical blend of circus art and street performers in spectacular costumes performing on fairyland sets.

Cirque du Soleil (French for "circus of the sun") was founded nearly 15 years ago by an impassioned and inspired group of street performers. Today, the productions are imaginative and inventive. Stadium-type seating assures there isn't a bad seat in the house. However, the continuing spectacle of stages rising in the air and props coming down from the ceiling assures everyone of good viewing of the performance.

There are now three permanent "Big Top" Cirque du Soleil theaters, and the newest is in the Southeast at Walt Disney World Resort.

For years, we've enjoyed Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere" at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas. Last fall, we saw the new water version "O" at the Bellagio in Las Vegas. In January, we enjoyed the brand new "La Nouba" at Disney World in Orlando, Fla. All three are different, yet they are in the same "circus as theater" tradition. Another permanent show will open soon at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, Miss. Some productions have toured the United States.

The production of "O" at the Bellagio takes place in and over a giant swimming pool. "Mystere" in Las Vegas and "La Nouba" at Disney World take place on and over a stage. Our first thought entering the Cirque du Soleil theater was "Why is the arena so high?" Every bit of the height is used by performers.

"La Nouba" originates from the French phrase "faire la Nouba" meaning "to party, to live it up." The 70,000 square-foot theater building at Downtown West in Disney World seats 1,671. The lighting is superb, and the musical background is enchanting. There's not a single animal. Two shows are performed Wednesday through Saturday at 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. On Sunday, shows are at 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

The 90-minute "La Nouba" features an enchanting agenda of performances as sections of the 171-foot-wide stage are raised and lowered to produce interesting effects. We saw unusual aerial acrobatic feats, 20 trampoline artists performing at the same time, young girls juggling spools in such extraordinary ways. Much of this performance was staged with supporting casts wearing extraordinary costumes.

In Las Vegas, "Mystere" is a completely different stage show from Disney World's "La Nouba." The new "O" is staged in an 1,800-seat theater with a 150-by-100 foot pool that reaches a depth of 25 feet. The pool area also serves as a solid stage as seven floor panels with tiny holes are raised and lowered rapidly. A character can appear to be walking on water one moment and then suddenly be underwater as the stage drops below the water level. Acts are performed by an international cast of 74. They include aerial acrobatics, gymnastic performances, divers leaping from a height of 60 feet, 16 synchronized swimmers, contortionists, a stunning fire sequence and, of course, clowns.

For more information on Cirque du Soleil, check the Web site http://www.cirquedusoleil.com. For best seats, make reservations in advance. For tickets for "La Nouba" at Disney World call 1-407 939-7600; in Las Vegas for "Mystere" at Treasure Island, call 1-800-392-1999, for "O" at the Bellagio, call 1-888 488-7111. Including tax, expect to pay approximately $50 to $60 at Disney World, $70 for Mystere and $100 for "O" in Las Vegas.

Jerry and Jan Michaelson travel the world from Knoxville. Address comments and questions by mail to the News Sentinel or fax: 423 981 7224. E-mail: smarttravel@worldnet.ATT.net.

TIC 2513

WATER WELL JOURNAL

DUBLIN, OH
MONTHLY 40,000

JULY 1994

-7175 BURRELLE'S OK

Treasure Island

The adventure of Treasure Island begins as guests approach the hotel on a wooden boardwalk running along Las Vegas Boulevard South. The front of the Treasure Island is designed as an outdoor theater resembling the small bay village described in Robert Louis Stevenson's famed novel, *Treasure Island*. Every 90 minutes between 3 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. a ship-to-ship cannon battle involves live actors in a meticulously staged show. The pirates are always victorious.

TIC 1956

DESIGNFAX

CLEVELAND, OH
MONTHLY 110,000

AUGUST 1994

BURRELLE'S
-2070 NI
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Technology

The new Treasure Island Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas features two 32-foot tall pirate skulls to add atmosphere. Composed of fiberglass-reinforced plastic (FRP), the skulls are part of a 160-foot entrance sign welcoming guests to the resort. Molded Fiber Glass Companies/West, Ashtabula, OH, produced the FRP skulls, ornate scrolls and sword hilts for the sign. Ad/Art Signs, Inc., Stockton, CA, engineered and built the free-standing sign, deciding to use fiberglass because FRP offered advantages over alternative materials. Fiberglass could be molded into large, three-dimensional shapes, and pigmented with the desired color and translucency for the back-lighting of the skulls. Another benefit is the high strength-to-weight ratio of fiberglass. MFG/West made use of a hand lay-up/spray-up process to build the various parts. Completion required 15,000 pounds of material and 10,000 hours of labor. **Circle 328.**

TIC 1994

PRICE HILL PRESS

CINCINNATI, OH
WEEKLY 9,635

APR 12 1995

BURRELLE'S

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READERS ON VACATION

The San Antonio Church Group took their *Western Hills Press* to Atlantic City this winter. Members of the group include: Marge Walker, Don Stevens, Theresa Schultz, Betty Walpol, Don Stevens, Angie Sicurella, Theresa Ventre, Tony Ventre, Marlene Steers and Honsi Sabin.

4926BR

This group took the *Western Hills Press* with them to Las Vegas and found some other treasures at Treasure Island Casino and Hotel. This traveling gang includes Frank, Bob and Nancy Costa, Aggie and Larry Harrell, Vaughn, Joe and Margo Marsala, Al and Mila Miller, Toots and Denny Bedinghaus, Fran and Dick Supe, David and Judy Denton.

TIC 2289

Frank and Ruth Sterbling and Elaine and Paul Kleinberg visited New Orleans during October. They are shown in front of St. Louis Cathedral.

Michael J. Burba and son Matthew traveled to Madison, Wisc., for a University of Cincinnati-University of Wisconsin football game.

TIC 2290

DELHI PRESS

CINCINNATI, OH
WEEKLY 11,265

APR 12 1995

BURRELLE'S

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READERS ON VACATION

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4926BK

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TIC 2292

WESTERN HILLS PRESS

CINCINNATI, OH
WEEKLY 25,325

APR 12 1995

BURRELLE'S

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READERS ON VACATION

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TIC 2293

Frank and Ruth Sterbling and Elaine and Paul Kleinberg visited New Orleans during October. They are shown in front of St. Louis Cathedral.

Michael J. Burba and son Matthew traveled to Madison, Wisc., for a University of Cincinnati-University of Wisconsin football game.

TIC 2294

MORNING JOURNAL

LISBON, OH
DAILY & SUNDAY 14,354

SATURDAY
APR 22 1995

BURRELLE'S
188 RI
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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.

TIC 2322

JOURNAL-NEWS
HAMILTON, OH
SUNDAY 26,380
DEC 6 1998

[redacted]

BURRELLE'S

165 ZP
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Entertainment fills Las Vegas skyline

By Will Harbaum

Harbaum

OUTDOORS

If you haven't been to Las Vegas within the past 10 years or so, you have a real surprise coming when you do get there.

It has grown so much since we were there about 20 years ago that on a recent visit with our son Barry and daughter-in-law Pat Goins Harbaum, I hardly recognized anything.

On our earlier visit, we stayed at the Riviera, a fine hotel and casino in the northern part of the "Strip." The Riviera is located across the street (Las Vegas Boulevard) from Circus Circus, another beautiful and exciting hotel and casino.

The Strip has spread southward, and now its southern part is several miles from the Riviera and Circus Circus.

I can remember the older part of the Strip as being brightly lit with thousands of light bulbs and neon signs, but it fades in comparison with the new area on the southern edge of the Strip.

We stayed at the Excalibur, a beautiful hotel and casino, built around the theme of the ancient knights of the Round Table, featuring King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and many of his cronies in Merry Old England. Knights in shiny armor are standing all around the interior and exterior of the hotel and casino.

From the outside it features many towers with conical roofs and fortress walls, guarded by knights and soldiers. It is surrounded by a moat, in which a giant dragon lurks, and every evening some of the knights have to go out into the moat and slay the dragon, to the delight of the guests who can watch from the safety of the drawbridge.

Next door to the Excalibur is the Lexor, another huge hotel constructed with the ancient Egyptians in mind. It is built in the shape of a huge pyramid and is guarded by a giant model of the sphinx, at least 20-feet high. It, too, is a beautiful hotel and casino. There is a walkway from the Excalibur to the Lexor.

Across Las Vegas Boulevard from the Excalibur is MGM and New York New York, both huge motels with noisy and beautiful casinos.

MGM is guarded by a giant golden lion that glistens in the bright sunlight and can be seen for a long way on the boulevard. Inside MGM is a rain-forest dining room with delicious food and drink. At the entrance to the dining room is a huge alligator that opens its wide jaws and emits smoke and steam. Nearby is a young lady who performs with parrots and macaws to the delight of the visitors.

New York New York is a fabulous production of New York City, with a gigantic Statue of Liberty out in front, a model of the Empire State Building, Grant's Tomb and a number of other replicas of the famous New York skyline. Overhead is a roller coaster that loops the loop and drops its riders into the depths of the city, only to rise up to the skyscrapers again.

Further to the south are several other beautiful new hotels, including the Mirage and the Belaggio. In the evening and continuing through most of the night, the Mirage has a giant volcano that erupts about every half hour, spewing fire and smoke high into the Vegas sky.

The Belaggio has a huge lake in front. In the evening a lighted display of "waltzing water" is shown about every 30 minutes. It and the Mirage's volcano attracts lots of visitors.

Caesar's Palace is another huge hotel with many attractions for its patrons and

TIC 2494

visitors. In several of its large indoor ponds and waterfalls are statues that appear to be made of solid marble. However, at certain intervals the statues come to life and begin moving their arms and legs and speaking in loud voices amid varied lighting displays and fountains of fire.

Treasure Island, another hotel north of Exalibur, has one of the most dramatic entertainment features that can be enjoyed from the street. A pirate ship and a British frigate have a real battle in the water in front of the hotel. They both fire cannons at one another. The British frigate takes a direct hit and begins to sink, and all hands abandon ship. It is quite a performance.

While in Las Vegas, don't overlook "Old Town," the original city where the Gold Nugget and many other hotels and casinos are located. Fremont Street has been blocked off to traffic, and two city blocks have been covered by a long, high domelike ceiling about 50-feet above the street. The ceiling is composed of millions of light bulbs, and at night, every 30 minutes a laser show is displayed on the ceiling with moving characters that run overhead up and down the street to the tune of popular music, such as Elvis Presley singing Viva Las Vegas.

It is certainly a must when visiting Las Vegas.

Although each hotel has its own theme, they all have similar large, brightly lit, noisy, exciting casinos where the tunes of slots and the dropping of coins form a cacophony of sounds.

Las Vegas is a fun city, with excellent accommodations, very good food at reasonable prices and shows of every description. While most of them require the purchase of tickets, many of the shows are free to the public.

Just be there at the right time and place.

(Will Harbaum is an avid outdoorsman and former editor for the Journal-News.)

TIC 2495

NOPA OFFICE MARKET UPDATE

ALEXANDRIA, VA
BI-MONTHLY 13,000

JUL-AUG 1994

BURRELLE'S

-1921 MH

Update

Welcome to Las Vegas

4926BK

A Sampling of What Las Vegas Has to Offer

By Sandra Selva
NOPA Managing Editor

The National Office Products Association (NOPA) welcomes you to The 1994 International Business Expo, the second joint Show sponsored by NOPA and NOMDA/LANDA in Las Vegas.

Again, this year, the Las Vegas Convention Center is the site of the Show. The Center has about 1.3 million square feet of total function space, including some 970,000 square feet of meeting rooms and exhibit space, as well as outdoor parking for about 4,000 cars. The Center is located within easy walking distance of the Las Vegas Hilton.

Tourism and conventions are major industries for the city, with more than 22 million visitors and 1.8 million convention delegates per year.

A Look at the City

Las Vegas is really two destinations—the well-populated, glitzy Strip and the Downtown area. The Strip is home to most of the new,

The front of this $430 million property resembles a village described in Robert Louis Stevenson's famed novel, "Treasure Island."

(Photo by S. Selva)

TIC 1957

E 158

The new 30-story Luxor features a 10-story sphinx outside and a mini-Nile River inside.

(Photo by S. Selva)

large casino hotels, while the Downtown, or "old" Las Vegas, houses the smaller casinos and less expensive hotel rates.

Prior to legalized gambling in 1931, the city was developed as an agricultural area. Fame as a resort area became prominent after World War II.

Las Vegas has the fastest growth rate in the nation–8.5 percent. Each month, approximately 3,500 people move to Las Vegas, because of jobs, affordable real estate, new housing developments, low property taxes, and no state income tax.

However, one of the biggest problems for Las Vegas is water, with less than a foot of rainfall each year. For the state of Nevada, new industries, including warehousing and distribution centers, have also discovered its favorable tax climate and are relocating there.

According to the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, the state has the lowest tax rate of any state in the nation. No income, inheritance, gift or estate, franchise, inventory, or corporate taxes are levied.

Additionally, there is no personal income tax; property tax is 35 percent of full cash value, $2.0380-$2.9307 per $100 of assessed valuation. And, residential utilities generally cost 20 percent less than the U.S. average.

Nearly half the state's revenues come from gaming operations, which turn over 6-1/4 percent of profits, compared with 20 percent in some other states, and 50 percent in Europe. In 1992, gaming generated more than $4 billion from Las Vegas.

New Resort Properties

Las Vegas is moving closer to becoming a year-round family resort destination with the opening of four new attractions, last fall. The properties added about 10,500 hotel rooms and suites to the existing 77,500 rooms in metropolitan Las Vegas.

Borrowing from Disney and Hollywood, each of the newest hotel/resort properties has a theme. Here is a glimpse of the newest offerings:

MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park—Based on the highlights of the MGM Hollywood image, the new $1 billion property is the largest entertainment resort of its kind, with 30-story towers; 5,009 rooms, including 744 suites that offer up to 6,000 square feet of space, and the world's largest casino—171,500 square feet.

The 112-acre resort, whose principal owner is developer Kirk Kerkorian, offers a 33-acre theme park featuring theme streets, four theaters, and attractions such as the Cotton Blossom Riverboat, Ghost Coaster, Journey to the Center of the Earth (a motion machine), French Bumper Cars, and a haunted silver mine.

The Luxor Hotel-Casino—This $300 million resort, built by Circus Circus Enterprises, is situated on 47 acres. Reportedly, it is large enough to accommodate nine 747s. Offering 2,521 rooms, the 30-story, bronze facility—in the shape of a pyramid

Headliner Entertainment In July

As of June 1, here is a sampling of "headliners" scheduled to appear in Las gas, during July:

's Casino Resort
.111
July 10-13, **Paul Anka.**
July 14-20, **Penn & Teller.**

aesars Palace
31-7110
July 6-11, **Reba McIntyre.**
July 15-17, **Dionne Warwick & Burt Bachrach.**

Desert Inn Resort
733-4444
July 10-17, **Rita Coolidge & The Everly Brothers.**

Las Vegas Hilton
732-5111
July, Andrew Lloyd Webber's **The Starlight Express.** Mondays, dark.

The Luxor Hotel Casino
262-4000
July, Production: **Winds of the Gods.** Wednesdays, dark.

The MGM Grand
891-1111
July 7-13, **Rita Rudner & Dennis Miller.**
July 13-31, **The Righteous Brothers.**

The Mirage
791-7111
July 7-12 and 14-19, **Siegfried & Roy,** with **The Royal White Tigers.** Wednesdays, dark.

July 15-17, **Bill Cosby & Clint Holmes.**

The Riviera
734-5110
July, Production: **Splash.**

Stardust Resort and Casino
732-6111
July, Production: **Enter the Night** with **Vladimir.** Tuesdays, dark.

Treasure Island
894-7111
July, **Cirque du Soleil.**

Note: Performances and show times are subject to change. To determine the seating policy, costs, and performance times, which vary from resort to resort, it is important to call and check. The main showrooms require advance reservations, which can be made by phone or in person at the showroom itself—or, in some hotels, at the "show reservations" booth in the lobby. For actual seating, plan to be in line at the showroom, about 45 minutes to an hour before showtime; for dinner shows, at least 90 minutes. Some showroom tickets include drinks (or dinner), tip, and tax; some do not. Ticket prices range from about $9-$95. A sampling of prices for the above headliners: Cosby & Holmes, $49.75; Cirque du Soleil, $52.80, and Siegfried & Roy, $78.35 (dinner is not included in this show sampling of prices).

—S. Selva

symbolizing eternal life—features a 10-story sphinx outside and a mini-Nile River inside.

Also, a Hanging Gardens of Babylon entrance; interior waterways and pools; an action ride based on technology similar to that used in flight simulators, and a simulated ch side the pyramid.

A central atrium soars to t of the pyramid, from which ful beam of light is reported from Los Angeles. From the floor, a reproduction from th ple of Karnak rises through ter of the atrium to the seco where it projects a laser ligh

Hotel guests are transpor Nile riverboats to state-of-th room elevators traveling at a gree angle at each corner of t pyramid.

The Luxor's pharoah-theme show, with performances in its ner theater, includes members the Romanian National Gymna Team and some former Olymp Special effects of the show incl the appearance of a flowing rive wave of real water that rolls 80 into the middle of the arena, wh minutes later, is the scene of ch races.

The Luxor is linked to the Ex bur property (another developm of Circus Circus Enterprises) by monorail transportation.

Treasure Island—The front this $430 million, Steve Wynn pro erty has been designed as an out door theater resembling the sma bay village described in Robert Louis Stevenson's famed novel, *Treasure Island.*

Seven times a day, the pirate ship *Hispaniola* battles with the *H.M.S. Sir Francis Drake.* The ship-to-ship cannon battle includes live actors in a meticulously-staged show.

Highlighting the entertainment is the French-Canadian performing troupe, Cirque du Soleil, which resides permanently at the resort.

Grand Slam Canyon—The five-acre, $75 million property is a climate-controlled theme park under a pink glass dome. Also constructed by Circus Circus Enterprises, the property is adjacent to the Circus

TIC 1959

E 160

Circus Hotel-Casino, with entry from the West end.

The property is a takeoff on the Grand Canyon and features 140-foot mountains; a 90-foot Havasupai Falls; special-effects theaters; river rapid rides over a 50-foot waterfall, and a powerful, four-loop roller-coaster through the canyon.

At the former site of the Dunes Hotel, another theme hotel is planned. Rumored to be based on the movie theme, *Casablanca*, this property, along with The Mirage and the Golden Nugget in Downtown Las Vegas, is also owned by Steve Wynn.

Another relatively new resort is the $300 million **Excalibur,** which opened in June 1990. Developed by Circus Circus, the castle-themed resort offers 4,032 rooms in four 28-story towers. Some floors are devoted solely to non-gambling entertainment for children and the young-at-heart.

Among Excalibur's offerings are two motion simulator theaters and jousting on horseback by the Knights of King Arthur's Court.

Even moviestar Debbie Reynolds opened a resort property in Las Vegas, last year. Boasting a telephone number that includes her name, 7-DEBBIE, the **Debbie Reynold's Hotel/Casino** features a "Star Theatre" and a Hollywood Movie Museum showcasing costumes from the star's most famous movies.

A Variety of Shops

Las Vegas offers a wide variety of specialty shops within walking distance of many Strip hotels. Two shopping malls, such as The Forum Shops (on Caesars Palace Hotel property) and Fashion Show, front

Free, Shuttle Bus Service

During The 1994 International Business Expo, July 12-15, free shuttle buses will operate between many Las Vegas hotels and the Las Vegas Convention Center. The schedule will operate as follows:

	Inbound to Convention Center Every 20 Minutes	Mid-Day Service To & From Hotels Every 30 Minutes	Return to Hotels Every 20 Minutes
Tuesday, July 12	7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, July 13	7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Thursday, July 14	7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Friday, July 15	7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Special Bus Service for 'World's Largest Roundup'

On Tuesday, July 12, free, shuttle bus service will be provided to and from the Las Vegas Hilton & Towers, site of the "World's Largest Roundup," set for 6-9 p.m., which includes the concert featuring Wynonna Judd and Collin Raye, at 7:30 p.m. Buses will depart from all official hotels every 20 minutes from 5:15 p.m.-7:30 p.m., with return service being provided every 20 minutes, from 8:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Note that the Las Vegas Hilton & Towers is within easy walking distance of the Convention Center; no shuttle bus service provided.

Direct Airport Service, Friday, July 15 Only

11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.—Every 30 minutes, from the Convention Center Shuttle Bus Area to McCarron International Airport. Boarding points for shuttle buses are as follows:

- **Alexis Park Resort and Spa**—Front Entrance, curbside (Route #2)
- **Bally's Casino Resort**—North Casino Entrance (Route #2)
- **Caesars Palace**—Olympic Tower Entrance (Route #3)
- **Desert Inn Resort**—Front Entrance (Route #3)
- **The MGM Grand**—Tour Bus Entrance (Route #4)
- **The Mirage**—Tour Bus Entrance (Route #3)
- **The Riviera**—Convention Center Entrance (Route #1)
- **The Sahara Hotel and Casino**—Casino Entrance (Route #1)
- **Stardust Resort and Casino**—South Casino Entrance (Route #1)
- **Treasure Island**—Tour Bus Entrance (Route #3)

TIC 1960

E 161

In the Forum Shops Mall at Caesars, Roman paintings are featured above an escalator and white statues atop marble-like buildings are silhouetted against a painted sky. Computer technology creates the changing hues of the sky every hour, including sunrises and sunsets, simulating a 24-hour day.

(Photo by S. Selva)

on the Las Vegas Strip.

Housed in a quarter million square feet of space, The Forum's 73 store and restaurant fronts are sandwiched between the opulence of Caesars Palace and the nearby Mirage hotel/casino property.

Fashion Show Mall is located on the corner of the Strip and Spring Mountain Road, North of The Forum. Neiman Marcus, Saks, and Dillards are among the more than 140 stores and 15 cafes in its international food court.

Boulevard Mall at 3528 Maryland Parkway is just a short cab ride from the Strip. With 1.13 million square feet, it's the largest shopping center in Nevada.

Guidelines for Tipping

While convention attendees can tip what they believe is fair, here are some guidelines to follow in Las Vegas:

Taxi drivers expect $1 to $2 for a direct route, and more for friendliness and help with the door and luggage. (Note: A taxi to a Strip hotel from the airport will cost about $7 to $10; to a Downtown hotel, $10 to $15.)

If a slot machine pays off, it is customary to tip the change girl with the "lucky coins." Tips can be given directly to dealers between blackjack hands, throws of the dice at craps, or spins of the roulette wheel.

Hotel maids expect $1-$2 a day at the end of the visit; pool attendants, 50-cents to $1 for towels, lounges, etc. For waiters, the standard 15 to 20 percent rule applies, and it is the same for room service.

Many showrooms sell tickets that have assigned seats. These tickets often include the tip. In resort showrooms that use restaurant-style reservations and seating, it is customary to tip the showroom maitre d' $5 to $20 to improve seating. Showroom waiters expect $5 to $10 for a party of two to four at a cocktails-only show, or $10 to $20 for a dinner show, depending on the service and quality of food.

The 1995 BPIA Show
In Atlanta

August 23-26
(Wednesday-Saturday)

Exhibits:
Georgia World Congress Center

Other Attractions

Las Vegas offers just about every recreational opportunity imaginable. Attractions include the Liberace Museum, Imperial Palace Auto Collection, Las Vegas Natural History Museum, and the Lied Children's Discovery Museum. A sampling of other points of interest, entertainment, and recreation include:

Ethel M Chocolate Factory & Cactus Garden—Free tours, and free "tastes" at the end of the tour; open daily. Garden features more than 300 cacti and desert plants; 2 Cactus Garden Drive, Henderson, Nev.

Golf/Tennis/Racketball—For the nine-iron set, there are more than 21 municipal and private golf courses in the city. Several hotels, including the Desert Inn and Showboat offer courses. And, there are racketball courts and approximately 100 tennis courts within a five-mile radius of the Strip.

Holy-Cow Brewery—Tour and taste at Las Vegas' only brewery on the Las Vegas Strip at Sahara Ave. Offerings include more than 100 cow collectibles. Slots and food are available.

Hoover Dam—One of the seven man-made wonders of the world. Tours are conducted by government guides. Admission (about 50¢ to $1); South on Highway 93.

Kidd Marshmallow Factory—Free, guided tours show marshmallows being made; open daily; 8302 Gibson Road, Henderson, Nev.

Lake Mead—The 100-mile long lake, located near Hoover Dam, offers year-round recreation.

Scandia's Mini-Golf/Fun Center—Attractions include three 18-hole miniature golf courses, raceways, waterbugs, batting cages, and game arcade; 2900 Sirius Road.

Valley of Fire—A State Park, a few miles from the upper arm of Lake Mead. Unusual rock formations and 1,500-year-old Indian rock writings.

Wet 'N Wild—Seasonal water park with rides and food stands; 2600 Las Vegas Blvd. S. □

TIC 1961

E 162

The Changing Face of

4926BR

LEISURE: This glittering desert city is a good bet for a family trip

Las Vegas is still a playground for grown-ups. It's a high scorer on the glitz scale, a little gaudier than life. But these days, it's also a great escape that will get the attention of even the most computer-game oriented kids.

For years, Las Vegas did little to discourage its image as America's Sin City. Its famous Strip, ablaze with neon signs touting lounge acts and showgirl revues, was like the midway of some adults-only carnival. Behind the glitz was the all-out gambling, the allure of easy money, the chance to hit the jackpot at craps, roulette or the slots.

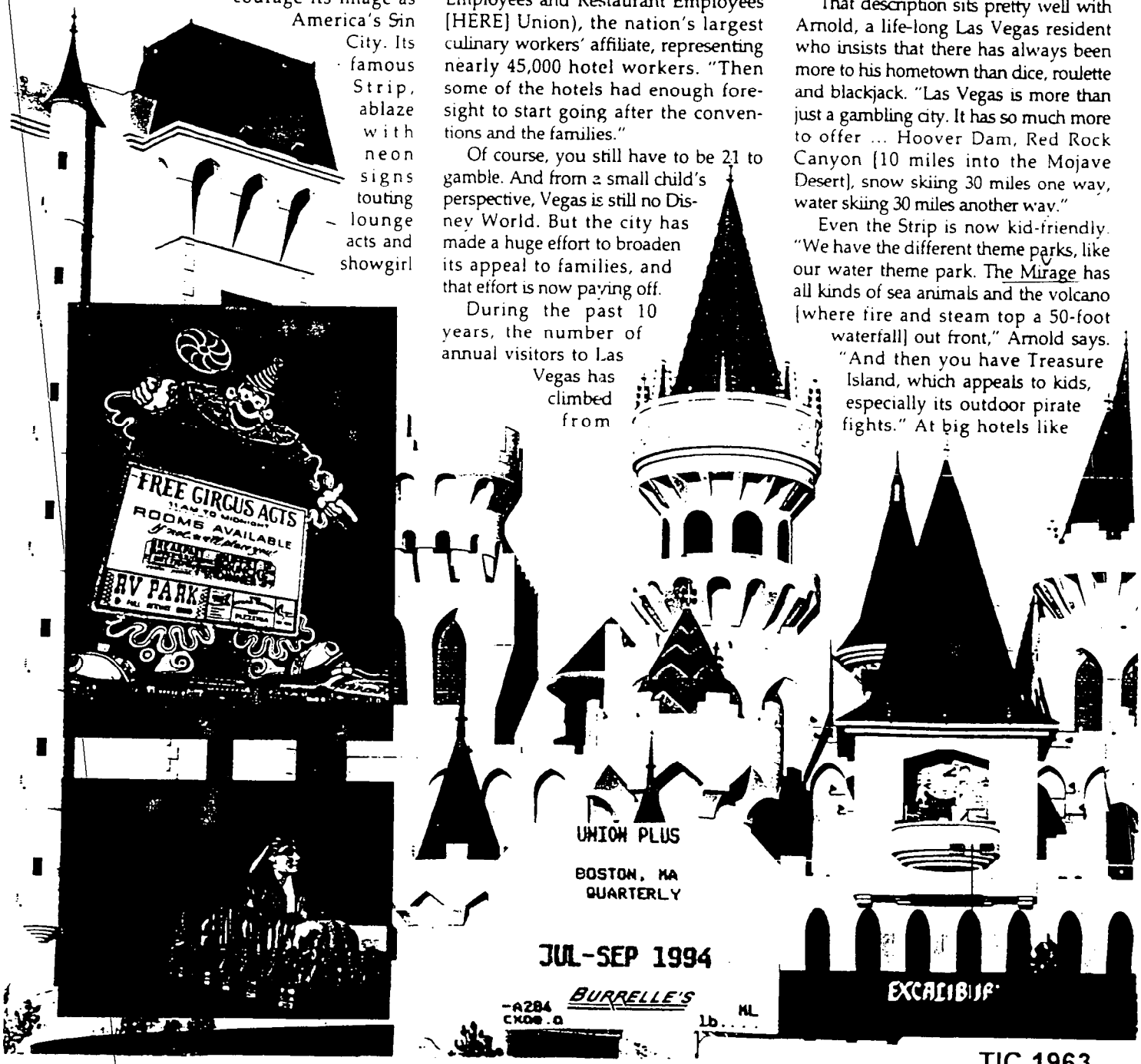
"When I grew up here, it was strictly for high rollers," says Jim Arnold, CEO and secretary-treasurer of Culinary Workers Local 226 (part of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees [HERE] Union), the nation's largest culinary workers' affiliate, representing nearly 45,000 hotel workers. "Then some of the hotels had enough foresight to start going after the conventions and the families."

Of course, you still have to be 21 to gamble. And from a small child's perspective, Vegas is still no Disney World. But the city has made a huge effort to broaden its appeal to families, and that effort is now paying off.

During the past 10 years, the number of annual visitors to Las Vegas has climbed from about 13 million to more than 23 million. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority boasts of a 149% increase in convention delegates between 1981 and '91. And, they say, more families have been coming along for the ride. Early this year, *Time* magazine called Las Vegas "The New All-American City."

That description sits pretty well with Arnold, a life-long Las Vegas resident who insists that there has always been more to his hometown than dice, roulette and blackjack. "Las Vegas is more than just a gambling city. It has so much more to offer ... Hoover Dam, Red Rock Canyon [10 miles into the Mojave Desert], snow skiing 30 miles one way, water skiing 30 miles another way."

Even the Strip is now kid-friendly. "We have the different theme parks, like our water theme park. The Mirage has all kinds of sea animals and the volcano [where fire and steam top a 50-foot waterfall] out front," Arnold says. "And then you have Treasure Island, which appeals to kids, especially its outdoor pirate fights." At big hotels like



TIC 1963

Las Vegas

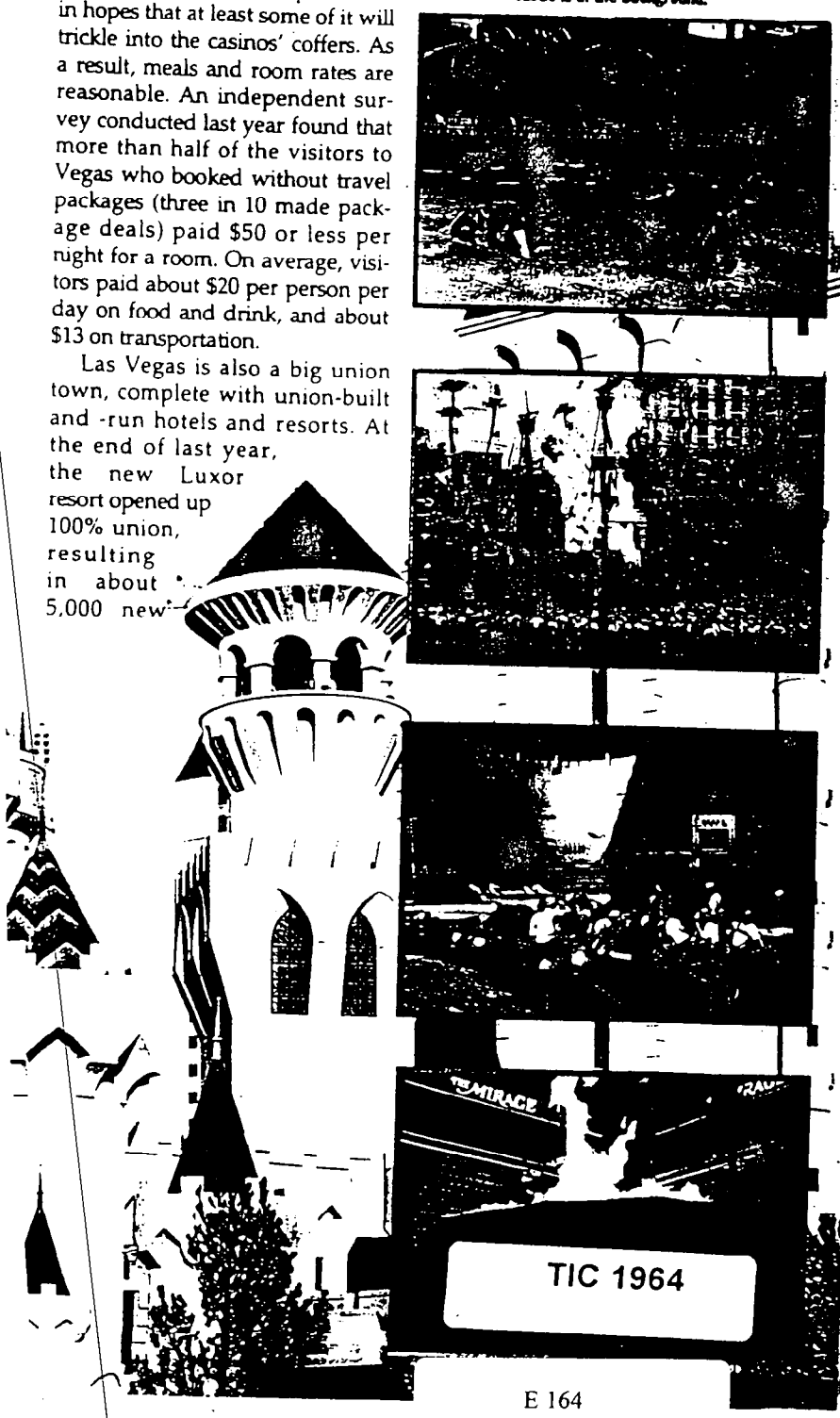
BY CLAYTON S. COLLINS

Circus Circus and the Luxor, he says, "Kids can stay busy all day long, and their parents can go where they want."

More good news for budget-watchers: Las Vegas is a city that likes its visitors to keep a little cash in their pockets — in hopes that at least some of it will trickle into the casinos' coffers. As a result, meals and room rates are reasonable. An independent survey conducted last year found that more than half of the visitors to Vegas who booked without travel packages (three in 10 made package deals) paid $50 or less per night for a room. On average, visitors paid about $20 per person per day on food and drink, and about $13 on transportation.

Las Vegas is also a big union town, complete with union-built and -run hotels and resorts. At the end of last year, the new Luxor resort opened up 100% union, resulting in about 5,000 new

Where it's at in Vegas (*clockwise from below*): Taking a dip at Wet 'n' Wild; the battleship at Treasure Island; rafting at Hoover Dam; the volcano at the Mirage; the Luxor's Sphinx; and the pageantry of Circus Circus. The Excalibur's castle is in the background.



Finding an Oasis of Family Fun in the Desert

Las Vegas lies before you like the Emerald City. And the kids want to go there all at once. *Union Plus* has assembled a practical guide to some highly recommended family activities.

★ **Treasure Island.** A free show outside the hotel every 90 minutes includes fireworks, music and a sea battle culminating in a sinking ship.

★ **Omnimax Theater.** At the famous Caesar's Palace hotel, catch informative films on a huge, wrap-around screen ($5.50 for adults, $3.50 for kids).

★ **Luxor Hotel.** Three high-tech "ride films" put together by a Hollywood special-effects team include a simulated chase that will have kids howling (admission is about $5). Luxor also offers a virtual-reality arcade called Sega land.

★ **Lied Discovery Children's Museum.** In the new central library building (833 Las Vegas Blvd. North) kids can lay hands on about 130 interactive exhibits covering sports, arts, space and more. (Cost is $5 for adults, $4 for children 12-17 and $3 for kids ages 3-11.)

★ **Wet 'n' Wild.** All the big hotels have pools, but this is the place to go for water slides (the "Blue Niagara" is 300 feet long). Adult admission is $18.95, $15.95 for children.

★ **Scandia Family Fun Center.** Try your hand at race cars, bumper boats and outstanding miniature golf.

★ **Excalibur Hotel.** This King Arthur-style castle offers a "must-see" jousting match with knights on horseback.

★ **Ethel M's Dessert and Desert.** Remember Willie Wonka? A free tour of this chocolate factory outside the city will interest children and parents; don't miss the two-acre cactus garden.

★ **Circus Circus Hotel.** Free circus acts every 15 minutes. Parents can do some "gaming" between sets.

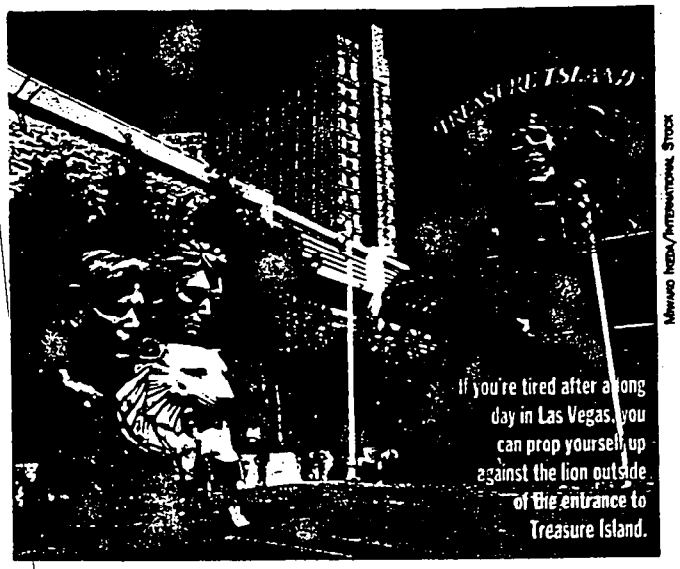
★ **Hoover Dam.** It isn't flashy in the Vegas sense, but consider taking your kids to see this engineering marvel: nine million tons of rock excavated, a million cubic yards of river bottom removed, seven million tons of poured concrete, 18 million pounds of steel, and 1,000 miles of steel pipes.

— *C.S.C.*

Homes Away from Home

One of the best parts of [illegible] Las Vegas getaway is the opportunity to be served by your unions. For a list of union-organized hotels in Las Vegas, call (800) HERE-WAY (be sure to have the 702 area code ready when you call). Rates can run anywhere from $30 to more than $200 per day, depending upon the season and the level of luxury you want.

PHOTOGRAPHS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT): COURTESY LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU (4); PAUL THOMPSON/INTERNATIONAL STOCK; JOHN MICHAEL/INTERNATIONAL STOCK; PAUL THOMPSON/INTERNATIONAL STOCK

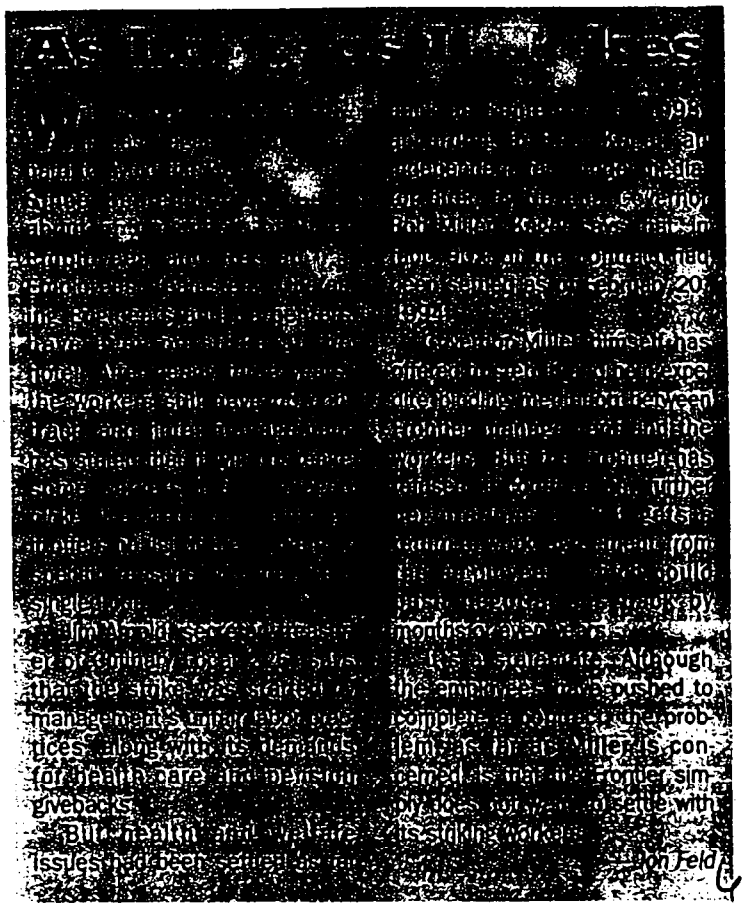


If you're tired after a long day in Las Vegas, you can prop yourself up against the lion outside of the entrance to Treasure Island.

MIRAGE MEDIA/INTERNATIONAL STOCK

union jobs (HERE also organized workers at Treasure Island). A long-standing cooperative labor-management plan has been in place at Circus Circus Enterprises, Mirage Resorts and Hilton. The 5,000-room MGM Grand ("the world's largest hotel") has taken a strong anti-union posture, but a coalition of nine international unions has launched a vigorous organizing campaign. In addition, the Frontier Hotel still is embroiled in a two-and-a-half-year strike.

If you're thinking about a family trip, Las Vegas might be the destination for you. Few places combine adult entertainment and family fun as well as this glittering desert-diamond of a town. Who knows? You might just hit the jackpot! ■



TIC 1965

BOSTON GLOBE

BOSTON, MA
DAILY 508,867

THURSDAY
JUL 21 1994

BURRELLE'S

32 PW

AP PHOTO

WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN – *The 17-story tower of the Old Dunes Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas is imploded yesterday before dawn to make way for two new resorts on the property. Another Dunes tower was imploded last October.*

TIC 2100

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE

BOSTON, MA
SUNDAY 814,036

MAR 26 1995
BURRELLE'S

34
xnegc PW

Lavish, opulent LAS VEGAS

. . . family-style

For your entertainment – your kids', too – a frigate sinks five times daily in a lagoon at the Treasure Island hotel in Las Vegas. Such spectacles are redefining the desert resort.

By Diane White
GLOBE STAFF

LAS VEGAS – "Escalator to the Medieval Village."

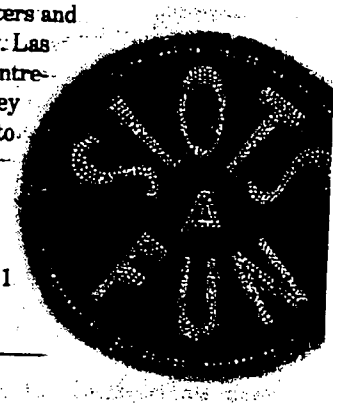
When I saw this sign in the casino at the Excalibur, a mega-hotel with an ersatz Camelot theme (a description that's probably redundant), it seemed to capture the cultural dissonance of the new Las Vegas.

Later, though, after seeing a lot more of how Vegas is changing, it became clear that no one phrase could neatly encapsulate everything that's happening to this city. It's just too much.

However, the crucial element that separates the new Vegas from the old Vegas can be summed up in one word: family. In the new Las Vegas, as in the old, it's wise to keep an eye on your wallet, but these days you also have to watch your step or somebody might run up your heels with a baby stroller.

Gambling opportunities have sprung up all over the country in recent years. Las Vegas has lots of competition – state-run lotteries and keno games, casinos on Indian reservations and river boats and in Atlantic City, racetracks and off-track-betting centers and satellite wagering. Las Vegas gambling entrepreneurs knew they had to find a way to appeal to younger gamblers, the baby-boom generation, if they

VEGAS, Page B11



Lavish, opulent Las Vegas . . . family style

■ VEGAS
Continued from Page B1

hoped to hold on to their share of the business.

The answer was under their noses: Circus-Circus, the hotel with the big-top theme that pioneered the concept of the Las Vegas family vacation more than 20 years ago by building a game arcade and a midway on top of the casino and hiring circus acts – trapeze high-flyers, wire-walkers, motorcycle daredevils – to perform above the casino action. A lot of gaming industry specialiststhought it was a crazy idea, but Circus Circus has been a huge success and continues to thrive by appealing to the family trade. In 1993, the hotel added a $90 million indoor amusement park, Grand Slam Canyon.

In the last few years, five new family-friendly theme hotels have opened on Las Vegas Boulevard (The Strip, as it's known all over the world). Treasure Island. The Mirage. The Excalibur. The Luxor. The MGM Grand.

The new hotels are huge and glitzy, attractions in their own right with all sorts of non-gambling diversions to amuse both adults and children. But the new Vegas hasn't eclipsed the old Vegas. This is still very much an adult tourist destination. Gambling is still what Las Vegas is all about, always has been, always will be. Here, all roads lead to the casino. But these days the people who've built the new Las Vegas want parents to bring the children along not just to get Mommy's and Daddy's gambling dollars but so the little ones will associate a visit here with fun and will keep coming back again and again, eventually with their own children and grandchildren.

The new Las Vegas is something else. But what is it?

It's the Egyptian-themed Luxor hotel, a 30-story black glass pyramid with an 18-inch-deep, chlorine-laced River Nile encircling the casino, a replica of King Tut's tomb in the basement and a mind-bogglingly Sega virtual-reality video game arcade on the mezzanine.

It's the MGM Grand's Wizard of Oz-themed casino and a grandmotherly Dorothy in "ruby"-encrusted sneakers ($60 a pair in one of the hotel's many gift shops) playing video

IF YOU GO

Think seriously about money if you're considering taking the children to Las Vegas. It's not cheap. You can spend a small fortune on amusement park rides, video games, midway entertainments, shows and all sorts of other trinkets and diversions, to say nothing of food. Bring lots of cash and traveler's checks and your credit cards.

If your children are older, they'll find plenty to do to entertain themselves – as long as you keep coming up with quarters. If they're small, they'll need supervision if you want to slip away to the casino. Two hotels — the MGM Grand and the Las Vegas Hilton — have child-care programs, but only for their guests.

If you need to book more than one room to accommodate the family, you may want to consider staying in a suite hotel. There are several in Las Vegas — the Rio and the St. Tropez are two of the most popular — offering suites at about the same rates, or even less, than it costs to rent one room in many hotels.

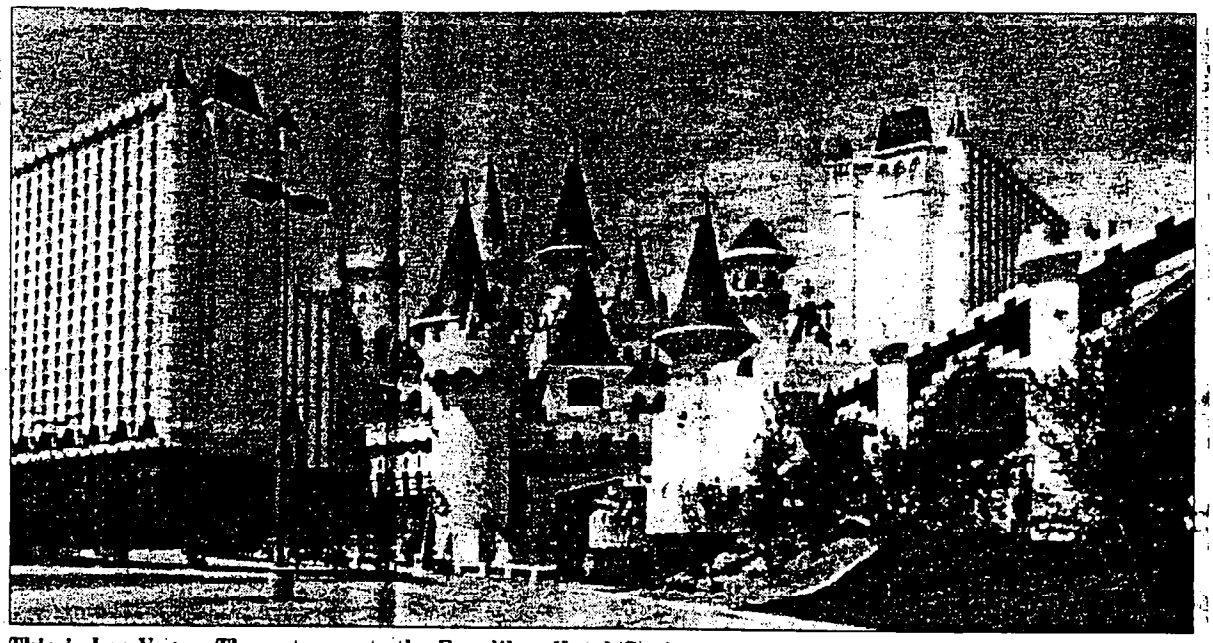
Las Vegas hotels, especially the newer ones, tend to sprawl. The youngsters will want to see and do everything, which means you'll walk for miles and miles. So be sure to bring comfortable walking shoes.

For a change of pace, consider getting out of the city for a day and doing something outdoors. Las Vegas is surrounded by desert and mountains. Go horseback riding or hiking or white-water rafting on the Colorado River. Or just drive around and look at the spectacular scenery. And there's always Hoover Dam.

Before you go, buy a guidebook, read it and plan ahead. "The Unofficial Guide to Las Vegas" by Bob Sehlinger ($13) is a particularly good one.

DIANE WHITE

TIC 2267



This is Las Vegas. The entrance to the Excalibur Hotel/Casino.

poker at a bar in the Emerald City casino beneath a canopy of artificial sky that changes faster than Las Vegas luck. Thunder and lightning one minute, sun and puffy white clouds the next.

It's the Mirage hotel, with a pride of Siegfried's and Roy's white tigers lounging in a glass-fronted habitat beside the lobby rain forest, while out back, next to the lavish palm-fringed swimming environment – mere pools are passe in the new Vegas – bottle-nosed dolphins cavort for the public's amusement in a swimming environment of their own, in the middle of the desert, hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean.

It's The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace, probably the world's most elaborate indoor shopping mall, an astonishing amalgam of fake Roman villa and real Rodeo Drive, where, when you tire of the 98 upscale shops, you can eat goat cheese pizza at a branch of Wolfgang Puck's Spago and watch the moves of audioanimatronic "classic" statues of Bacchus and Venus under yet another canopy of artifical sky that approximates the weather and the time of day or night outside.

It's the MGM Grand Adventures theme park, a 33-acre amusement park, with it's Parisian Taxis bumper cars and roller-coaster Water Flume ride. It's the man-made volcano that

Continued on next page

TIC 2268

Jousting knights and pirate fights are part of the Las Vegas scene

Continued from preceding page

erupts in a fiery blast outside the Mirage. It's the pirate battle – complete with the sinking of a three-quarter-scale replica of an 18th-century British frigate staged five times daily in a pseudo-lagoon in front of the Treasure Island hotel. It's the gaudy neon-Camelot decor of the Excalibur, where you can dine in the Lance-A-Lotta Pasta restaurant, an "olde world" spaghetti house.

It's nuts, is what it is, the new Las Vegas. It's sensory overload to the max. But it's fun. It can be fun, anyway, if you don't think about it too much. If you hope to have a good time in the new Las Vegas, you can't allow yourself to wonder if that grandmother might be squandering her Social Security check in the Emerald City casino, or if the dolphins are being exploited, or how many of the plants in the Mirage lobby rain forest are plastic, or what effect the building boom is having on the local air quality and the water table.

I spent a few days recently exploring the three newest family-oriented mega-hotels – The Luxor, the MGM Grand Hotel and The Excalibur. They're all within walking distance of one another on The Strip, so if you stay at one it's easy to visit the others, which is very important if you bring the family to Vegas.

The MGM Grand Hotel

The first thing kids – and many adults – want to know is how to get to the theme park. It's a hike. This 5,005-room, $1 billion hotel is the biggest in the world, a massive complex of glowing green glass towers, its main entrance guarded by a colossal, 88-foot-tall, golden MGM lion.

Walk through the lion's paws and follow the Yellow Brick Road on the carpet that winds through the Emerald City Casino, the Hollywood Casino, the Monte Carlo Casino, the Sports Casino, past five of the MGM Grand's eight restaurants, past the fast-food court, past the midway and game arcade. The theme park entrance is beyond King Looey's Youth Activity Center, which provides supervised activities and outings for children of hotel guests. Most Las Vegas hotels can arrange for in-room baby-sitting, and the Las Vegas Hilton has a day-camp program for children of hotel guests, but the MGM Grand is the only one that has a child-minding center. It's well-equipped and staffed, and the day I popped in the youngsters seemed to be having a fine time.

The theme park is meant to approximate a movie backlot, with areas representing, among other places, Paris, New Orleans and New York. It's small compared with, say, Disney World, and the rides are not as thrilling as some in other parks. Still, it's a full-fledged amusement park with nine eating places and countless gift shops. Besides the major rides and the stage shows, the place is crawling with costumed characters and street performers who really throw themselves into their work. I walked, by mistake, straight into the arms of a 6-foot-tall dancing banana and ended up foxtrotting with it while a Dixieland band played "Sweet Sue." Don't say you weren't warned. Visitors can explore the park, eat in the restaurants, browse in the gift shops without paying a fee. If you wish to go on the rides, you can buy individual tickets or a bracelet ($15 for adults, $10 for children up to age 12) that allows you unlimited rides for one day.

The MGM Grand is a bit more expensive than some of the other new family-oriented hotels. All the hotels have lavish swimming complexes, but the MGM Grand's is arguably the most spectacular. There's also a health club, a spa, tennis courts. The rooms are slightly larger than average, and the decor is tasteful, by Las Vegas standards.

The Luxor

This pyramid-shaped hotel, owned by Circus Circus, stands out even in a city replete with architectural oddities. The conventional wisdom about the Luxor is that either

TIC 2269

"River" Nile upon which, for $3, you can meander around the hotel's inner perimeter on a barge while a guide gives a little talk about Egyptian history. "There's a lot to learn about your tomb of King Tut," said the young man in charge of our barge. Indeed there was. The $3 self-guided tour through the replica of King Tutankhamen's tomb as it was discovered by Howard Carter in 1922 was fascinating, the high point of my visit to the Luxor.

Children, and many adults, prefer the hotel's more contemporary amusements. The Sega game arcade is fabulous, if you like that sort of thing, and what youngster doesn't? But the biggest attractions are the Luxor's three virtual reality rides, the Pyramid Trilogy, which are the work of Douglas Trumbull, creator of the "Back to the Future Ride" at Universal Studios Florida. The story that links the three rides doesn't make a great deal of sense, but, of course, the story isn't the point. Suffice it to say it's a "Raiders of the Lost Ark" type tale involving time travel, a mysterious stolen crystal and a lot of high-tech and low-tech skulduggery. A ticket for all three rides is $13. (Warning: The first ride, "In Search of the Obelisk," is a jolting, break-neck affair. Guides warn those with back or neck problems, or heart conditions, or any other problem that might be aggravated by violent movement to skip it. Heed them. I didn't and my back hurt for days afterward.)

The Excalibur

The plastic Camelot theme of this garish, enormous (4,032-room) Circus-Circus owned hotel is absurd, but it has other qualities that endear it to family vacationers – moderately priced rooms, relatively inexpensive restaurants and plenty of entertainment and activities for children and adults. The guest rooms are less gaudily furnished than you might imagine, given the look of the public spaces. The swimming complex isn't what you'd call lushly landscaped. It's basic concrete and water. But it's huge.

The Excalibur's main floors have a kind of bazaar ambience (bizarre, too). The hotel's fanciest restaurant, Camelot, is on the top floor along with the Canterbury Wedding Chapel, where you can arrange to be married – or remarried, renewing vows is very big in Vegas – in mock 12th-century splendor. One floor down is the Medieval Village with its gift shops and themed restaurants, including the aforementioned Lance-A-Lotta Pasta, the Round Table Buffet and Sir Galahad's Prime Rib Room. The cavernous casino is one floor below that, and, on the bottom level is the Fantasy Faire, complete with Sham-alot craftspeople – candle-maker, coin-minter, perfumer – and a midway, a video game arcade and two magic motion machines. The hotel showroom is there, too, King Arthur's Arena, site of the popular twice-hightly dinner show, King Arthur's Tournament.

A single ticket to some family-oriented Las Vegas shows – Siegfried and Roy at the Mirage, The Cirque du Soleil at Treasure Island, Starlight Express at the Las Vegas Hilton – can cost as much as $75. King Arthur's Tournament is a bargain at $24.95. It's a dinner-cum-jousting-show complete with Merlin the Mgaician, dancing damsels, acrobats and long-haired young "knights' on horses trying to unseat one another with lances in the time-honored manner. The audience is encouraged to cheer their favorite champions while digging into a hands-on dinnor of cornish game hen and other finger foods. Children love it.

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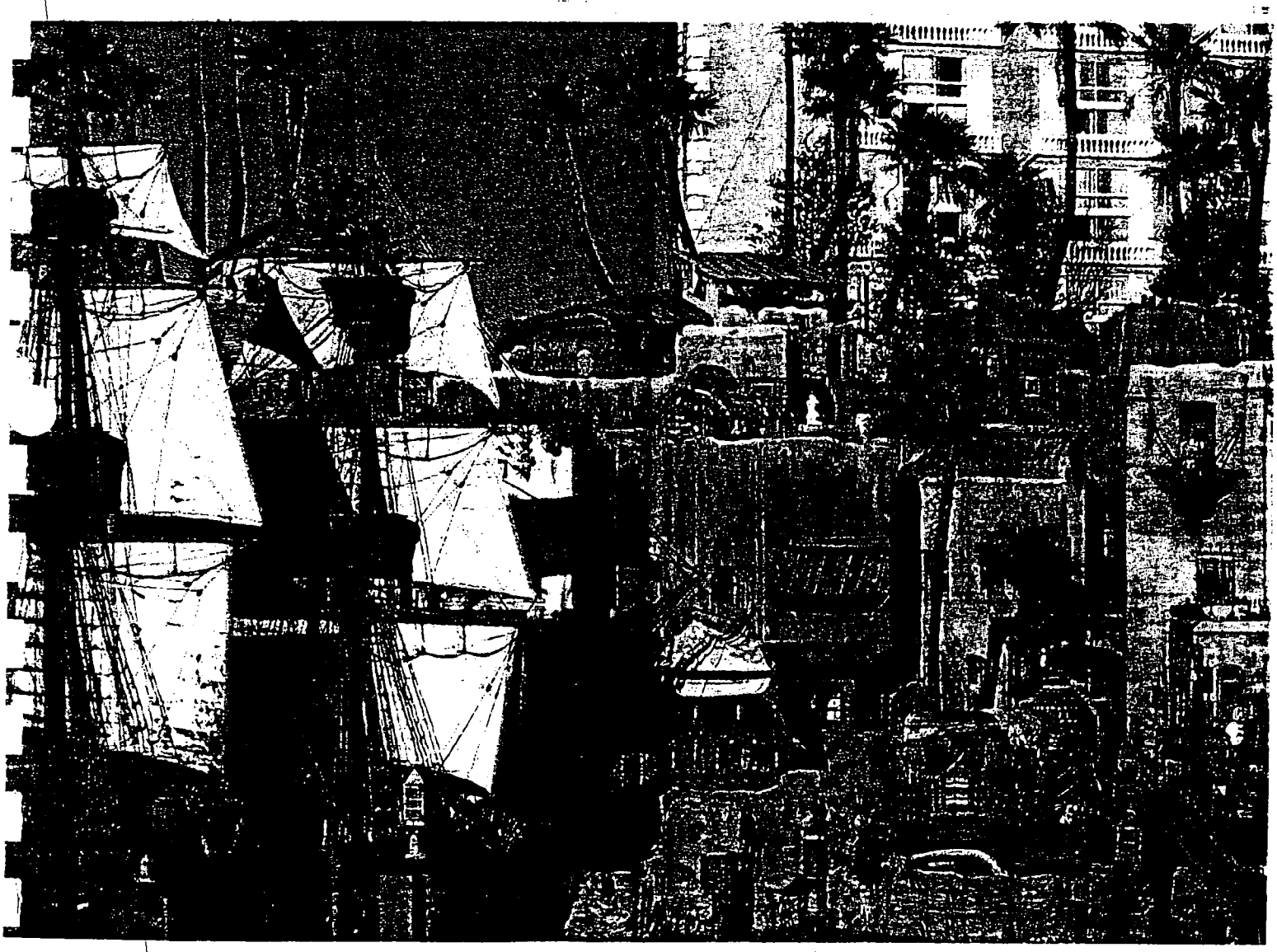

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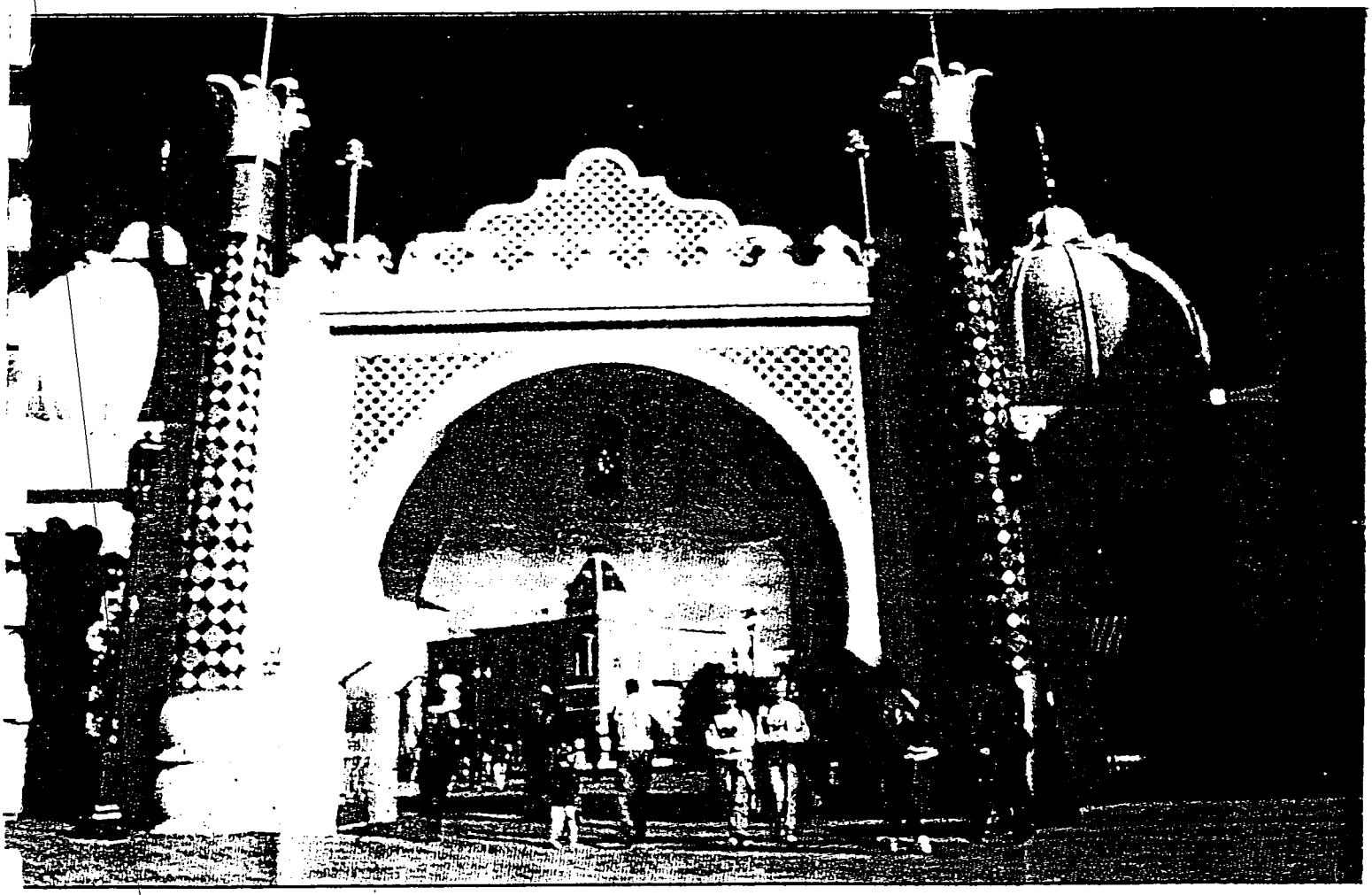

-or families, resorts such as the MGM Grand are creating a world of fantasy.

TIC 2272

Wrecking + Salvage Journal (MA)
Oct. 1994

OCTOBER 1994

BURRELLE'S

Dunes Nothing But Dust As . .

FRONT PAGE

. . South Tower Is Imploded

LAS VEGAS, NV — While the send off wasn't as climatic as the implosion of the North Tower nine months earlier, some 3,000 people showed up to watch as magic was once again created by CDI.

Gone were the fireworks and film crews, it was all business this time around.

The implosion of the 17-story, 226,000-square-foot, reinforced concrete building took place at 4:00 am on July 20, 1994.

Kevin Wynn, daughter of Mirage Resorts Inc. Chairman Steve Wynn was on hand to press the detonator. The more than 300 dynamite charges were set-off by the discharge of 10,000 volts of electricity into the building.

Those involved with the project included Controlled Demolition, Inc. of Phoenix, Maryland who contracted with Atlandia Design Inc., who represented the owner, Mirage Resorts, Inc. General Contractor on the project was Marnell Corrao Associates (MCA) of Las Vegas. To guarantee it's operations, CDI furnished $25 million in insurance. The building was soft-stripped by Chuck Clark of Three D Services, Inc., Pomona, California, and Goldie Enterprises of Las Vegas, who spent the following 4 to 5 weeks clearing the debris from the site.

Mirage Resorts bought the financially crippled Dunes last year and immediately announced plans to raze the hotel and casino to make room for a new resort. The older North Tower and most of the casino were demolished in October 1993.

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Christian Science Monitor

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Las VEGAS

It's a Western boomtown, a gambling mecca, a planning nightmare, a partial tax haven, and even a family place

By Daniel B. Wood
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

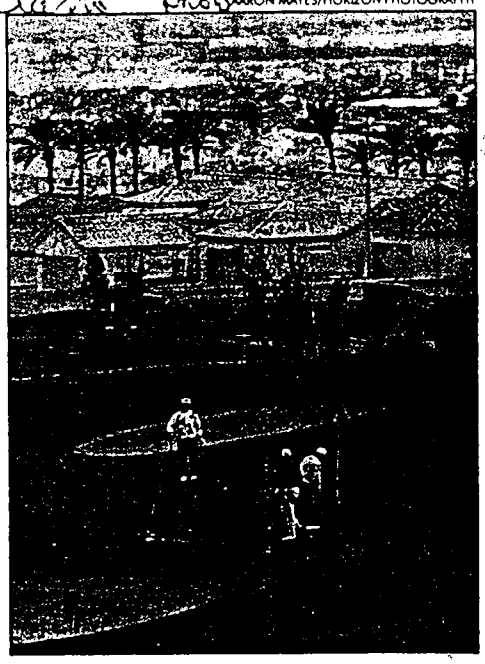
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

A LONG traffic-choked Las Vegas Boulevard, stretch limos deposit tuxedoed entertainers beneath the marquees of palace-sized casinos: Stardust, Sahara, Riviera. Inside, masses of people in caps and sweat shirts – 28 million last year – feed quarters into acres of slot machines 24 hours a day.

Five miles north, just blocks from downtown City Hall, a group of homeless men warm themselves on refuse burning in a steel drum. One wears a cardboard sign: "Will work for food."

Farther out to the northwest, potential home buyers ogle a lighted model of the largest master-planned development in the United States, Summerlin. Already boasting thousands of young families and retirees, the sprawling community includes libraries, civic centers, workout clubs, malls, and six golf courses carpeted over sandy soil.

Metropolitan Las Vegas, a mere desert crossroads of 5,100 the year before the state legalized gambling in 1931, has outpaced the growth of every other American city for six decades. It is still the fastest-growing city: an even million at last count, with plenty of room amid the saguaro for more. With that increase have come the growing pains of large populations – traffic congestion, smog, crime, homelessness – but also the opportunity to reinvent itself.



AARON MAYES/HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY

DIFFERENT CHIPS: *Highland Falls is one of the city's many golf courses, all constantly thirsty. Between 4,000 and 6,000 people move to Las Vegas each month, many in search of sunshine.*

"We're graduating beyond gambling and flesh shows," says Mike O'Callahan, former Nevada governor and now executive editor of the Las Vegas Sun. Twenty years ago, touring Russian cosmonauts refused to enter Nevada because of Las Vegas's reputation as "sin city." Today, says the 40-year resident, "I tell you there are more lights on softball fields than casinos."

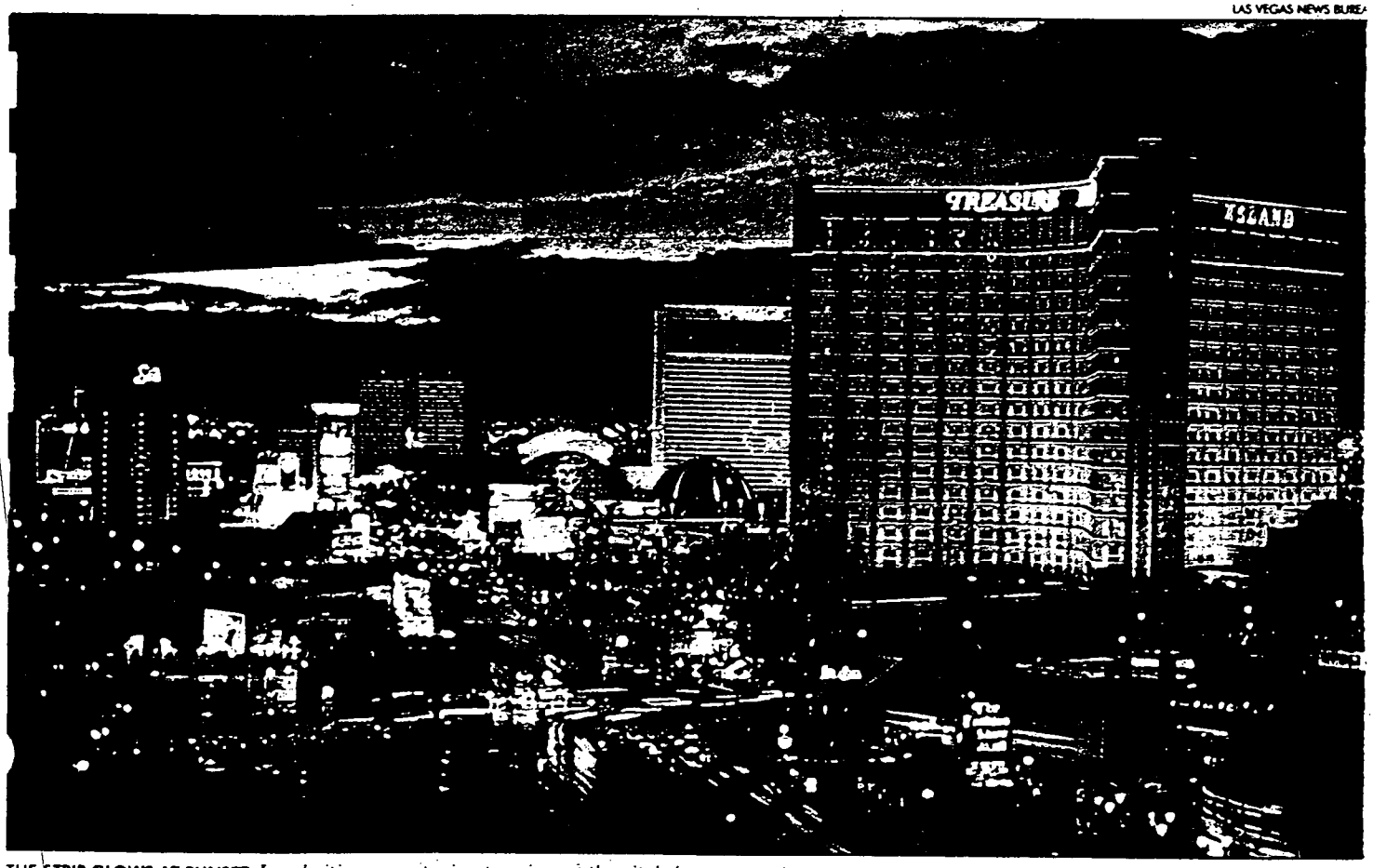
In the past five years, city fathers have orchestrated a formalized effort to cast off the town's time-worn image as the world's playland getaway and redefine itself both as a family-oriented tourist destination (**Article, right**) and an all-American city. That has meant a stronger civic focus on theater, music, ballet, and schools for its own residents. It has also meant a full-scale push to diversify business, upgrade educational institutions, and remake infrastructure from water to highways, mass-transit, and even sewers.

"The press comes in here and all they write about is the [casino gambling] strip," complains Mayor Jan Jones, pointing south from her 10th-floor downtown office.

Last year, the opening of three major casinos – adding more hotel rooms at one intersection than exist in all of San Diego – made headlines worldwide. But Mayor Jones points north to miles of new, orange-tile-topped developments and touts the highest percentage of churches, synagogues, temples, civic organizations, and children's leagues of any US city. "Why don't they write about this as well?" she asks.

The Las Vegas of gambling and the Las Vegas of homes and families in fact enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Casinos brought in $6 billion last year, funding more than 43 percent of Nevada's general fund. That offers businesses and citizens alike a life with fewer taxes, cheaper housing (median cost: $126,000), and lower cost-of-living than neighboring Arizona, Utah, and California.

LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREA



THE STRIP GLOWS AT SUNSET: *Local citizens are trying to reinvent the city's image, turning it into a hometown instead of just a gambling town.*

"Lower taxes, lower workmen's comp, lower labor, utility, and occupancy costs typically add up to 30 percent lower cost in doing business here [than California]," says Dennis Stein, president of the Nevada Development Authority. He hands visitors a list of 50 companies that moved to the area last year, 70 percent from California. Names include Ocean Spray Cranberries, Big O Tires, and Household Credit Services.

"We wanted to grow in a regulatory environment that was pro-business and would allow us to build and operate at low cost," says Household Credit Service's Mike Walter. "And we needed a good source of qualified labor – we found all three in Las Vegas."

Drawn by the allure of mountain vistas, sunshine, and a lower cost-of-living, 4,000 to 6,000 people a month are packing into the sage-encrusted landscape here. To accommodate them, cookie-cutter developments now ring the city with names like Cherry Creek, Willow Tree, and Vista Del Oro.

"Las Vegas may be the last million-plus metropolis of the Sun Belt for decades to come," says California historian Kevin Starr. Following the same archetype of Los Angeles's sprawling San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and San Gabriel valleys, Las Vegas also mimics the pattern of Houston, Phoenix, and Scottsdale, Ariz., before it.

But there are social consequences to both additional numbers and the speed of growth. Robert Parker, an urbanist who teaches at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas, says the city has lacked viable planning and zoning laws as well as enforcement of those already on the books.

MISMATCHED segments make up the city. There are retirement villages like Sun City, and a so-called "labor surplus/free trade zone" north of town, which attracts homeless and other transients. Other separate areas include Nellis Air Force Base, an increasingly abandoned downtown, and the tourist-stuffed gambling strip. "The city's different areas are not very well connected to each other," says Mr. Parker, who labels the phenomenon a

TIC 2212

"multi-nucleated metropolis." He ticks off the list of problems that have come with both size and disjointedness.

First is the necessity of finding water to meet housing, business, and recreational needs **(Article, below)**. Crime rates exacerbated by gang activity have pushed the city incarceration rate to three times the national average. The school district has grown into the nation's 11th largest. Result: some 18 schools now need to be built a year.

Because of heavy auto use and the same geology that inverts the air around Los Angeles, the number of unhealthy air days here hit 100 in 1994 – a 400 percent increase since 1993. "Police, fire, trash collection, and social services are all more difficult to coordinate and are more expensive when you grow so helter-skelter," Parker says.

Still, interviews with families across the city indicate a high overall standard of living, one free from the sinister shadows many associate with gambling.

"People have this absurd notion that we all grew up in casinos," says Connie Brennan, mother of six and co-publisher of the Nevada Business Journal. "They're surprised to find the people are really very conservative and wholesome. It's beautiful, open, and clean."

To forestall one case of uneven growth, the city has a plan known as the "Fremont St. Experience," a $60-million development that will place a canopy over several downtown casinos to tie them into a single entity alight with laser beams. Supporters hope the idea will stop the downward slide of downtown, where many casinos, failing to compete with glitzier gambling halls on the strip, have reported dwindling revenues.

There are also moves afoot to study the expansion of an existing downtown domed stadium, although Las Vegas has no professional baseball, hockey, or football team. Local officials envision a beltway encircling the city in the future and are studying the idea of a monorail to serve the gambling strip, whose boulevard cannot be widened because casinos extend to the curbs.

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IN THE CARDS

Las Vegas stays step ahead of rivals in entertainment business

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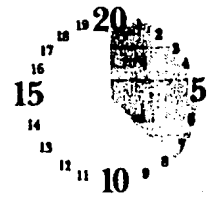


Estimated Reading Time (in minutes)

Second in a series

By David Flick

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

LAS VEGAS — For more than 20 years, Imogene Rogers has regularly visited this desert town to play a few slot machines, watch a few shows and take in the glitz and glitter of the Strip.

"I never go to Las Vegas thinking I'll be a millionaire; I go for entertainment," said the 56-year-old, who formerly worked for the Irving recreation department.

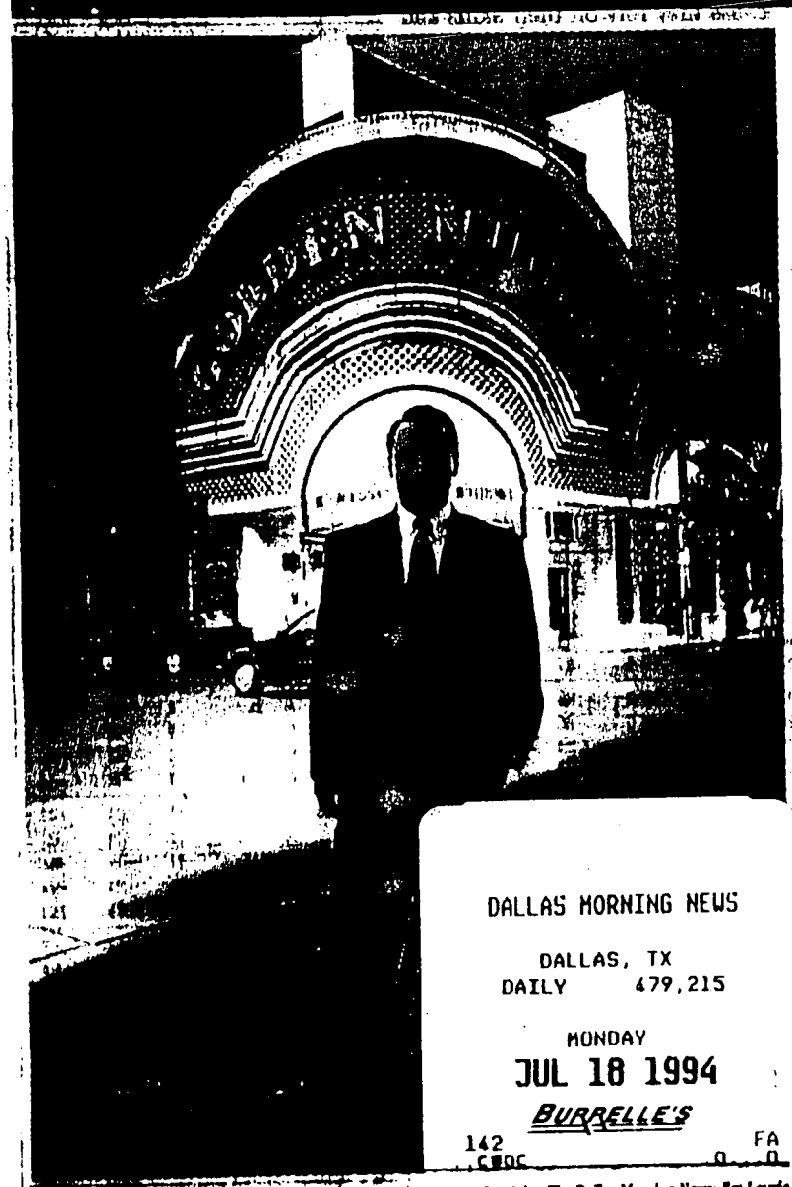
Perhaps more than any other city in the country, Las Vegas was built on Americans' desire to get away from it all. For more than 60 years, its gaming business and bright lights have attracted tourists. And thanks to ever more extravagant displays and shows, the city is still booming.

U.S. Census Bureau figures show Las Vegas is the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area, with 919,000 people in 1993, up from 741,000 in 1990, according to a survey by *Las Vegas Perspective* magazine.

With 23.5 million visitors last year, gaming revenue increased to $4.7 billion from $4.4 billion in

Please see LAS VEGAS on Page 4D.

■ Mixing work with leisure. 1B
■ Exercise boom. 1C



DALLAS MORNING NEWS
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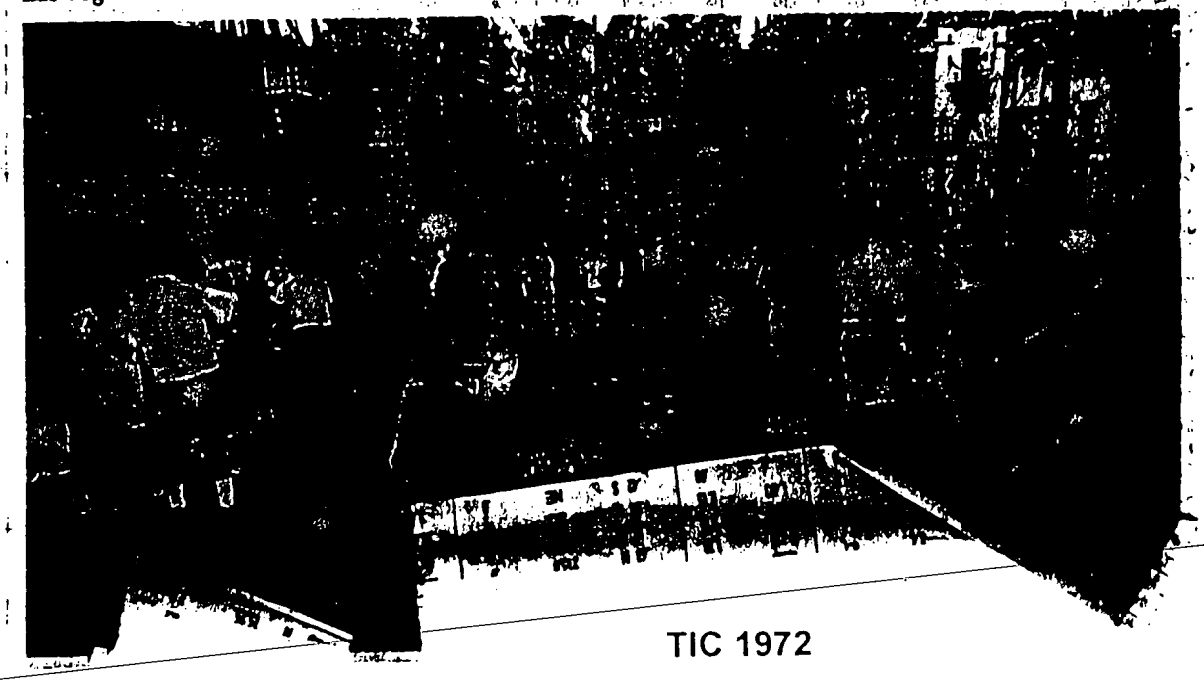
Special to The Dallas Morning News: Jim Laurie

Don Snyder (above) is president of a project aimed at revitalizing downtown Las Vegas. At Treasure Island on the Strip (right), a sea battle is regularly re-enacted in an artificial lagoon along the boulevard.



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Las Vegas thrives as adult playground

Continued from Page 1D.

1992. So strong is that business that one out of three workers in Clark County is directly employed in the leisure industry, according to R. Keith Schwer, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. An equal number are indirectly tied to that industry, he said.

The growth comes as a number of other cities and states have legalized gambling, threatening Las Vegas' near-monopoly. The realization that its allure may not last has prompted the region to look at economic alternatives.

"We're analyzing where we want to go. . . . We don't want to get like Detroit, where the oil crunch comes along and you're dependent on making cars no one wants," said Tim Carlson, executive director of the Nevada Commission on Economic Development, which was formed in the mid-1980s to lure more traditional jobs.

"Our export product is leisure," added Mr. Schwer of UNLV. So, unlike Detroit, "we're dealing with what people want to do in their spare time. . . . People are fickle; their tastes are subject to change."

Still, Mr. Carlson said that the spread of legalized gambling has had less of an effect on Las Vegas than was initially feared. Joe Buckley, analyst for Bear, Stearns & Co. in New York, agrees.

"What these new markets in Mississippi and Illinois and Louisiana have done is to expose people to gambling, and Las Vegas reaps the benefit from that," he said.

If gambling became legal in California, home to 28.6 percent of Las Vegas-area visitors, that could change. But Mr. Buckley notes that such an event is down the road; for the first four months of 1994, gambling revenue along the Strip grew 25 percent from last year, to $1.2 billion.

Ms. Rogers of Irving hasn't been swayed by the competition either. She tried out casinos in Vicksburg, Miss.; Lake Charles, La.; and Bossier City, La.

"I enjoyed them," she said. "But it's just not Las Vegas."

If Boston was built on shipping and Chicago on the railroads, Las Vegas owes its economic existence to Chapter 463 of the Nevada Revised Statutes. A legislative act in 1931 legalized gambling in a town founded by a railroad in 1905.

Among the earliest settlers, "the furthest thing from their minds was a resort town," said Frank Wright, curator of the Nevada State Museum. "The original deeds when they sold a parcel of land always said you couldn't sell liquor."

The town had no distinguishing natural beauty, but it lay on the Arrowhead Trail, an unpaved road between Los Angeles and Utah's national parks. Its first effort to tap into the vacation trade came during the Depression, but the focus wasn't on gambling, Mr. Wright said.

"The big deal was the Hoover Dam," then being built as Boulder Dam a few miles to the east, he said. The city of about 3,000 advertised itself under the slogan "The Best City by a Dam Site."

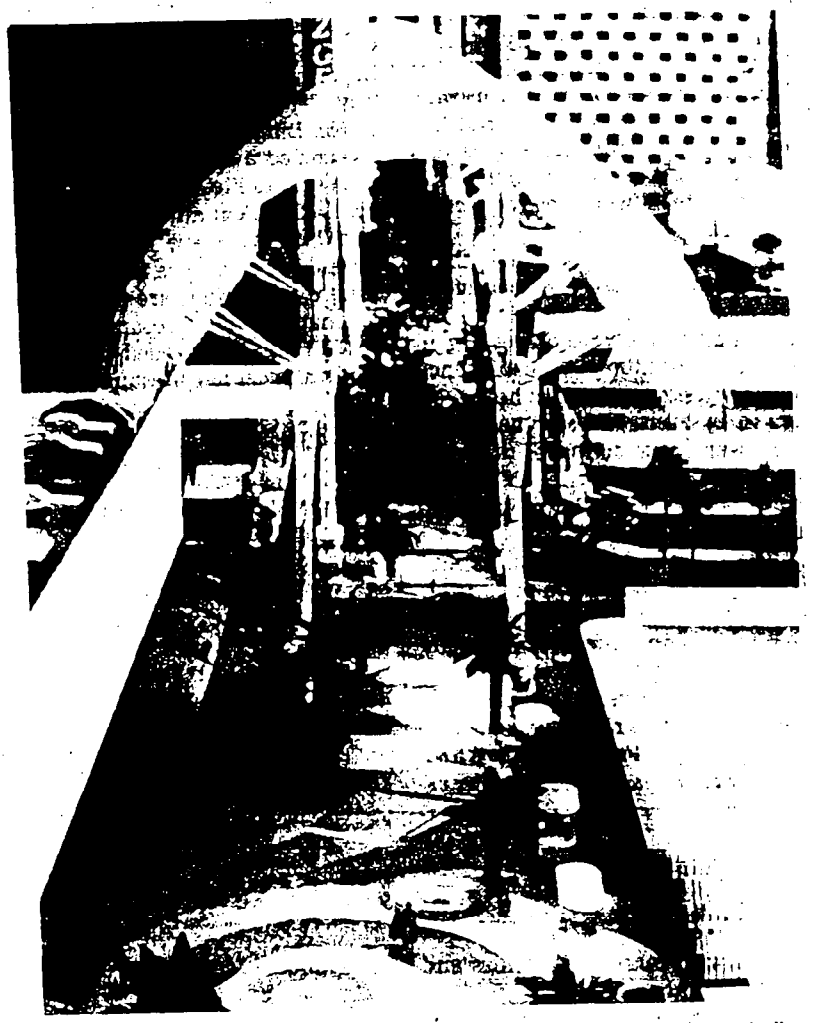
"Boulder Dam turned out to be an incredible tourist spectacle. It was at that time the town became aware of its potential as a playground," he said.

Professional gamblers who had been chased out of Los Angeles by municipal reform moved to Las Vegas in the 1930s, though the city continued to promote itself as a place to bring the family.

But gambling won out. The first big casinos were built along Fremont Street downtown, but since World War II, most of the growth has been in resorts along the Strip, an unincorporated stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard south of Sahara Avenue.

Today, supporters of downtown are locked in a battle with the Strip for the city's business. Since they offer the same product — casino hotels — the difference comes down to packaging.

So, in recent years, the hotels along the Strip have offered more extravagant shows, such as Trea-



Special to The Dallas Morning News

Fremont Street Experience, a $63 million project aimed at reviving downtown Las Vegas, is shown in an artist's rendering.

sure Island, where a sea battle is regularly re-enacted in an artificial lagoon along the boulevard. Next door, the Mirage entertains passersby with a fake volcano that erupts in fire four times an hour between sunset and midnight.

Five years ago, 80 percent of the people who stayed on the Strip also visited downtown. Now that number is down to 20 percent, said Donald D. Snyder, president and chief executive officer of the Fremont Street Experience, a $63 million project aimed at reviving downtown.

The project's key feature will be the Celestial Vault, a 100-foot-high arch that stretches more than four blocks. It will host a nightly "Sky Parade," a high-tech sound and light show, when it is completed next year.

"The competition is such today, you need to offer something new," Mr. Snyder said. "We're saying that you need more than gambling. You need a whole entertainment package; you need a hook to bring people in."

The programmable light show will be able to be tailored to specific occasions, such as the Chinese New Year or Mexican Independence Day, to attract specific visitors.

Mr. Snyder said the more traditional method of renewing downtown — filling vacant office space with companies — wasn't considered. "This is the heart of the gambling industry," he explained. "The gambling industry and leisure industry grew up here."

That's not lost on John Thomson, who moved to Las Vegas a year and a half ago from Euless. His job at the MGM Grand Hotel, as food and beverage manager, provides him enough security to support a 14-month-old son and a 30-year mortgage.

"The way it's going, they're building another 14,000 rooms a year in Las Vegas," he said. "It keeps growing. None of this is going away."

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Tesmec 1300 cutting through solid rock in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Western Pipeline of Las Vegas were able to assist Treasure Island Hotel and Casino when they began construction of their new facility. The foundation had to be dug in solid rock. Blasting created too many potential liabilities as the site lay between the Mirage and Sands Hotels. The Tesmec 1300 was able to dig through rock up to 14 feet deep and 40 inches wide for the showroom foundation, hotel perimeter, and the valet parking tunnel.

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Bright Attraction

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Bright lights, big city, big shows, big hair, big resorts, big money, big gamble.

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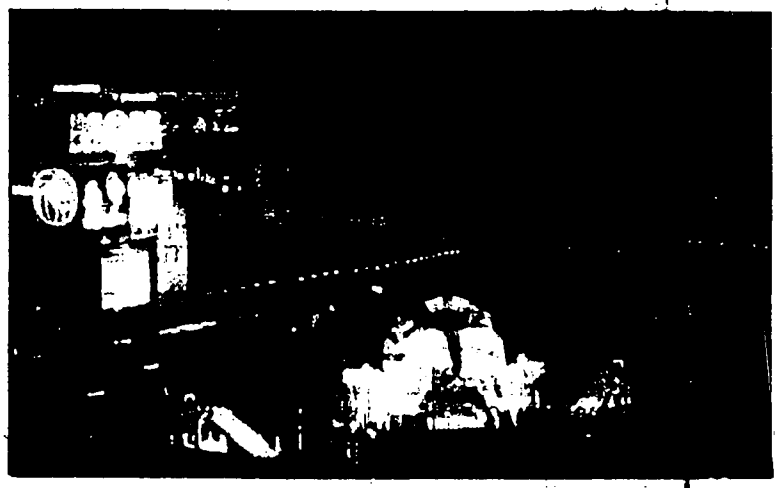
"Be prepared to lose. That's my tip," he said. "I'm not so sure just walking in and throwing your money down is not the best thing to do. It's kind of what you're doing; you're making a donation."

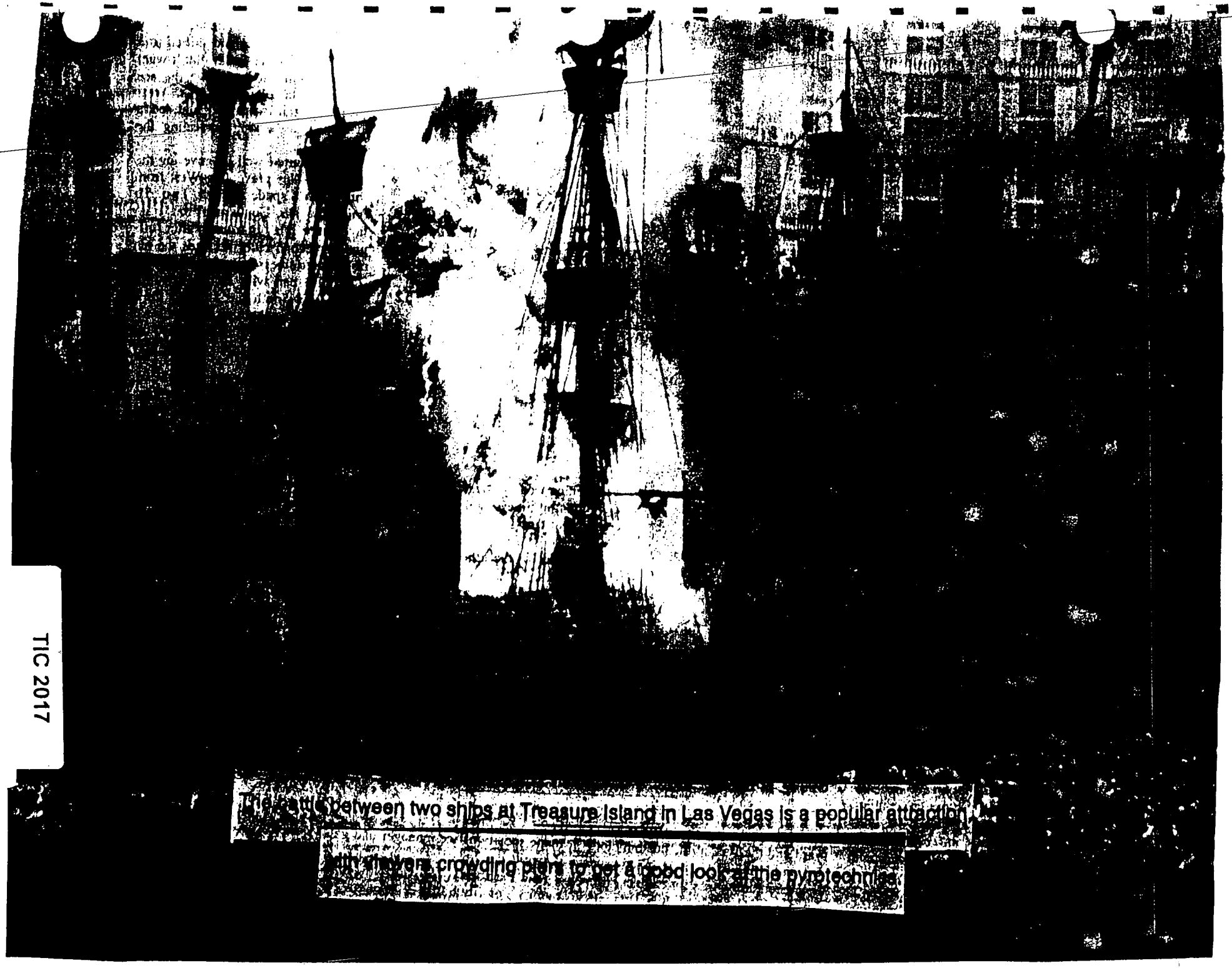
Hoover Dam, above, is a popular destination. Below, the MGM Grand resort lights up the night sky.



Art courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau
Story and page design by Larri Jo Starkey

NEXT: HAND SIGNALS

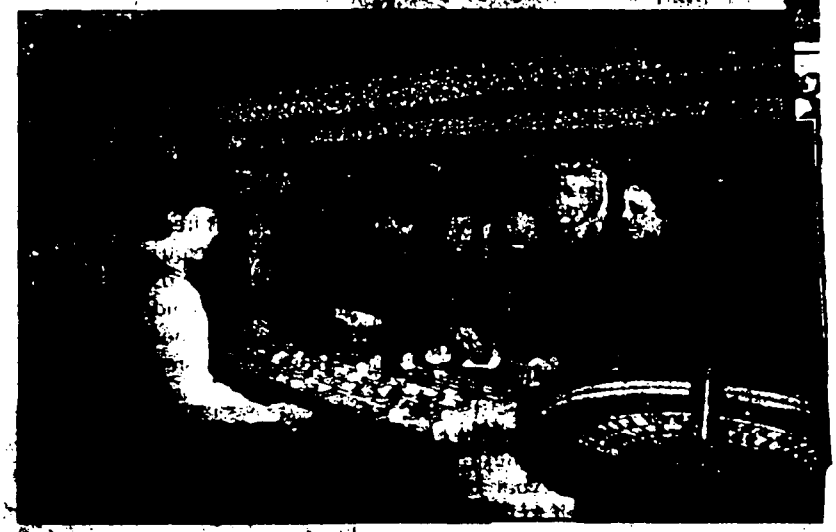
TIC 2016



The battle between two ships at Treasure Island in Las Vegas is a popular attraction with viewers crowding piers to get a good look at the pyrotechnics.

TIC 2017

Fremont Street in Las Vegas, above, sports neon glitter to attract gamblers, below.



TIC 2018

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.

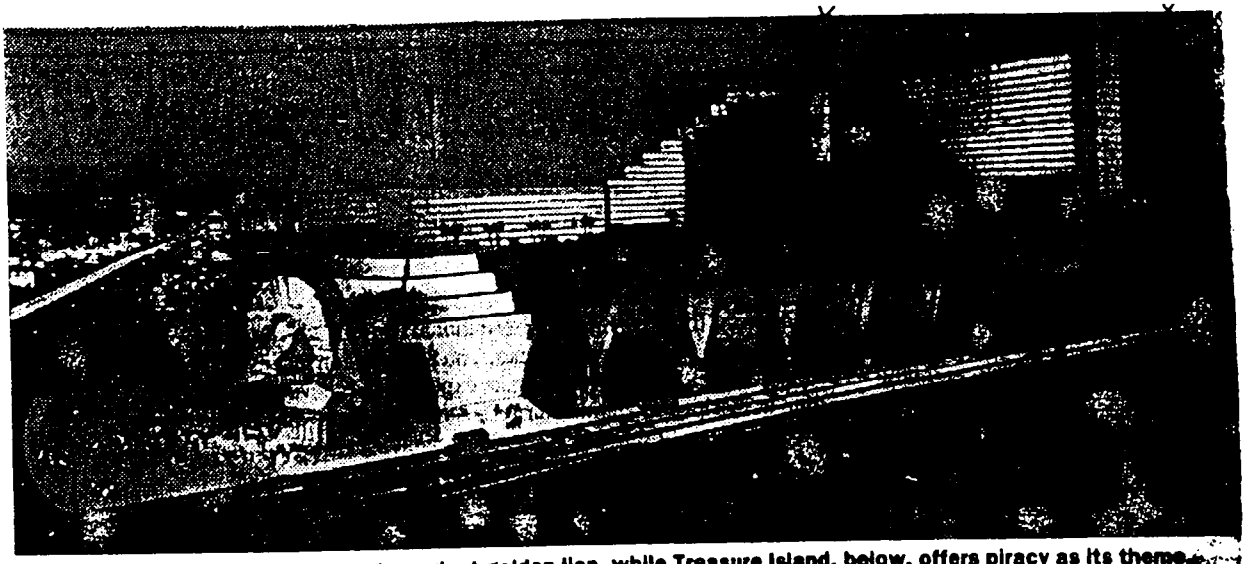
The Luxor intrigued me because I've never been to Egypt nor slept in a pyramid. Appropriately enough, the huge complex sits at the southern end of The Strip, where the city gives way to the open desert. The exterior of bronze reflective glass gives the Luxor a look of restrained elegance, in contrast 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 2019



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*

TIC 2020

Bright Attraction

AMARILLO GLOBE-TIMES
AMARILLO, TX
DAILY 24,891
MONDAY
SEP 12 1994
BURRELLE'S
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4976BR

Bright lights, big city, big shows, big hair, big resorts, big money, big gamble.

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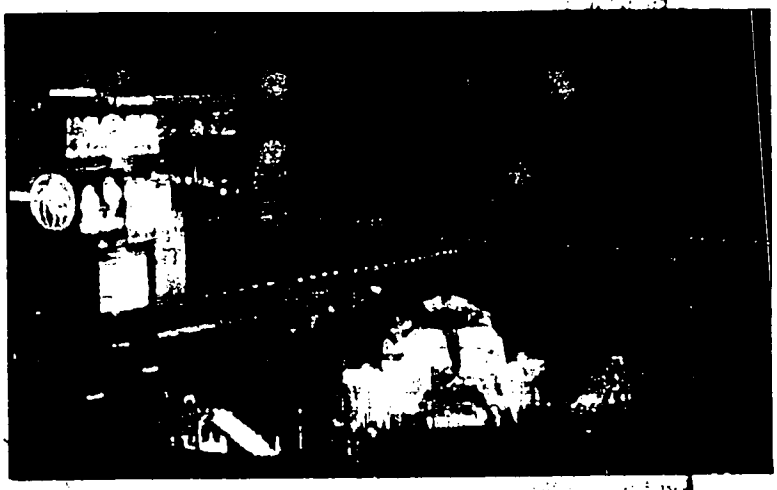
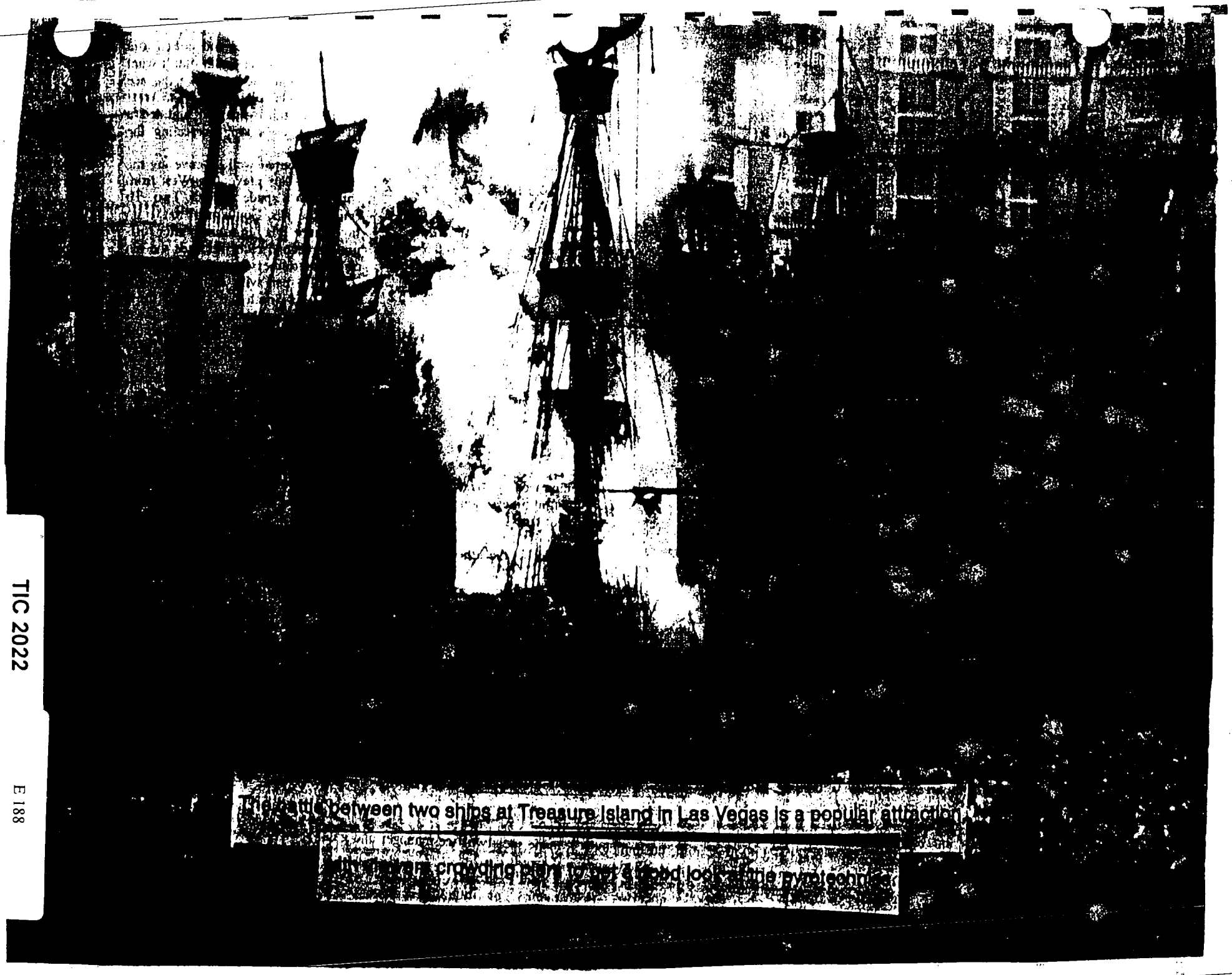


Art courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau
Story and page design by Larri Jo Starkey

NEXT: HAND SIGNALS



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[illegible] crowding piers to get a good look at the pyrotechnics.

TIC 2022

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TIC 2023

SILICON GRAPHICS WORLD

AUSTIN, TX
MONTHLY 20,000

FEBRUARY 1995

BURRELLE'S

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txos.. cp....

Hotel/casino uses SimGraphics' digital puppet system

4926BK

LAS VEGAS—Treasure Island's digital puppet installation features a "pirate" VActor, or virtual actor, known as "Captain Blackjack."

Complete with a patch over his right eye, a sharp sword and a black, tri-corn hat, the 3-D, computer-generated Captain Blackjack is projected onto a large videowall in an escalator causeway. Controlled by an actor offstage using a connection of two-way microphones, speakers and video cameras, the swashbuckling cartoon interacts with guests as they descend into the lower levels of the casino.

This realtime interaction between the computer-generated Captain Blackjack and guests of the hotel/casino is facilitated through an animation system from SimGraphics called VActor Performer, which was sold to Treasure Island by Iwerks Entertainment. The Treasure Island system is driven by an SGI Crimson.

Operating in a configuration similar to the Wizard in "The Wizard of Oz," actor Gary Columbo controls Captain Blackjack from a remote operator station with input devices that track his facial movements. Because of its high-profile exposure, Treasure Island also uses Captain Blackjack to provide guests with details about casino/hotel events and activities.

"Captain Blackjack gives a welcome and a warning to guests as they enter our pirate-themed casino. Guests have fun talking to the cartoon and then getting an immediate response," Jules Lauve, director of entertainment at Treasure Island, said. "Our guests not only love interacting with the character, but it also gives us a creative opportunity to promote every aspect of our property in a personalized way."

Treasure Island's parent company, Mirage Hotels, joins a growing list of companies who are using the SimGraphics technology for both promotional activities and broadcast entertainment applications including: BBC, Artear, Dentsu Prox, NHK, Fuji TV and Nintendo. Based on its success, VActors are expected to be used to animate characters and mascots not only in hotels and casinos but also at theme parks, stadiums, theaters and convention halls around the world.

Iwerks Entertainment, a SimGraphics distributor, is a supplier of software-driven attractions.

For information, call 213-255-0900. ■

TIC 2207

HOUSTON POST

HOUSTON, TX
SUNDAY 337,656

MAR 19 1995

BURRELLE'S

602 JW

Let the good times Roll

Las Vegas bedazzles families with witches, white tigers and pirates

BY PATRICK SORAN
SPECIAL TO THE HOUSTON POST

LAS VEGAS — Not so long ago the word "Vegas" conjured images of showgirls, free liquor and all-night gambling binges.

Then the city fathers realized their good-old-boy market was disappearing faster than chips after a busted blackjack hand. Out came the "Families Welcome" sign.

They don't even call it Vegas anymore — it's *Las Vegas*, thank you very much. And along with nearly 10,000 rooms added to Las Vegas Boulevard South came a string of family appropriate lures to draw

■ Changing face of Las Vegas/F-8
■ Diverse cultures/F-3

Mom, Dad and kids of all ages to hotels both old and new. The "Strip" itself has become an attraction.

In fact, there are so many free, or inexpensive, enticements now that many families set aside an entire day to don walking shoes and water bottles to

Please see LAS VEGAS, F-6

TIC 2260

E 191

LAS VEGAS: Visitors follow glittering paths of entertainment

From F-1

. . . well, walk the streets.

Instead of packing the kids off to an amusement park and hiding out in a smoke-filled poker parlor, visitors dodge handbill pushers to gaze at witches, white tigers and pillaging pirates.

Many visitors actually start off with more of a skipping action as they follow the yellow brick road beneath the seven-story-tall dome at the MGM Grand. At The Wizard's Secret, they watch the confused Scarecrow, squeaky Tinman and Dorothy herself re-enact scenes from *The Wizard of Oz* as they tread their way to a magic show. Overhead, the wicked witch streaks by on her broomstick.

For some, Munchkins simply aren't exotic enough so they cross the bridge to the Tropicana Hotel. Then they surf through the slots and up to the Wildlife Walk that connects the hotel tower with the casino. Dozens of rare birds dwell amid the greenery. "We have parrots, Lorikeets and African Crown Cranes," says Gail Ackerman, the hotel's assistant curator of wildlife, "but our most popular feathered friend is Tiki." This dark-blue and shocking-yellow Hyacinth Macaw perches above a manmade pond.

Some of the hotel's river birds might feel even more at home across the boulevard within the enormous, black-glass Egyptian pyramid known as Luxor. In gondola-style boats, time-travelers may chart a "Nile" cruise, coursing through tunnels and around misty waterfalls spotting hieroglyphs. Back on dry land, archaeology buffs can go on an expedition through a replica of King Tut's tomb.

Next door at the Excalibur the time period is strictly medieval. Court jesters entice crowds to gather 'round a stage on the mezzanine level. Jugglers, dancers and puppeteers make appearances throughout the day, but the crowds go craziest for the Malenga Brothers. One of these contortionists pulls his entire body, one limb at a time, through an unstrung tennis racket.

After the rather rigorous mile-long walk north to the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace, shopping enthusiasts relax on a motorized walkway gliding through a statue- and fountain-lined entrance arcade. Once inside the mall, they may pick and choose their way through 70 high-end retailers such as Ann Taylor, Structure and Gucci. The stores line up along three delightfully overdesigned Roman streetscapes, complete with giant columns, painted skies and elaborate waterworks.

White Bengal tigers live at The Mirage. The regal cats, pampered co-stars in Siegfried and Roy's magic show, pace to and fro in their all-white, hint-of-the-Taj-Mahal display area replete with arched colonnades and swaying palm trees. The felines actually live here so their presence is continuous, but the cats are more active during the moonlight hours.

Near the Mirage's swimming pool, six Atlantic bottlenose dolphins cavort in more than 2 million gallons of saltwater. Unlike the tigers, however, the dolphins don't perform in any scheduled stage acts. They merely entertain each other, and dozens of human onlookers who tour the Dolphin Environment.

Prepare for a mega-crowd next door at Treasure Island. Several times a day throngs gather to raise a "yo ho ho" as a British triple-masted frigate sails around Skull Point. The crew spies pirates pillaging a village and a nasty naval battle ensues. Amid cannon blasts and explosions, rope-swinging buccaneers fire a direct hit into the British ammunition stores and the ship goes down in flames, accompanied by her stiff-upper-lipped captain. It's the most popular attraction in town, garnering more than 25,000 exuberant spectators a week.

Many Strip-steppers call it a day after a dash across the street to view the Auto Collection at the Imperial Palace. After picking their way through a dark and smoky casino to a tiny elevator, they're rewarded with scores of "cherry" chariots for a daydream drive down Memory Lane. They might imagine themselves cruising with Elvis in his Cadillac Eldorado or tooling around town in Marilyn Monroe's pink Lincoln convertible.

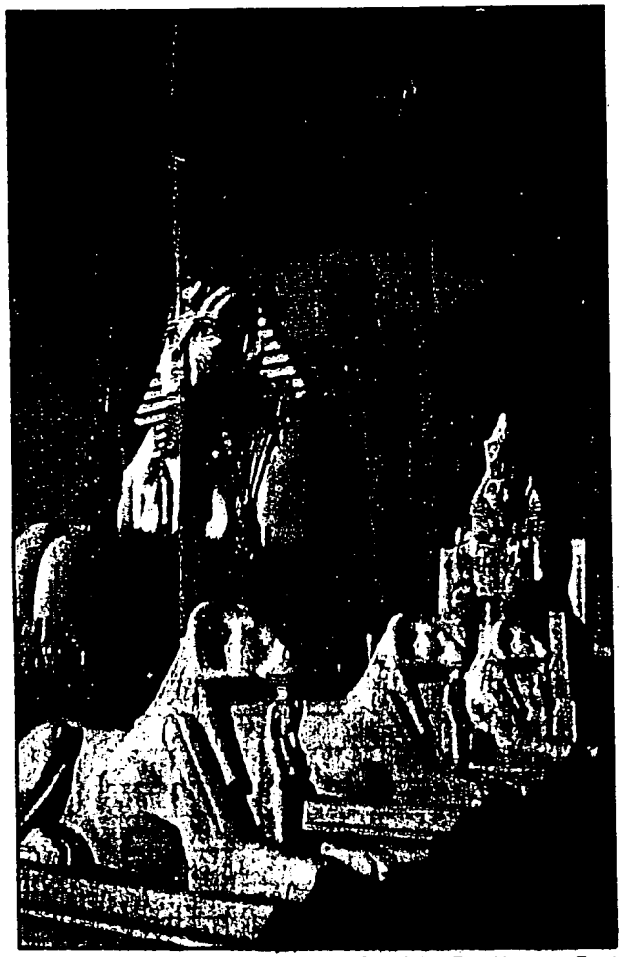
Some folks continue to trek north though, applauding the high-wire and balancing acts presented every half-hour or so at Circus Circus. Or perusing the unusual displays at The Guinness Book of World Records Museum next door.

Only the heartiest go the distance to downtown, enjoying peeks into Las Vegas' biggest cottage industry — wedding chapels — along the way. At The Little White Chapel they might step into a gazebo and plight their troth or witness a drive-by wedding at the drive-through chapel as lovers, too busy to park, voice their vehicular vows.

The payoff for this daylong walking excursion is at the Golden Nugget Casino downtown. There, in a darkened vestibule, behind thick glass, under a brilliant spotlight, is the world's largest gold nugget. It weighs a whopping 61 lbs. 11 ozs. It's called The Hand of Faith.

And anyone who's ever been to Vegas — or Las Vegas for that matter — knows that faith is what it takes to win in this town.

TIC 2261



Patrick Soran/Special to The Houston Post

The Luxor Hotel is surrounded by re-created artifacts from ancient Egypt, including a sphinx and replica of King Tut's tomb.

If you go

Getting around: Not everybody actually strolls the Strip, at least not some of the longer, barren stretches. Take the bus. They cruise the strip every 20 minutes or so each way, from early morning to late at night. It'll set you back a buck. Expect crowds.

MGM Grand, The Wizard's Secret: The magic show runs every 20 minutes from 10 a.m. to 9:40 p.m. Cost: Adults — $5, Kids, Military and Seniors — $4.

Wildlife Walk, Tropicana: No Charge. Visitors can see the birds and primates from 9 a.m. until about 8 p.m.

Nile River Cruise, Luxor: Runs about every 15 minutes from 9 a.m. until 12 a.m. Cruises cost $3.

King Tut's Tomb, Luxor: Tomb tours cost $3 and the tomb is open from 9 a.m. until 11 p.m. Sunday — Thursday, 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. weekends.

Forum Shops, Caesars Palace: open from 10 a.m. to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. the rest of the week.

The Mirage: The white Bengal tigers and aquarium are on display 24 hours without charge. The Dolphin Environment is open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekends and holidays.

Treasure Island: The naval battle on Buccaneer Bay occurs daily, without charge, every hour-and-a-half starting at 4:30 p.m.

The Auto Collection, Imperial Palace: open 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. daily. Charge for adults is $6.95, $3 for seniors and children.

Circus Circus: Acts go on under the Big Top approximately every half hour from 11 a.m. to midnight.

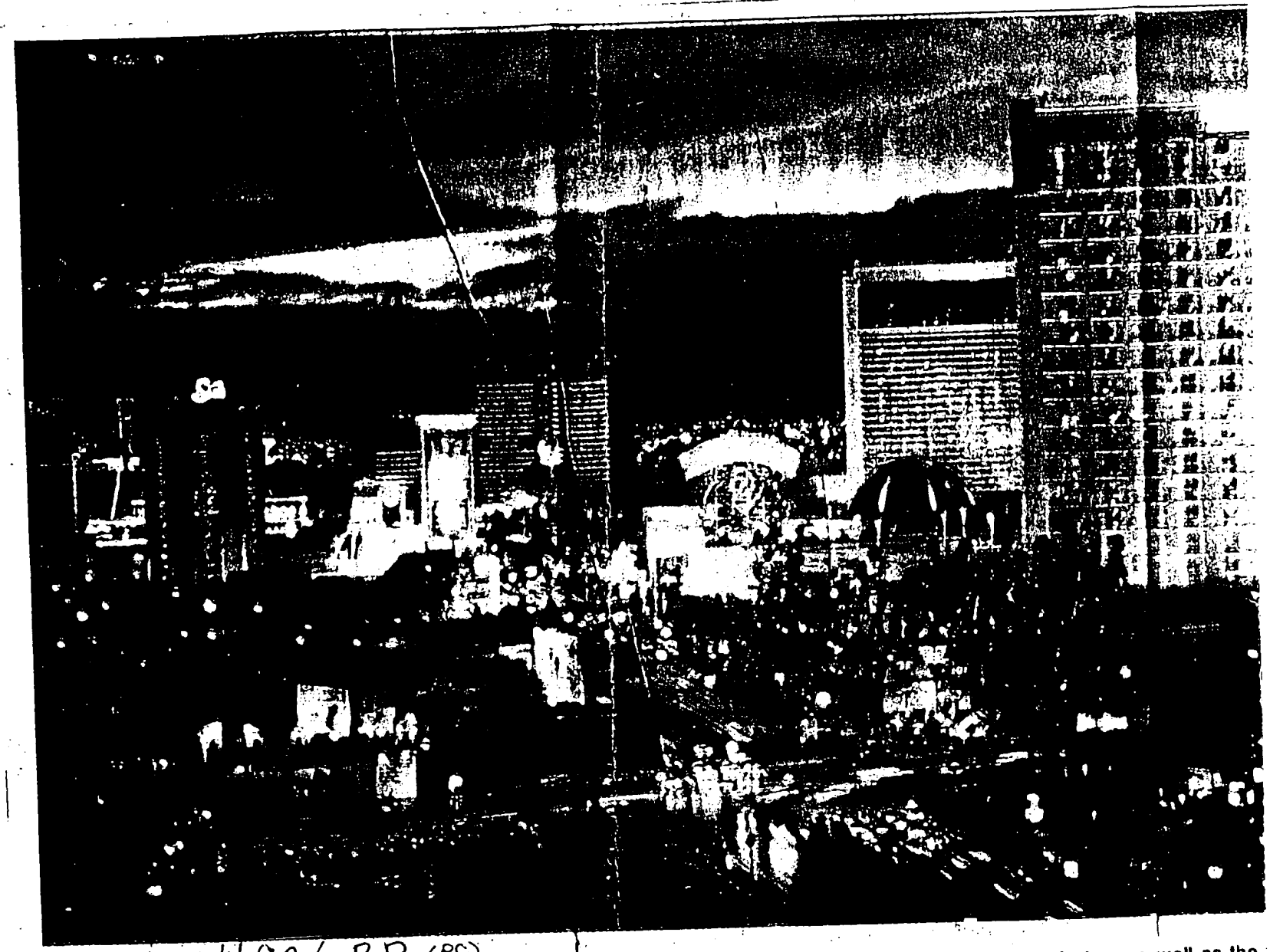
Guiness Book of World Records Museum: open daily 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Adults — $4.95, Senior, Students, Military and Children — $2.95.

The Little White Chapel: at 1301 Las Vegas Blvd. South, the chapel performs dozens of different wedding services. Call (702) 382-5943.

Graceland Wedding Chapel: Call (702) 382-0091 to find out when you can attend a wedding performed by Elvis. The chapel is at 619 Las Vegas Blvd. South.

E 193

TIC 2262



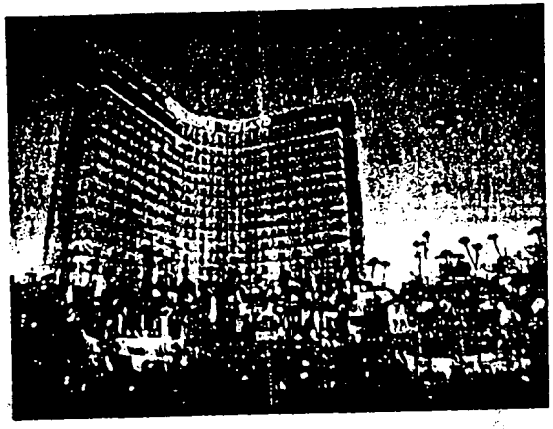
4926 BR (PC)

Although the Las Vegas "Strip" glitters as brightly as ever, today the lights beckon families with children in tow as well as the

TIC 2263

Valley Morning Star (TX)
SUNDAY 35,017
JUN 25 1995
BURRELLE'S

LAS VEGAS



ISLAND RESORT: The Treasure Island casino-hotel features a faux Caribbean bay out front, where a pirate ship and man-o-war wage battles.

KRT photo by Kyle Keener

4926BR

It's not just for gamblers anymore

By **ANDY THOMAS**
Valley Morning Star

The future has come to Sin City.

At the corner of Tropicana Avenue and Las Vegas Boulevard, an elaborate system of stairs, escalators and elevators carries pedestrian crowds safely above the congested streets. Concrete barriers make it clear that those on foot are

son is angered and decides to never re-

E 195
TIC 2339

some foot care products. The distance between any two points on the Strip is incredible. A hotel tower might appear within easy reach when it is really half a mile away.

You might walk the equivalent of two laps around Boggus Stadium just to get from your hotel room to the street, or from your car to the casino.

Even though I don't have any children, I still spent several hours in the MGM Grand Adventures theme park. The rides are somewhat tame and are for the most part hidden from general view. There are several shows that perform throughout the day. I recommend the pirate duel.

When I went, the pricing structure was free admission, with a $15 wristband for all shows and rides all day long. Individual $1 tokens could also be obtained. Individual rides and shows could be experienced for two or three tokens.

At the other end of the Strip, there is a Wet 'N Wild water park. You don't have to go through a casino to get into it, but then you don't get in for free either.

Near the water park is Circus Circus, the casino that pioneered the whole family-crowd theme when it opened back in the '60s. A tram system connects various parts of this complex, which includes an indoor amusement park called Grand Slam Canyon.

Up front is the big top, which has several free circus acts throughout the day. A midway area with carnival-type games surrounds the big top.

Several casinos, mainly the newer ones, sport similar midway areas as well as large video game arcades and motion-simulator rides.

The Luxor has the best features of this type. The 30-story, black-glass pyramid is unique with its vast central atrium, embracing ancient Egypt and the future at the same time.

Visitors can ride on the River Nile, running around the inside perimeter of the atrium, and examine reproductions of Egyptian hieroglyphs and artwork. A basement museum provides a reproduction of King Tut's tomb.

Above the casino, an assortment of Manhattan-esque skyscrapers and other structures rise into the atrium. *The Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid* is a ride/film trilogy and is recommended despite its cheesy, contrived plot.

They can be experienced individually or all in sequence. Those who like roller coasters will enjoy the first part. Those who like talk shows and 3-D effects will enjoy the second part. The third part, the only part I experienced, is similar to an IMAX movie, with nice special effects.

TIC 2340

E 196

OFF THE BEATEN STRIP

Here are some more attractions off the Strip, starting within town, then moving out.

■ Numerous bus tours and air tours are available to various outlying locations including some listed below. Bus tours will pick you up at your hotel and drop you off there. Read all the fine print on the brochures. The "flightseeing" tours might be tempting, but be aware that this industry is poorly regulated and has had a number of fatal accidents over the years.

I'd recommend Gray Line as this is a national firm and appears to have the widest variety of tours in Las Vegas. I went on its Hoover Dam Deluxe tour which included several stops and a lot of great scenery along the way.

Often the stops were barely long enough for a quick look around at the attraction. The driver was fairly polite and friendly and gave a lot of trivia and history about the area and the various attractions.

■ Wedding chapels both on and off the Strip allow you to take advantage of Nevada's liberal marriage laws.

■ If you enjoy collecting Hard Rock Cafe merchandise, don't miss the one in Las Vegas. Behind the original restaurant at the corner of Harnon Avenue and Paradise Road, a new hotel/casino has opened. The casino is small, friendly and well-designed and rock concerts are often held there.

■ I spent several hours one day hanging around on the University of Nevada-Las Vegas campus. No casinos or gaudy neon were visible anywhere. The campus is tree-shaded with long promenades and a central plaza where some live amplified bands were playing on the day (Friday) I visited.

■ The Ethel M Chocolate Factory is a popular stop for tour buses. The tour is very short and begins and ends in gift shops, but you get free samples. There's also a cactus garden adjacent to it.

■ Hoover Dam is one of the world's engineering wonders. The tour through the inside of the dam is worth the long line that usually forms. Lake Mead offers many recreational opportunities.

■ Other nearby places for the nature enthusiast include Valley of Fire State Park, Red Rock Canyon and Mount Charleston.

■ Death Valley, Zion National Park and the Grand Canyon are within a day's drive. Other gambling towns such as Laughlin and Stateline can also be easily reached.

For more information

Several free magazines are published for tourists. They are easily found in hotels, information centers and other places. You'll even find them in your hotel room. The freebies contain extensive listings of shows, dining and things to see and do.

■ The *Las Vegas Advisor* is an insider's newsletter full of tips and bargains and useful information. You can get a sample issue by sending $5 to them at 5280 S. Valley View Blvd., Suite B, Las Vegas, Nev. 89118.

FAMILY FUN

Here are some other attractions on the Strip, most of which cater to children:

■ The Mirage features an indoor rain forest, white tigers from the *Siegfried & Roy* magic show, sharks in an aquarium, the famous volcano out front and dolphins out back.

■ Several hotels have outdoor shows that range from continuous laser action at the Luxor, to the hourly dragon fight at the Excalibur, to the spectacular *Buccaneer Bay* pirate show at Treasure Island. Be forewarned that the pirate show draws very large crowds. So get there very early, and hang on to your valuables.

■ Caesars Palace should be seen for its high-class, Roman-themed decor throughout the casino and the adjacent Forum Shops shopping mall. Watch the changing "sky" in the Forum Shops, and don't miss out when the fountain statues come to life. Maybe you'll see someone famous at Planet Hollywood. Within the casino is the Omnimax Theatre, which is similar to an IMAX theater.

■ The Imperial Palace maintains a huge collection of classic and antique cars and has roughly 200 of them displayed at any one time. It is difficult to negotiate the mazelike casino to find this display, but it is easy to obtain free-admission coupons.

■ O'Sheas Casino features the Magic & Movie Hall of Fame, plus you can play antique arcade games, which are a far cry from today's violent video games.

■ The Fashion Show is a shopping mall featuring upper-class stores, plus a submarine-themed restaurant that had not yet opened when I was there.

■ Every major hotel has at least one major constantly running show, plus various headliners such as musicians, comedians and boxing matches. I would recommend these shows, although they are expensive: Cirque du Soleil's *Mystery at Treasure Island*, *Siegfried & Roy* at The Mirage and *EFX* at the

Please see 'FAMILY,' Page D8

FAMILY/ Food, fun

Continued from D6

MGM Grand.

A couple of other shows are also very good but more moderately priced, and I attended both.

Enter the Night, which forbids children, is at Stardust. It is a modern rock 'n' roll revue celebrating romance.

Then there's Lance Burton's magic show, which is a great bargain while it lasts at the Hacienda. It will end its run there on Aug. 3 and later re-open as a larger, more expensive show at one of the new megaresorts.

Children are welcomed at the early show, and some of them, plus a couple of grown-ups, are drawn into the show as volunteers.

Where to eat

Every large hotel has several restaurants including buffets, coffee shops, family eateries and gourmet black-tie joints.

The buffets have had some great bargains over the years but these have become somewhat more scarce recently.

Good buffets on the Strip include:

■ Bally's,

■ Caesars Palace,

■ Treasure Island and

■ Mirage.

The cheapest one is at Circus Circus but it's essentially cafeteria food.

Good burgers and loud rock 'n' roll from the jukebox can be found at Fatburger, on the Strip near the MGM Grand.

Off the Strip, I'm told the Rio Suite Hotel has the best buffets in Las Vegas.

Off the Strip

Don't go downtown if you have children, at least this year.

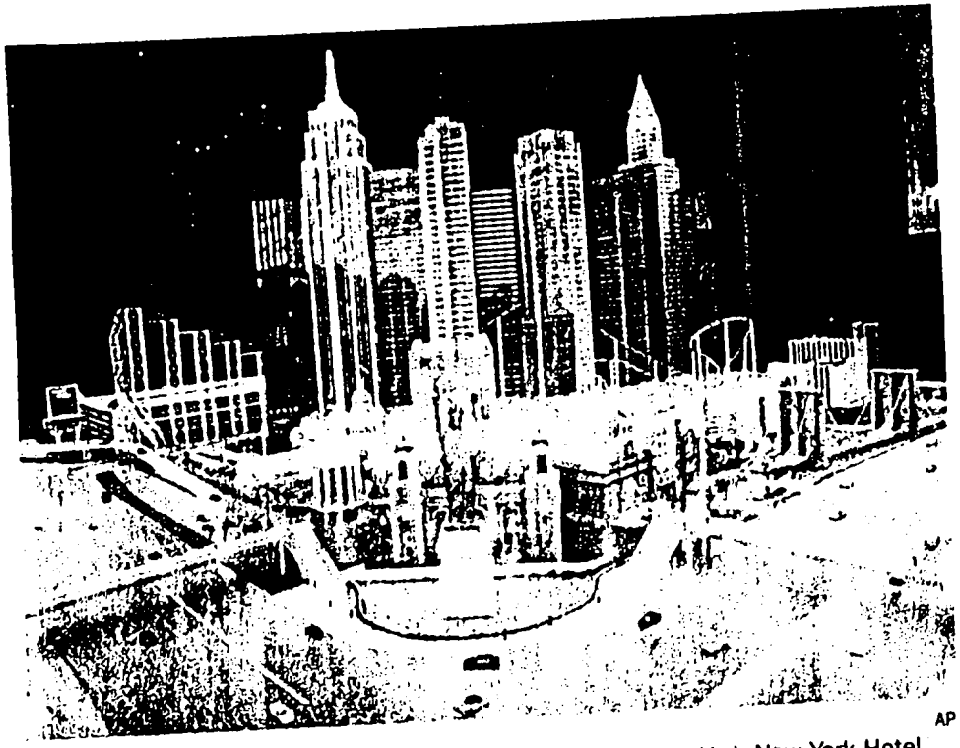
Fremont Street, the famous "Glitter Gulch" seen in many movies, is in the process of being transformed into an enclosed pedestrian-only attraction.

Called the Fremont Street Experience, the $70 million project will feature parades and performers in the evenings.

At least through the end of this year, the whole area is a no-man's land of construction.

TIC 2341

E 197



AP

FUTURE RESORT: This model depicts the $350 million New York-New York Hotel and Casino, which is being built on the Strip across from the MGM Grand. The resort will feature a classical Manhattan skyline with its 10 high-rise buildings comprising the hotel guest rooms and suites. Other features include a replica of the Statue of and a roller coaster 200 feet high that runs throughout the property.

KRT photo by J. Kyle Keener

GRAND CASINO: At MGM Grand's casino, the slot machines get a workout near a seven-story mock-up of Oz, the Emerald City. The casino-hotel hopes to woo the whole family to Las Vegas.

TIC 2342

KRT photo by Ja Clan

DESERT OASIS: Las Vegas, once known as 'Sin City,' is changing face to attract more family business. A huge sphinx straddles the motor entry to the 30-story pyramid that houses the Luxor Hotel.

TIC 2343

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 has seven restaurants: two gourmet dining rooms, The Buccaneer Bay Club and The Plank; an international theme buffet, 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, with their new show *Mystere*, and performs in the 1,500-seat showroom. Mutiny Bay, Treasure Island's entertainment center, is an 18,000- square-foot complex with state-of-the-art video and midway games, 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,

TIC 2344

HOUSTON CHRONICLE
HOUSTON, TX
SUNDAY 740,952
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Viva las vows

Want to tie the knot? You can opt for Elvis or even a pirate ship ceremony

Lennox McLendon / Associated Press

Wedding venues in Las Vegas now include the HMS Royal Britannia at Treasure Island. Unlike the resort's popular show in which pirates sink the ship, it stays afloat for the bride and groom.

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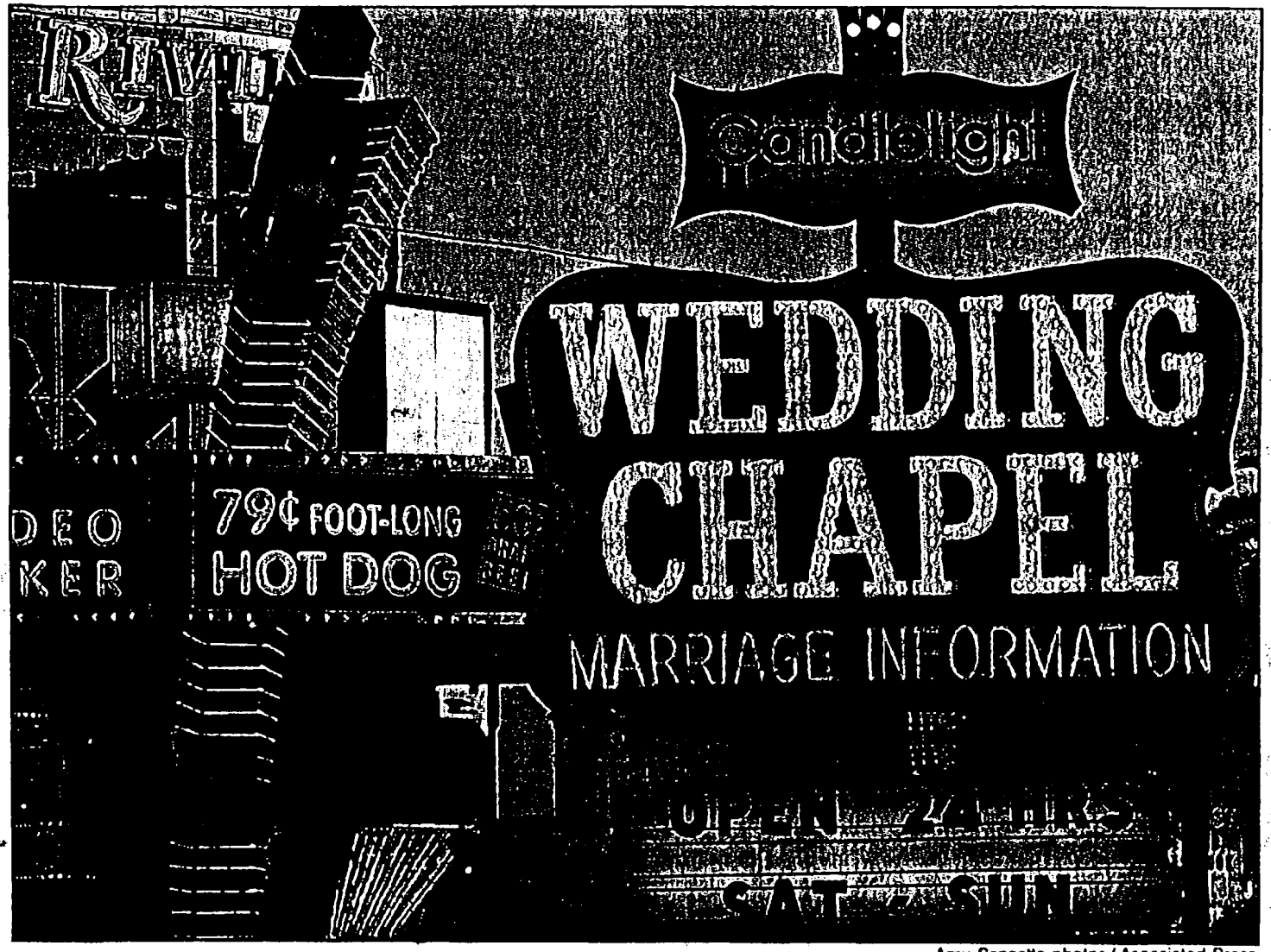

Amy Sancetta photos / Associated Press

More than 200,000 people exchanged vows last year in Las Vegas, where marquees tout weddings at any hour.

By BRUCE WESTBROOK
Houston Chronicle

LAS VEGAS – "Honey, let's run off to Vegas and get married!"

That's still as popular an idea today as it was in the early years of this glittery gambling empire and tourist magnet. But Las Vegas no longer is a good bet only for cheesy weddings whose best attributes are being fast and cheap.

Just as this city has evolved into an entertainment empire far beyond slot machines and lounge shows, weddings in Vegas have gone beyond drive-through ceremonies to embrace the city's modern expansiveness.

More than 200,000 people exchanged vows in Las Vegas last year, choosing from a smorgasbord of chapels and wedding styles. Options range from a traditional white wedding overlooking a lagoon to a ceremony accompanied by an Elvis impersonator singing *The Wonder of You* and *Viva Las Vegas*. Others marry in a hot-air balloon or helicopter, and area hotels or chapels can arrange almost any imaginable type of themed wedding – perhaps medieval or Renaissance, space futuristic or S&M (leather costumes thoughtfully provided).

- Wedding options: Page 4G
- Vegas online: Page 4G
- Louvres of Las Vegas: Page 5G

Countless couples continue, too, to embrace the "fast and cheap" concept – "50 chapels; no waiting" remains a motto – at establishments such as the Shalimar Wedding Chapel, whose ad is headlined with "$AVE $$$$."

But Las Vegas weddings today can be as expensive or as elaborate as you'd like.

Among the newest offerings is the "Crown Jewel Package" at Treasure Island, the pirate-themed hotel and casino on the Vegas Strip.

TIC 2451

E 202

Twenty minutes after their wedding ceremony, newlyweds Russ and Dennette O'Brien from Olympia, Wash., gamble on slot machines at the Frontier in Las Vegas.

After saying their "I do's," Graham and Lisa Potter join Elvis impersonator Jesse Garon in singing *Viva Las Vegas*. "Elvis" is available — for an extra fee — at many chapels.

Treasure Island has long featured a watery streetside show in which battling pirates sink the HMS Royal Britannia, a movable replica of an 18th-century sailing vessel that then rises again for another fray. Now, if such a piratical theme fits your style, you can adapt those elements to your wedding.

Prepare to get hitched on board the Britannia. And best of all, it won't sink for you.

Only six guests are allowed on the ship, but you can invite up to 100 others to view the proceedings from the adjacent Buccaneer Bay Patio, where the Britannia is docked for the ceremony, all dressed up in flowers and netting.

Pirates escort the bride up a plank onto the ship, where the 15-minute ceremony is conducted by a costumed ship's captain. (Microphones carry the words to your guests.)

Oh yes — the ring is presented by a pirate who swoops down from the ship's crow's nest on a rope.

"It's theater," said Cindy Carter, Treasure Island's director of guest services. "We like to make things fun."

See VEGAS on Page 4G

TIC 2452

Vegas

Continued from Page 1G.

Unlike the hotel's more discreet weddings in its indoor chapel, the Britannia vows are certainly not private.

Tourists roaming down the Strip can view the ship's nuptials from a distance. But Carter thinks spectacle is part of the appeal.

"People getting married in Vegas almost come to expect that," she said. "They like the showy aspect of it. It's like *they're* the celebrities."

Shipboard weddings are offered at 10 and 11:30 a.m. and at 1 p.m. Besides escaping some of the heat, that way they don't conflict with the Buccaneer Bay show that starts at 4 p.m.

"Couples sure don't want to be on the ship when it sinks as part of the show," Carter said with a laugh.

No rehearsal is offered, "but we guide them along," she said, "and so far it's been successful."

Treasure Island has hosted only four such weddings since introducing the attraction on Valentine's Day. The hotel is still considering these a trial run and hasn't publicized them, preferring to let tourists spread the word.

"It was actually customers who first asked if they could get married on the ship," Carter said, adding that the city at first opposed such a move.

"There were ordinances involved, and our permit was only to conduct the show, the pirate battles," she said. "So security and safety became an issue."

Such matters were ironed out, and now the shipboard weddings are evolving.

You can purchase added theatrics, such as a parrot who presents the ring. But the basic Crown Jewel Package costs $3,000.

The package includes the shipboard wedding; a floral package including bride's bouquet and groom's boutonniere; dinner for two at the Buccaneer Bay Club; a Buccaneer Bay suite for two nights including a spa and salon package (such as massage and facial); a keepsake box; premium champagne and specialty flutes; and an assortment of wedding photos.

Amy Sancetta / Associated Press

Charlotte Richards, right, performs a drive-up wedding at A Little White Chapel in Las Vegas.

You're on your own for wedding attire. Carter said most people prefer traditional formal wear, "but if they want to be in costumes, we can rent themed costumes for them.

"Either way, it's like a great adventure on the high seas," she said. "We wanted something no one else could offer, and pretending you're getting married at sea is it."

Exchanging vows on land here can be an adventure, too.

The Flamingo Hilton Garden Chapel offers couples an opportunity to "get married in elegance and splendor, overlooking a quiet lagoon, 20-foot waterfalls and an island of live flamingos!"

The Las Vegas Wedding Gardens boasts the city's "only garden wedding chapel with an actual running waterfall."

And then there is Elvis.

At the Graceland Wedding Chapel, which is about the size of a large convenience store, manager Kathy Carlson says she can get a bridal party outfitted in an hour.

Graceland's wedding packages range from $50 for a basic ceremony that includes use of the chapel, a witness and music, to the $200 DeLuxe Wedding package.

Elvis is extra -- $120. He's also the reason so many people (including Jon Bon Jovi) pick this chapel, some coming from as far away as Australia, Japan and England to marry or renew their vows.

As the bride walks down the chapel's 12-foot aisle, an Elvis impersonator croons, "Love me tender, love me sweet." After the vows, he wows the crowd, the 2-foot-long trim on his bright blue jumpsuit swaying during *All Shook Up*.

At some point during one recent 20-minute ceremony, every one of the 50 or so guests was singing, clapping or rocking to the music. To enthusiastic applause, Elvis boomed: "Thank you. Thank you very much." And then he left the stage. Um, altar.

Many Las Vegas chapel names evoke country music or prom songs: Chapel of Love, the Chapel by the Courthouse, the Candlelight Chapel, the Little White Chapel in the Sky, the We've Only Just Begun Chapel. Some are sweet and small, others so busy they remind of an airport on the night before Thanksgiving.

Charlotte Richards has four chapels (if you count the hot-air balloon, and she does) and it's not unusual for them to handle 60 to 80 weddings a day, especially on Saturdays or Valentine's Day and New Year's Eve.

Richards is an institution, the high priestess of Vegas matrimony. She has married couples for 38 years and claims a string of firsts: She performs weddings in the desert or in helicopters racing down the Las Vegas Strip. And she opened the now renowned drive-up wedding window at her Little White Wedding Chapel.

"You would not believe the people who do this and why," Richards says of the dozens of people who choose to wed at her drive-up window.

Merely reading some promotions is a treat: For instance, Wedding Dreams of Las Vegas' Internet site (http://www.weddingdreams.com) touts among other offerings for $640:

- A Camelot wedding with use of the "Camelot chapel," Camelot memorabilia, fog, a choice of Merlin the Magician or King Arthur as minister and additional characters such as knights, trumpeters or fair ladies.
- A Beach Party wedding with two muscle men to carry the bride down the aisle on a surfboard, Beach Boys music and additional characters that can include showgirls in bikinis carrying pink sand pails.
- A Gothic wedding in which the Grim Reaper welcomes the bride and groom at wrought-iron cemetery gates and escorts the couple through fog and candlelight to meet the minister, Count Dracula.

No matter the size or style of a Vegas wedding, a main emphasis almost always is on convenience. Most chapels are open late and some never close. Even the county's Marriage License Bureau is open until midnight on weekdays and 24 hours a day weekends and holidays. No blood test or waiting period is required.

Naedine Joy Hazell of the Hartford (Conn.) Courant contributed to this report.

TIC 2453

Vegas to slake thirst? Bad bet

H926BR

By Jennifer Gavin
Denver Post Staff Writer

LAS VEGAS — The marquee at the Desert Inn touts the rock group Air Supply. If Las Vegas city hall were to sport a giant sign like those in front of the casinos, it would clamor for water supply.

The fastest-growing city in the U.S., Las Vegas needs water like blackjack players need aces. Some 31,000 new jobs were created in the past year, primarily because of giant new casinos. "And 31,000 new jobs is incredible," says John Schlegel, Las Vegas planning director.

Three new casino/hotels - Treasure Island, the Lux- and the MGM Grand — contain a total of 11,000 hotel rooms. Five more casinos are on drawing boards.

People pour into town for hotel and casino jobs, even though they are largely service work with low or moderate pay. As a result, the Las Vegas metro-area population is pushing 1 million. That's up from about 750,000 in 1990; 460,000 in 1980; and 275,000 in 1970.

The job seekers come even though Las Vegas, in early 1991, had to call a halt to new building permits when officials discovered that they might have overcommitted available municipal water supplies.

The issue of water scarcity is keeping officials in neighboring states up nights. They worry about breaking up the Colorado River Compact to bring new water to teeming populations in Nevada and California.

Since 1991, competing ar- water agencies have re-

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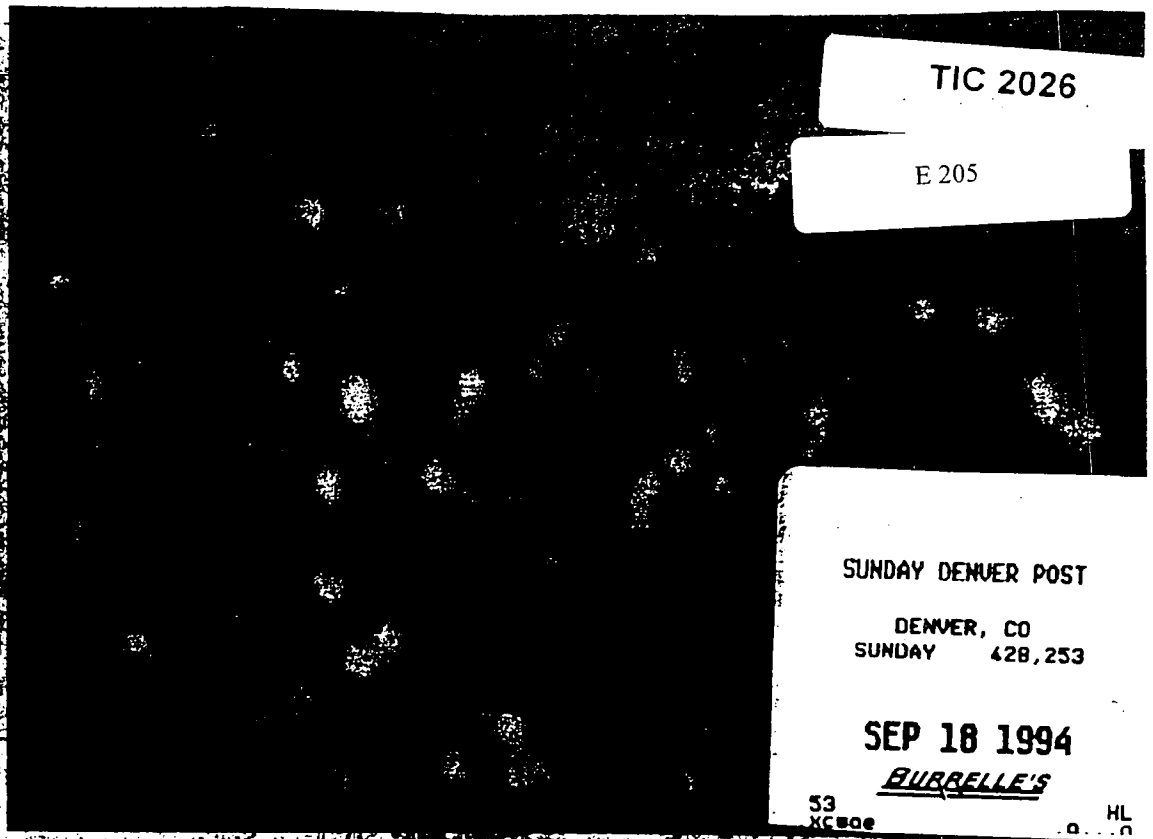
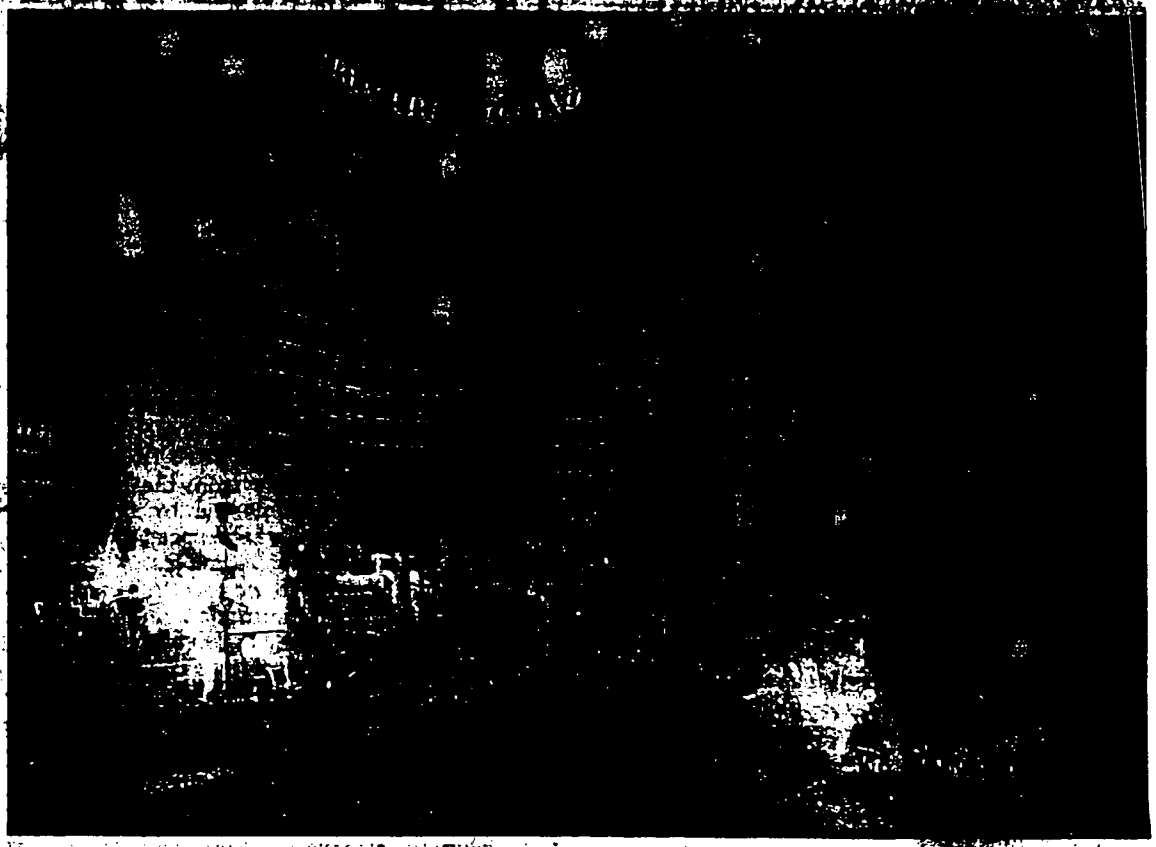


Special to The Denver Post / Jim Richardson

SOURCE: The Colorado River trickles from headwaters in Rocky Mountain National Park, beginning its seven-state journey toward the sea. Explosive urban growth [illegible] of-war among the states [illegible] the river's water through a special [illegible]



Special to The Denver Post

DESTINATION: Ships wage a phony battle on a manmade lagoon in front of the Treasure Island casino and hotel in Las Vegas, Nev. But a real battle over access to Colorado River water has prompted the thirsty city to order use of recycled water for such visual attractions.

Las Vegas puts its chips on continued pro-growth spin, but many hedge bets

VEGAS from Page 1A

organized into one powerful, cooperative entity in southern Nevada. It has bought or bargained for enough water to cover all bets and keep Las Vegas in the boom business for a few more years.

The Clark County planning department's mission statement calls for economic stimulation first, conservation of scarce resources last.

"The culture here has always been very pro-growth," Schlegel said.

Southern Nevada has a relatively small tax base. Gambling pays the freight for many public services, although voters recently have been hit with tax requests to finance schools and roads.

One or two Las Vegas officials have suggested carefully that more controlled growth might be worth at least *starting* to think about. But, Schlegel admits, "Nobody really wants to own up to it."

"They're afraid to voice that idea publicly because of the panic it would cause. The development community would go berserk. The banking community, which would have a lot invested in all these real estate projects, would have heartburn on these kinds of statements coming from public officials."

Meantime, roads and schools are getting jammed in the influx.

Clark County Commissioner Paul Christensen was one official who suggested, during a minor recession in 1991, that residents were getting fed up with the negative side effects of the boom. He urged planners to draft a policy of moderate and controlled growth.

Today, Christensen calls that "unrealistic. You can live wherever you want in this country. If you were able to stop growth, you would kill the community."

So pressure is on for Las Vegas to get more water in ways that are controversial in the arid West.

Area water officials filed for permission to pump and pipe water from northern counties in Nevada. That bid still is being pondered by state authorities.

And then there's the Colorado River, which backs up behind the Hoover Dam southeast of Las Vegas to form Lake Mead. Its huge volume might as well be a mirage to the locals, because the Colorado River compact only allots 300,000 acre-feet of water to Nevada. That's about one-fifth as much as evaporates off the river yearly in its roll to the sea.

Colorado, by comparison, gets 3.8 million acre-feet, much of which is unassigned to use within the state. Colorado officials are fighting attempts to create a market for sale of water up and down the river, saying that, in effect, would break down the compact that protects Colorado's right to use the water in the future.

Las Vegas was a tiny railroad stop in 1922, when the Colorado River compact was signed. Though its name is Spanish for "the meadows," a reference to a marshy area where a water table emptied into the Colorado, most of Nevada was unlikely to sustain the agriculture that dominated state econo-

TIC 2027

mies when the pact was inked.

That led to its annual allocation of 300,000 acre-feet. Today, greater Las Vegas is growing at a rate of 6,000 residents a month.

Many states in the compact are experiencing population growth. California has exceeded its compact share for years, and other states are blowing the whistle. The Phoenix area exploded as a corporate and retirement center in the '60s and continues to grow. Salt Lake City apartment vacancy rates are falling. And some 43,000 refugees from California's rocky economy and natural disasters have jammed streets and schools in Colorado in the past year.

Patricia Mulroy's job is to get water for southern Nevada. As general manager of the Las Vegas Valley Water District and of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, she has made some waves. Mulroy is watched nervously by regional water officials. She opposes linking water availability with a growth policy. "To cut off your water supply to manage your growth isn't the wisest thing to do," she says. "You're not just talking about new people moving in; you're talking about my children, other people's children. There's a natural growth that occurs in a community. By cutting off your water supply, you can't even accommodate that."

In addition to charging higher water rates and other conservation efforts — which only began in earnest when Las Vegas water officials realized that they might run out of water for growth by 1995 instead of well beyond the year 2000 — Mulroy's agency has brokered a few years' supply from a local industrial user and Southern California Edison, a power company.

Getting more water out of the Colorado River has to be pursued, she says, or Las Vegas' economy could be jolted. There also is a legal line of attack. Water lawsuits have cost Colorado taxpayers at least $10 million since the mid-1980s. Money is one thing Nevada can ante up. But lawsuits can take years, something southern Nevada can't afford to squander.

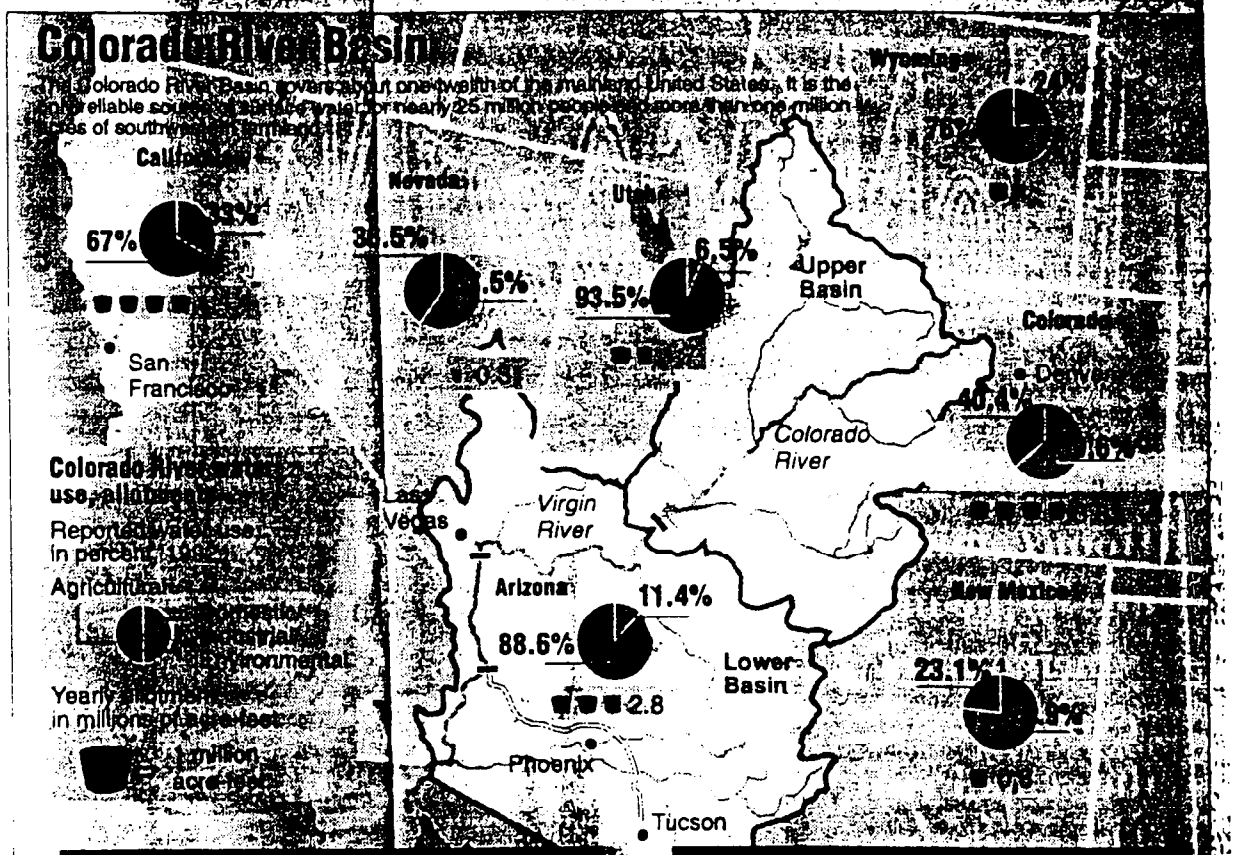
Mulroy wants to get new water cooperatively, but must lay hands on it one way or another. "I don't know what it's going to take to get people to try to see the world from where the other guy sits," she says. "There are people who live here that have the same needs as people who live in Denver." Schlegel puts it a different way: "There is very powerful support for the efforts of the Southern Nevada Water Authority and (Nevada's) Colorado River Commission to acquire more water sources. They're willing to put all kinds of money, time, effort and political power into that."

TIC 2028

THE RIVER

Colorado River Basin

The Colorado River Basin covers about one-twelfth of the mainland United States. It is the [illegible] reliable source of surface water for nearly 25 million people and more than one million acres of southwestern farmland.



Colorado River water use, allotment

Reported water use in percent, 1992

Agricultural

Domestic/industrial/environmental

Yearly allotment in millions of acre-feet

1 million acre-feet

Current populations and projections

Current population of basin states and projections

Calif.	31.4	(48)
Ariz.	[illegible]	[illegible]
Colo.	[illegible]	[illegible]
Utah	[illegible]	[illegible]
N.M.	[illegible]	[illegible]
Nev.	1.4	[illegible]
Wyo.	0.473	(0.858)

2020 projection

Rainfall

June 1, 1993 through June 30, 1994, in inches

	Actual	Normal
Calif.	14.6	22.1
Ariz.	14.1	15.8
Colo.	13.1	13.4
Utah	9.9	13.0
N.M.	10.7	12.8
Nev.	8.9	11.3
Wyo.	5.5	8.7

SOURCES: Census Bureau, Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, National Climatic Data Center, NOAA, Bureau of Reclamation, Water Education Foundation

Knight-Ridder Tribune/ANDREW DE VIGAL and TERRY VOLPP

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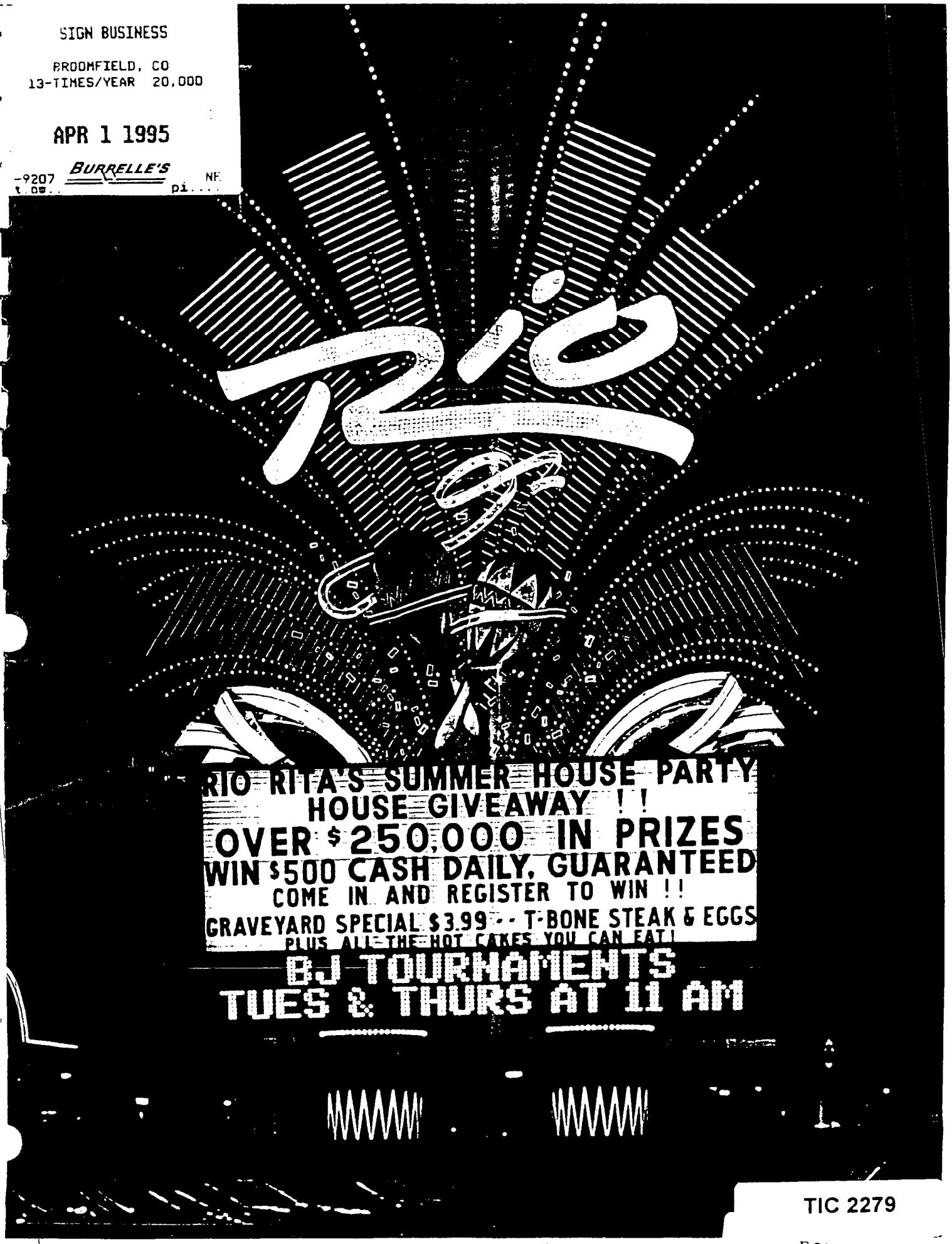


TIC 2279

The Changing Face of Vegas

By K. Schipper

New technologies and grander productions are giving Las Vegas a fresh look for the '90s.

WHEN IT COMES TO SIGNAGE, everyone knows the United States capital is Las Vegas — not Washington, D.C.

The face of Las Vegas is changing, however. What was once strictly an adult playground has, in recent years, also become the home of ancient Egyptians, jousting knights, pirates, and Dorothy and her friends from the *Wizard of Oz*.

The resort's increasing emphasis on family entertainment is changing the face of signage, as well. However, people in the industry say that transformation is only having a minor impact on changing the look of the gambling town.

They say what's really driving the industry today is what's always driven it: a desire for something new, different and exciting.

THE THEME'S THE THING

The idea that Las Vegas is suddenly going from *adults only*, to *bring Grandma and the kids*, is, to a certain extent, a public misperception.

Chuck Barnard, presently senior designer for the Stockton, Calif.-based Ad Art/Inc., and the author of a book on the electric art and architecture of Las Vegas, observes that back in the late 1960s, what's now the Las Vegas Hilton was designed to include youth facilities, and Circus Circus introduced live circus acts and family accommodations in the early 1970s.

Both he and John Williams, division manager for Young Electric Sign Co. (YESCO) in Las Vegas, acknowledge that the family-entertainment phenomenon has enjoyed a recent boom. However, Williams says it's almost incidental that signage which relied on primarily adult themes is being replaced with themes that appeal to a broader segment of the population.

Instead, both see the changes coming as a result of a move toward what Williams calls a "theatrical invasion." Rather than going with logo-type signs, he says Las Vegas signage is moving more toward thematic, dimensional products.

"It has to do with the aesthetic draw," he says. "Caesar's Palace probably was among the first with its sculptures, statues and busts, which offer eye appeal and attraction appeal."

A good example, he says, is a new "neon garden" at Bally's. YESCO produced more than 14 miles of neon for the installation, which changes color constantly, and every 20 minutes features a show of lights and motion, as well.

"This is more an attraction than a sign," he says.

At the same time, Barnard sees sign design being influenced by the work of a few architects and independent conceptual designers who are seeking more of what he calls, "architectural" linear sign treat-

continued

(Left) The spectacular Rio Hotel display was designed and built by YESCO in 1989. The 125' x 80' production incorporates over 15,000 linear feet of neon and 5,598 bulbs. (Photo courtesy of YESCO.)

Flexible-face and full-color electronic imaging are one of the hottest combinations on the Vegas Strip right now. (Photo courtesy of Ad Art/Inc.)

Full-color imaging will continue to have a larger presence in the gambling mecca.

particular theme, it's almost impossible to coordinate a total design package for a lengthy period of time.

"There's more emphasis on uniqueness and appeal," he says. "They all want something different and unique and tastes change very, very quickly. The casino industry is very dynamic; there's always something new and the old goes away very quickly."

Ken Murphy, owner of the Las Vegas-based KMA Designs, offers a slightly different view. When it comes to interior signage, he says often the changes are little more than a switch from square to rounded edges, or vise versa. What is important is that they do their jobs.

"In a casino, you've got things going on wherever you look," Murphy says. "If you've got signs with things going on, too, you don't know if it's a sign or a slot machine top. You just want the sign to say *Restrooms*. The signs should be functional."

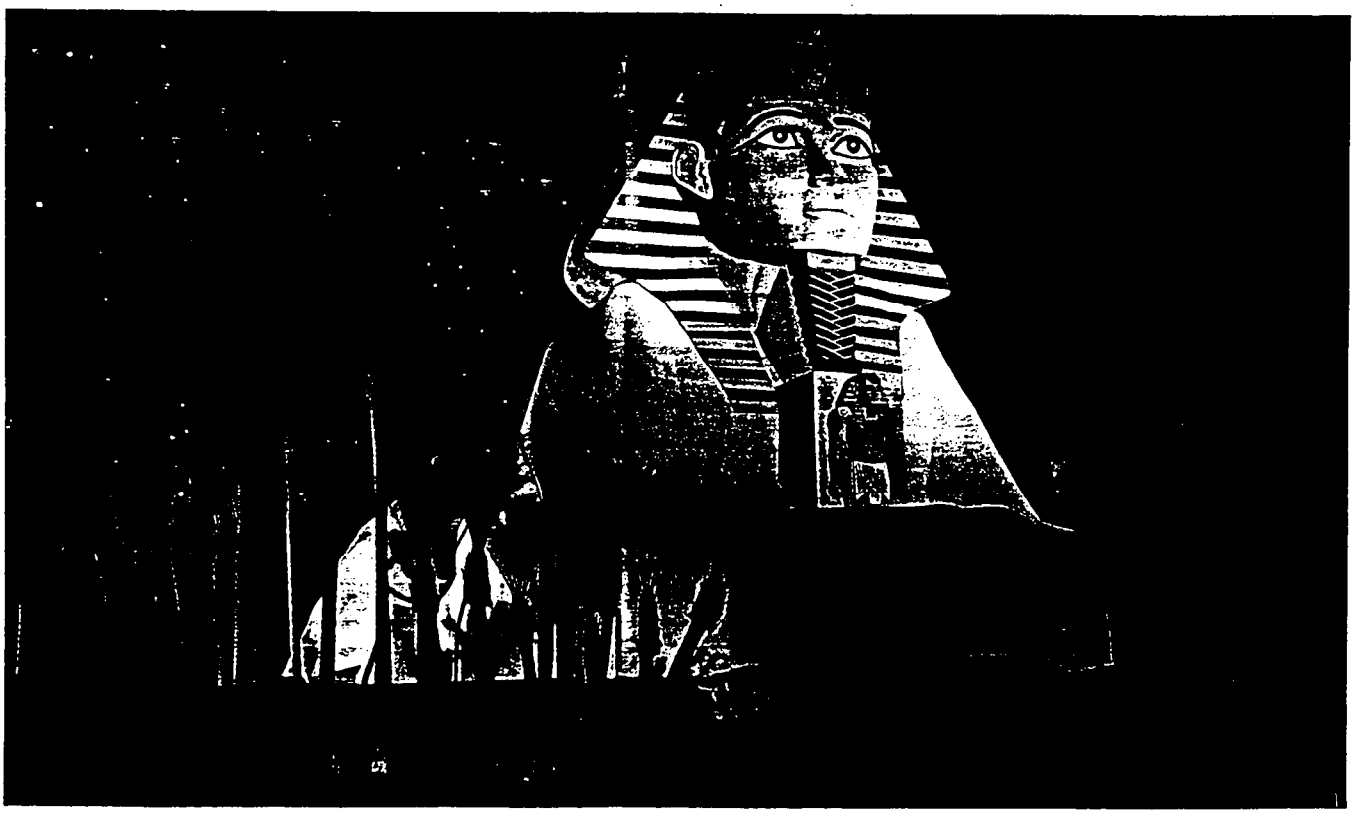
THE BEST OF OLD AND NEW

Aesthetic and thematic outside, or functional indoors, the resort is making use of some of the most advanced sign technology on the market.

Both Williams and Barnard say the hottest trend is toward full-color message displays.

"These huge digital displays are part of the natural progression in visual electronic technology that has taken us from the interior-illuminated readerboards of the '50s and '60s, through the black-and-white electronic message displays of the '70s and '80s to today," says Barnard.

"Everyone wants — and at this point almost needs — a message center," agrees Williams. "It provides so much more flexibility to immediately change the price on



One of Las Vegas' larger thematic, dimensional products outside the Luxor. (Photo by Tom Brewer.)

The pirate theme behind Treasure Island Hotel and Casino is seen as having more universal appeal than gambling might. The sign offers a combination of the thematic skull-and-crossbones with the latest in signmaking technology. (Photo courtesy of Ad Art/Inc.)

The Fiesta Hotel beckons vacationers with a free-standing, 63' x 38' pylon display, designed and built by YESCO in 1994. (Photo courtesy of YESCO.)

shrimp cocktail or offer double bonuses or tell who won what 15 minutes ago. It has that kind of flexibility."

Among the projects the two men cite as examples: The 16-color electronic system Ad Art installed at the Mirage, and YESCO's message center for the Fremont Street Experience, which is being billed as the largest such installation in the world.

Barnard and Williams also mention full-color imaging as another of the leading-edge sign technologies that will continue to have a larger presence in the gambling mecca, both inside and out.

For some interior use, "We're using a unique computer-generated photographic process that gives photographic-quality illuminated faces," says Williams. "Resolution and clarity and color are in great demand, even in slot machine belly glass and transparency cabinets."

For outdoors, Barnard cites the full-color, flexible-face, interior-illuminated graphics that Las Vegas is also becoming noted for. While possibly the best-known example may be the 48' x 48' pictorials of Sigfried and Roy at the Mirage, Ad Art is also the company behind the revolving 50' cube at the MGM Grand, which features four interior-illuminated pictorials and graphics, as well as the fixed pictorials below.

With the newer, more thematic casinos naturally gravitating toward the newest in designs and signs, it's probably not unreasonable to wonder about the fate of some of the city's older signs, which have been up for a quarter century or more and have become local landmarks.

Sign fans shouldn't worry. Barnard and Williams say technology is allowing some of those older signs to be upgraded without damaging the images they represent. Among the signs in line for a facelift

continued

TIC 2282

E 212

HUNTSVILLE TIMES

HUNTSVILLE, AL
SUNDAY 84,484

SEP 25 1994

BURRELLE'S

Taking a chance on Las Vegas

TIC 2030

E 213

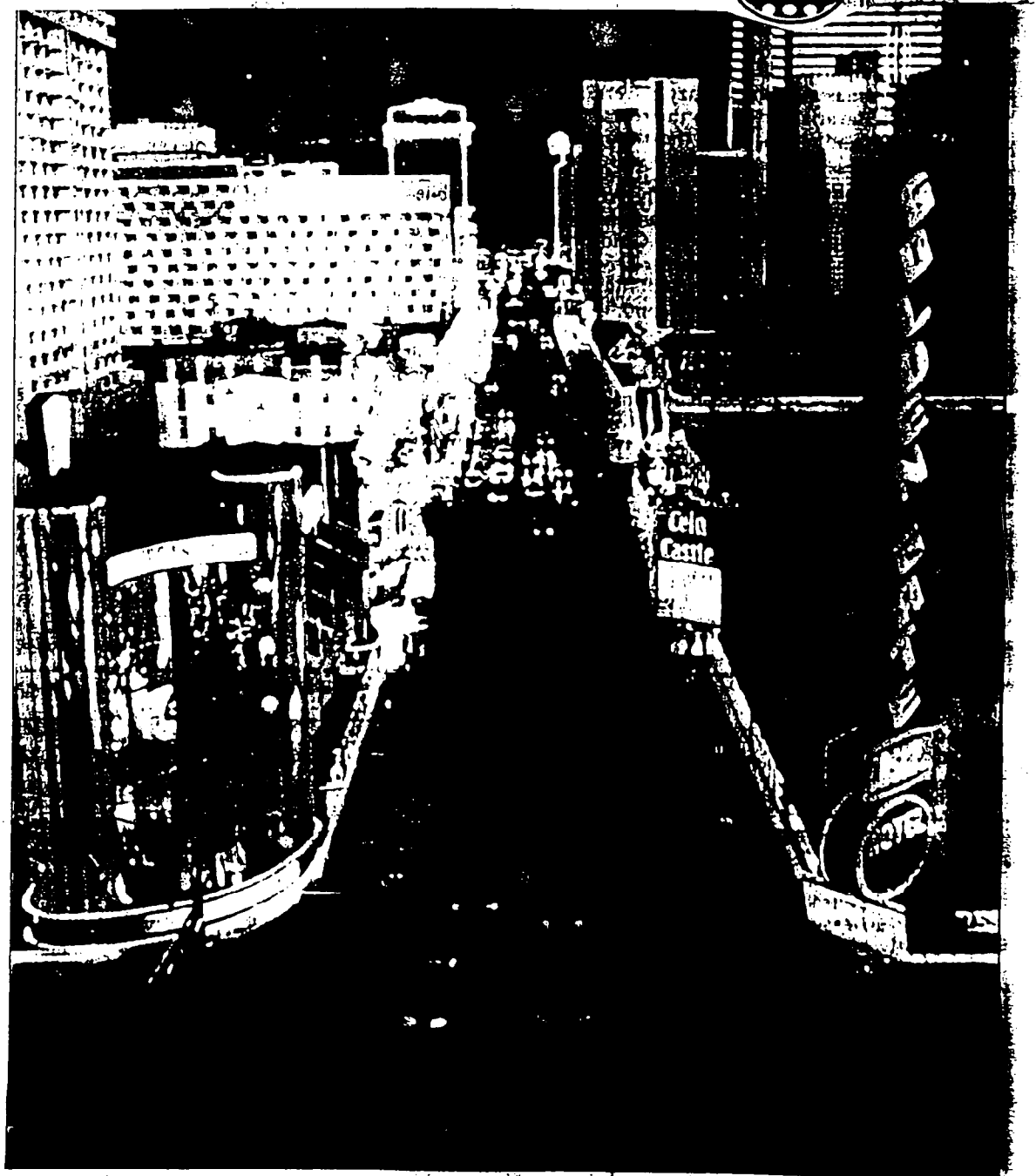


Photo by Las Vegas News Bureau

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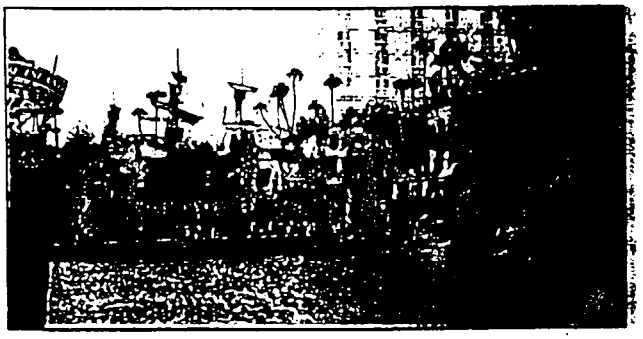


Al Burleson/Huntsville Times

Treasure Island hotel is the setting for mock sea battles.

Gamblers, kids mix these days

By AL BURLESON
Assistant Sports Editor

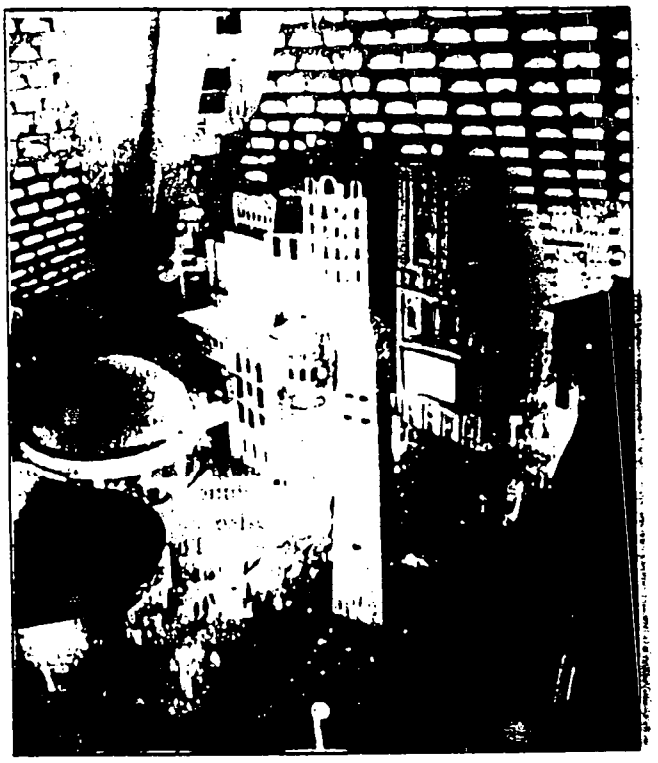
LAS VEGAS — Wedged in the crowd, I keep my hand on my wallet as the pirate chief shouts "Here's one for you, you British scum" and ignites the cannon to blast the other ship to Davy Jones' locker.

Hundreds of us are jammed so close together for the sea battle in front of Buccaneer Bay at the Treasure Island hotel-casino that you are hoping nobody's deodorant fails.

The battle is staged every hour and a half daily from 1:30 until 10:30 p.m., when the British frigate HMS Britannia sails around Skull Point to confront the pirate ship. In the pyrotechnic battle that ensues as cannon and musket fire are exchanged, the crews of both ships bail out over the sides into the lagoon when explosions rock and set their vessels on fire.

The pirate in the crow's nest of his ship does a spectacular gainer into the water. He looks like Greg Louganis

Please see VEGAS on J2



Las Vegas News Bureau

The interior of the Luxor, which has its own version of the river Nile.

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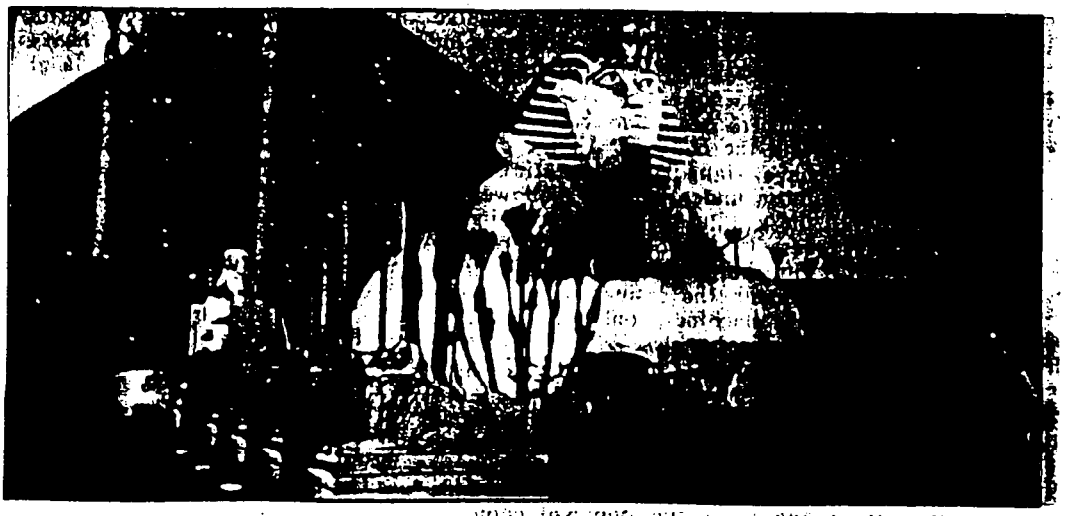

Las Vegas News Bureau

The Luxor gambling palace is patterned after Egypt's Great Pyramid

·egas

inued from page J1

h an eye patch and bandana ·nd his head.

e pirates appear to be losing ›attle when the head pirate ches off that last-gasp cannon y. It apparently hits dead cen- ecause the mast of the Britan- ollapses and the British ship ks quickly to the tops of its ee main sails. Now I know why ails look mildewed.

couple of minutes after being ık, the Britannia miraculously s from the water and moves around Skull Point to get into ion for the next show.

is the best free attraction I've n since a tour of the Jack Dan- Distillery at Lynchburg, Tenn. also the most fun I've had shortly after arriving when I 1,000 quarters on a slot ma-

e crowds are so large in front reasure Island that I sense the ıger of falling and being tram- remembering what happened ıose people at that rock con- t having read a story about kets who've had far better increasing their wealth here inside at the tables, I'm more erned about my wallet in the se quarters.

fter the pirate show, the hun- s of people who have been hing move slowly off the arf-like wooden sidewalk in rt of Treasure Island, on down rd the Mirage hotel to watch olcano erupt.

amily approach

the crowds, nobody is attired ırmani. A few have the lounge ard look, with polyester shirts n outside the pants to hide beer es. Some more have the Cali- ia-cool appearance — pony- ls, shades and gold chains. But great majority of those walking n the Strip and wandering ugh the casinos have the typi- l tourist look with baggy bermu- shorts and T-shirts. Some look they may have slept in what have on. You quickly gather at the rule on dress here is that re is none. Anything goes as es there is some green in the

Al Burleson/Huntsville Times

Golf enthusiasts enjoy lush greens at Las Vegas resorts.

you notice are the ages in the crowds. Few in them look like seasoned gamblers. There are a lot of elderly folks and children of all ages.

There seems to be a paradox with the children. All the casinos have signs posted stating that those under 21 aren't allowed in the gaming areas. Yet to gain access to the restaurants, arcades, gift shops, children have to pass through the casinos, right by the slot machines, roulette wheels and blackjack tables.

But this is the new Vegas where children are welcome. Where families are wanted, and why the hotels have added theme parks and water worlds. The idea, of course, is to get something to occupy the kids and mom and pop will come to gamble.

It doesn't take much of a observer to deduce that this is still what Vegas is about. Gambling. What Bugsy Siegel intended so long ago when he used the mob's money to build the first hotel, the Flamingo, out here in the middle of the desert. But it has gone far beyond what Bugsy and those who rubbed him out could have envisioned. Someone needs to coin a word beyond gaudy to describe all the glitz and neon.

There are 69 major casino hotels, some with thousands of rooms. They have theme parks, shopping centers, pirates and sea battles, and an erupting volcano. It is where Barbra Streisand can perform in one showroom before nearly 14,000, and where heavyweight fights can be staged in gigantic hotel parking lots.

The sound in the casinos, the constant ding, ding, ding of the slot machines, is universal. No matter how thick and lush the carpeting, or elaborate the decor, the slots are always the main decoration. Anybody who can push a button or pull a lever can play the slots. The nickels, quarters and dollars crammed into them amount to billions each year.

How many slot machines are there? Seemingly as many as sagebrush plants in the surrounding desert.

The lure of the slots is hard for anyone to resist with the sound of all the dollars and quarters hitting the baskets underneath, paying off.

There is another strong lure of the senses — good, cheap food. Elaborate lunch and dinner buffets at many of the casinos are as low as $4.95. Some hotels feature steak and lobster for $7.95. Also available are giant hot dogs for 95 cents, shrimp cocktails for $1.49, and strawberry shortcake for 99 cents. Breakfast buffets are as low as $2.95 and $3.95.

"You can have the best cheap vacation here you've ever had," a Vegas cab driver advises, "just as long as you don't gamble."

Shows aren't cheap

Some things that aren't cheap are the shows at the hotels. Ma have Broadway prices. The t show in town, Siegfried & Roy, the Mirage, costs $72. The hi price is no barrier to audienc though, for Siegfried & Roy a their featured white Tigers ne play before an empty seat. Th are currently working on a fo year $57 million contract.

Starlight Express, the hit mu cal, is at the Las Vegas Hilton $45. A ticket for the Mystere sh at the Cirque du Soleil Theatre Treasure Island, which features actors, dancers and acrobats fr around the world, is $52.80, included.

The Righteous Brothers, in t Hollywood Theatre of the MG Grand, costs $40 and is worth The "brothers," Bill Medley a Bobby Hatfield, who have been gether for 32 years, are outsta ing entertainers who carry on running banter with their audie es. They poke fun at their ag saying how tough it is for th now to hit all the high notes their big hits, like "You've L That Loving Feeling" and "U chained Melody."

There are some good, reasona priced shows. One of them is "H Stuff," a musical revue at the C Room in the Sands (Wayne N ton is the headliner in the room for $35) that is only $15.

The critically acclaimed show the Stardust, "Enter the Night," another bargain at $24.95. It everything from a pair of ice sk ers who could show up plenty Olympians to some spectacula built showgirls who bare nearly

Some elderly women sitt down front, not yet too cogniz of what this town is about, g audibly when the showgirls f stroll out bare-breasted.

Plenty of "names" are on marquees this week — Steve Eydie at the Desert Inn, Julio I sias at Caesars Palace, Charo the Sahara, Debbie Reynolds her own Debbie Reynold Ho Engelbert Humperdinck at Ball the Platters, Little Richa George Carlin, Frankie Valli the Four Seasons, The 5th Dim sion, Smothers Brothers, Le Uggams, the Captain and Tenn Keely Smith, the Four Tops...

But there are so many sh rooms and lounges that the ta level dips a great deal from p to place. Some of the entertai you thought were dead or l

TIC 2032

since retired.

The MGM Grand, which hosted the attendance-breaking Streisand show over the New Year's holidays, also hosts heavyweight fights. The largest hotel in the world with more than 5,000 rooms, its huge entrance has almost as much traffic as the nearby freeway leading to Los Angeles. They need a six-way traffic light in the entrance.

Crane your neck up as high as you can and you may be able to see the top of the Luxor, another of the newer gambling palaces. Patterned after the Great Pyramid, the Luxor may be just as spectacular. It has its own river Nile winding around inside upon which they offer boat tours.

While it isn't one of the newer hotels, Caesars Palace is still one of the most spectacular in Vegas. The huge, sprawling complex bespeaks of luxury with its elaborate entrance and fountains. It is hardly a place for low-rollers.

In one of the old "Samford and Son" television episodes, Fred Sanford is chased out of the Caesars fountain by a guard for gathering up the coins there. Seeing all the coins down in the water, you don't blame Fred for trying. Enough are there to play the slot machines for hours.

Also at Caesars are the Forum Shops. They are a "shopper's paradise" for the rich and famous and those who have had a big day at the tables. But you don't have to buy anything to appreciate the scenery. Just wandering through the Forum, whose shops are designed like an ancient Roman village, and peering up at the ceiling with a sky that changes constantly from day into night, is pretty fascinating.

In the heart of the Strip, in front of the upscale mall that houses Neiman-Marcus and Sak's among other stores, lurk the porn distributors. Any male above a certain age who passes by runs a gauntlet and gets loaded down with material advertising nude shows and girls that will come to your room in 30 minutes.

The seedy types passing out the stuff don't take no for an answer. It is easier to accept their "literature" than to refuse.

In the midst of all this are beggars on the streets. One without legs greets those who pass by him with "Good morning, gamblers." Another, wearing several sweaters and an overcoat in the 100-degree temperature, insults a passerby who doesn't put enough in his hat.

A lot of desert

The big issue recently in the local papers, the *Las Vegas Sun* and *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, is over hotel owner Bob Stupak's desire to increase his tower structure 813 feet so it can become the tallest in the world. The tower, near his hotel, Las Vegas World, is being opposed by the Federal Aviation Administration.

The construction is still going on. There is still a lot of desert out there that needs converting. During our stay, a $750 million hotel and another for a paltry $250 million are announced.

Something that hasn't changed since our last visit a year ago is the situation at the Frontier. The pickets are still camped out in front. The workers (or former workers) are seeking better pay and benefits, thus far to no avail. The Frontier has been carrying on business as usual, gamblers strolling right on by the strikers and their picket signs.

Inside the Frontier is a great Mexican restaurant, the Cantina. Try the sampler platter for two for $9.95. On our previous visit, the waitress had advised "it is more than two people can eat." I'm not sure what all the food was, but it was good and she was right. This time, it is just as good and plentiful as before.

Unless you leave the city, finding your way around isn't much of a problem. The city is so flat you can see it all. Especially if you have a room on one of the top floors at a hotel.

The first thing that impresses you upon arrival and the last upon leaving are the bald mountains that surround the city. The mountains — and the land. The land appears so dry and barren that you think it might not grow kudzu. Rain seems to come about as often as the three 7s — red, white and blue — come up on one of the dollar slots.

A story in one of the papers is about a waitress who hadn't played a slot machine in five years because she believed herself to be unlucky. But she goes out one night determined to spend only $10 playing the quarter slots. She gets down to her last two quarters on one of the progressive machines when she lines up four symbols and wins $743,906.

It doesn't stop, even after you've checked your baggage and walked to your boarding gate at the airport. Right outside are slot machines to give the departing some last chances to pull a lever. Most do, because who knows? The big one might come up. Just like for that waitress.

TIC 2033

DISPLAY & DESIGN IDEAS

ATLANTA, GA
MONTHLY 18,039

OCTOBER 1994

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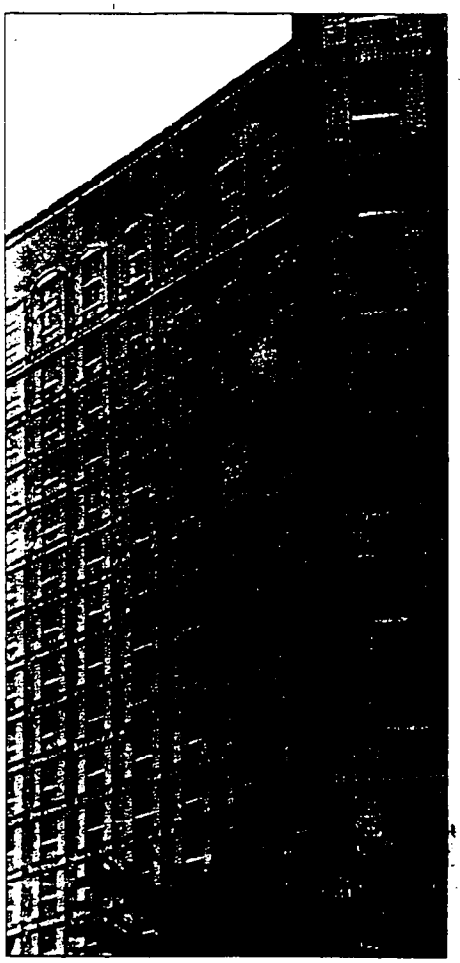

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▲ **Looking for treasures...**Futura's Styrothane system was used over computer cut expanded polystyrene foam to form the simulated three-dimensional balconies for the Treasure Island Hotel/Casino. Styrothane is a fast set spray-applied urethane.

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TIC 2071

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IT'LL BE SRO AT HEARTH SHOW NEXT MONTH IN LAS VEGAS

Don't Roll The Dice: Reserve Your Hotel Room Now

4926BR

It's one of the down signs of success – for the third year running, some of the companies that want to exhibit at the Hearth Products Association's Expo, in Las Vegas from March 24-27, could be on the outside looking in.

Richard Rooney, trade show committee chairman, reports that as of mid-December, all of the 775 indoor booths had been spoken for and all but a handful of the 211 spaces in the outdoor cooking and burn area were reserved.

There's a waiting list of 30 companies, all hoping Rooney can find a way to squeeze them into the Sands Expo and Convention Center for the industry's largest annual trade show and convention.

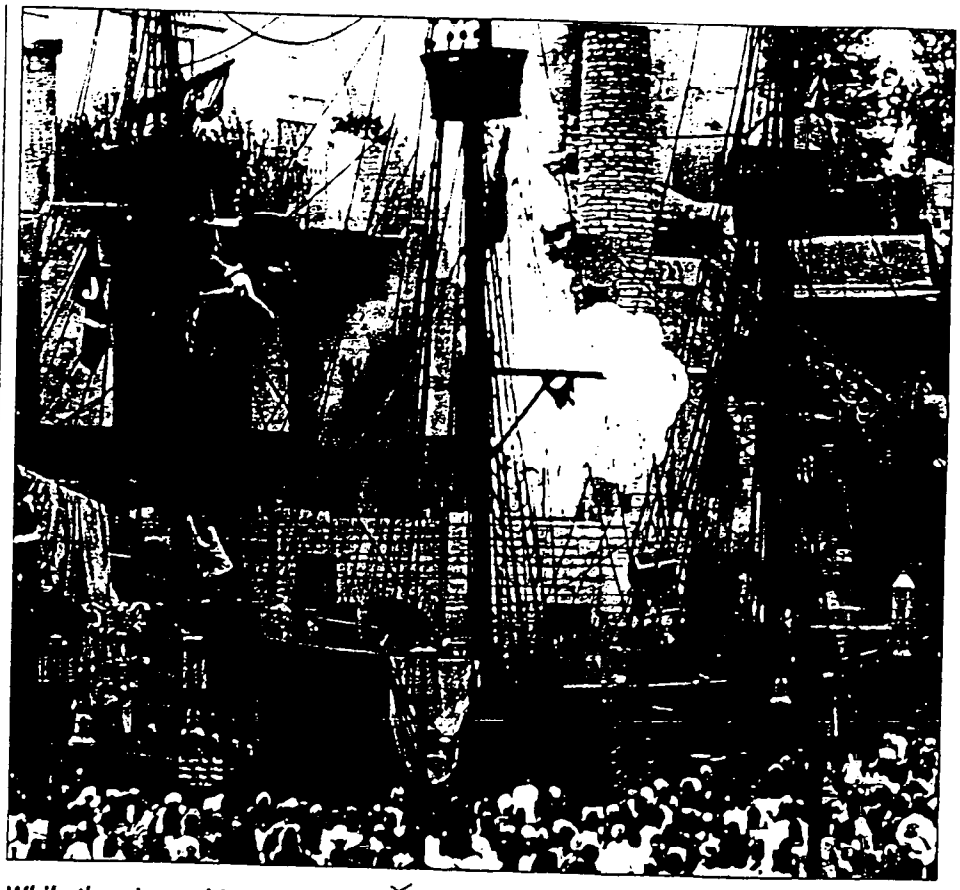
Rooney says the HPA is discussing with Sands officials how to expand the size of the indoor exhibit hall.

"We are doing everything possible to find space for these exhibitors," says Rooney. But he would make no promises.

Reserve room now

With the number of attendees expected to exceed last year's 8,000 level, HPA officials urge those planning to attend to make sure they have room reservations.

Feb. 20 is the cut-off date for both hotel reservations and Expo advance registrations, but the rooms could run out before the deadline.



While the pirate ship burns at Treasure Island, the world's largest display of hearth products will sizzle at the Sands Expo and Convention Center in late March.

TIC 2208

If you plan to attend but have not received a registration brochure, which includes a hotel accommodation package, call the Expo convention office at (202) 857-1137.

Space has been reserved at eight hotels, ranging in price from $59 to $99 a night (single or double) in both gaming and non-gaming hotels.

Some people might prefer to arrange rooms through their own travel agent. There are hotels other than those reserved for the HPA that are close to the Sands.

No matter where you plan to stay, getting your Expo registration in advance makes a lot of sense because it gives you immunity from the long lines of those waiting to sign in.

It's like having your best friend as the maitre d' at the trendiest restaurant in town. You get immediate seating while those around you fume in line.

World's largest for hearth

HPA officials promise that Expo '95 will be "the most comprehensive exhibition of hearth products anywhere in the world." It will attract retailers, builders, distributors, product manufacturers, engineers, gas company executives, building planners, consumers and other hearth and home professionals.

There will also be a raft of media types.

The HPA's new Public Relations Committee has hired a New York public relations firm to persuade some of the nation's best known and most influential magazines to visit the Expo and see first-hand how the hearth products of 1995 can make staying home a very attractive option.

Commitments have already come from *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Country Living*, *American Home Style*, *House Beautiful*, *Home*, *Sunset*, *Popular Mechanics* and *Traditional Home*.

Despite the hoopla, hearth retailers will be in Vegas to learn – to learn about the new products they can sell next season, how to operate them, and how to sell them.

The Hearth Education Foundation (HEARTH) will conduct symposiums and Toolbox sessions designed to make retailers a lot better at what they do to make money.

While gas will predominate the exhibit area, all hearth products will be on display, many with unique enhancements that dealers will have to know about to keep up with the times.

As Rooney puts it, "This is the premier event of the year. For hearth professionals, it's simply 1995's best opportunity to test new products, learn about new technologies and strategies and generate new business opportunities."

Prizes for all golfers

With a Vegas location, you know this will not be a convention of business, business, business, work, work, work.

In spite of its well-deserved reputation for casino slots, dice, cards and wheels, Vegas offers plenty of family oriented attractions and theme parks.

One of the most popular attractions is the annual golf outing, which this year will be held at Black Mountain Golf course. It's a par-72, 6,600-yard course located 35 minutes from the Vegas Strip.

The HPA wants no sore losers, so it promises everyone will be a winner, no matter the handicap. While everyone gets a prize, special awards will go to the winning team and to those with the longest and closest-to-the-pin drives on each nine.

A $75 registration fee covers green fees, the use of a cart and bus transportation from the Sands Hotel. (Taxis to and from the hotel run about $35 each way.)

The outing starts on Thursday, March 23 at 1 p.m. with a shotgun start, four-person scramble. Buses leave the Sands at 11 a.m., so "don't putt around," says the HPA.

Tournament registration forms are included with the registration brochure. The deadline is Feb. 15, so if you lost

TIC 2209

yours, never got one, or need more information, call Peter Berg at (207) 799-2166.

Raincoat not needed

Las Vegas boasts that the city averages 294 days of sunshine per year, and temperatures in March range from a low of 42 to a high of 68. Rain seldom totals a half-inch for the entire month of March.

Casual clothes are fine around the clock, reports the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors bureau, although women seem to favor cocktail dresses for evening wear; pant suits are appropriate too.

A fair percentage of men wear sports clothes or jackets and ties.

Because temperatures cool off at night, the bureau says it's a good idea to bring lightweight wraps for evenings, such as woolens or furs.

For those who never tossed ivories onto green felt but would like to try, many casinos offer free lessons on craps, blackjack, roulette, poker and baccarat. It's far less expensive than the place most of us learned roll and deal – the back of an Army barracks.

And for people who satisfy their gambling urges just playing the cards of life, alternative recreational activities abound, from nature walks to boat rentals to sky diving – which sounds like a gamble from here.

One of the biggest advantages of visiting places where casinos dominate the landscape is the multitude of good restaurants with extremely reasonable prices.

With more than 800 restaurants offering every imaginable cuisine, Las

Vegas truly offers gourmet meals at gourmand prices.

Both American and Delta airlines offer 10% discounts for Expo travel from March 21 to 30. For American, call (800) 433-1790 and ask for Star File #S0135KV; for Delta, call (800) 241-6760 and ask for file #R0633.

The HPA has also arranged special rates with Avis Rent-A-Car from one week before to one week after the meeting dates and include unlimited mileage. To make a reservation, call Avis at (800) 367-2847.

NORWICH BULLETIN

NORWICH, CT
DAILY 35,000

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BURRELLE'S

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WINNING TALE: 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.

TIC 2304

POST-TRIBUNE
GARY, IN
SATURDAY
APR 2 1994
BURRELLE'S

Post-Tribune (Gary, IN)

HILL AND KNOWLTON

Head 'em up, move 'em out!

Sunshine and warmer weather heralds the beginning of family road trip season.

By Betty Sacek
Staff Writer

TRAVEL

The wicked winter has taken its toll.

After being cooped up at home for days on end because of the exasperating elements, folks are anxious to spread their wings.

The time finally has come when they can hit the road.

With the volume of vacationers expected, however, it's important — especially for families — not to tarry in deciding where to head and what to do.

The U.S. Travel Data Center in Washington, D.C., predicts close to 99.4 million adult travelers plan to take a family vacation this year. Nearly half that number will be traveling with children.

While families can trek off just about anywhere these days — even with tots in tow — there are places that seem to draw them like a magnet.

Beverly Rand, manager of AAA Travel Agency in Merrillville, and Bonnie Buford, corporate accounts manager for World Travel Unlimited in Valparaiso, revealed what spots are hot with Northwest Indiana families this season. And others that those without plans yet might consider.

Mickey, Minnie and mates seem to lure moms, dads and kids like a bluegill to a nightcrawler.

Both Rand and Buford agree Disney World in Orlando, Fla., is "extremely popular — probably No. 1" with area families in search of fun.

"There are so many things to do that it's easy to spend a week there and have every minute filled," Buford said.

But, Rand cautions, the theme park "is not inexpensive, so people have to be realistic about their per-day budget expectations."

The travel manager said families should expect to spend at least $100 a day per person, which includes park admission, food and accommodations.

A four-day passport (which covers admission and rides) costs $132 for adults and $103.50 for children; a one-day, $36.95 for adults and $29.55 for children. Lunch could range from $7-$8.

But it's possible to cut corners, Buford said.

"Book a hotel outside the park complex where they're less expensive or, if your family is beach-oriented, consider a condo. They're plentiful and a good value, since they have kitchen facilities for doing your own cooking."

Moving up on the mouse mob, Rand said, is Branson, Mo., the home of country music in the Ozarks.

While it's not surprising that families are flocking to Florida and Missouri, it is that parents are packing themselves — and their offspring — off to Las Vegas, once the domain of grownup gamblers.

"A lot of people are taking their kids to Las Vegas now, since it's being marketed as a family destination," Rand said.

And rightly so.

"New resorts like the MGM Grand, Luxor and Treasure Island offer family areas or amusement parks," Rand said.

The largest of those new properties, the MGM Grand, has devoted a good chunk of its space to a 33-acre Disney-like theme park called MGM Grand Adventures. Children 4 to 12 are admitted for $10.

The Excalibur features jousting tournaments and a dungeon "fun zone" for the younger set, complete with video arcades, games and a Magic Motion Simulator.

Circus Circus recognized the family tie-in years ago when it started staging high-wire and trapeze acts and opened an RV campground.

And it doesn't take big bucks to have a ball.

"Vegas is a good value for families since hotel rates are affordable and food is almost a giveaway," Rand said.

No matter where one stays, hotel prices are among the country's lowest, running nearly half that of other resort cities.

Another selling point for Vegas is its accessibility to Bryce Canyon and Zion National parks in Utah.

"It has taken Midwesterners a while to discover those two spots," Rand said, "but they're becoming popular with families, as all the national parks are."

Their current attraction is due, in part, to better accommodations, the travel bureau manager said.

"In the past, only budget accom-

TIC 1813

Industry counts on those cars full of family travelers

Peter Mason, travel marketing director for Better Homes and Gardens magazine, tracks family travel trends.

A special study on the family vacation market was conducted by the U.S. Travel Data Center in Washington, D.C., for Better Homes and Gardens. It reveals that:

- The family vacation market is vital to the travel industry because, depending on the season, it accounts for between 69 percent and 75 percent of all leisure travel in the United States;
- Sixty-nine percent of all family vacationers are between the ages of 25 and 54;
- More American families are looking for more value for their vacation dollar than ever before. Added value packages, discounts, babysitting services, special children's menus and activities all are being sought today by families when planning their vacations;
- Two out of five family vacationers (41 percent) spent under $500 on their most recent family vacation last year. More than one-fourth (27 percent) spent $1,000 or more;
- Over one-half of family vacationers (56 percent) expect to spend the same amount on their vacation this year. Thirty-one percent expect to spend more, while 11 percent think they will spend less. Two percent don't know how much they expect to spend;
- Last year, Florida was the most popular destination for family vacations, followed by California and Nevada and;
- More people went to the beach or ocean in '93 than in the previous year. Similarly, more vacationers visited a major theme park or attraction last year than in '92.

modations were available."

Also making big waves with related travelers are cruises, Rand and Buford said.

While some junkets, like those to the Caribbean, can be had for $100 a day, others are pricier.

"Some do seem expensive when you look at them initially," Buford said, "but everything — like air fare and meals — often is included."

Lines like Carnival Cruise have been catering to families for years, carrying an estimated 86,000 children annually on cruise vacations.

Today, the line's "Camp Carnival" features programs for four age groups, from Toddlers (2-4) to Teens (14-17).

Shipboard facilities for youngsters include playrooms, video arcades and children's wading pools on all ships, along with water slides on the "Fun Ships."

Several other cruise ships also are family-oriented, including Premier Cruise Lines and the new American Family Cruises.

Premier offers package combinations like the one that features four days at Disney World and three nights cruising.

On board Premier ships in addition to kids and their folks are Disney characters who stop by the table to say hello, or the Looney Toons, who soon will be tucking youngsters into bed.

While most Alaskan cruises are adult-oriented, American Family Cruises is sponsoring a seven-day family vacation this summer to Juneau, Skagway and Ketchikan. Weekly rate is $895 for adults; $395 for children, air fare not included.

The line also offers special rates for single parents and their children.

Those who prefer to have their feet on terra firma might consider a dude ranch.

"They're gaining in popularity with adventure travelers," Rand said, "and we're getting more inquiries and bookings from people in this area."

Many, like those out West, can be expensive, however — from $535 to $1,645 per adult, per week, to $245 to $1,470 for children, riding and meals often included.

Prices vary according to the amenities and levels of accommodations. Many offer programs for children.

The high cost of being a cowboy for a week isn't the only drawback.

"You still have to get there," Rand said. "Some ranches seem to be at the end of the earth, not close to airports or train stations."

Riding a train is possible for those who opt to spend their leisure time in Washington, D.C., a perennially-popular vacation spot.

"Parents like to take their children there because it gives the youngsters an opportunity to experience riding a train and to take in some history," Rand said. "Some Washington vacationers incorporate Philadelphia and New York City into their trips."

Families for whom money is no object could traipse off to a resort like Club Med or Embassy Suites in Maui.

"Certain Club Med destinations cater to families, offering children's programs and even a Baby Camp," Rand said.

See FAMILY, D16

Simple camping trips are the most economical way to get away from it all as a family.

Family

BB

From Page D3

The Hawaiian resort offers programs for little people, as well.

"It employs counselors who take care of the children and offers activities for them throughout the day."

Expect to fork out about $4,000 a week for a family of four in Maui.

Those whose budgets are bare needn't sit in the back yard and sulk all summer.

Rand noted that the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn., is becoming a popular short-destination trip for families.

Or, she said, "If you want a really inexpensive outing, go camping."

Annette Murray, communications specialist for Kampgrounds of America, based in Billings, Mont., agrees.

"Camping is a value-packed vacation for families," she said.

Located near national and theme parks and historical attractions throughout North America, the 600 KOA Kampgrounds offer an environment where families can base camp and visit area attractions.

Or, they can just enjoy the recreation and amenities offered on the campground — all for an average daily fee of $17 per family of four.

"Camping doesn't include a lot of hidden costs — what you see is what you get," Murray said. "The cost depends on what equipment a family has and whether they want a base rate (without hookup) or full-utilities hookup.

Standard KOA amenities include restrooms, individual hot showers, laundry facilities and a convenience store.

For those who aren't into roughing it, Kamping Kabins are available.

In Indiana, a cabin that sleeps four goes for $26.95-$30 per night.

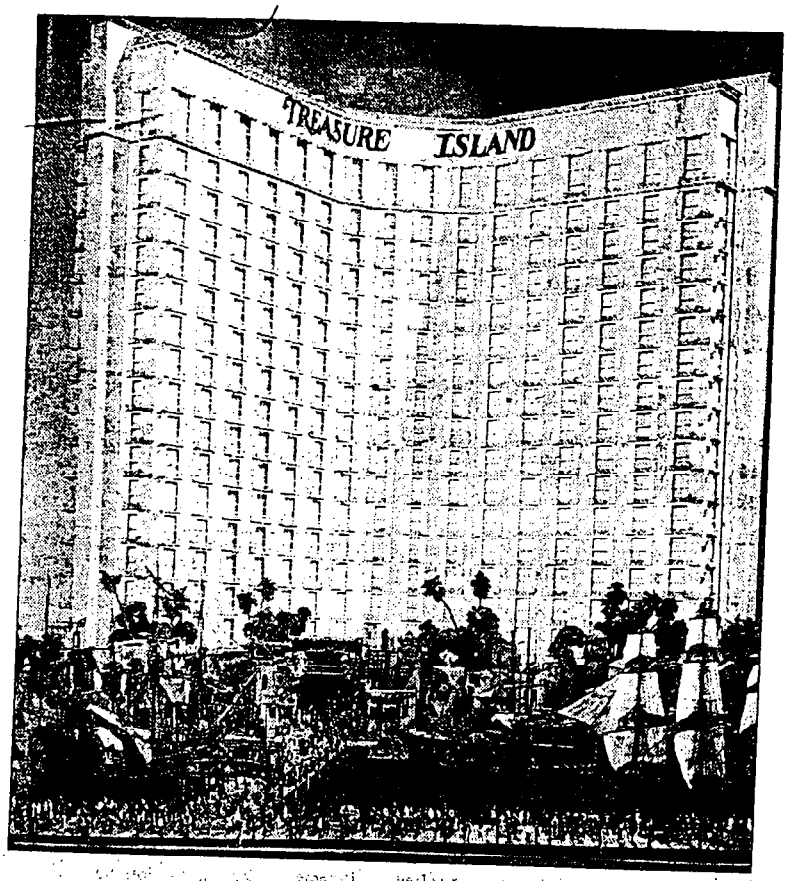
"Those who aren't in the market for a camp near a national attraction can sleep under the stars close to home. The majority of Indiana state parks offer camping facilities, including Indiana Dunes State Park in Chesterton."

"All the occupants need is sleeping attire and a lantern or flashlight," Murray said.

Those who aren't in the market for a camp near a national attraction can sleep under the stars close to home.

The majority of Indiana state parks offer camping facilities, including Indiana Dunes State Park in Chesterton.

The cost for camping out at Dunes State Park this summer is $11 per day with electricity and $7 without. Each site accommodates six people and two tents.



Nautical battles staged in front of Las Vegas' Treasure Island are sure to appeal to the whole family.

COURIER-TIMES

NEW CASTLE, IN
DAILY 12,500

FRIDAY
APR 21 1995
BURRELLE'S

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ced.

Casino magnate STEVE WYNN usually wins when gamblers lose. 4926BR

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.

TIC 2301

SUNDAY NEWS JOURNAL
WILMINGTON, DE
SUNDAY 150,986
MAY 3 1998

BURRELLE'S

24 21

U.S. AND BEYOND

News & Notes 8307

LAS VEGAS LOVE BOAT: 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. For information, call (800) 866-4748.

UNCOVERING THE SPHINX: In the latest effort to revive a $3 billion tourism industry battered by terrorist attacks over the past year, Egypt has taken down the scaffolding that has veiled the Sphinx for nearly 10 years and reopened the 242-foot-long icon to visitors.

Workers had been shoring up the crumbling monument with more than 12,000 limestone blocks. The country also continues to upgrade security at many sites. Last month, officials announced airport-type screening and more video-camera surveillance at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

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TIC 2403

TAMPA TRIBUNE AND TIMES

TAMPA, FL
SUNDAY 364,102

JAN 1 1995
BURRELLE'S

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Las Vegas pirate

492 Bh

Las Vegas' Treasure Island Hotel has taken the lead in high-tech entertainment with the introduction of the world's first digital puppet installation featuring a "pirate" virtual actor known as "Captain Blackjack."

Complete with a patch over his right eye, a sharp sword and a black, tricorn hat, the 3-D, computer-generated Captain Blackjack is projected onto a large screen on an escalator causeway.

Controlled by an actor offstage using an intricate connection of two-way microphones, speakers and video cameras, the swashbuckling cartoon interacts with guests as they descend into the lower levels of the casino.

"Captain Blackjack gives a hearty welcome and a playful warning to guests as they enter our adventurous, pirate-themed casino. Guests have a lot of fun talking to the cartoon and then getting a live, immediate response," said Jules Lauve, director of entertainment at Treasure Island.

TAMPA TRIBUNE AND TIMES

TAMPA, FL
SUNDAY 364,102

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Weird WONDERFUL AMERICA

TREASURE ISLAND HOTEL AT THE MIRAGE

- **ADDRESS:** 3300 Las Vegas Blvd. S., Las Vegas, Nev. 89109
- **TELEPHONE:** (702) 894-7111
- **ADMISSION:** Standard room rates average $70 a night. "Mystere" tickets are $57.20 for adults, $28.60 for kids younger than 12.

Hotel anchors Las Vegas renaissance

By LAURA BERGHEIM of King Features

These days, the American dream is drifting away from perfect houses bordered by white picket fences and toward lottery numbers borne on white pingpong balls. Now, when fortune knocks, we pray it's Ed McMahon on the doorstep.

Nowhere is this increasingly common dream of easy money more evident than in Las Vegas, which has reinvented itself as a clean, if surreal, family-friendly fantasyland, where gamblers gambol through a landscape of medieval knights, MGM lions, Roman maidens and Egyptian pharaohs.

During the next year, this column will, from time to time, explore some of the unique and surprising results of Las Vegas' renaissance. Perhaps its quintessence is the Treasure Island Hotel.

Even amid the city's neon-lit cacophony, the Treasure Island stands out — especially if you happen to witness one of the pirate battles enacted several times a night in front of the hotel.

Crowds fill the sidewalks for the spectacle, which involves two nearly full-sized vessels in a moat (one a pirate ship, the other a British frigate) engaging in a cinematically choreographed clash complete with swashbuckling dialogue, dizzying mast-climbing, fiery explosions and the climatic sinking of the frigate.

Pirate battles are enacted nightly at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas.

This is Las Vegas, hotel literature explains, so the pirates always win.

It won't cost you a cent to see the show, for it's one of the many free-to-all attention-grabbers now attracting visitors to casinos. Next door, the Treasure Island's mother hotel, the Mirage, has a volcano erupting every half-hour at night.

The ship battle is just the tip of the sword-blade at the Treasure Island, which opened in October 1993. Like Las Vegas' other amusement-parkish palaces, the hotel's theme is ever-present, from the wooden boardwalk entrance — leading through a lavishly constructed pirate village — to the lobby/casino areas, decorated with faux treasure chests, jewels and golden coins.

The staff is dressed to the cat-o'-nine-tails in billowy shirts and other high-seas couture; even the restaurants, guest rooms and kids' arcade are paeans to the pirate life. The whole place is Errol Flynnian's rainbow, a Technicolor tribute to nautical naughtiness.

The Treasure Island's "new" Las Vegas ambiance is exemplified in its resident entertainment: Cirque du Soleil's "Mystere" — a wonderfully weird, primitively futuristic exhibition of gymnastic grace and moody music that is so removed from the city's standard lounge act and showgirl fare as to be from another planet. Actually, the troupe is from Canada, so at least it's from another country.

After a few days of hopping between the Treasure Island and the other new hotels, you'll probably be croaking, "Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of Tums." Then again, maybe you'll win a little loot to put the wind in your sails before heading back to home and that white picket fence.

STAR-SPANGLED PLANNER: Folks in Kirksville, Mo., will be calling all gobblers during the Turkey Days festivities this week ... while fragrant flowers sweeten Fredericksburg, Va.'s, Pear Blossom Festival, Tuesday through Saturday ... and extraterrestrial activities abound at the Ozark UFO Conference, in Eureka Springs, Ark., this weekend.

HOMETOWN CAPITAL OF THE MONTH: Green River, Utah: Melon Capital of the World.

E 231

TIC 2284

St. Petersburg Times (FL)
Oct. 16, 1994

BURRELLE'S

Even as casinos spread nationwide, there's still no place like Las Vegas. And nervous owners are trying to keep it that way.

BETTING ON A NEW IMAGE

GAMBLING IN AMERICA
FIRST OF FOUR PARTS

By JENNY DEAM
Times Staff Writer

LAS VEGAS — As Gods of Money go, this one probably has a lock on location.

He is called Kala Nui and stands 12 feet high outside the Tropicana Hotel with a killer view of the world-famous casino Strip. As the hopeful masses troop toward the blackjack tables and slot machines, a loudspeaker commands them to bow before this grumpy-looking god and the riches of seven lifetimes could be yours.

Sounds good to Jean Miesen of Little Rock, Ark. Her luck at the poker machines hasn't been so hot. Actually, she has lost more than she cares to admit. She edges toward the big guy, glances around a little, and then gives him a quick bow. Maybe it'll help.

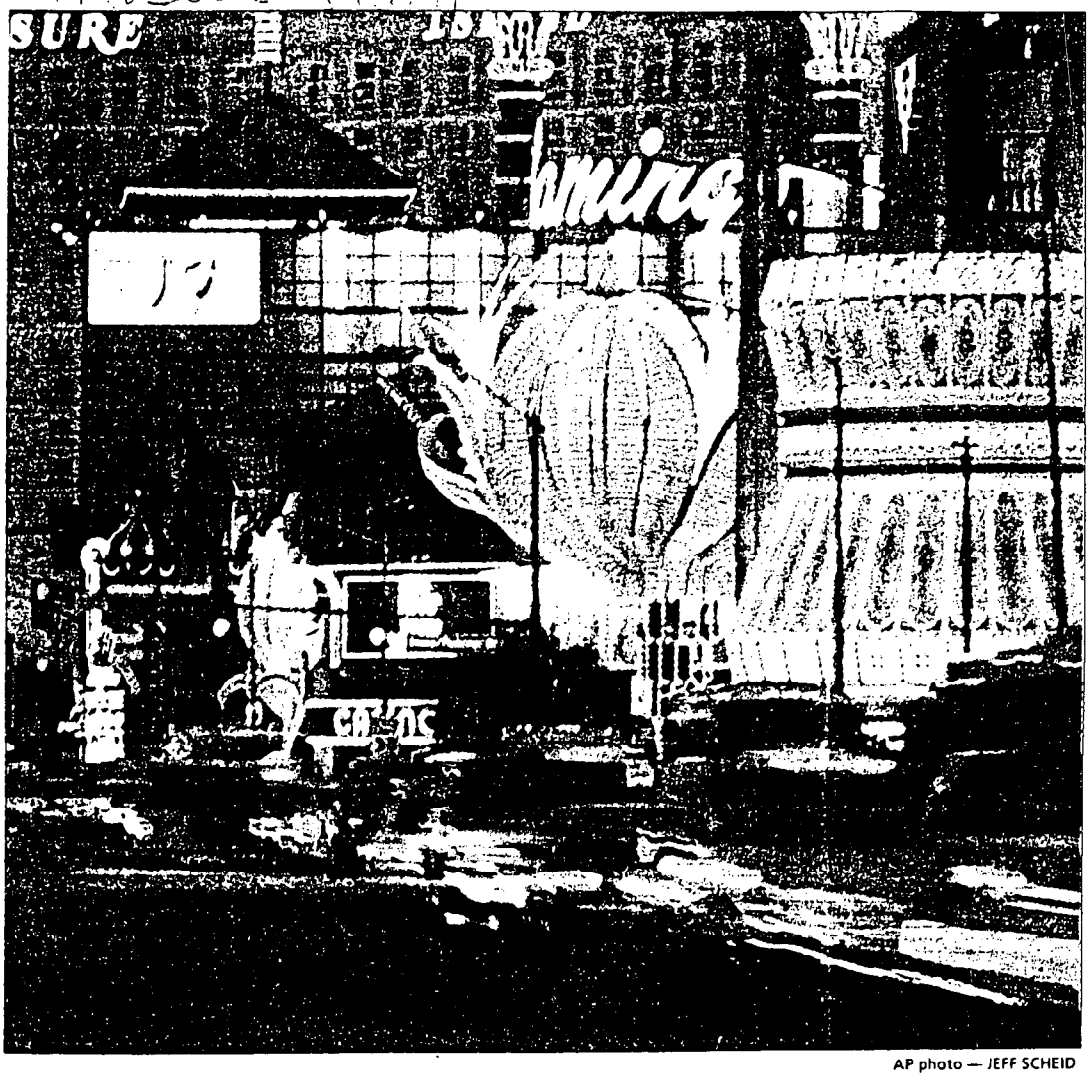
"Why not?" she asks. "Nothing else has."

■ ■ ■

That's Vegas for you. There's no other place like it. An up-all-night, zillion-watt playground where last year 23-million people came to bet a staggering $53-billion.

Just how much is that? Roughly the gross domestic product of the Philippines.

As casinos spread like crazy across America, from the cotton fields of Mississippi to the river towns of Missouri, this desert oasis remains the granddaddy of them all.



AP photo — JEFF SCHEID

There's no place on earth like the Las Vegas Strip, the heart of gambling in the United States. Forty-six of the Vegas area's 61 casinos are on the Strip.

TIC 2125

Yet, ironically, it is spending billions these days to reinvent itself. The new and improved Vegas is trying to push aside stereotypes of forbidden pleasure and excess in favor of carefully marketed PG images of itself.

"Las Vegas is very nervous right now," said Mike Messner, who heads the youth center at the MGM Grand hotel, where parents can drop off their children with licensed child-care employees for up to five hours at a time.

In the past few years, casinos have seemed an unstoppable force in their spread across the nation. No longer are Nevada and Atlantic City the only games around. Suddenly there's competition. Twenty-three states now have some form of state-sanctioned casinos. And last year, 92-million people visited them. That's more than went to Major League Baseball games.

In fact, 48 out of 50 states now have legalized gambling of some sort — be it horse racing, Indian casinos, lotteries, riverboat gambling, off-track betting or high-stakes bingo. Only Hawaii and Utah have not joined the pack.

Certainly a wild card in this shuffle is Florida. On Nov. 8, Florida voters will be asked whether to change the state constitution to allow 47 casinos across the state.

If voters say yes, Florida will become the nation's most populated state to allow high-stakes casinos. That's enticing to casino owners, especially in light of Wall

Please see **VEGAS** 5A

BETTING ON A NEW IMAGE

Even as casinos pop up across the nation, Las Vegas, Nev., is still the king. Nervous owners are trying to keep it that way.

NO DEALS YET

There's a lot of talk but no deals yet on two free-standing casinos that could be allowed in Pinellas and Hillsborough.

IN BUSINESS

CASINOS COME TO COTTON FIELDS

The residents of grim Tunica County, Miss., embraced the jobs casinos brought. Then came the problems like they had never seen before.

A SMALL TOWN DIVIDED

Historic Parkville, Mo., is split over whether to allow a riverboat casino in the closeknit town.

CITY OF HOPE, DESPAIR

Nearly two decades ago, Atlantic City, N.J., approved casino gambling as a way to turn the decaying city around. Is it working?

GAMBLING IN AMERICA

FIRST OF FOUR PARTS

Vegas from 1A

Street predictions that Florida casinos could generate $3-billion to $5-billion in profit for them. That would put the state only slightly behind Nevada, which last year produced about $6-billion in profits to owners.

Many of those owners are watching the Florida casino campaign carefully. They have pumped millions into it to try to ensure its passage. But business is business. At the same time, they have been sprucing up their own back yards to make sure all bets are covered in the tourism war.

The real motivation

These days roller coasters screech in Disney-cloned theme parks behind casinos and Disneyesque pirates do battle from giant ships floating in hotel moats. Even the word "gambling" has been stricken from the vocabulary in Vegas, replaced with the more recreational-sounding "gaming."

Much has been made of all these changes as an attempt by hoteliers and tourism promoters to turn Las Vegas into the new family destination.

And, sure enough, statistics show Las Vegas is ahead of Orlando — a perennial family favorite — in the number of visitors. Last year, Las Vegas drew 23.5-million, about 8 percent of whom were under 21. By comparison, Orlando attracted 13.5-million visitors, including 9-million from the United States. Of the U.S. visitors, about 42 percent traveled with their children.

This year, Las Vegas is expecting more than 25-million, while Orlando officials have predicted little or no growth.

Las Vegas and Orlando are the nation's two largest markets for hotels. Las Vegas has 87,000 rooms, Orlando 80,000.

Backers of the casino campaign, Proposition for Limited Casinos, have jumped on what is happening in Vegas as proof that Florida needs casinos to stay competitive in tourism. They say as Vegas reinvents itself to lure the family trade, it is chipping away at Florida's share of those dollars. "I think it could be devastating to Florida," predicted Randy Lewis, a spokesman for the campaign. "Florida has taken its visitors for granted for so long it has lost sight of what it has."

But if Vegas is truly competing with Florida for families, does Florida need to reciprocate?

"Absolutely not," argued Joy Mills, public information director for the Florida Department of Commerce. "It is not Florida tourism that needs casino gambling; it's casino gambling that needs Florida. They want access to our 41-million visitors."

Back on the Vegas Strip, what most say is really afoot has nothing to do with keeping the kids happy with dancing cartoon characters and laser light shows. That's simply a by-product of the real motivation:

TIC 2126

E 233

more gamblers and more money.

Cannons, white tigers and a Sphinx

Ever since the 1940s, when a gangster named Bugsy Siegel blew into town, Vegas has held all the cards. It has been the undisputed king. In recent years, however, this city has become worried that it is vulnerable.

Something needed to be done to give it the edge. "The uniqueness of (just) gambling was wearing thin," said Alan Feldman, vice president of public relations for the Mirage hotel and casino.

So in the late 1980s, about the same time Congress gave American Indians permission to open casinos on reservations and Iowa became the first state to allow riverboat gambling, a man named Steve Wynn emerged center stage.

Borrowing heavily from the ideas of "themed" casinos — such as Caesars Palace, which opened in the 1960s, and Circus, Circus, which opened in the 1970s — Wynn set out to do themes one better.

In 1989 he opened the 3,000-room Mirage hotel and casino and made it look like a trip to the islands. He spent an unprecedented $630-million and built into it all sorts of excuses for folks who didn't want to think of themselves as gamblers. He gave them white tigers behind glass. He gave them a dolphin show that would make Sea World proud. He even installed a $32-million volcano that belches fire and smoke every quarter hour.

And, if they just happened to drop some coins in the slot machine on the way to the tigers, so much the better. In the first month of operation the Mirage took in $40-million in gambling revenue.

"Steve Wynn came along and said, 'There's a better way to do things,' " Feldman said.

The wild success of the Mirage set off a chain reaction along the Strip. Everyone wanted a theme. And everyone couldn't wait to top the guys next door.

The Excalibur opened with its Camelot theme, complete with live jousting matches. The Luxor opened, housed in a 357-foot black glass pyramid with a Sphinx out front. The MGM Grand opened with 5,000 rooms, with Dorothy and Toto to greet you at check-in and a 30-acre amusement park in the back.

Even Wynn bested himself by opening Treasure Island next to the Mirage. He hired John Jerde, who did the master plan for Euro-Disney, to design a full-scale pirate battle out front. Cannons explode and a British frigate sinks before crowds of hundreds toting camcorders.

In the works are plans for a 1,700-room casino hotel called New York, New York — which will work on a Big Apple theme. It is scheduled to break ground late this year and will feature a roller coaster running through the property.

"The only limit we see to the growth of Las Vegas is the limits of our imagination and creativity," Feldman said.

Now Wynn is looking at Florida. He has joined forces with a Miami developer named Thomas Kramer. Together they have contributed $2.7-million of the $10-million gathered for the pro-casino campaign. Blueprints already are drawn for their vision: a $500-million to $600-million Miami Beach resort hotel and casino with a Mediterranean motif, set on 16 acres with shopping galleria and spa. No exploding volcanos for this one, though. Feldman said they're going subtle.

'The engine that drives us'

Yet for all the bells and whistles, for all the packaging and spin, Vegas is still a gambling town.

"Gaming is still the engine that drives us," said Manny Cortez, president of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

There are 61 casinos in the Las Vegas area. Forty-six are on the Strip, part of which is actually outside the city limits.

When you check into the Flamingo Hilton and flip on the television, it switches to a house advertisement for the casino downstairs. A young woman wails to her husband on the ad that she will *never* get the hang of gambling. He assures her she would learn. "Hilton wants you to learn," the ad promises.

And, conveniently, the hotel also provides easy instructions on how to request extra cash against your credit card by using the television remote control.

The new push for the family business here is not without its critics. Many say a gambling town is no place for kids.

"We're not participating in that," snapped Ralph Berry, director of Communications for Promus Companies Inc., which owns 13 casinos nationwide, including one on the Strip. "We believe casino entertainment is for adults."

Down in the Flamingo Hilton casino, a mother feeds coins into a slot machine while her two toddlers fidget near her chair. A casino employee explains the no-children rules to the mother. She complies by leaving, only to reappear moments later at a new machine. This one, out of the sight of the employee. The mother then begins again, this time letting one of her children put the quarters in.

"It's sickening," complained William Thompson, a public administration professor at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas who specializes in government regulations of casinos. "The public is ready to accept gambling. They will never accept gambling foisted off onto children."

And while it is strictly forbidden to allow children in casinos, it is almost impossible in some of the new themed hotels to get to the attractions without crossing into the gambling areas.

At Caesars Palace, for example, the spiffy, upscale shopping mall draws its customers off the street by way of a moving sidewalk. The only way you can leave the mall is through the casino.

At MGM Grand's outdoor theme park, Marlee Stouffer, of Grand Rapids, Mich., said she has mixed feelings about whether it is the place for her two children. "We've been coming for 15 years. This is the first time we've ever brought the kids."

She likes the *idea* of the new, improved Vegas. Her two children have visited most of the attractions. For less money than a trip to Walt Disney World, they can wander through a storybook village and pose for pictures with costumed characters dancing to ragtime music. They can ride on a full-size roller coaster that splashes through water or drive bumper cars.

Yet she says she still feels uneasy. "I don't like them wandering through the casino," she said. They passed through it to get to the theme park.

Lindsay Verdon, from Sydney, Australia, has similar qualms. He said his 9-year-old son, Ross, was fascinated by the concept of slot machines.

"He thought it was great: Dad put two quarters in and got 10 back. We brought him back to reality quickly," Verdon said. He made sure his son watched as he lost all 10 quarters in a matter of minutes.

Thompson predicts that this experiment to lure the family trade, just for the sake of capturing a few more customers, ultimately will fail. "It will ruin us," he said.

Las Vegas can offer inexpensive meals and hotel rooms because they are subsidized by the profits from the casinos, he said.

If people come with their children and take in the attractions, that means less gambling time and less profits.

"Kids and gambling don't mix," said Maureen Price, of Vancouver, British Columbia. She has been in the casino at the Flamingo nearly nonstop since she and her husband arrived Sunday. It's now Thursday. "I haven't seen much of the light of day," she joked. She has lost about $2,000.

"I wouldn't want my kids here and I don't want other people's kids hanging around," she said.

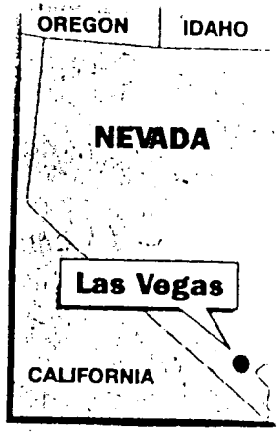
Evelyn Engdahl, of Framingham, Mass., who is pumping quarters into the machine next to her, agreed. "It's not okay to climb over a baby carriage to get to the damn slot machine."

With that, the two women return to the business at hand. The insistent, melodic drone of the slot machines fills the air.

Maureen Price opens another roll of quarters and starts feeding them in. The God of Money would be pleased.

TIC 2128

In a pirate battle performance in front of the Treasure Island casino hotel, cannons explode and a British frigate sinks.



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TIC 2129

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES

ST. PETERSBURG, FL
SUNDAY 460,319

OCT 16 1994

BURBELLE'S

FRONT PAGE

BETTING ON A NEW IMAGE

GAMBLING IN AMERICA
FIRST OF FOUR PARTS

■ Even as casinos spread nationwide, there's still no place like Las Vegas. And nervous owners are trying to keep it that way.

By JENNY DEAM
Times Staff Writer

4926BR

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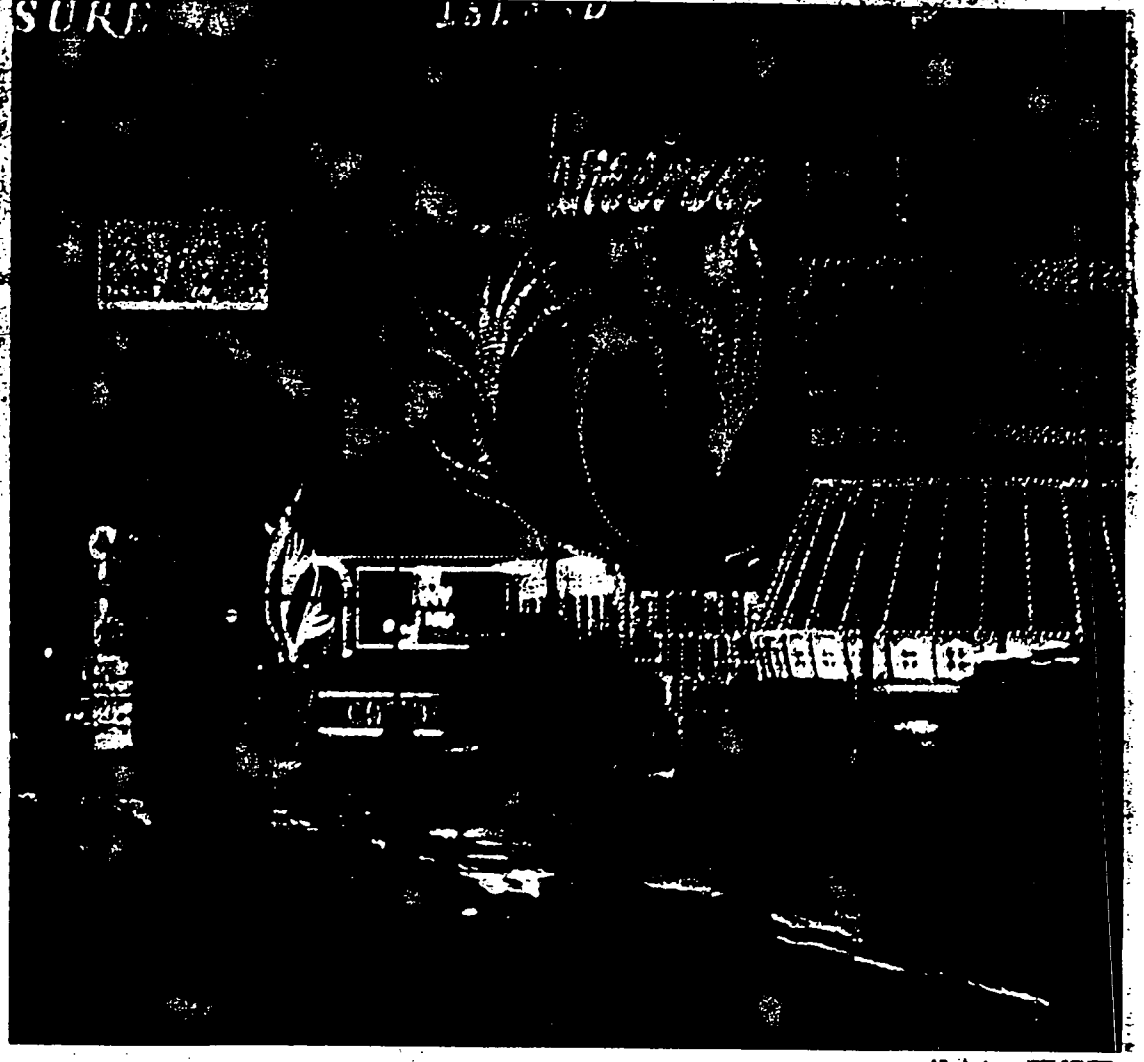

AP photo — JEFF SCHEID

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Yet, ironically, it is spending billions these days to reinvent itself. The new and improved Vegas is trying to push aside stereotypes of hidden pleasure and excess in favor of carefully marketed PG images of itself.

"Las Vegas is very nervous right now," said Mike Messner, who heads the youth center at the MGM Grand hotel, where parents can drop off their children with licensed child-care employees for up to five hours at a time.

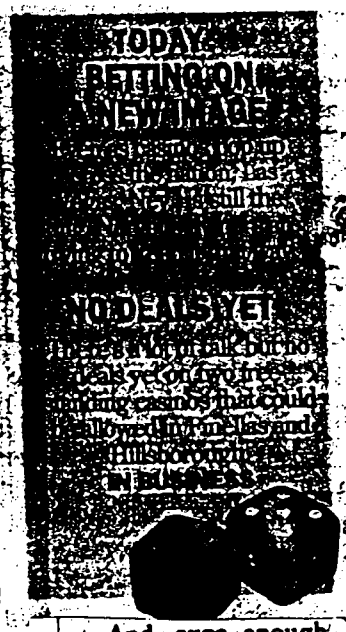
In the past few years, casinos have seemed an unstoppable force in their spread across the nation. No longer are Nevada and Atlantic City the only games around. Suddenly there's competition. Twenty-three states now have some form of state-sanctioned casinos. And last year, 92-million people visited them. That's more than went to Major League Baseball games.

In fact, 48 out of 50 states now have legalized gambling of some sort — be it horse racing, Indian casinos, lotteries, riverboat gambling, off-track betting or high-stakes bingo. Only Hawaii and Utah have not joined the pack.

Certainly a wild card in this shuffle is Florida. On Nov. 8, Florida voters will be asked whether to change the state constitution to allow 47 casinos across the state.

If voters say yes, Florida will become the nation's most populated state to allow high-stakes casinos. That's enticing to casino owners, especially in light of Wall

Please see **VEGAS** 5A



MONDAY: CASINOS COME TO COTTON FIELDS

The residents of grim Tunica County, Miss., embraced the casinos brought. Then came the problems like they had never before.

TUESDAY: A SMALL TOWN DIVIDED

Historic Parkville, Mo., is split over whether to allow a riverboat casino in the closeknit town.

WEDNESDAY: CITY OF HOPE, DESPAIR

Nearly two decades ago, Atlantic City, N.J., approved casino gambling as a way to turn the decaying city around. Is it working?

GAMBLING IN AMERICA

FIRST OF FOUR PARTS

Vegas from 1A

Street predictions that Florida casinos could generate $3-billion to $5-billion in profit for them. That would put the state only slightly behind Nevada, which last year produced about $6-billion in profits to owners.

Many of those owners are watching the Florida casino campaign carefully. They have pumped millions into it to try to ensure its passage. But business is business. At the same time, they have been sprucing up their own back yards to make sure all bets are covered in the tourism war.

The real motivation

These days roller coasters screech in Disney-cloned theme parks behind casinos and Disneyesque pirates do battle from giant ships floating in hotel moats. Even the word "gambling" has been stricken from the vocabulary in Vegas, replaced with the more recreational-sounding "gaming."

Much has been made of all these changes as an attempt by hoteliers and tourism promoters to turn Las Vegas into the new family destination.

And, sure enough, statistics show Las Vegas is ahead of Orlando — a perennial family favorite — in the number of visitors. Last year, Las Vegas drew 23.5-million, about 8 percent of whom were under 21. By comparison, Orlando attracted 13.5-million visitors, including 9-million from the United States. Of the U.S. visitors, about 42 percent traveled with their children.

This year, Las Vegas is expecting more than 25-million, while Orlando officials have predicted little or no growth.

Las Vegas and Orlando are the nation's two largest markets for hotels. Las Vegas has 87,000 rooms, Orlando 80,000.

Backers of the casino campaign, Proposition for Limited Casinos, have jumped on what is happening in Vegas as proof that Florida needs casinos to stay competitive in tourism. They say as Vegas reinvents itself to lure the family trade, it is chipping away at Florida's share of those dollars. "I think it could be devastating to Florida," predicted Randy Lewis, a spokesman for the campaign. "Florida has taken its visitors for granted for so long it has lost sight of what it has."

But if Vegas is truly competing with Florida for families, does Florida need to reciprocate?

"Absolutely not," argued Joy Mills, public information director for the Florida Department of Commerce. "It is not Florida tourism that needs casino gambling; it's casino gambling that needs Florida. They want access to our 41-million visitors."

Back on the Vegas Strip, what most say is really afoot has nothing to do with keeping the kids happy with dancing cartoon characters

TIC 2081

E 238

more gamblers and more money.

Cannons, white tigers and a Sphinx

Ever since the 1940s, when a gangster named Bugsy Siegel blew into town, Vegas has held all the cards. It has been the undisputed king. In recent years, however, this city has become worried that it is vulnerable.

Something needed to be done to give it the edge. "The uniqueness of (just) gambling was wearing thin," said Alan Feldman, vice president of public relations for the Mirage hotel and casino.

So in the late 1980s, about the same time Congress gave American Indians permission to open casinos on reservations and Iowa became the first state to allow riverboat gambling, a man named Steve Wynn emerged center stage.

Borrowing heavily from the ideas of "themed" casinos — such as Caesars Palace, which opened in the 1960s, and Circus, Circus, which opened in the 1970s — Wynn set out to do themes one better.

In 1989 he opened the 3,000-room Mirage hotel and casino and made it look like a trip to the islands. He spent an unprecedented $630-million and built into it all sorts of excuses for folks who didn't want to think of themselves as gamblers. He gave them white tigers behind glass. He gave them a dolphin show that would make Sea World proud. He even installed a $32-million volcano that belches fire and smoke every quarter hour.

And, if they just happened to drop some coins in the slot machine on the way to the tigers, so much the better. In the first month of operation the Mirage took in $40-million in gambling revenue.

"Steve Wynn came along and said, 'There's a better way to do things,' " Feldman said.

The wild success of the Mirage set off a chain reaction along the Strip. Everyone wanted a theme. And everyone couldn't wait to top the guys next door.

The Excalibur opened with its Camelot theme, complete with live jousting matches. The Luxor opened, housed in a 357-foot black glass pyramid with a Sphinx out front. The MGM Grand opened with 5,000 rooms, with Dorothy and Toto to greet you at check-in and a 30-acre amusement park in the back.

Even Wynn bested himself by opening Treasure Island next to the Mirage. He hired John Jerde, who did the master plan for Euro-Disney, to design a full-scale pirate battle out front. Cannons explode and a British frigate sinks before crowds of hundreds toting camcorders.

In the works are plans for a 1,700-room casino hotel called New York, New York — which will work on a Big Apple theme. It is scheduled to break ground late this year and will feature a roller coaster running through the property.

"The only limit we see to the growth of Las Vegas is the limits of our imagination and creativity," Feldman said.

Now Wynn is looking at Florida. He has joined forces with a Miami developer named Thomas Kramer. Together they have contributed $2.7-million of the $10-million gathered for the pro-casino campaign. Blueprints already are drawn for their vision: a $500-million to $600-million Miami Beach resort hotel and casino with a Mediterranean motif, set on 16 acres with shopping galleria and spa. No exploding volcanos for this one, though. Feldman said they're going subtle.

'The engine that drives us'

Yet for all the bells and whistles, for all the packaging and spin, Vegas is still a gambling town.

"Gaming is still the engine that drives us," said Manny Cortez, president of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

There are 61 casinos in the Las Vegas area. Forty-six are on the Strip, part of which is actually outside the city limits.

When you check into the Flamingo Hilton and flip on the television, it switches to a house advertisement for the casino downstairs. A young woman wails to her husband on the ad that she will *never* get the hang of gambling. He assures her she would learn. "Hilton wants you to learn," the ad promises.

And, conveniently, the hotel also provides easy instructions on how to request extra cash against your credit card by using the television remote control.

The new push for the family business here is not without its critics. Many say a gambling town is no place for kids.

"We're not participating in that," snapped Ralph Berry, director of Communications for Promus Companies Inc., which owns 13 casinos nationwide, including one on the Strip. "We believe casino entertainment is for adults."

Down in the Flamingo Hilton casino, a mother feeds coins into a slot machine while her two toddlers fidget near her chair. A casino employee explains the no-children rules to the mother. She complies by leaving, only to reappear moments later at a new machine. This one, out of the sight of the employee. The mother then begins again, this time letting one of her children put the quarters in.

"It's sickening," complained William Thompson, a public administration professor at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas who specializes in government regulations of casinos. "The public is ready to accept gambling. They will never accept gambling foisted off onto children."

TIC 2082

And while it is strictly forbidden to allow children in casinos, it is almost impossible in some of the new themed hotels to get to the attractions without crossing into the gambling areas.

At Caesars Palace, for example, the spiffy, upscale shopping mall draws its customers off the street by way of a moving sidewalk. The only way you can leave the mall is through the casino.

At MGM Grand's outdoor theme park, Marlee Stouffer, of Grand Rapids, Mich., said she has mixed feelings about whether it is the place for her two children. "We've been coming for 15 years. This is the first time we've ever brought the kids."

She likes the *idea* of the new, improved Vegas. Her two children have visited most of the attractions. For less money than a trip to Walt Disney World, they can wander through a storybook village and pose for pictures with costumed characters dancing to ragtime music. They can ride on a full-size roller coaster that splashes through water or drive bumper cars.

Yet she says she still feels uneasy. "I don't like them wandering through the casino," she said. They passed through it to get to the theme park.

Lindsay Verdon, from Sydney, Australia, has similar qualms. He said his 9-year-old son, Ross, was fascinated by the concept of slot machines.

"He thought it was great. Dad put two quarters in and got 10 back. We brought him back to reality quickly," Verdon said. He made sure his son watched as he lost all 10 quarters in a matter of minutes.

Thompson predicts that this experiment to lure the family trade, just for the sake of capturing a few more customers, ultimately will fail. "It will ruin us," he said.

Las Vegas can offer inexpensive meals and hotel rooms because they are subsidized by the profits from the casinos, he said.

If people come with their children and take in the attractions, that means less gambling time and less profits.

"Kids and gambling don't mix," said Maureen Price, of Vancouver, British Columbia. She has been in the casino at the Flamingo nearly nonstop since she and her husband arrived Sunday. It's now Thursday. "I haven't seen much of the light of day," she joked. She has lost about $2,000.

"I wouldn't want my kids here and I don't want other people's kids hanging around," she said.

Evelyn Engdahl, of Framingham, Mass., who is pumping quarters into the machine next to her, agreed. "It's not okay to climb over a baby carriage to get to the damn slot machine."

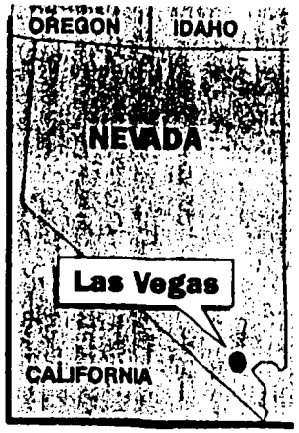
With that, the two women return to the business at hand. The insistent, melodic drone of the slot machines fills the air.

Maureen Price opens another roll of quarters and starts feeding them in. The God of Money would be pleased.

E 241

TIC 2084

In a pirate battle performance in front of the Treasure Island casino hotel, cannons explode and a British frigate sinks.



Family friendly

TOURISM: New attractions in Las Vegas are drawing visitors away from California

Las Vegas, nearly a year into its "family friendly" frenzy, apparently has found some of its best new buddies among tourists who otherwise would have come to California.

"There was certainly a serious impact on California for much of '94 and it's difficult to forecast how it will play out," said John Poimirro, California director of tourism.

First-quarter tourism in California rose 21 percent, but declined in the subsequent two quarters, mostly because of the Northridge earthquake, but partly because of the new attractions in Las Vegas, Poimirro said.

Tourists swarmed to the desert city to have a look-see at Treasure Island, the MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park, and Luxor — three megaresorts that opened in late 1993, adding 10,000 hotel rooms.

Vegas visitor volume this year is projected to hit 29 million, up from 23 million last year. Visitor contributions, the amount spent on gaming and hotels, is expected to rise to between $17 billion and $20 billion in 1994 from $15.1 billion last year.

"Las Vegas has state-of-the-art facilities and the budget to tell the world about them," said Charles Ahlers, president, Anaheim/Orange County Visitor and Convention Bureau. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority spends $60 million to $70 million on all aspects of marketing and advertising, more than the combined budgets of bureaus in Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Diego and San Francisco.

In a way, Vegas' tykes-are-OK approach is reminiscent of the advent of slot machines — casinos originally installed them as a diversion for the wives and girlfriends of the men who came to play at the felt-covered tables, the lore goes.

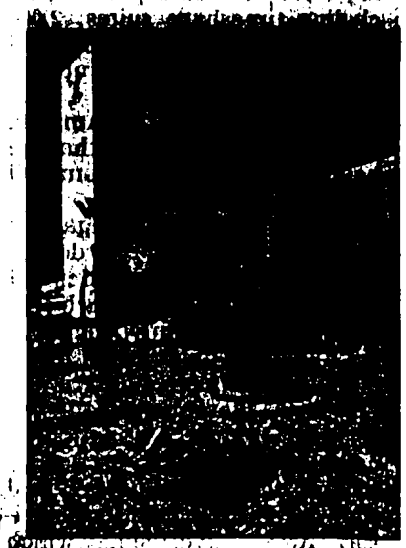
Similarly, the video arcades and theme parks are a recognition that today's parents are more likely to take short trips with their children, might even bring them along to a convention. And parents increasingly have come to view moderate gambling as entertainment rather than a vice unfit for the eyes and ears of children. (Children are not allowed in gambling areas.)

"This is product diversification," said Keith Schwer, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "A stronger Las Vegas attracts people throughout the world."

To be sure, each Vegas megaresort is staking an ever-more precise claim to a segment of the convention, tourism and gaming

Please see LAS VEGAS Page 2

CATHY TAYLOR



BUGSY'S PLACE: The Flamingo Hilton will soon have timeshare suites, more rooms and a garden area.

NEVADA: THE PROMISED LAND?

Sunday: Betting on Vegas
Companies, workers flow in

Monday: Help Wanted
New residents tell all

Tuesday: Homing in
Californians on the scene

Today: Family friendly
Casinos and kids

Thursday: River of Money
Charters discover Laughlin

E 242

TIC 2085

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES
ST. PETERSBURG, FL
SUNDAY 443,624
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For children, the other Las Vegas awaits

8307 Treasure FS.

■ Not far from the Strip are activities where children can try their luck too, getting gooey, digging for dinosaur bones, nibbling freshly made marshmallows and more.

By MICHAEL SCHUMAN

LAS VEGAS

A few blocks away, glassy-eyed men and women are risking their money at the blackjack and poker tables in downtown Las Vegas. Down on the Strip, topless women dance at the Riviera. Nearby, tourists nurse cocktails and listen to comedians say things that they cannot say on *Letterman*.

Me? I have my arms elbow deep in green glop called *oobleck* — a mixture of cornstarch, water and food coloring — and I am surrounded by a gaggle of kindergarteners and preschoolers. I am in the Lied Discovery Children's Museum, as high-tech, hands-on and complex as any big-city children's museum.

To most Vegas visitors with children, kids' entertainment means a trip to the Strip to see the mock volcano erupt at the Mirage and knights battle on horseback at the Excalibur. These attractions were added in the past decade to draw more families.

However, there is another Las Vegas off the Strip, occupied mainly by the people who live here. That would include my sister, who teaches in the city school system and who shared some places where residents take their children — a few miles and a few million light years from the tourist Vegas.

Please see **KIDS** 4E

AP

Although the number of kid-friendly attractions in Las Vegas has grown, minors are still prohibited from betting, and parents are not allowed to gamble with children by their side.

Kids from 1E

After drenching my hands in *oobleck* at the Lied (rhymes with reed) Museum's Creativity Workshop, my wife, children and I walked a short distance to step on the musical keyboard mounted on the floor, similar to the one in the movie *Big*, to try playing *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* with our feet.

The youngsters then sorted mail by ZIP code in the museum post office; they dressed in full firefighting apparatus and tried to maneuver with the equivalent of a car's weight on their backs.

Although the museum's bottom floor is devoted to arts and everyday living, the emphasis on the upper level is science. This is where kids pilot the space shuttle by remote control, learn the mechanics of sound at the whisper dish (hear someone else whisper from across the room) and experience what it is like to be physically challenged.

If the children's museum is the place to realize your fantasies, the Las Vegas Natural History Museum, within walking distance, is the place to confront your fears. The clerk who took our money at the desk had a king snake slithering around her neck as we entered.

"He's a good snake," she informed us. "He kills rats and rattlesnakes and he's harmless to people."

Not as polished and high-tech as the children's museum, the Natural History Museum nonetheless lets youngsters dig for dinosaur fossils, match paw prints to animals and shake a tube full of sand to hear what a desert rattlesnake sounds like.

The Wild Nevada Room is a tribute to regional residents such as the bighorn sheep and desert tortoise, all found within 100 miles of Sin City. Some animals are live, others preserved as mounts fronting dioramas of their natural surroundings. Like most kids, ours liked the robotic dinosaurs the best. They cried out, "Sharptooth!" a character from *The Land Before Time* animated movie series, as we walked past the *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Our motion triggered its roar.

Next door to the natural history museum is

TIC 2428

Photo by MICHAEL SCHUMAN

At Ron Lee's World of Clowns, children can admire the vintage clown exhibits, watch a circus train run on tracks above a wall decked with a hand-painted mural of clowns and balloons and take a ride on the 30-foot carousel.

the one vestige of the city's original settlement, Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort, a state historic site. Built in 1855 as a way station between Salt Lake City and San Bernardino, Calif., the fort's western end still stands. The few furnishings inside are 19th century period pieces. More abundant are old photos and other displays depicting the many lives the fort has had since the first adobe brick was laid. The earliest photo dates to 1876 and depicts men wearing long pants and dark jackets in the scorching summer heat.

Outside the fort is a garden similar to the one planted by settlers more than 140 years ago, today cultivated and tended by park supervisor Phares Woods and his staff. Woods says, "When the first vegetables came up, the settlers were very, very happy. The first summer they had lived on bread and water."

Journey from the oldest to the newest by hopping on I-15 to the booming suburb of Henderson. Within a three-mile radius are four factory tours, where your children will watch marshmallows, candy and clown statuettes being made, and learn why a cranberry juice processing plant is located in the middle of the Mojave Desert.

Of the four tours, Cranberry World West and Ron Lee's World of Clowns offer the most vari-

TIC 2429

ety. And no, there are no cranberries growing nearby. Massachusetts-based Ocean Spray opened a plant here for reasons relating solely to distribution. Las Vegas is just a few hours from major markets such as Salt Lake City and Phoenix.

At Cranberry World (similar to the original, near Plymouth, Mass.), you will find buttons to push and videotapes to watch. You will learn here that the cranberry was named because of the berry plant's resemblance to the head of a crane.

Ron Lee, 50, established his clown miniature factory here not for distribution but escape. Like many Las Vegans, Ron and Jill Lee fled overcrowded Los Angeles. He has been in this location more than three years, but has made gold-plated, hand-painted metal clown figurines for more than 21 years.

Watch through windows as artists cast parts and paint details. Then examine them close up on nine well-spaced monitors. Lee has licenses with Disney and Warner Bros., but you will also see in display cases clowns on skis and on surfboards, as Vegas magicians and as Olympic athletes.

Regardless, expect your children to beg for a ride on the 30-foot carousel, complete with flying horses and carnival music. They might also admire the vintage clown exhibits, watch a circus train run on tracks high above a wall decked with a hand-painted mural of clowns and balloons, or drop in a quarter and watch the moving parts of Lee's miniature animated theme park. It took Lee 11½ months to construct it, all from metal and balsa wood.

The two other self-guided tours fall into the category of yummy. Outside, Ethel M Chocolates is a cactus garden. The high point of the Kidd's Marshmallow Factory tour is the long knife, perpetually moving as it slices marshmallows.

Each tour ends with free samples of candy and marshmallows. Try getting those at the roulette table.

Michael Schuman is a freelance writer who lives in New Hampshire.

If you go

The following sites are closed most major winter holidays:

Lied Children's Museum, 833 Las Vegas Blvd. N, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission: $5 adults; $4 ages 12-17, ages 55 and over and military; $3 ages 3-11. (702) 382-3445 .

Las Vegas Natural History Museum, 900 Las Vegas Blvd. N, is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Admission: $5 adults, $4 ages 55 and over and military, $2.50 ages 4-12. (702) 384-3466. Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort, 908 Las Vegas Blvd. N at Washington Avenue, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. Admission is free. (702) 486-3511.

Admission to the four factory tours in Henderson is free; there is a $1 charge to ride the carousel at Ron Lee's World of Clowns.

The World of Clowns factory is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; and, in November and December, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday; (702) 434-1700. Cranberry World West is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; (702) 566-7160. Kidd's Marshmallow Factory is open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday; Ethel M Chocolates is open for tours from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Ethel M's cactus gardens are lit with 50,000 bulbs every Christmas season, this year from Dec. 6 through Jan. 6. (702) 458-8864.

For more ideas, pick up a copy of *Las Vegas kidz* magazine. It's free and available at the Lied Children's Museum, the Las Vegas Visitors Bureau (near Las Vegas Boulevard S and Sunset), all Las Vegas libraries and at most Lucky Supermarkets.

AP

Antonio Valles, 2, his father, Eddie, and brother Tyson, 8, of Anaheim, Calif., greet pirate Warrick Price outside the Treasure Island Hotel.

TIC 2431

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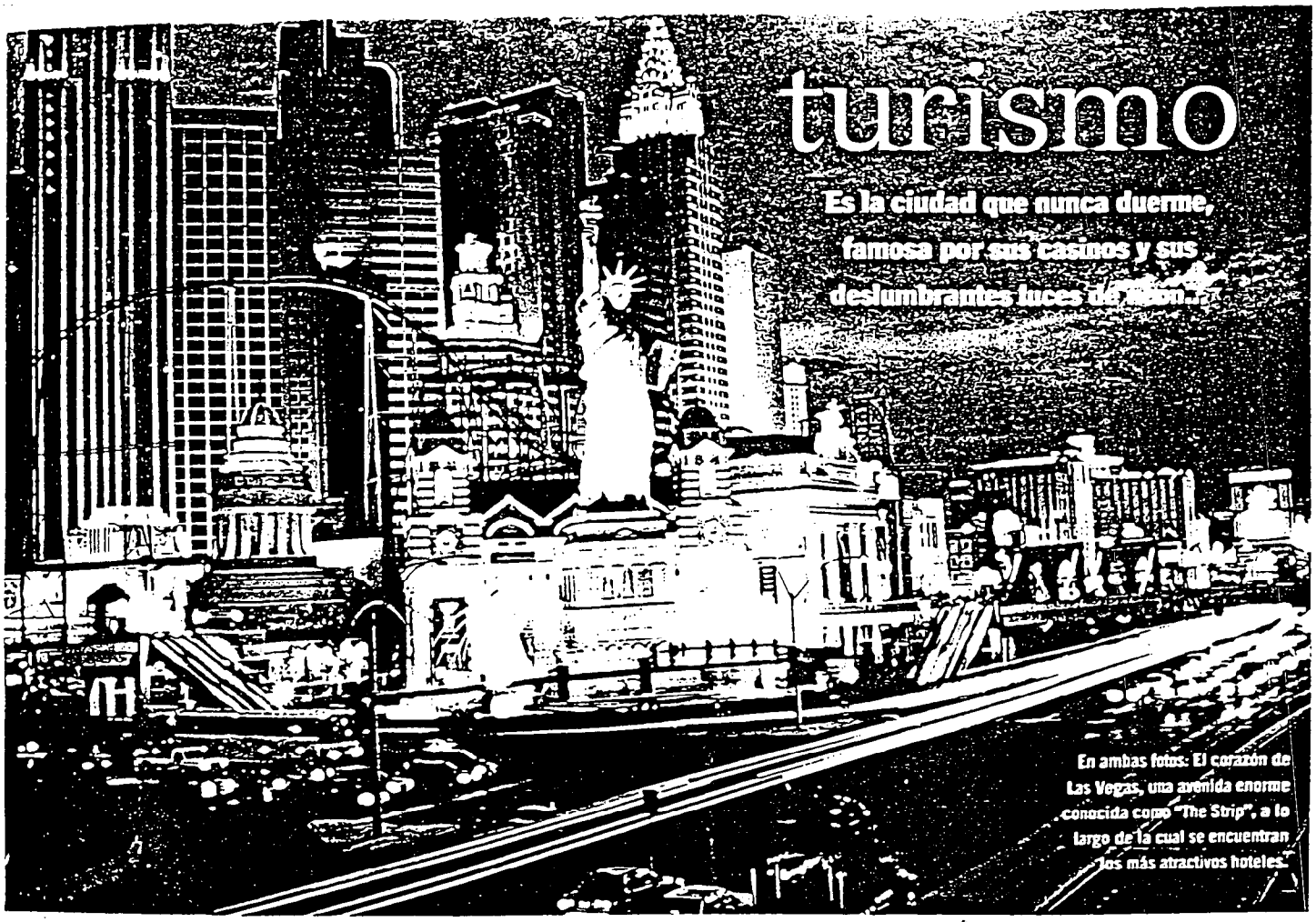


En el nuevo milenio LAS VEGA

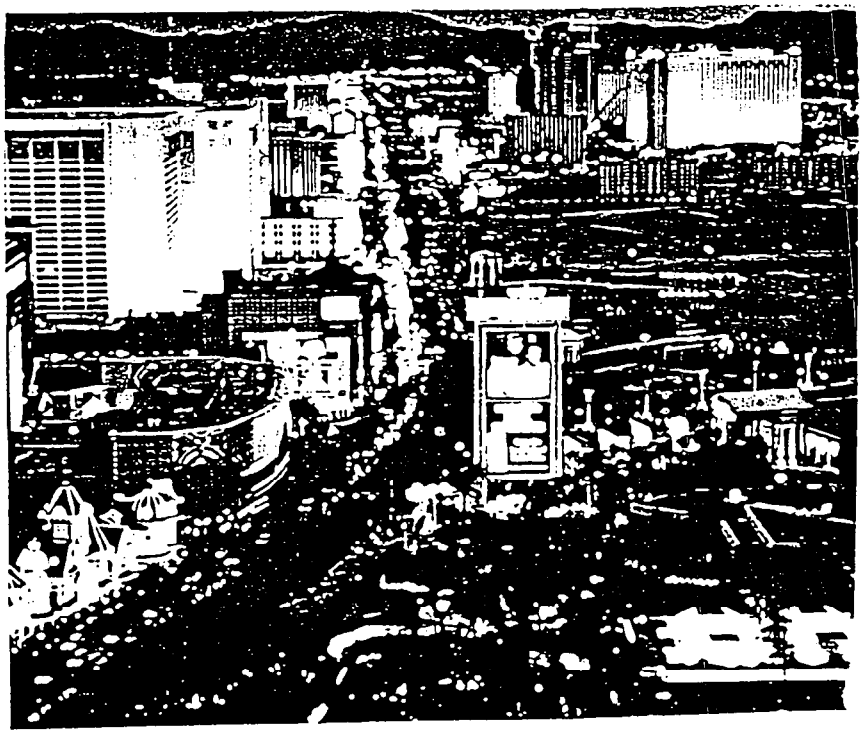
5307A Por Mari Rodríguez Ichaso

Dentro de aproximadamente 9 meses no vamos a celebrar la llegada de un nuevo siglo, ¡sino de un

TIC 2531

nuevo milenio! No será otro año que comenzará con el conocido 19... ¡sino el comienzo del año 2000! ¿Nos acostumbraremos a escribirlo con naturalidad en cheques, cartas y documentos? ¿Será difícil adaptarnos mentalmente a un cambio tan importante? Es impresionante pensar que terminará el milenio donde más tiempo hemos vivido una gran parte de nosotras y comenzará una nueva era histórica. ¿No les parece algo increíble? Pocos son los seres humanos que pueden decir que han vivido no en dos siglos, ¡sino en dos milenios!

Esto me hace pensar que este nuevo comienzo será un evento casi "surrealista" y prácticamente "mágico", ¡que vale la pena celebrar! ¿Y qué mejor ciudad en la Tierra que la surrealista y casi-mágica Las Vegas, para celebrar la llegada de una nueva era? Hay algo tan teatral y extravagante en lo que va a suceder. *—Pase a la página 123*



yo era casi un niño ando viajando y trabajando lejos y ¡qué curioso!, hoy de cierta forma vivo con mi hijo lo que mis padres vivieron conmigo, pero en este caso soy yo el que tiene poco tiempo para compartir con Lorenzo. Quisiera estar todos los días con él y no puedo".

Cuando habla de su hijo, fruto de la unión con la modelo venezolana Marilisa Maronesse, cambia la expresión de su rostro y pone cara de papá experimentado: "Cambio pañales con una sola mano, y mira... eso es lo más bonito que hay. No sabes apreciar el amor de tus padres hasta que tienes un hijo... Mi familia siempre me ha apoyado y espero que siga siendo así, porque esa es la mayor recompensa".

Muy bien merecido, Chayanne sigue adueñándose del éxito, llegando a otros mercados, hace unos meses apareció en el popular *show* de Oprah Winfrey, también en Regis & Kathie Lee y en The Tonight Show With Jay Leno, y conquistando el cariño de sus admiradores.

Termina la entrevista y también una tarde fabulosa en su compañía, pero ahora, nada de descanso. Acaba de confirmar la cita con un canal de televisión de República Dominicana, donde tiene prevista una presentación. Y se despide como llegó, como es: amable y sonriente.

TURISMO

Viene de la página 20

que sería muy divertido ser parte de una "ciudad-teatro" como la superextravagante Las Vegas, donde siempre nos sentimos como si estuviéramos "entre-telones"; y donde igual podemos transportarnos a París que a Egipto, que a Suiza, que a los Mares del Sur, que a la propia Nueva York, ¡como si estuviéramos celebrando la llegada del milenio en varios continentes a la vez! Y aunque se rumora que la mayor parte de las reservaciones de "paquetes" a Las Vegas para Fin de Año están casi agotadas, siempre pienso que no se pierde nada con tratar; y si no podemos estar allí ese mismo 31 de diciembre, quizás sea posible encontrar reservaciones para esa primera semana (o ese primer mes) del nuevo milenio y celebrar su comienzo por todo lo alto.

Las Vegas, como siempre les he comentado, es una combinación de lo feo con lo bello. De lo enorme y masivo (hoteles gigantescos, cientos de restaurantes, cientos de *shows*, etc.) con la rara intimidad que se crea dentro del espacio hueco de un oscuro casino de juego, cuando estamos solos con la maquinita tragamonedas o el excitante sonido de la ruleta. Es una ciudad "plástica", maravillosamente artificial, de oropel, que a veces parece estar hecha de millones de luces y, a la vez, es una ciudad tan 100% norteamericana, algo que a los europeos y latinoamericanos nos sorprende tanto.

El turista que quiere pasar un buen rato, debe estar dispuesto a reir y a mirar medio-boquiabierto el tiempo que esté en este paraíso de lo exagerado, donde además de los hoteles que son como "monumentos" y los casinos de juego, hay muchos *shows* con bellas coristas y los artistas más famosos del planeta

que cuando la conozcan "en carne y hueso" van a quedar impresionados.

Una visita turística a este *mirage*, que un buen día pareció nacer en medio del desierto en el oeste de los Estados Unidos, tiene varios atractivos obvios: 1) Sus increíbles hoteles (los que se "visitan", uno tras otro, como atracciones turísticas o "monumentos"). 2) Sus casinos de juego (ciudades dentro de ciudades, pues los hoteles de Las Vegas son como miniciudades). 3) El comer bien y barato (un incentivo para que nos queden $$$ para jugar). 4) Los *shows* con bellas y casi desnudas coristas, y los artistas más famosos del planeta.

Ahora bien, el turista que quiere pasar un buen rato debe dejar en casa su "espíritu crítico" y estar dispuesto a reír y a vivir medio-boquiabierto durante 2 ó 3 días en que esté en este paraíso de lo exagerado. ¿Algunos datos interesantes? Las Vegas es la quinta ciudad del mundo más visitada por turistas internacionales y la número 1 entre los turistas norteamericanos; 9 de los 10 hoteles más grandes del mundo están allí y su aeropuerto es el octavo más ocupado del mundo.

El corazón de Las Vegas es una enorme y famosa avenida llamada "The Strip", a lo largo de la cual están las miniciudades de que le hablamos (léase hoteles), aunque en la zona de Freemont St., en el *downtown* (donde todo es mucho más económico), junto a hoteles y casinos lujosos (como el Golden Nugget), hay hoteles y moteles aceptables y mucho más baratos (ideales si tenemos un presupuesto reducido, ya que nos ofrecen un sitio decente donde dormir, mientras pasamos el día y la noche recorriendo los hoteles y casinos del "strip").

Entre los hoteles más extraordinarios de Las Vegas tenemos "The Bellagio", inaugurado hace unos meses y quizás el más elegante y sofisticado de todos. Construido a la imagen de las villas que rodean el pueblo de Bellaggio, en la región de los lagos italianos, el enorme hotel tiene hasta su propio museo de maestros impresionistas, valorado en muchos cientos de millones de dólares (es la colección privada de su dueño). También cuenta con 9 mil empleados para atender 3.005 lujosas habitaciones, cientos de boutiques de alta moda (Chanel, Armani, Hermès), el *show* permanente del Cirque de Soleil y restaurantes con cocinas de todos los países del mundo, incluyendo sucursales de los célebres "Le Cirque" y "Jean-Georges" de Nueva York.

Otro de los grandes hoteles es "The Mirage", con tema tropical, rodeado de cascadas, bosques de lluvia y enormes tigres blancos, junto a grandes acuarios con tiburones y delfines. ¡Impresionante! También "muy Las Vegas" es el "Treasure Island at the Mirage", con sus 3.000 habitaciones y 8 restaurantes de lujo, además de tener en su entrada un enorme barco de piratas, ¡donde tienen lugar diariamente grandes "batallas"! ¿Otro de sus atractivos? Sus dos capillas matrimoniales y un *spa* excelente.

El "MGM Grand Hotel & Casino", situado en 114 acres de terreno y con 5.005 fabulosas habitaciones, es enorme. Quizás demasiado. Y no sólo tiene un casino del tamaño de un terreno de fútbol, sino una "arena" de deportes, varios teatros, un parque de diversiones (con la célebre y enorme montaña rusa Skyscreamer), 7 restaurantes *gourmet* y un *spa* de 6 acres.

"Excalibur", basado en la leyenda inglesa de Camelot, es cursilísimo, pero divertido. Como un castillo medieval, ¡rodeado de luces de neón!, tiene 4.008 habitaciones, piscinas y unas cenas con un *show* al estilo de los concursos medievales de la Corte del Rey Arturo. El "Luxor" es como un viaje a Egipto, pues el hotel es una pirámide egipcia de 30 pisos con 4.400 habitaciones decoradas al estilo egipcio. Y nosotros somos sin duda los faraones en medio de su enorme casino, un teatro para 1.200 personas, 10 restaurantes, 5 piscinas, un *spa* y una galería de tiendas llamada Giza. El ya viejo, pero todavía fabuloso y muy lujoso "Caesar's Palace" tiene aceras rodantes, empleados vestidos a la usanza griega, 2.500 habitaciones (muchas con camas redondas, con espejos en el techo, y bañeras que parecen piscinas), además de una de las piscinas más fabulosas de la ciudad y un *spa* gigantesco y modernísimo. ¡Y un centro comercial llamado Forum Shops!

El "New York-New York Hotel & Casino" es uno de los más extravagantes de estos hoteles-ciudades, pues consiste en 12 torres que imitan el perfil de rascacielos de la ciudad ¡y una réplica de la estatua de La Libertad! Su *show* musical "Lord of the Dance" es uno de los más

codiciados de la ciudad. ¿Y qué decir del "París Las Vegas", que se va a inaugurar en el otoño? Pues que tiene a su entrada una torre Eiffel ¡de 50 pisos!, y una réplica del edificio del Musée d'Orsay, además de una piscina con 2 acres de terreno en el tope del hotel (algo nunca visto), 8 restaurantes con cocina de todas las regiones de Francia, un *spa* europeo y casi 3.000 habitaciones.

El próximo a abrir, "The Venetian Resort Hotel & Casino", con 3.036 *suites*, es una réplica de la Piazza de San Marco en Venecia, con su Torre del Campanile, el Palacio de los Dogos, y una larguísima y estrecha piscina de agua que representa el famoso Gran Canal y la que —como en Venecia— está rodeada de cafés y tiendas.

¿Otros hoteles famosos? El Sahara, el Mandalay Bay, Monte Carlo Resort, The Stratosphere, Imperial Palace, Circus-Circus, Hard Rock Café, Las Vegas Hilton y otros.

Como ven, estos hoteles de Las Vegas son atracciones en sí, y es de rigor ir de uno a otro conociéndolos y comparando cuál nos gusta más y cuál nos gusta menos. ¡Es parte de la diversión que nos hace entrar de lleno en este mundo artificial! Si aparte de todo lo anterior, desea conocer más cosas, les recomiendo tomar el paseo de 1 hora y media en avión que sobrevuela el cercano Cañón del Colorado (en el estado de Arizona) y la Represa de Hoover. El llamado "Grand Deluxe Tour" hace el mismo recorrido, pero después el avión aterriza y se visitan partes del Gran Cañón en autobús. El Museo de Liberace es también una atracción muy popular. Alquilar un auto es buena idea, especialmente si queremos hacer excursiones por sus alrededores o nos hospedamos en moteles (más económicos) en las afueras de la ciudad.

¿Un *tip*? Mientras estén en Las Vegas les recomiendo hacer un buen desayuno (los *buffets* de los hoteles son regios y tienen precios moderados), un almuerzo ligero y en la noche disfrutar de una opípara cena en los restaurantes de la ciudad, seguido de un *show* como sólo en Las Vegas puede disfrutarse (el de "Sigfried & Roy" es uno de los grandes espectáculos de la ciudad).

Entre los sitios económicos y de precios moderados les recomiendo lugares muy divertidos como Planet Hollywood, el Official Allstar Café, la excelente cadena italiana The Olive Garden, la cadena australiana de "steaks" Outback Steakhouse, el Hard Rock Café (en el simpático hotel del mismo nombre), el Harley Davidson Café y las cadenas Houlihan's y Hooters.

Entre los restaurantes más caros y con excelente cocina tenemos el "Bacchanal Room" (precio fijo de US$68.00 por un verdadero "bacanal" de comida, en el hotel Caesar's Palace); "Ah'So" (cocina japonesa de altura en Caesar's Palace); el famoso "Charlie Trotter's" (en el MGM Grand); el elegante "Cipriani"; el "Sacred Sea Room" (en Luxor Hotel); el célebre "Morton's of Chicago" (famosísimos "steaks"); "Sir Galahad's" (en el Excalibur); "Sir Reginald's Steak House" (en el MGM Grand); el legendario "Le Cirque" y el "Aqua" (en el Bellagio); "Isis" (en el Luxor); "Top Of The World" (en la torre del Stratosphere, con una vista única de la ciudad); el "Wolfgang Puck" (en el MGM Grand); el siempre-de-moda "Spago" (en el Forum Shops de Caesar's Palace); la comida china del "Madame Ching" (en el Treasure Island); el popular "Emeril's New Orleans Fish House" (en el MGM Grand) y el "Gallagher's Steakhouse" (en el New York-New York Hotel & Casino).

En Las Vegas, hay hoteles con temas, como el "Luxor", que es como ir a Egipto, pues el edificio es una pirámide de 30 pisos, con 4.400 habitaciones. El "New York-New York Hotel & Casino", que consiste en 12 torres que imitan los rascacielos de la ciudad y tiene una réplica de la estatua de La Libertad...

Los sibaritas *buffets* de Las Vegas son famosos y vale la pena probar al menos uno de ellos. Entre los que más se destacan están: "The Buffet" (en el Bellagio); "Fresh Market Square Buffet" (en el hotel Harrah's); "Seafood Buffet" (en el hotel Rio) y el popular "Circus Buffet Spectacular" (en el hotel Circus-Circus). También encontrará *buffets* a muy buenos precios en un sinnúmero de restaurantes económicos y cadenas populares de comida rápida.

¿Una buena idea? Planear un viaje a Las Vegas por 2 ó 3 noches y continuar después el viaje a California, para conocer Los Angeles y San Francisco. Muchas líneas aéreas vuelan a Las Vegas, entre ellas American Airlines ofrece excelentes "paquetes" de hotel y tarifa aérea desde varias ciudades.

Para encontrar hoteles en la Internet en Las Vegas (y todos los Estados Unidos), incluyendo para fechas en que muchos están vendidos, marquen esta dirección: http://www.best.com/~usaweb/lasvegas/calls/c-hmfr1.htm.

TIC 2534

A gamble

Theme parks challenge casinos in Las Vegas

By Lee Littlewood
Copley News Service

LAS VEGAS — The city of sin that never sleeps – the desert of decadence, the mecca for greed and gambling – is now not only the playground of Wayne, Frank, Siegfried and Roy, but of much younger fun seekers with names like Ashley, Cody, Brittney and Nicholas. Las Vegas, although not yet squeaky clean and "Disney-ized," is becoming as well known for its family attractions as for its showgirls and casinos.

More and more theme parks, midways, circuses, water parks and kids' camps are emerging monthly to attract families. And, with a new baby boom in full swing, more families traveling together, and working parents seeking quality time with their kids, it's only natural for this desert vacation mecca to jump on the bandwagon (station-wagon, rather) and become family-friendly.

The most attractive lure of Las Vegas remains, however, in its versatility. While there's plenty for kids to do, Dad can still shoot craps, Mom can play a few slots and they both can enjoy a dinner or cocktail while the youngsters slumber under the watchful eye of a bonded baby sitter. But the most fun is in the attractions they can experience together.

Listed are the particularly family-friendly casinos/hotels and what they have to offer.

MGM Grand Hotel, Casino and Theme Park. The world's largest hotel and Las Vegas' most extravagant (and one of the newest), the MGM appeals to both kids and adults with more than 5,000 Hollywood-themed rooms, restaurants, attractions and an outdoor amusement park.

The most amazing is the "Wizard of Oz" tower and its talking statues of Dorothy, the cowardly lion and friends. The life-size figures seem to come to life while the sky above the Yellow-Brick Road produces lightning, thunder, floating clouds and, most impressively, a tiny, cackling witch riding a bicycle.

There's the wizard himself speaking from a balloon, plus a tour and magic show in a replica of Emerald City ($5 for adults, a little less for kids). That unforgettable Wicked Witch's laugh can be heard from all over the casino while flying monkeys leer from their perches.

I especially liked the carpeting throughout the Oz tower and casino – it's bright and flowery like the poppy field scene in the movie. (But guaranteed to not put you to sleep.)

The Oz theme extends to the Oz Buffet restaurant, with munchkins peering out windows and from the insides of elaborate potted plants. The buffet is affordably priced and a delicious step up from the prime rib buffets of not-so-yesteryear with items like ceviche, vegetable lasagna, eggplant, baked ham, fresh fruit and umpteen other mouth-watering delectables. Real munchkins are more than welcome for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

There's several other wonderful restaurants in the hotel, too, and for pickier eaters, a fast-food court with kid staples like McDonald's, a pizza joint and an ice cream parlor.

MGM Grand Adventures is their 33-acre theme park featuring 12 major attractions and rides like Grand Canyon Rapids and Deep Earth Exploration, the Dueling Pirates Stunt Spectacular, a magical Peking Circus revue, several other entertaining shows, traveling musicians and cartoon figures, nine themed areas (similar to Main Street at Disneyland) and many food outlets and retail shops. And for weary parents, a full-size riverboat restaurant complete with slot machines offers a little more sophisticated fun. General admission to the park is $15 for adults, $10 for kids 4 to 12 and $9 for seniors, or you can "get in for nothin,'" and pay $1 to $3 per event or ride.

But what about when Mom and Dad want to have a little fun on their own? Drop the kids, ages 3 to 16, off at the wonderful King Looey's Youth Activity Center. Four separate rooms cater to kids of different ages and those above 6 can sign up for guided excursions and trips.

The rates are reasonable, meals and snacks are available, the decor is bright and friendly, and the supervised activities run the gamut from playhouses, tumbling mats and puppets to Super Nintendo, foosball and mini pool tables to just plain hanging out with other kids. My 5-year-old son wanted to move in permanently.

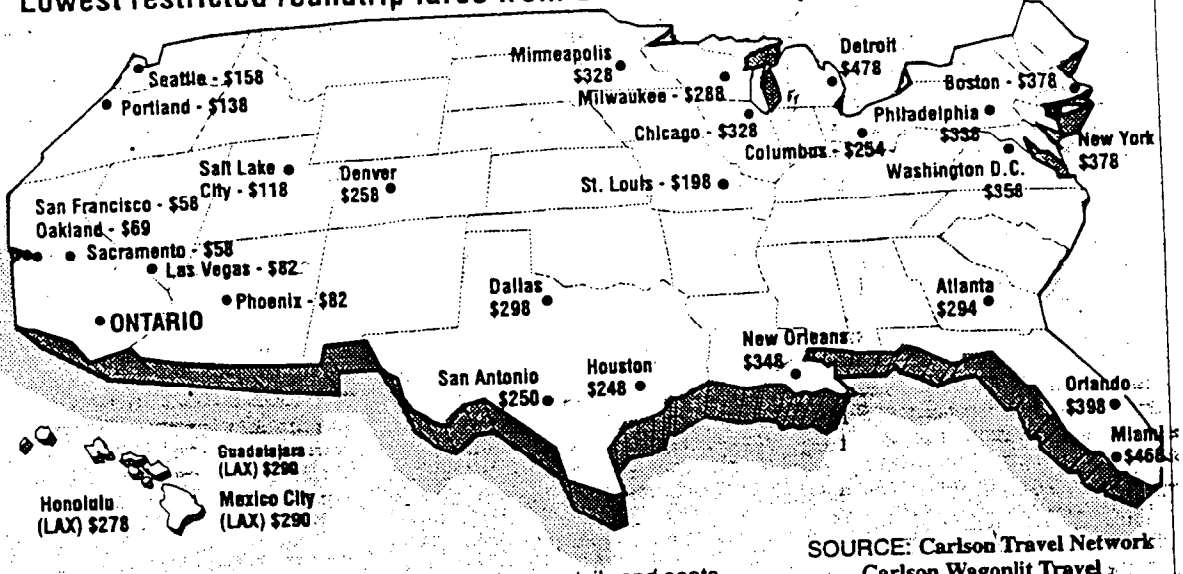
Like most larger hotels, babysitting services for infants and non-potty-trained tots is available by contacting management. For added convenience, most will provide mini-refrigerators, (call ahead in advance), for formula, milk and leftovers. Stroller rentals are widely available, too.

In addition, The Oz Midway and Arcade is one of the cleanest video arcades I've ever seen and features 33 carnival and video games. Even the MGM's pool, with a water level of 3½ feet throughout, is child-friendly, with a sand beach and gentle

TIC 2309

Air fares for less

Lowest restricted roundtrip fares from Ontario as of April 25, 1995*



SOURCE: Carlson Travel Network
Carlson Wagonlit Travel
Inland Empire Travel Bureau
ONTARIO

* Due to highly fluctuating fares, prices often change daily and seats are subject to availability. Advance ticket purchase and other restrictions may apply (including day of week and time of year).

waterfalls to frolic under.

Excalibur Hotel/Casino. The hands-down best not-to-miss show for kids is located inside this medieval-themed family resort that's complete with a moat, fire-breathing dragons, a Fantasy Faire full of carnival-style games and The Medieval Village of shops, restaurants and strolling entertainers.

Jousting knights, fair maidens, mystical Merlin, special effects, lasers, stunt riders and gallant horses transport visitors back to the early Middle Ages twice a "knight" in King Arthur's Tournament, a royal feast of sights and sounds sure to enthrall any age.

Kids (and adults) are encouraged to eat the medieval-style dinner with their hands (how often does this happen at home?) and become part of the show by cheering for their section's knight as he battles the other lavishly dressed knights with swords, shields and amazing horseback riding. The end of the show features a celebration with stunt riders, expert acrobats and lots of pageantry.

My son, who celebrated his fifth birthday at the tournament, was more than thrilled when the master of ceremonies announced his special day (and a lot of others as well) and allowed a bevy of children (including him) to pet the horses.

Tickets for the tournament sell out frequently but can be purchased up to six days in advance by calling (702) 597-7600. At $29.95 each, King Arthur's Tournament is spectacular entertainment, a hearty meal complete with dessert and, for one little knight wannabe, the grand highlight of his Las Vegas trip.

Other highlights of Excalibur are the Lipizzaner horse shows and a giant, fire-breathing dragon that moves from underneath its moat to battle the enemy.

Circus Circus. Not too long ago, Circus Circus was Vegas' only family resort. These days, the famed pink hotel/casino has joined the building boom with Grand Slam Canyon, its indoor amusement park housed beneath a pink adventure dome.

Patterned after the Southwest's canyon country, Grand Slam Canyon features the only double-loop, double-corkscrew indoor roller coaster in the United States, as well as a water flume ride, a laser tag game, several kiddie rides and dinosaurs that look and move in a convincing manner.

Rides are $3 each or an all-inclusive package, with wristband, is about $12. This park seemed popular with teens, too.

The following, which primarily aim themselves at adults, have family-friendly attractions.

Caesar's Palace's Forum Shops' Roman statues come to life to perform entertaining hourly shows full of lasers, pageantry and drama. Its stores and restaurants, such as Warner Bros. and Planet Hollywood, also welcome kids.

The Luxor has a Nile River Ride, virtual-reality center and arcade youngsters can enjoy.

Treasure Island's live pirate show, although exciting and spectacular, produces crushing crowds, so view it from across the street if you have tiny tots.

The Mirage's majestic white tigers prance about for free, but it costs $3 to see the dolphins.

Last, but not least, the biggest question: Are children allowed in the gaming areas? Yes, they can pass through, but no, Junior can't put his quarters in the slot machines to try to fatten up his piggy bank. If kids linger too long in the casinos, management will escort them out.

TIC 2310

Forbes

December 9, 1991

SECTION: FOLLOW-THROUGH; Pg. 12

LENGTH: 211 words

HEADLINE: Enter **Wynn**

BYLINE: HOWARD RUDNITSKY; EDITED BY EDWARD GILTENAN

BODY:
KIRK KERKORIAN'S MGM Grand and Circus Circus Enterprises are building huge theme casino/resorts to draw more middle-class families to Las Vegas. Kerkorian's $ 1 billion MGM Grand complex will have a movie-fantasy theme playing off popular films from the venerable Hollywood studio. Circus Circus' $ 290 million attraction, still unnamed, will be built around a science fiction theme inexplicably housed in an Egyptian pyramid (FORBES, *Sept. 30*).

Now Stephen **Wynn,** the able chairman of **Mirage Resorts,** is getting into this high stakes act. In October **Wynn** announced his ambitious plans to build Treasure Island, a 3,000-room, $ 300-million-plus hotel/casino with a pirate theme. Together, the three projects will increase the number of Las Vegas hotel rooms by at least 14%. They are slated to open within months of one another, in late 1993 through mid-1994.

Wynn's Treasure Island will dampen his rivals' hopes of having the mass-market casino idea all to themselves. But the biggest losers will likely be Las Vegas' smaller, plain vanilla casinos, which are already scrambling to survive in a glutted market. First Boston gaming analyst Daniel Lee thinks the new projects could further squeeze some of Vegas' poorly managed hotel/casinos.

Los Angeles Times

November 17, 1991, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: Travel; Part L; Page 1; Column 3; Travel Desk

LENGTH: 2662 words

HEADLINE: LAS VEGAS ERUPTS IN BARGAINS;
SIN CITY'S ATTEMPT TO LURE FAMILIES AND LOW-ROLLERS PRODUCESTHE LOWEST PRICES IN YEARS

BYLINE: By BARRY ZWICK, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:

In those glorious days when the Mob ran Las Vegas, life was cheap. Drinks were too. And meals and rooms. Why, they just gave them away.

Those glorious days, my friend, are back.

Two weeks ago, I saw the Folies Bergere at the Tropicana Hotel for $10.50. Twenty-five years ago, to see the same show, I had to pay $12.50.

Why so cheap?

I had a coupon. In fact, *everyone* in line had a coupon.

Discount coupons are a way of life in Las Vegas today. You'll get a pile of them in the mail two days after you make your hotel reservation for an air/hotel package. Otherwise, they'll be waiting for you at the front desk. The clerk at the airport car rental counter will hand you some more. They'll be stacked up in your hotel lobby.

Las Vegas is simply awash in discount coupons. Every day is like Thursday afternoon at Ralph's.

Some examples: Free admission to the antique car museum at the Imperial Palace, normally $3.75. Half-price on the Island Buffet at the Tropicana, already a dirt-cheap $3.95. Two for the price of one at the Liberace Museum, normally $6.50 a head. Five dollars off the $22.50 ticket price for Jeff Kutash's "Splash" at the Riviera. Free tickets to the "Viva Las Vegas" show at the Sands, normally $10. Free wine at the Dunes. Three free drinks and two free desserts at the Flamingo Hilton.

Las Vegas has always offered bargain brunches and, to patient gamblers, free drinks. But show discounts? Free shows? What has happened? Why now?

For one thing, Las Vegas has added 13,000 rooms in the last two years, including 4,032 at the Excalibur, which opened last June, and 3,049 at Steve **Wynn's** Mirage, which opened seven months earlier. Occupancy has dropped from 87.4% last year to 77.6% this year. As a result, Las Vegas hotels are giving away the store to fill all those rooms.

"All the new hotels have certainly keened the competition up," said Don Payne of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. "But in this quixotic market, every time you put 3,000 rooms up, and they say there's a surplus, the new hotel suddenly gets 90% occupancy."

Another factor is the economy. "The bargains you're talking about," Payne said, "are a reflection of our feeling on people's will to spend discretionary income. In other words, the recession."

Kathy Espin, who handles publicity for the Stardust, has a seasonal explanation: "This is our traditional (end-of-the-year) slump. People have social obligations elsewhere. Occupancy at all the hotels suffers, and we're pulling out all the stops."

Payne compares the present to the late '60s, "before the bean-counters took over. The new management decided that everything had to pay its own way, starting with the rooms. The one thing they kept was the free parking."

Coupon madness is raging at the best places. Even the posh Desert Inn is giving away coupons for free drinks at Jeff Kutash's "Showstopper," a brand-new show by Las Vegas' hottest choreographer.

But the biggest news right now is the bargains on air fares and room rates. Southwest Airlines introduced a $29 one-way air fare (from Burbank, Ontario or LAX) on Nov. 1. Southwest also offers air-and-hotel combinations for two nights for $69.

During weekdays, rooms at the Imperial Palace, the Excalibur and the Aladdin are down to $20 for a double. They're $30 at the Sahara and Circus Circus.

(A caveat: You must book three weeks in advance for the airline deals, about two weeks for the hotel discounts. For hotel reservations, use the numbers listed in the "Guidebook," or the ones you find in Sunday newspaper advertisements. Often, main hotel switchboards are not aware of these discounts. If there's a convention in town, you'll pay top dollar. A national convention of undertakers was here when I was, and I had to pay the full price of $89 for my room.)

Meal prices in Las Vegas, meanwhile, have hit Depression levels. Downtown, at Lady Luck, you can eat three buffet meals a day for a total of $8.89.

Las Vegas on $25 a day? You bet. And you'll have enough left over for nickel slots at the Riviera, 50-cent roulette at the Stardust and dollar craps at the Golden Nugget. Not to mention the best free show in town, the exploding volcano in front of the Mirage, which erupts every 15 minutes after sundown.

Does this tell us that the so-called "grind," or low-rollers, trade has taken over Las Vegas? Have senior citizens on bus tours replaced high-rollers as the mainstay of Las Vegas' business?

Step with us now into the casino of the Imperial Palace. Here, under a ceiling crawling with hideous bronze dragons, slot machines spread out as far as the eye can see. Two white-haired women sit side-by-side, feeding quarters to the machines. One, whose name tag says Thelma, is smoking. The other picks up a glass and takes periodic sips. "Can you believe it?" she asks. "They gave me a free drink and I'm not even a big gambler. I don't even know whether a full house beats five of a kind."

Outside, seniors pour out of three buses, and the Strip Trolley -- a hotel shuttle bus disguised as a tram -- discharges what looks like the vanguard of a nerd invasion from Caltech. The visitors carry their suitcases through the casino, jostling furious patrons, and take an elevator upstairs. Later, they will be chastised for standing over the blackjack tables with calculators in hand.

You'll have to go elsewhere to find the high rollers. Check out the baccarat tables at the four most expensive hotels in town -- the Desert Inn, Bally's, the Mirage and Caesars Palace. Few Americans are playing the high-stakes games these days. Males carrying Asian passports keep them going.

New games have been introduced as a result. A two-handed variation of poker called *pai gow* is everywhere.

Somewhere between the Mirage, at $99 a night (down from $130), currently the most expensive hotel in town, and the Imperial Palace, at $20, lies a great bargain

hunter's middle ground.

Circus Circus, always a good deal at $44, has lowered its rates to $30 per room, sleeping up to four people. Circus Circus pioneered the kid-friendly casino/hotel concept when it opened in 1968. The hotel, and the medieval-themed Excalibur it sired, represent the new Las Vegas, a city that Mayor Jan Laverty Jones wants to promote as a desert resort for the whole family. Late last month, Steve **Wynn** of the Golden Nugget and the Mirage announced that he, too, would be building a family-oriented hotel, with 3,000 rooms.

Circus Circus' upstairs midway, where kids are allowed to play unaccompanied by adults, features free circus acts, leaning to trapeze and high-wire artists, from 11 a.m. to midnight. Contortionist Rudolph Delmonte, so nimble he can lick any body part below his neck, draws big crowds. Look for mobs of kids playing carnival games and making silly faces in the fun house mirrors. While their parents are off gambling, the kids run back and forth, in and out, up and down the elevators. It's all free, whether you're a hotel guest or not.

Even kid-haters love the dinner buffet at Circus Circus, an incredible feast for under $3.99. Ten thousand people eat here every day, the hotel claims. The lines are long, but they move quickly. Friday is seafood night, with six seafood items among the 45 at the buffet. Flounder and cod, rarely seen at buffets, are here.

On your way out of the buffet, you'll be given a book of coupons.

Circus Circus has been such a success that its owners decided to build another theme hotel: the Excalibur. The Excalibur puts up nearly as many kids as Circus Circus. Its noon and 2 p.m. "Wonderful World of Horses" shows, starring the Royal Lippizaner stallions, are a big draw at $5.95. For rooms, too, the price is right: $20 per night between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The theme here is supposed to be Olde England, but the exterior is clearly modeled after a 19th-Century Bavarian castle. With 4,032 rooms, this is the largest resort hotel in the world. Excalibur draws older kids than Circus Circus, mostly teen-agers, and rather than running around in the casino they go jousting out in the parking lot.

For a more adult experience, the Tropicana is a good bet. To young, sophisticated Americans, the Tropicana has become what the Dunes was in the '60s. It's down from $89 a night to $55 now -- still no great bargain, but the food is: $3.95 for the breakfast and lunch Islander Buffet, $4.95 for supper.

Guests registering at the Tropicana, where I stayed, get a sheaf of discount coupons: half-price for the Folies Bergere, $2 off at the Java Java Room coffee shop and half-price at the Islander Buffet. With your half-price coupon, you get endless trips to the breakfast bar for $1.95 -- rows of tropical fruits, exotic omelets, seven kinds of doughnuts and something you'll never see at Circus Circus: unlimited soft drink refills.

And, when you cash in your half-price coupon, you get . . . two more coupons.

At the other end of town, the Golden Nugget, the AAA-rated four-diamond luxury king of downtown, is giving away its big Victorian rooms for $58 this month and $49 in December for two. We're talking about four-poster beds and expensive-looking antiques.

From Dec. 8-26, Southwest Airlines' packages will cost just $74 per person for two midweek nights at the Golden Nugget, with air fare.

Wynn spent millions redecorating the Golden Nugget. The lobby is lined with gleaming white marble. In the hotel and casino you'll find gold-plated elevators, vases, telephones, even slot machines. And a huge gold-plated Big Six wheel. You might expect to find the heavy hitters gambling here, but not necessarily. The opulent Golden Nugget is the home of nickel slots and dollar craps.

"We have dollar blackjack, too," said Alan Feldman, vice president of **Mirage Resorts,** Inc. "But we also have $100-minimum craps, and $100-minimum blackjack. We're one of the few downtown casinos with baccarat. We feel that part of the appeal of downtown is that it appeals to a wide variety of players. You never turn your back to the nickel slot player."

The busiest slots in the Golden Nugget face the buffet restaurant. This is where you wait for your number to be called, half an hour on Sunday. The Sunday champagne brunch, at $9.50 per person, would seem to be a big splurge by Las Vegas standards. But this is a four-plate, two-bowl, all-you-can-eat brunch. And beautiful to look at: smoked salmon, cherry cheesecake, fresh melon, gefilte fish, blintzes in strawberry syrup, French toast, Spanish omelets, roast beef, ham, turkey and shrimp salad.

The champagne is only Jacques Bonet, but you get vast quantities.

The brunch is offered all day Sunday. From 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. every night, the Golden Nugget sells complete steak dinners for $1.99.

At show time in the new, lean Las Vegas, the real bargains begin -- or end, depending on your tastes. Magic shows are steep and rarely discounted. Tickets for Siegfried and Roy at the Mirage start at $67.30.

But tickets for "Crazy Girls" at the Riviera -- 12 young women telling X-rated jokes and taunting males in the audience -- sell for only $9.95, including two drinks. The performers lip-sync to lewd tapes and dance topless, too. In fact, this is the raunchiest show in town.

Folies Bergere, in contrast, is topless for only a few minutes. This is Las Vegas' longest running show, 32 years old, and cheaper than ever . . . thanks to coupons. Depending on which coupon you use, the $21 two-cocktail show costs either $15 or $10.50.

How does the show look to someone who last saw it 25 years ago? Wonderful. The singing is better, the '50s songs are new, the comedian, Ray Fell, is much, much funnier. And you no longer have to slip somebody a $10 bill to get a front-row seat. Just get in line early.

The hottest ticket in town is "Enter the Night" at the Stardust, featuring Bobbie Berosini and his performing orangutans. At $33.25, this is no bargain by current Las Vegas standards. But if you stay at the Stardust between Dec. 1 and Jan. 30, your tickets are free. A double at the Stardust during this period will cost just $32 in the brand-new tower, $22 in the motor inn. The deal is good on weekends, but not on

New Year's Eve or Super Bowl weekend, Jan. 25-26. The Stardust will give guests 25 free raffle tickets on a 1992 Saturn from Dec. 15-25.

Visitors now rate hotels by the quality of their coupons. Of those hotels that willy-nilly hand out coupon books to all who ask, the Dunes is considered the worst and the Flamingo Hilton the best, with the Sands a close second.

You pick up your Dunes Funbook at the Promotions Desk. The coupons, except for the one for the free key chain, have strings attached. The Dunes will give you a free carafe of wine, but you have to buy dinner. They'll give you a free drink, but you have to buy a second one.

Not so at the Flamingo Hilton. Their free drinks are unconditionally free. You don't even have to be gambling.

The Sands gives you a high-quality coffee mug and free show tickets, but to get the hats and T-shirts you must bet $20 on a sporting event.

The Flamingo Hilton's coupon book will introduce you to Food Fantasy, their 24-hour coffee shop. Whether or not you take them up on their two-for-one hamburger and fries offer at $3.25, this deli/cafeteria is a cheerful relief when you've had enough buffets. Corn beef or pastrami sandwiches are $4.25.

These coupons exist, of course, to lure you into the hotel casinos. Las Vegas hotels are set up so that no matter where you wish to go, you must pass through the casino first. Thus, while enjoying a rock-bottom, low-budget vacation, you can easily lose your house.

GUIDEBOOK

Las Vegas

Here is a sampling of Vegas deals:

Bargain flights: America West flies from LAX to Las Vegas for $29 one way, provided tickets are purchased 21 days in advance. Call (800) 247-5692. Likewise Southwest Airlines, (800) 531-5601.

Air-hotel packages: Southwest Vacations, including air fare and two nights' lodging, begin at $69 for midweek stays; (800) 423-5683.

Delta Dream Vacations, including air fare, two nights' lodging and 24-hour Alamo subcompact, begin at $99 for midweek stays; (800) 872-7786.

Hotel specials: Aladdin, $20 per night, double occupancy. Address: 3667 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 634-3424.

Circus Circus, $30 per night, double occupancy. 2880 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 634-3450.

Excalibur, $20 per night, double occupancy. 3850 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 322-8687.

Imperial Palace, $20 per night, double occupancy. 3535 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 634-6441.

Sahara, $30 per night, double occupancy, includes show tickets and buffet breakfast. 2535 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 634-6666.

Stardust, $32 per night, double occupancy, in the new tower, or $22 in the motor inn from Dec. 1 to Jan. 30, excluding New Year's and Super Bowl weekends, includes show tickets. Available weekends. 3000 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 222-2946.

Meal deals:

Circus Circus for best supper buffet bargain, $3.99. 2880 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 634-3450.

Flamingo Hilton, Food Fantasy, two hamburgers and two orders of French fries with coupon available at the Funbook Desk, $3.25. 3555 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 732-2111.

Golden Nugget for best Sunday champagne brunch, all day, $9.50. 129 E. Fremont St.; (800) 634-3454.

Palace Station, winner of the Las Vegas Review-Journal's poll for best buffet and best breakfast, at $3.95 for breakfast, $4.95 for lunch, $7.95 for supper. 2411 W. Sahara Ave.; (800) 634-3101.

Tropicana Hotel, Islander Buffet, $3.95 breakfast and lunch, $4.95 supper. 3801 Las Vegas Blvd. South; (800) 634-4000.

- Freebies: The continuous circus acts at Circus Circus, 11 a.m. to midnight.

Free sample of your choice and free tour, Ethel M Chocolate Factory & Cactus Garden, 2 Cactus Garden Drive; (800) 634-6584.

For more information: Contact the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, 3150 S. Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nev. 89109, (702) 733-2323.

The Associated Press

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November 11, 1991, Monday, PM cycle

SECTION: Business News

LENGTH: 689 words

HEADLINE: Vegas Crapshoot: Gaming Capital For Adults Goes All Out to Woo Families

BYLINE: By ROBERT MACY, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS, Nev.

BODY:
Once upon a time, in this land of green felt and glizty neon, kids were persona non grata.

But the city that once prided itself in being a Disneyland strictly for adults is changing dramatically.

Some of its most successful players are betting billions that the future lies with families as well as with the coveted high rollers who built the town.

Last month, two of the city's gaming giants announced plans for $ 1.3 billion in new family-themed projects.

And on Thursday, Circus Circus Enterprises Inc., a $ 1.7 billion gaming empire built on the thesis that Vegas could be a family-kind-of-town, is poised to announce another $ 300 million project.

Circus Circus chairman William Bennett promised after he opened the $ 300 million, 4,000-room Excalibur Hotel in June of 1990 that he had a few more ideas up his sleeve.

That hotel was built like a castle and complete with court jesters and friendly dragons.

Bennett said the new venture will still cater to families, though it will be more lavish.

"We're using a lot of people who do work with Disney," Bennett said, declining to disclose the theme or location of the new project. "We're getting into the big leagues, and getting into the big bucks."

Mirage Resorts chairman Steve **Wynn** surprised the industry late last month by announcing plans for a $ 300 million family-themed resort to be known as Treasure Island, north of his Mirage Hotel.

Earlier in the month, billionaire Kirk Kerkorian broke ground for his $ 1 billion MGM Grand Theme Park and a 5,000-room hotel that will be the world's largest.

By wooing families, developers also hope to build more future business. Teen-age family members, after getting a taste of Vegas, may come back when they can legally gamble.

Nevada law prohibits anyone under the age of 21 from gambling or being in areas where gaming equipment is located.

One thing speeding the metamorphosis of Las Vegas into a family resort destination is a shifting public perception of gambling, which in recent years has shed much of its sinful connotation.

In the past, when casinos zeroed in on freewheeling high rollers, families felt they

were unwelcome, gambling industry officials say.

Robert Maxey, president and chief executive of Kerkorian's MGM Grand Inc., said those days are gone. He sees the family unit as the fastest growing market segment in a city that draws 21 million visitors a year.

If there is one person who helped start the evolution of the family market in this gaming capital, it is Bennett, 66, who bought the ailing Circus Circus resort in 1974 along with partner William Pennington.

Circus Circus offered a mezzanine midway and circus acts to entertain the kids while Mom and Dad gambled downstairs.

The idea worked.

The parent Circus Circus Enterprises now owns seven properties in Nevada with 11,200 rooms. That contrasts with a total of 8,100 rooms for Atlantic City's 12 major hotels.

For the fiscal year ending Jan. 31 the company reported revenue of $ 692 million, up from $ 522.3 million the previous year. His knack for tapping the family market in a gaming environment has left Bennett with a fortune estimated in excess of $ 500 million.

Kerkorian also is no stranger to Las Vegas. He built the former MGM Grand, now Bally's, and the former International Hotel, now the Las Vegas Hilton. Both were the largest hotels in the world when built.

He calls the new hotel and theme park, which will have a Wizard of Oz theme, his greatest undertaking yet.

Wynn got a foot in the family market with his $ 730 million Mirage Hotel, which opened two years ago this month. The resort includes a white tiger habitat and a dolphin lagoon.

The Mirage rooms average about $ 130 a night, while **Wynn's** new Treasure Island will be more competitive with Circus Circus and Excalibur - offering rooms in the $ 40 range.

What does Bennett think about the new players in the family market?

"Everybody all of a sudden wants a piece of our pie," he said earlier this summer. "Everybody all of a sudden is trying to become Circus Circus, to mimic our modus operandi. That's okay. It's out there for the asking."

Chicago Tribune

View Related Topics

November 3, 1991, Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: REAL ESTATE; Pg. 2J; ZONE: C

LENGTH: 341 words

HEADLINE: Mirage plans family resort in Las Vegas

BYLINE: By Robert Macy,

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
Mirage Resorts Inc. said last week it will build a $300 million, 3,000-room family resort, the latest Las Vegas casino company to turn its attention away from high rollers in the quest for new business.

Mirage chairman Steve **Wynn** donned a pirate's cap and coat as he announced plans for a new theme destination resort to be named Treasure Island.

"We said when we opened the Mirage it would take a couple of years to get things squared up" before moving on to new projects, **Wynn** told a news conference. "Well, here we are. It's time."

Wynn opened the $730 million, 3,000-room Mirage in November, 1989, amid skepticism whether the resort could make it financially. The hotel has exceeded projections and is, **Wynn** says, the highest grossing hotel in the world.

While the Mirage caters to high rollers, the new project will focus on families, **Wynn** said. It becomes the latest Las Vegas resort to target the family market.

Billionaire Kirk Kerkorian broke ground earlier this month on a $1 billion MGM Grand theme park and 5,000-room hotel.

Circus Circus Enterprises Inc., which has made a fortune catering to families here, is expected to announce a major new family-theme resort in the next few weeks.

"We believe there's a great deal left to do in this market," **Wynn** said, referring to the growing number of families among the 21 million people who visit this gaming mecca annually.

Wynn said the rooms at the new property would be in the $40-a-night range, compared to $130 at the adjacent Mirage and $70 at the company's downtown property, the Golden Nugget.

The new property will be built on a parking lot north of the Mirage on the Las Vegas Strip.

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer, with completion set for mid-1994. The new hotel will employ 3,000 people.

Wynn said Mirage officials had been working five months on the new project.

"It will be a theme destination resort," he said. "We plan to bring the same level of imagination to this project that has characterized our work in the past."

Los Angeles Times

October 30, 1991, Wednesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Business; Part D; Page 2; Column 3; Financial Desk

LENGTH: 571 words

HEADLINE: MIRAGE RESORTS PLANS FAMILY HOTEL IN VEGAS;
GAMING: THE $300-MILLION TREASURE ISLAND COMPLEX IS EXPECTED TO INTENSIFY COMPETITION IN NEVADA'S BIGGEST ENTERTAINMENT OASIS.

BYLINE: By GEORGE WHITE, TIMES STAFF WRITER

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

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

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

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

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

The **Mirage Resorts** announcement is another sign of changing times in Las Vegas, said Manny Cortez, executive director of Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

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

However, the building boom is expected to create a competitive shakeout in Las Vegas. The city has about 77,000 hotel rooms, a 20% increase over the past two years. With just the announced expansion plans, Las Vegas would have an additional

10,000 rooms by 1994, said Willard Brown, a gaming industry analyst at Dean Witter Reynolds in New York.

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

However, some casinos are already feeling the competitive pressure. The hotel occupancy rate thus far in 1991 is 80%, compared to 86% for the same period in 1990. Casino revenue growth in 1991 is about 3%, compared to about 10% a year earlier, said Walter Tyminski, an industry analyst who contributes to Resort Management Report, a trade journal published in Midlothian, Va.

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

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

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

The New York Times

View Related Topics

October 30, 1991, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section D; Page 10; Column 3; Financial Desk

LENGTH: 766 words

HEADLINE: Market Place;
Casinos Are Not Such a Gamble

BYLINE: By Roger Cohen

BODY:
GAMBLING industry stocks tend to be regarded as a big gamble themselves. High leverage, high fixed costs and the unpredictablility of high rollers all contribute to the uncertainties of an intensely competitive sector whose growth has long been curtailed because gambling is allowed in relatively few places. Only one pure gambling company, Circus Circus Enterprises, has an investment-grade rating from

Standard & Poor's.

But although the sector will never offer blue-chip credentials, there are encouraging signs. Analysts cite the growing popularity of gambling, its widening acceptance, the resilience of the Nevada economy and the successful digestion of a number of new casinos.

"We believe that the gaming industry will continue to expand and be increasingly accepted as part of the general entertainment business," said Robert Nelson, a senior vice president at S.& P. "This should offer continued growth opportunities for the major gaming companies."

The prospects seem brighter in Nevada than Atlantic City, which is hurt by tighter regulations, overcapacity, the recession in the Northeast and the heavy indebtedness of several companies.

Donald J. Trump's properties, Resorts Casino Hotel and the Pratt Hotel Corporation's Sand's casino are all heavily leveraged. But after a terrible 1990, when the 12 Atlantic City casinos suffered a total net loss of $265.5 million, an upturn appears to have started in the second half of this year. Year-on-year revenues rose substantially in July and August.

Richard J. Byrne, an analyst at Merrill Lynch, said the improvement in Atlantic City should be bolstered by a move to 24-hour gambling on weekends, the concession of greater space to slot machines, a gradual improvement in the region's economy and an improved basic substructure for the city.

New gambling venues on riverboats and Indian reservations as well as in South Dakota are making gambling more widely accessible. Although this means new competition for Atlantic City and Nevada, the growth also offers new opportunities to established companies and should increase the appetite for gambling around the country.

"The spread of legalized gambling could garner us oppotunities beyond Nevada soon," said Glenn Schaeffer, the president of Circus Circus.

Circus Circus, whose annual increase in earnings per share has averaged about 20 percent over the last five years, describes itself as a "merchant of fun." Having recently built one enormous hotel-casino in Las Vegas, the mock-medieval Excalibur, it is about to announce plans for what it calls another "one-of-a-kind entertainment megastore." No wonder: operating cash flow at the Excalibur was about $103 million on revenues of $316 million in its first year of operation.Mr. Schaeffer is impassioned in his presentation of gambling as a form of reasonably priced family vacation entertainment, and his company's success suggests that this portrayal will become increasingly pervasive fairly soon.

Already, Kirk Kerkorian's MGM Grand Inc. has embarked on a $1 billion investment in Las Vegas that will combine a theme park and a casino in the most expensive test yet of family-style gambling. The Hilton Hotels Corporation, meanwhile, has long been successful in Las Vegas through a combination of its Flamingo Hilton, which has mid-market family appeal, and the up-market Hilton Las Vegas, which caters to the high rollers.

The world of high rollers, however, has found its most extravagant expression in Las Vegas at the Mirage Hotel of **Mirage Resorts** Inc., where many Asian players have been gambling as much as $12 million an hour on baccarat. So high are the stakes that Steve **Wynn,** the chief executive of Mirage, warned in his company's last annual report that the loss of the "most significant" of these players could have "a material adverse effect" on Mirage.

He is deleveraging the company, meanwhile, with the cash flow from the Mirage and said that he had already retired about $250 million of debt this year, bringing the company's borrowing down to $850 million. Promus Companies, with properties in Atlantic City and Las Vegas, has also been paying down debt.

With Las Vegas continuing to defy the recession -- its revenues rose 13 percent to $4.04 billion in the fiscal year ended June 31 -- the companies with a strong presence there appear well placed. These include Circus Circus, Hilton Hotels, Mirage and Caesars World Inc. Competitive pressures, however, are likely to be intense as new and ever more extravagant projects are developed to appeal to the family gambler of the 1990's.

The Associated Press

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October 29, 1991, Tuesday, AM cycle

SECTION: Business News

LENGTH: 469 words

HEADLINE: Mirage Announces New Family-Theme Resort

BYLINE: By ROBERT MACY, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
Mirage Resorts Inc. said Tuesday it will build a $ 300 million, 3,000-room family resort here, the latest Las Vegas casino company to turn its attention away from high rollers in the quest for new business.

Mirage Chairman Steve **Wynn** donned a pirate's cap and coat as he announced plans for a new themed destination resort to be named "Treasure Island."

"We said when we opened the Mirage it would take a couple of years to get things squared up" before moving on to new projects, **Wynn** told a news conference attended by board members and members of the investment community. "Well, here we are. It's time."

Wynn opened the $ 730 million, 3,000-room Mirage in November 1989 amid skepticism whether the resort could make it financially. The hotel has exceeded projections and is, **Wynn** says, the highest grossing hotel in the world.

While the Mirage caters to high rollers, the new project will focus on families, **Wynn** said. It becomes the latest Las Vegas resort to target the family market.

Billionaire Kirk Kerkorian broke ground earlier this month on a $ 1 billion MGM Grand theme park and 5,000-room hotel.

Circus Circus Enterprises Inc., which has made a fortune catering to families here, is expected to announce a major new family-themed resort in the next few weeks.

"We believe there's a great deal left to do in this market," **Wynn** said, referring to the growing number of families among the 21 million people who visit this gaming mecca annually.

Wynn said the rooms at the new property would be in the $ 40-a-night range, compared to $ 130 at the adjacent Mirage and $ 70 at the company's downtown property, the Golden Nugget.

The new property will be built on a parking lot north of the Mirage on the Las Vegas Strip.

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer, with completion set for mid-1994. The new hotel will employ 3,000 people.

Wynn said Mirage officials had been working five months on the new project.

"It will be a theme destination resort," he said. "We plan to bring the same level of imagination to this project that has characterized our work in the past."

Wynn said gambling "in itself is not that exciting anymore," with numerous states now offering some type of legalized gaming.

"The expectations of people are so much higher," he said, and resorts must now offer more than just slot machines and table games.

His company, which changed its name earlier this year from Golden Nugget Inc. to **Mirage Resorts** Inc., reported Monday its net income nearly tripled for the third quarter ending Sept. 30 despite a 10 percent drop in revenues.

The Mirage, complete with erupting volcano and white tiger habitat, opened in November of 1989. It has since become a premier attraction on the glitzy Strip, surpassing Hoover Dam as Southern Nevada's No. 1 tourist attraction.

PR Newswire

October 29, 1991, Tuesday

SECTION: Entertainment, Television, and Culture

LENGTH: 261 words

HEADLINE: CIRQUE DU SOLEIL TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT NORTH AMERICAN HOME AT THE MIRAGE LAS VEGAS

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS, Oct. 29

BODY:
Executives from Cirque du Soleil and The Mirage today announced that the famed circus will establish a permanent North American home at the Las Vegas resort.

Stephen A. **Wynn,** chairman of **Mirage Resorts** Inc., announced that the company has entered into a long-term agreement with Cirque du Soleil. The premiere performance of Cirque's highly acclaimed "Nouvelle Experience" will take place on Nov. 22, 1992, to commemorate the third anniversary of The Mirage.

"From the beginning, we have sought to create a sense of magic at The Mirage. I can't think of a better way to expand the wonder and thrill of The Mirage than with Cirque due Soleil," **Wynn** said at a joint news conference.

"It's a major step in the history of Cirque du Soleil," remarked Daniel Gauthier, Cirque's president. "For many years we have been searching for a 'home' in Las Vegas. We are extremely pleased to have found it at The Mirage. They offer us the same high standard of creativity, vision and sense of entrepreneurship as we have always strived to achieve within our organization."

Widely praised as an extraordinary experience which combines traditional elements of circus and theatrical flair and innovation, Cirque du Soleil has captivated millions of theater-goers in North America and Europe. Cirque's influence is considered a model for other circuses around the world and has, for millions, redefined the meaning of "Circus." CONTACT: Jean David or Claude Bergeron of Cirque du Soleil, 514-522-2324; or Alan Feldman of The Mirage, 702-791-7111

United Press International

October 29, 1991, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Financial

LENGTH: 390 words

HEADLINE: Mirage announces plans for new Vegas resort

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS, Nev.

BODY:
Mirage Resorts Inc., in a move to challenge MGM Grand's plans for a $1 billion family resort, announced Tuesday it will build a competing "Treasure Island" hotel-theme park project.

The Mirage's project, to be built adjacent to its lavish $730 million Mirage Hotel, will have more than 3,000 guest rooms. Construction is scheduled to begin next summer

and be completed in mid-1994.

Mirage's announcement comes three weeks after financier Kirk Kerkorian held groundbreaking ceremonies for the MGM Grand, also due to open in 1994. That resort will include an entrance with an 88-foot-high Leo the Lion, the world's largest hotel at 5,007 rooms, the world's largest casino and theme park designed to resemble a Hollywood movie studio back lot.

The move by **Mirage Resorts** shows the growing belief that Las Vegas' future may lie in repositioning itself as a theme-park destination, much like Orlando, Fla., home of competing attractions run by Walt Disney and Universal Studios.

Mirage Resorts opened the 3,054-room Mirage Hotel in November 1989 and made operating profits of $187.6 million on revenues of $660.5 million in its first year. "This hotel is the biggest success in the history of the world," said Steven **Wynn,** the company's flamboyant chief executive.

The hotel includes a $13 million erupting volcano and a 20,000-gallon aquarium containing exotic fish. Industry analysts say the hotel owes its success in part to its ability to attract high rollers, particularly from Asia, with special suites that include their own gardens, statuary, swimming pools and putting greens.

Another Las Vegas mega-hotel, the 4,032-room Excalibur, has also racked up considerable success since it opened in June 1990 at a cost of $300 million to its parent Circus Circus Enterprises Inc. The hotel, heavily themed toward medieval merrymaking, had estimated operating profits of about $103 million on revenues of $316 million.

In a separate announcement Tuesday, **Mirage Resorts** said the critically acclaimed Cirque du Soleil will establish a permanent North American home at the Las Vegas resort.

"From the beginning, we have sought to create a sense of magic at The Mirage," **Wynn** said at a news conference. "I can't think of a better way to expand the wonder and thrill of The Mirage than with Cirque due Soleil."

The New York Times

View Related Topics

July 11, 1991, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 21; Column 1; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 661 words

HEADLINE: Pay-Per-View Politics

BYLINE: By Les Guthman; Les Guthman is a television producer.

BODY:
There it was, buried at the end of a newspaper article about the $50 million pay-per-view television special starring boxers Mike Tyson and Donovan ("Razor") Ruddock.

The idea came from an unlikely source -- or not so unlikely, the more you thought about it.

A Las Vegas impresario, Steve **Wynn,** chairman of **Mirage Resorts,** which sponsored the multimillion-dollar bonanza, told a reporter there was nothing standing in the way of a colossal $100 million pay-per-view broadcast except the absence of an event that could galvanize a national TV audience. "Election night!" Mr. **Wynn** said. "That would be a great pay-per-view event!"

After all the cynical hand wringing by news executives, the large-scale layoffs, the headlong retreat from journalistic responsibility, here was a proposal that could rescue the network news divisions.

Almost 1.4 million people paid $34.95 to local cable companies to watch the Tyson-Ruddock match at home. Presumably there would be a larger audience for the networks' election night coverage in 1992. Each network would offer a card of anchor heavyweights worthy of the $34.95.

If five million households signed up, several million fewer than the number who watch Peter Jennings each evening on "World News Tonight," ABC's revenues would be about $175 million -- for one night's effort. That is more than half of the ABC News budget for an entire year. Based on the size of the audiences of the four evening news shows, CBS would reap about $155 million for its election night special, NBC $145 million and CNN about $15 million.

NBC News could drop its plans to close most of its domestic bureaus and merge them with local news operations. CBS News could end its four-year siege of layoffs. Ted Koppel's "Nightline" could end its preoccupation with ratings and regain its crown as TV's best news program.

News purists would argue that putting election night on pay-per-view would set a bad precedent. It might herald an era of pay-per-view news.

If the Tyson-Ruddock price of $34.95 is too steep for regular campaign coverage, drop it to the price of a movie ticket, $7.50. A single primary night special, with a meager rating of 3 (almost unheard off in network prime time) would bring CBS $21 million. That is only the beginning. The primary season lasts from February to June.

Two nights of coverage during the Democratic and Republican National Conventions would bring each network a potential purse of $180 million based on the 1988 audiences of about six million homes each.

NBC News would not have to close its bureau in Miami and cover Latin America from the local news desk at KNBC in Los Angeles or with inexperienced freelance reporters. Charles Kuralt could stop worrying that "Sunday Morning" might be cancelled.

Politics aside, how about "60 Minutes" on pay-per-view? Mike Wallace and Morley Safer surely have more drawing power than Mike Tyson and Razor Ruddock. Don Hewitt, executive producer of "60 Minutes," far outclasses boxing promoter Don King as a prime time showman par excellence. If one-fourth of the 19 million households that watch "60 Minutes" subscribed to the "Hewitt P.-P.-V. Network" (a future CBS subsidiary?) paying each week the cost of a MacDonald's "Happy Meal" ($3.08) to

receive the nation's most popular news program, CBS would gross $14.6 million a show, or $380 million over 26 weeks -- a run that would put to shame even this year's blockbuster movie, "Dances With Wolves," which grossed $176 million after 32 weeks.

If Hewitt P.-P.-V. really caught on and all 19 million viewer households signed up, revenues could reach as high as $59 million a week, or $1.5 billion (not counting reruns).

Perhaps Steve **Wynn** was only joking when he suggested broadcasting election night on pay-per-view TV. It is a measure of how far we have permitted the erosion of our concept of public responsibility in broadcasting that his proposal would be taken seriously, even for a moment.

Los Angeles Times

June 27, 1991, Thursday, Home Edition

SECTION: Business; Part D; Page 1; Column 2; Financial Desk

LENGTH: 1407 words

HEADLINE: THE WINNER IS . . . PAY-PER-VIEW TV;
MARKETING HITTING NEW PEAKS IN THE TYSON-RUDDOCK MATCH

BYLINE: By THOMAS S. MULLIGAN, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
If Donovan (Razor) Ruddock should nestle into the canvas Friday night with the encouragement of a short, crisp jab from Mike Tyson, the overhead camera will show him sprawled on a huge Budweiser logo on the ring mat.

It may be a priceless shot from an aesthetic standpoint but, like everything else involved in a big-time boxing match, it definitely has a price: It's costing Anheuser-Busch about $750,000 to put its premium trademark there.

If it *can* be sold at this fight, it's being sold -- right down to the National Anthem, which will be sung by Peabo Bryson in a performance that his employer, Columbia Records, is promoting aggressively.

Joked Scott Kurnit, president of Showtime Entertainment Television, a partner in the pay-per-view TV promotion: "We've got to figure out a way to get the fighters to wear more than boxing trunks so you can fit more logos on."

The logos and advertising tie-ins have long been standard on a top-flight boxing show. But what makes Friday's contest stand out is that it represents the latest stage in the evolution of pay-per-view TV. Virtually every element of the promotion is aimed at boosting the pay-per-view audience.

Nobody contends that Tyson versus Ruddock represents the pinnacle of fistic art. It just happens to be the top attraction available at a time when pay-per-view TV is

finally blossoming.

Pay-per-view sales will account for at least two-thirds -- and possibly as much as three-quarters -- of the event's gross revenue. Promoter Don King predicted that the pay-per-view draw will be 1.9 million households. At the $34.95 suggested price, that would be $66 million. All other revenue sources, including the live gate, total about $20 million. Even if King were off by 400,000 households, Friday's contest would still be the richest pay-per-view event ever.

(The April bout between heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield and George Foreman holds the record, which its promoters, Time-Warner's TVKO pay-per-view network, put at 1.49 million households and $55 million gross. Kurnit, a rival, claims that TVKO's numbers are inflated and the real draw was 1.3 million homes and $48 million gross.)

Steve **Wynn,** the Vegas impresario who built the Mirage, the huge hotel-casino where Friday's fight is being staged, says telecommunications technology has ushered in "the Age of the Promoter." With pay-per-view TV now able to reach 19 million households via cable, the broadcast networks no longer run all the big shows. Anybody with an event and the relative pittance it costs to rent satellite transmission hardware can sell it to the world.

Still, even in the Age of the Promoter, it seems odd that the most highly evolved member of the species would be the hyperbolic, electric-haired Don King.

"Is Tyson's insatiable lust for women taking his mind off Razor Ruddock?" King screamed into a TV camera Monday, playing off a USA Today report that referred colorfully to Tyson's "raging libido."

"Is the fury gone?" King screamed, parroting the headline on the cover of last week's Sports Illustrated. "All questions will be answered Friday!" King screamed. "King Vision Pay Per View! Ask your local cable operator!"

For several hours a day all this week, for talk shows, sports and news programs nationwide, King has been screaming the same message -- give or take a few denunciations of the envy-haunted rivals who are always plotting to do him dirt.

Yes, King is a throwback to the carnival barker, but he has Mike Tyson, today's most bankable fighter, and he has refined a new kind of barter system to help drive his pay-per-view events.

If you want a piece of this fight, don't pay King in coin, pay him in air time. Of the approximately $10 million worth of promotion that King is sinking into Friday's event, less than $3 million comes out of his pocket, he said. The rest is barter.

Thus, the $750,000 that Anheuser-Busch pays to put the red-and-white Budweiser "bow tie" on the ring mat and numerous other camera-strategic positions around the arena is not in cash -- it's in TV commercials that promote the fight. As the nation's biggest sports advertiser, Anheuser-Busch is in a fine position to work that way. It simply substitutes Tyson-Ruddock ads for some of the dozens of beer ads it airs every day.

(Such barter dealing becomes even more crucial in the fall and early winter, when

the weekend TV schedule is crowded with football and basketball and the choicest ad time has already been snapped up by sports-hungry advertisers. The King of Beers always has plenty of spots that can be traded.)

Similarly, when ABC bought the rights to broadcast the fight on a delayed basis, it paid in promo dollars, not green paper. ABC has already aired a couple of Tyson-Ruddock features on its regular sports programs, and it is also chipping in commercials, King said.

Casio, the electronics maker, contributed cable TV commercials in exchange for its designation as "official television timekeeper."

The ad campaign is focused on cable TV because that's where the highest concentration of likely pay-per-view subscribers -- male sports fans 18 to 49 -- can be found, according to Showtime's Kurnit. But King said he likes to have ads on the broadcast networks, too, because they lend "credibility" to events carried by their younger cable cousins.

And what of the product being sold?

Tyson tenderized Ruddock pretty well last March in their first meeting, which was stopped in the seventh round on a controversial ruling by the referee.

"Ruddock was losing but he hadn't lost," said an employee of the Mirage, which also hosted that fight. It's a key distinction, as that modest suggestion of unfairness has been leveraged into a big-money rematch. When the technical knockout was called, Ruddock was alert enough to stare angrily into a ringside camera and mouth the question: "What?" That video sequence forms the backbone of the ad campaign now being flogged coast to coast.

Since the first Tyson-Ruddock fight last March, the "addressable universe" of homes that can be reached by pay-per-view has expanded by 1.5 million, Kurnit said.

Professional sports leagues -- especially the National Football League -- are also trying to figure out how to cash in. An indication of the potential was the great success of the Stanley Cup hockey playoffs as a regional pay-per-view event in Minnesota, where the underdog North Stars were a finalist.

"It only gets bigger," said Shelly Finkel, a New York City music and boxing promoter.

Wynn, chairman of **Mirage Resorts** Inc., gets all excited about pay-per-view's potential. **Wynn** is not a partner in the pay-per-view end of Tyson-Ruddock II -- his profit comes primarily from the live gate -- but he learned that side of the business by promoting a heavyweight title bout between Holyfield and James (Buster) Douglas at the Mirage last fall.

Tyson and King will split about 55% of the total take from pay-per-view, with the rest going to the local cable operators, **Wynn** said. King's expenses are unknown, because King isn't telling how much he guaranteed Tyson, Ruddock and the other fighters rounding out the program. Still, several people close to the event say that King could turn a profit with only half of the 1.9 million pay-per-view households that he expects.

In his office at the Mirage on Monday, **Wynn** mused that the only thing standing in the way of hundred-million-dollar, single-night profits is the lack of a truly galvanizing event, something that would draw women and men, young and old.

"Election night!" **Wynn** exclaimed. "That would be a *great* pay-per-view event!"

Boxing: Slicing the Pie
Pay-per-view TV is now the top source of revenue in a big-time boxing event, such as Friday's Tyson-Ruddock rematch. The chart, based on interviews with people involved in the fight, shows roughly where the money comes from . The live gate figure assumes a near sellout of the 16,000 -seat arena. The $45-million pay-per-view figure assumes that 1.3 million households buy the event at $34.95 apiece-a conservative estimate. Promoter Don King predicts 1.9 million households. If he's right, add another $21 million.
Gross revenue: $65.0 million
Live gate, $8.5 million: 13.1%
Closed circuit TV, $1.0 million: 1.5%
Foreign TV rights, $3.5 million: 5.4%
Delayed broadcast rights, $4.0 million: 6.2%
Advertising sponsorship, $2.0 million: 3.1%
Merchandising, $1.0 million: 1.5%

Business Wire

January 17, 1991, Thursday

DISTRIBUTION: Business Editors

LENGTH: 335 words

HEADLINE: Stephen **Wynn** elected chairman and chief executive officer of Hollywood Park subject to shareholder/regulatory approval

DATELINE: INGLEWOOD, Calif.

BODY:
The board of directors of Hollywood Park Operating Co. Thursday announced that subject to the election of management's slate of directors at the shareholder meeting on Feb. 18 and the obtaining of regulatory approvals in California and Nevada, it has appointed of Stephen A. **Wynn** as chairman and chief executive officer, and that **Wynn** has agreed to assume such positions.

The board's action came at the recommendation of Marjorie L. Everett, Hollywood Park Operating Co.'s current chairman and chief executive officer.

Wynn is chairman, president and principal shareholder of Golden Nugget Inc., which owns and operates the Golden Nugget Casino and Hotel in downtown Las Vegas, The **Mirage Resort** on the Las Vegas Strip and the Golden Nugget Casino in Laughlin, Nev.

"I hope Hollywood Park will soon reap the benefit of Mr. **Wynn's** remarkable creativity and talent for marketing and management," Everett said. "If he is able to accept the appointment, he promises an extraordinary future for Hollywood Park, to

the great benefit of our shareholders and patrons."

Wynn was named president and chairman of the board of Golden Nugget Inc. in 1973. He transformed the small downtown casino into an elegant resort/hotel.

Wynn oversaw the design and construction of the Golden Nugget Casino and Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J. in 1980. Although it was the smallest casino in the city, it quickly became the most profitable and dominated the market. The property was sold to Bally Manufacturing Corp. in 1987.

Wynn and Golden Nugget Inc.'s most recent project is The Mirage, a destination resort with a tropical theme which has captured the imagination of visitors to Las Vegas. The mirage has set all-time industry records for gaming and non-gaming revenues and is considered an unqualifed success by industry analysts.

Forbes

October 29, 1990

SECTION: PERSONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 146

LENGTH: 862 words

HEADLINE: Personal links

BYLINE: By Evan; McGlinn; Edited by William G. Flanagan

HIGHLIGHT:
Putting your own golf course in your backyard is one way of avoiding the hassles of waiting to tee off.

BODY:
SHOULD PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH feel the sudden urge to get in a quick game of golf whenever he's in California, he need merely pop over to his friend Walter Annenberg's 205-acre Sunnylands estate in Rancho Mirage. Annenberg has his own private 18-hole course at Sunnylands. (He also has a 3-holer at his East Coast home in Wynnewood, Pa., on Philadelphia's Main Line.)

Closer to the White House, the President could drop in for a round at John Kluge's house. Kluge doesn't play much golf himself, but he does have an 18-hole personal course on his 10,000-acre Albemarle estate in Charlottesville, Va. The 6,084-yard, par 70 course was designed by Arnold Palmer.

The half dozen or so personal 18-hole courses that exist around the U.S. are golfers' fantasies. Imagine never having to make a tee time or getting bogged down by a slow foursome or having to let others play through. Never having to replace divots. Taking ten minutes to line up a putt.

One could include in that fantasy list: Never having to pay a $ 100 greens fee. But in fact, of course, the costs of a personal course are astronomical. Leave aside the expense of the real estate needed (a professional-quality course requires at least 200 acres). Just the staff, equipment and maintenance involved can run $ 1 million a year (*see box*).

The most famous private course in the U.S. is Annenberg's Sunnylands links, built in 1964. The 5,869-yard, par 73 course is a lush oasis in the middle of the Coachella Valley desert. The well-guarded compound has long been a presidential favorite -- Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan and Bush have all played here.

Probably the oldest private course is the one at the Rockefeller estate in Pocantico Hills, N.Y., near the Hudson River. Originally built in 1901, the 5,673-yard, par 70 course was redesigned in the 1930s by the renowned design firm of Toomey & Flynn, which also redesigned Soughampton's majestic Shinnecock Hills Golf Club on New York's Long Island, where the 1986 U.S. Open was held.

The newest personal course -- and easily the most expensive yet built -- is Shadow Creek, in Las Vegas. Completed a year ago, it is the brainchild of Stephen **Wynn,** the chairman and chief executive of Golden Nugget, Inc. The course is near The **Mirage Resort,** but none of the hotel's guests gets to play it unless **Wynn** gives the okay. High rollers, including many Asians whom the Mirage has cultivated, often get that nod.

With a price tag estimated at over $ 30 million, Shadow Creek is a 7,090-yard, par 72 Shangri-la in the desert. Tom Fazio, the designer, recreated the feel of the northern courses by planting 13,000 mature trees in 3 million cubic yards of soil -- quite a feat. Most new courses require only 500,000 yards of soil and roughly 500 trees. Fazio also built numerous waterfalls and one mile of creek. Rarely can another golfer be seen on another hole -- but, then again, only a handful of foursomes are allowed each day. **Wynn,** himself an avid player, oversaw the design of the course.

Private courses have been designed by the likes of Fazio, Robert Trent Jones Sr., Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. But country singer Kenny Rogers decided he'd do it himself when he put a course on his 1,200-acre spread in Colbert, Ga., just east of Athens. What started out as a simple practice hole in his backyard is today a full 18-hole, 6,500-yard, par 72 course complete with waterfalls, brooks and bridges.

But as a course designer, Rogers had to work the kinks out the hard way. For example, his 16th and 17th holes had improper drainage: After every heavy rain fish from the ponds would wash up on the greens. Rogers (who plays with an 11 handicap) now has a complex system of pumps and drains that keep all the brooks and ponds at the proper level.

"If you design a golf course yourself you have to expect to go through some catastrophes," shrugs Rogers.

One thing Rogers can fix whenever he wants, however, is where the trees are placed on his course. With the help of a hydraulic tree mover, Rogers can take planted trees, dig them out of the ground with their roots intact, and replant them where he likes. He rearranges the thousands of trees around the course on a weekly basis.

"Sometimes when I'm playing a hole I'll realize where I want a tree," he says. "So I'll tell my men and later when I come back that afternoon there will be a new tree in the middle of the fairway."

Besides determining how a course looks and where, for example, the trees should be, private course owners enjoy other license. You can, for example, make your own

special rules. Another country singer, Willie Nelson, has a nine-hole course in Spicewood, Tex., outside of Austin. On the back of his score cards, for folks who really like golfing parties, is printed: "No more than 12 allowed in your foursome."

And you can take other liberties, too. Walter Annenberg, for example, always had trouble reaching the green of his par 4, 455-yard, 5th hole at Sunnylands in less than three strokes. Frustrated at the thought of never scoring a birdie on the hole, Annenberg simply changed the hole's par 4 to par 5.

Chicago Tribune

April 20, 1990, Friday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 6; ZONE: C; Assignment: Las Vegas

LENGTH: 797 words

HEADLINE: Growth and jobs become the surest things in town

BYLINE: By James Coates, Chicago Tribune

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
Economists call it the multiplier effect, the happy phenomenon in which every time a new job is created, work blossoms for the people who must supply goods and services to the newly added employee.

Here in America's adult entertainment mecca, Baghdad alongside the yucca, the multiplier effect is on a rare roll.

An influx of tourists, retirees, investors and job seekers is creating a heady round of merrymaking and homebuilding unlike any ever seen in these parts before.

Nevada, once a desert backwater famous for its quick divorces and slow-paying slot machines, is booming, and the resulting job numbers are head-spinners.

When casino mogul Steve **Wynn** opened the **Mirage resort** next to Caesars Palace last November, 5,000 people were hired overnight to deal blackjack, sell jewelry, make beds, book tours, cook food, carry bags, drive limos and otherwise serve visitors staying in the spa's 3,049 rooms.

That multiplies out to 1.6 jobs per room, noted Terry Murphy, a sociologist employed by the Southern Nevada Homebuilders Association, a collection of delighted developers who are building houses and apartments for the new job-holders as Nevada outpaces all other challengers as America's fastest-growing state.

In June, the Circus Circus casino empire will open Excalibur, a complex of gaily colored medieval castle turrets, moats and drawbridges now taking shape amid an enchanted forest of construction cranes on the storied casino strip. Excalibur will add 4,032 rooms (and about 6,500 jobs) overnight.

Sometime next year, mega-developer Kirk Kerkorian plans to open another of the

new generation of vast Las Vegas pleasure palaces. Kitty-corner to the Excalibur, it will be a 5,000-room hotel surrounded by a theme park based on the MGM movie studio. That should add about 8,000 more jobs.

With an unemployment rate at or below 4 percent most months, Nevada needs outsiders to fill these thousands of new jobs, and that means a housing boom that creates still more jobs, a textbook example of the multiplier effect.

On April 10 the U.S. Census Bureau announced growth statistics that showed that Nevada, with a 39 percent population increase, was the country's fastest-growing state between 1980 and 1989.

Nevada thus outstripped even Florida, which grew by 30 percent during the decade, in part because of big growth in resorts drawn to the Orlando area by the success of Disney World. By contrast, Illinois' population increased by 2 percent during the period.

The University of Nevada at Las Vegas estimates that a whopping 97,000 jobs will be created here between now and the end of 1993 and, if trends hold, Las Vegas then will be a city of roughly 1 million. At the start of the decade, the city's population hovered around 300,000.

The latest reports from Nevada Power and Light Co. show there are 3,000 new residential electrical hookups each month in the Las Vegas area, a rate believed to be the fastest in the U.S.

Surveys of these new customers by homebuilders indicate that about 12 percent of the newcomers are retirees drawn by low taxes made possible by revenue from gambling as well as by low housing costs and the climate. Las Vegas has broiling 105 degree-plus summers, but it offers mild, livable weather for the rest of the year.

Of course, there are clouds on the horizon. On many mornings, the Las Vegas valley is filled with the same sort of brown cloud of air pollution from commuting automobiles that curses Denver, Phoenix, Albuquerque and Los Angeles.

Construction has recently been slowed because the city's expansion is damaging the habitat of the threatened desert tortoises that once flourished in the area.

Crime rates are high and schools are crowded at a time when an influx of retirees, whose children are long out of school, will make it more difficult to raise school taxes.

"They come here for wide-open spaces, but their numbers cut down on the amount of wide-open spaces available," said Murphy, the sociologist.

Indeed, according to a just-published study by the University of Nevada, each new job added or retiree lured here brings 2.1 new residents in the form of spouses, children, in-laws or assorted other relatives, adding to the population pressure.

Murphy used her own family to illustrate the phenomenon. In 1973, she said, her sister moved to Nevada while the rest of the family was living in Brooklyn.

A few years later the Murphy parents were lured to a Nevada retirement by the

pioneering sister.

Ten years ago Terry Murphy left Brooklyn for Nevada to join her parents and sister. Others followed.

"Between my family and my husband's family, at least 40 of our relatives have moved here since my sister came in 1973," Murphy said. "That's a multiplier for you."

The Washington Post

January 12, 1990, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A3

LENGTH: 942 words

HEADLINE: American Journal;
In Roll of the Dice, Las Vegas Offers Family Fare

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: T.R. Reid, Washington Post Staff Writer

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
There's a gaudy new show in this neon-washed resort city, and people are lining up by the hundreds along the strip to see the spectacle. But this production doesn't involve Frank Sinatra, Joan Rivers or troupes of dancing girls in pink flamingo plumes.

The hottest new attraction here in Glitter Gulch is a 55-foot man-made volcano that blows its top every 15 minutes at night with a fusillade of fire and brimstone, shooting flames 40 feet high and wafting huge clouds of pin

a-colada-scented steam over astonished passersby on Las Vegas Boulevard.

"Only in Vegas," snorted Michael Hudspeth, a local resident standing in the large crowd that gathered to watch an eruption one night this week. "I mean, only in Vegas would a guy build himself a nice new hotel and then say, 'I think I need a 60-foot volcano shooting off every few minutes in my front yard.' "

Ever since mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel erected the first oversized neon sign outside a casino here in 1931, Las Vegas has been writing the book on wretched excess. And the **Mirage resort** hotel -- with an erupting volcano out front, live albino tigers in the lobby and a school of dolphins bobbing beneath man-made waterfalls by the swimming pool -- looks at first like one more chapter in that familiar volume.

But to local business leaders, the huge new Mirage, whose 3,029 rooms make it the biggest hotel in the free world, reflects a major change underway in this legendary sin city.

With the coming of the Mirage and several other new hotels that emphasize features other than all-night gambling and half-nude chorus lines, Las Vegas is trying to give itself a PG rating, to become a spot for family vacations.

The Mirage, says its developer, Stephen A. **Wynn,** is designed to be "a property which would help set a new direction for Las Vegas, one which would appeal to the entire family audience."

Gambling remains the economic mainstay. Indeed, the casino in the Mirage is big enough to stage two football games side by side, and the hotel issues its own $ 500 coins so gamblers won't have to carry an unwieldy wad of paper money. But **Wynn** says his new place, which drew 100,000 visitors on opening day seven weeks ago, is "a resort hotel which includes a casino, not a casino which includes a hotel."

"This town is not a mafia center, it's not a sin city as it used to be seen," says Richard Etter, chairman of Las Vegas's big Valley Bank. "It's coming to be an adult Disneyland, a family recreation area . . . . That's what the Mirage and the other places are leading to."

The "other places" about which Etter is talking are new family-resort-cum-casino establishments under construction here, places that will be even bigger than the leviathan Mirage. When the current building boom is completed in about four years, Las Vegas will have four of the world's five biggest hotels. The biggest is the Rossiya in Moscow.

A few blocks down the strip from **Wynn's** erupting volcano, the owners of the Circus Circus casino are building a hotel-casino-zoo-theme park combination called "Excalibur" that is to have 4,000 rooms and parking for 5,000 cars. When it opens this June, visitors can gamble while surrounded by a Camelot-style fantasy land, complete with medieval knights jousting each afternoon.

But even Excalibur will take second place -- in sheer size, at least -- to the new combination of casino, movie studio and theme park proposed by MGM, the entertainment conglomerate that already runs a huge casino here. The MGM resort will have 5,000 rooms and be aimed squarely at the same family trade spending its travel money at places such as Disney World.

With all that bustling, the city's image-makers are diligently trying to change the popular picture of Las Vegas as a land of hard-drinking high-rollers sporting multi-carat diamond pinkie rings.

The local tourism board has run television ads across the western United States touting this city as "the American way to play." The commercials show golf courses, concerts and nearby Hoover Dam but nary a blackjack table nor bubble dancer.

Except for its sprawling casino, which includes a separate area called the "Salon Prive" where the minimum bet on any game is $ 1,000, The Mirage has the feel of a theme park. Arriving visitors are carried along on a moving sidewalk while a friendly voice lists sights to be found in the hotel, including the enormous room where the white tigers live and the 60-foot-long wall-sized aquarium, habitat of four sharks and assorted marine exotica.

Having walked past all of that and traversed the indoor jungle, with orchids and bougainvillea blooming in profusion beneath 80-foot palm trees, the visitor finds an attractive hotel. His room, one of the establishment's cheapest at $ 159 a night, was large, brightly colored and comfortable.

Wynn says he spent more than $ 600 million building the Mirage, financing the place with junk bonds through controversial financier Michael Milken. Local scuttlebutt, which **Wynn** won't confirm or deny, holds that the hotel's expenses and interest payments exceed $ 1 million a day. If the project turns out to be a success, according to a local banker, the Mirage should make that much on gambling operations alone.

After all, family resort or not, Las Vegas is still place where the urge to gamble runs deep. That was evident one night when two men strolled up to the hotel's two-block-long man-made lake, hoping to see the next eruption of the volcano.

"I'll wait 10 minutes for this thing, and that's all," the first man said. "Ten minutes? Fine," the second said. "And I'll bet you a hundred it goes off before then."

Chicago Tribune

November 12, 1989, Sunday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: BUSINESS; Pg. 14D; ZONE: W

LENGTH: 676 words

HEADLINE: 30-story, $630 million 'joint' ready to wow Vegas gamblers

BYLINE: By Robert Macy,

DATELINE: LAS VEGASLEAD: Steve **Wynn,** the golden boy of Nevada gaming, is putting the finishing touches on his $630 million **Mirage resort,** just down the Strip from where this city's glitz ignited his imagination 37 years ago.

BODY:
Steve **Wynn,** the golden boy of Nevada gaming, is putting the finishing touches on his $630 million **Mirage resort,** just down the Strip from where this city's glitz ignited his imagination 37 years ago.

Employees began reporting for orientation earlier this month to work out the kinks before the doors open to the public Nov. 22. The Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran fight follows at the resort Dec. 7.

Wynn's 30-story showplace cost more than 100 times the value of the cluster of casinos that dotted the Strip when he first visited here in 1952. And it has sparked a multibillion-dollar building boom unprecedented in the city's history.

New resorts are popping out of the desert and renovations and expansions are under way at many of the city's older properties.

Some operators admit privately they're fixing up and adding on because of the challenge of the 3,049-room Mirage.

Wynn, 47, is the majority shareholder of Golden Nugget Inc., which owns the Mirage. Sometimes he refers to the Mirage as "the joint," a throwback to the jargon of another era when his father, Michael, dreamed of opening a bingo parlor in this growing gaming town.

Other times he refers to the Mirage as an "experience" or a "wonderment the world will flock to see."

Guests arrive via a palm-lined entry that features a 54-foot volcano, three lagoons and waterfalls - hardly your typical desert environment. The lagoons and waterfalls are fed by pipes that pump 100,000 gallons of water a minute.

Valets whisk arriving cars into a labyrinth of tunnels under the resort.

"Just like a James Bond movie, huh?" **Wynn** joked as his Mercedes whipped along the underground maze during a pre-opening tour.

The top five floors of the 30-story resort contain 260 penthouse suites for coveted casino customers. And for his "stratosphere" players, **Wynn** has six ground-level private bungalows, complete with their own swimming pools.

The swimming pool is a quarter-mile around and nearby is a dolphin habitat approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Registering guests will find themselves facing a giant fish tank whose inhabitants include 4-foot sharks.

"The sharks will, of course, prompt a lot of bad jokes about what will happen if you don't pay your markers," **Wynn** said.

The casino covers the space of two football fields, but will be broken up by thatched huts containing such operations as the cage, the pit and a bar to make the area appear more intimate.

In one area of the casino, customers can play nickel slots and order pizza or pasta. Nearby, a small room provides "stratosphere" customers their own private casino, with $1,000 chips the smallest available.

"We'll let you gamble there as high as you've got the nerve," **Wynn** promised.

The hotel's 1,500-seat showroom will feature illusionists Siegfried and Roy, who returned earlier this month from a tour of Japan and a stint at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

The volcano and waterfalls in front of the Mirage are designed to block the view of other resorts across the Strip.

"I'm burned out on neon," said **Wynn,** whose Golden Nugget Hotel in downtown's Glitter Gulch is also void of any neon. "I think it's cheap. To me, neon is yesterday Las Vegas."

It was the neon that captivated **Wynn** in 1952 when he came to Las Vegas with his

father, who hoxed to start a bingo parlor in the city. Old-time gaming figures blocked the elder **Wynn,** sending him and his son home to Maryland, nursing busted dreams.

Wynn later returned to Las Vegas, bought an interest in the Frontier Hotel, then bought stock in the Golden Nugget and eventually took control of the Nugget.

Wynn is confident his new property will be profitable, despite the high cost, saying it can earn the necessary $1 million a day.

Wynn said the high-rise came in on budget despite some guesswork on exotic frills.

"What we could not budget intelligently was the atrium, the volcanoes. There was no way of knowing those costs in advance. What do you do? Look under the Yellow Pages for volcanoes?"

The Associated Press

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November 12, 1989, Sunday, AM cycle

SECTION: Business News

LENGTH: 760 words

HEADLINE: Opening Near for Golden Boy's $$630 Million Vegas Resort

BYLINE: By ROBERT MACY, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
Steve **Wynn,** the golden boy of Nevada gaming, is putting the finishing touches on his $$630 million **Mirage resort,** just down the Strip from where this city's glitz ignited his imagination 37 years ago.

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Other times he refers to the Mirage as an "experience" or a "wonderment the world will flock to see."

Guests arrive via a palm-lined entry that features a 54-foot volcano, three lagoons and waterfalls - hardly your typical desert environment. The lagoons and waterfalls are fed by pipes that pump 100,000 gallons of water a minute.

Valets whisk arriving cars into a labyrinth of tunnels under the resort.

"Just like a James Bond movie, huh?" **Wynn** joked as his Mercedes whipped along the underground maze during a pre-opening tour.

The top five floors of the 30-story resort contain 260 penthouse suites for coveted casino customers. And for his "stratosphere" players, **Wynn** has six ground-level private bungalows, complete with their own swimming pools.

The swimming pool is a quarter-mile around and nearby is a dolphin habitat approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Registering guests will find themselves facing a giant fish tank whose inhabitants include 4-foot sharks.

"The sharks will, of course, prompt a lot of bad jokes about what will happen if you don't pay your markers," **Wynn** laughed.

The casino covers the space of two football fields, but will be broken up by thatched huts containing such operations as the cage, the pit and a bar to make the area appear more intimate.

In one area of the casino, customers can play nickel slots and order pizza or pasta. Nearby, a small room provides "stratosphere" customers their own private casino, with $$1,000 chips the smallest available.

"We'll let you gamble there as high as you've got the nerve," **Wynn** promised.

The hotel's 1,500-seat showroom will feature illusionists Siegfried and Roy, who returned earlier this month from a tour of Japan and a stint at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

The volcano and waterfalls in front of the Mirage are designed to block the view of other resorts across the Strip.

"I'm burned out on neon," said **Wynn,** whose Golden Nugget Hotel in downtown's Glitter Gulch is also void of any neon. "I think it's cheap. To me, neon is yesterday Las Vegas."

It was the neon that captivated **Wynn** in 1952 when he came to Las Vegas with his father, who hoped to start a bingo parlor in the city. Old-time gaming figures blocked the elder **Wynn,** sending him and his son home to Maryland, nursing busted dreams.

Wynn later returned to Las Vegas, bought an interest in the Frontier Hotel, then bought stock in the Golden Nugget and eventually took control of the Nugget.

Wynn is confident his new property will be profitable, despite the high cost, saying it can earn the necessary $$1 million a day.

Wynn said the high-rise came in on budget despite some guesswork on exotic frills.

"What we could not budget intelligently was the atrium, the volcanoes. There was no way of knowing those costs in advance. What do you do? Look under the Yellow Pages for volcanoes?"

Donald Trump's new 1,200-room Taj-Mahal in Atlantic City is expected to cost $$1.2 billion when completed next year. **Wynn** says his Mirage would have cost $$1.5 billion to build in Atlantic City or New York City, where construction costs are higher.

Wynn, who's had off-and-on battles with Trump, said he wants to be known as a hotel operator, not "the star."

"I want people to say that Steve **Wynn** built the best hotel in the world. I don't want to say I own it. I want to be the guy that designed it. That's my edge."

Forbes

January 1, 1996

SECTION: ON THE COVER; The 48th Annual Report On American Industry; Pg. 163

LENGTH: 329 words

HEADLINE: Still on a roll

BYLINE: W. G. F.

BODY:
It's a lot easier to make money on casinos than in them. And Steve **Wynn,** chairman and president of $ 1.3 billion (revenues) **Mirage Resorts,** has the hot dice -- and the strongest balance sheet on the strip.

Wynn's Mirage, Golden Nugget and Treasure Island in Las Vegas, and Golden Nugget in Laughlin, Nev., set the standards in service and attention to detail.

In casinos the name of the game is grow or die, and Mirage has been doing very well on that score. Its 23.2% five-year average sales growth tops our hotel and gaming category, and the company has a number of big projects in the works.

In Las Vegas, two Mirage properties are under construction at the former site of the Dunes hotel. The first s a joint venture with Circus Circus Enterprises, called Monte Carlo, a 3,000-room hotel and casino expected to open in July of 1996. It will have a French belle epoque theme and aim for the low-budget customer.

The other is the 3,000-room Bellagio resort and casino, to open near the start of 1998 at an expected cost of $ 1.1 billion. This project is themed as a small lakefront

Italian town with its own 2-acre manmade "lake." It will be the dominant high-end property in Las Vegas.

Although Mirage lost its bid to open a casino in Bridgeport, Conn., the project was later killed. This elimination of a potential competitor for the New York metropolitan market was good news for Atlantic City gaming interests, including Mirage. Atlantic City has been outpacing Las Vegas lately. Atlantic City casino revenues grew 9% in the first nine months of 1995, compared with Vegas' 4.5%. Mirage's new Atlantic City project, due to open in late 1998, will be situated on 178 acres in the marina district and have 2,000 rooms. Mirage also plans to build a 1,000-room Golden Nugget in Biloxi, Miss., due to open in 1997.

In 1994 the company earned $ 1.32 per share; the conservative estimate for 1995 is $ 1.70; for 1996, with new capacity available, $ 1.85.

The New York Times

View Related Topics

December 18, 1995, Monday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section B; Page 12; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 2363 words

HEADLINE: Gambling's New Winnings: A Special Report;
Gambling Owners Spend Lavishly To Gain a Voice in Many States

BYLINE: By KEVIN SACK

BODY:
In only five years, the gambling industry has bought its way into the ranks of the most formidable interest groups in American politics, spending huge sums to gain the kind of influence long wielded by big business, big labor and organizations of doctors and lawyers.

From the Empress riverboat casino in Joliet, Ill., to the Mashantucket Pequot tribe in Ledyard, Conn., gambling interests, which now run casinos in 24 states, have used vast profits gleaned from their craps tables and slot machines to fatten the campaign coffers of political candidates and wage multimillion-dollar lobbying offensives.

While state officials have been the primary beneficiaries of the industry's largesse, there has also been a surge in contributions to Federal and local officeholders.

Gambling-financed political action committees gave three times as much to Congressional candidates and the national parties in the 1993-94 election cycle as they gave in the previous two years, according to Common Cause and the Center for Responsive Politics, two Washington-based organizations that monitor campaign financing. The $2 million total for the cycle put the industry in the same league as long-established interest groups like the United Automobile Workers, which gave $2.4 million, and the National Rifle Association, which gave $2.2 million.

At the state level, meanwhile, the rising tide of gambling money has in many places

become a flood. In Florida last year, pro-gambling forces spent $16.5 million in an unsuccessful effort to win approval of casinos in a referendum. That sum was almost as much as the state's two gubernatorial candidates spent combined.

In other states, the industry's wealth has allowed it to outspend its opponents by as much as 50 to 1. In the process, that wealth has contributed to major corruption scandals in Louisiana, Missouri, Arizona, Kentucky, South Carolina and West Virginia, all since 1989, when legalized gambling began its cross-country expansion.

Perhaps most significant, the torrent of dollars has rapidly eroded a longstanding stigma against the intermingling of gambling and politics.

"Twenty years ago, if you got support from gambling interests it would have been the kiss of death," said one Federal lawmaker, Representative Frank R. Wolf, a Virginia Republican who opposes the continued expansion of gambling. "If you were running for office in Illinois or Iowa and got money from gambling interests, you wouldn't want to tell your brother or mother."

Noting that today's casinos are run by Indian tribes and Fortune 500 companies, not mobsters, gambling industry officials assert that it is only natural for a heavily regulated, high-growth business to play an active role in politics, just as public utilities and tobacco companies do.

"The only industry that is more regulated is the nuclear power industry," said Mark B. Edwards Jr., a gambling analyst for the State Capital Resource Center, a private group that monitors political developments for casino companies. "Therefore, it's more important for the gaming industry to flex some political muscle. A lot of it is the nature of the beast."

The gaming industry has focused its lobbying campaigns on state capitals, where governors, lawmakers and regulators hold the authority to determine whether to expand gambling, which companies will get gambling licenses and vending contracts, and how extensively gambling will be taxed and controlled.

Gambling opponents say the abundance of lobbying money, and the promise of bountiful tax revenue, has helped the industry move its operations into impoversished communities, with little attention paid to social consequences.

A backlash has begun to emerge in which grass-roots anti-gambling drives in some states have managed to neutralize the influence of big money. But that is no easy task. In the last two years, campaigns to establish or expand legalized gambling in Florida, Missouri, Virginia and Connecticut have spent more money than was ever before spent in those states on any lobbying effort.

During Virginia's legislative session this year, gambling interests hired 48 lobbyists. In Texas, they hired 74, more than two for every state senator and one for every two members of the Texas House.

The lobbyists are often enlisted from the ranks of former public officials. The lobbying payroll in Illinois has included a former governor, a former state attorney general, a former state police director, two former United States attorneys, a former mayor of Chicago and dozens of former state legislators, including a Senate president and a House majority leader.

Two years ago a Nevada casino company, Primadonna Resorts, offered two Illinois lobbyists a compensation package of $20 million over 20 years if they could reel in a riverboat license. (They have yet to do so.)

For an April 1994 referendum on allowing slot machines in Missouri, committees financed by out-of-state casino companies paid out $4.2 million, outspending the proposal's opponents by 50 to 1, according to a study by Alfred Kahn, a retired professor of planning at Southern Illinois University, at Edwardsville. The measure failed by one-tenth of a percentage point. Seven months later, the gambling companies were back, this time spending $11.5 million. The proposal passed with 54 percent of the vote.

The gambling opponents, Mr. Kahn said, "were just overwhelmed by wall-to-wall television commercials."

'It's a Sea Change In the Political Landscape'

Like lobbying expenditures, campaign contributions have been flowing as freely as complimentary cocktails on a casino floor. Only one state, New Jersey, prohibits political contributions from gambling interests.

In Louisiana, gambling interests in 1993 and 1994 gave state legislators more than twice as much as did the petrochemical industry, a study by The Times-Picayune of New Orleans showed.

"I've been told by legislator after legislator that the gambling industry has become the single largest political influence in their states," said Robert Goodman, a professor at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., who is the author of "The Luck Business" (Free Press, 1995), a book critical of legalized gambling's spread. "It's a sea change in the political landscape in the states where the gambling industry is operating."

As in many other states that now have casinos, the spending in Illinois has been spurred by competition among gambling concerns whose interests conflict.

Wealthy businessmen who want casino licenses, which now allow casino gambling only on riverboats, are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in campaign contributions to help persuade legislators to expand gambling to Chicago and suburbs. Fearful of new competition, the owners of the state's 10 existing licenses are contributing hundreds of thousands more to protect their monopolies. In doing so, they have placed themselves in an unusual alliance with those who oppose gambling on moral or social grounds.

In Washington, the rise of the gambling industry has created influential power brokers. In a single afternoon last June, Steve **Wynn,** chairman of **Mirage Resorts,** one of the country's largest casino companies, raised nearly $500,000 for the Presidential campaign of Bob Dole, the Senate majority leader. The fund-raising luncheon, at a posh Las Vegas country club, came one day after Mr. Dole had traveled to Los Angeles to level a withering attack on what he described as the mercenary values of the entertainment industry.

Mr. Dole opposes new taxes on the gambling industry, said his spokesman, Clarkson

Hine, but supports creation of a Federal commission to study gambling's effects. The industry opposes such a commission, believing that it could lead to heightened regulation. But Mr. Hine said Mr. Dole "feels strongly" that regulation should be left to the states.

In any event, **Mirage Resorts** is hardly the only gambling-industry player in the capital. The 370-member Mashantucket Pequot tribe, virtually unknown until it opened the Foxwoods Resort Casino in Ledyard, Conn., in 1992, is one of many others, having given $465,000 to the Democratic National Committee and $100,000 to the Republican National Committee from 1991 to 1994.

Gambling money is so abundant that on occasion it reaches out even to the most vocal of gambling opponents, like Gov. Kirk Fordice of Mississippi, where casino operations have been growing for five years.

In 1993, Mr. Fordice accepted $73,500 in contributions from casino interests, almost a third of all the money he raised that year. Then, beginning last Jan. 1, he swore off accepting any more gambling money, although he declined to return the earlier bounty. The purpose of the new policy, said Andy Taggart, his campaign manager, was to take an issue away from his opponent this year. Mr. Fordice won.

First the Boom, Then a Backlash

It was political money, along with the promise of new tax revenue for recession-racked states, that provided the kindling for the wildfire spread of legalized gambling in the 1990's.

In 1988, only Nevada and New Jersey had casinos. Now, 24 states have casinos on land, water or Indian reservations, and 48 states have legalized gambling of some kind. In the last four years, annual legal-gambling revenue has grown by 50 percent, to $39.9 billion. That is nearly a quadrupling since 1982, according to an annual survey by Christiansen/Cummings Associates, a consulting firm that specializes in the gaming industry. On average, profit margins are high, ranging from 15 to 20 percent, said Will E. Cummings, managing director of the firm.

"Without the outside influence coming in" to lobby in this state or that, "there would be no spread of gaming," said William N. Thompson, a professor at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas who is co-author of "The Last Resort: Success and Failure in Campaigns for Casinos" (University of Nevada Press, 1990). "The opponents don't get to make their case."

In the last year, though, the industry has suffered several financial and political failures, suggesting that the market for betting may finally be saturated. A casino in New Orleans and riverboats in Louisiana and Mississippi have failed, and voters and lawmakers have rejected the expansion of gambling in a number of states.

Industry analysts say some of the backlash can be attributed to growing revulsion with the amount of gambling money in politics, and to concern about corruption among holders of public office.

In the most recent scandal, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said in August that it was investigating whether video poker operators in Louisiana had bribed lawmakers into killing anti-gambling legislation earlier this year. That inquiry is continuing, but

many of the legislators who are targets of it either have chosen to retire or failed to win re-election this fall.

In Pennsylvania, State Attorney General Ernie Preate Jr. pleaded guilty in June to hiding campaign contributions from operators of illegal video poker games. And from 1989 to 1992, lawmakers in Arizona, Kentucky, South Carolina and West Virginia were convicted of accepting bribes from gambling interests.

Much 'Like a Bull In a China Shop'

Frank J. Fahrenkopf Jr., president of the American Gaming Association, the industry's trade group, told a Congressional committee last month that singling out legalized betting as a corrupting influence was unfair.

"The problem," said Mr. Fahrenkopf, a former Republican national chairman, "is that where there is money, there is the potential for corruption, and that is by no means confined to gaming interests." After listing political scandals from Teapot Dome to Abscam, he added, "To suggest that it is unique to our industry is manipulative, cynical and, frankly, dishonest."

Even when operating within the law, though, gambling supporters have sometimes lacked subtlety.

In 1994, the president of the Louisiana Senate, Sammy Nunez, handed out envelopes to colleagues on the Senate floor, each containing a $2,500 campaign check from a casino owner. Mr. Nunez lost in a bid for re-election in November.

In Illinois in 1993, Al Ronan, a legislator turned casino lobbyist, pulled lawmakers off the floor and handed them white envelopes containing campaign checks of $50 to $300.

"The gambling companies have been like a bull in a china shop," said William R. Eadington, director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming, at the University of Nevada at Reno. "These were companies that did not have the sophistication to understand the nuances of political activity."

Some experts, noting the intense issue that gambling money has become in some states and localities, believe that the industry has turned into its own worst enemy.

Despite devoting $16.5 million to the referendum on casino legalization in Florida last year, pro-gambling forces were crushed at the polls, 62 percent to 38 percent, at least partly because of voter discomfort with that level of spending.

And given the corruption investigation in Louisiana, candidates for governor there spent much of the race this year trying to trump each other's anti-gambling stands.

Further, after the St. Louis County Executive, George Westfall, accepted more than $150,000 in contributions from companies competing for a riverboat casino license, the County Council this year approved a ban on the industry's political donations.

In recent months, some casino companies have decided to put a stop to their own multimillion-dollar political wagers.

One such company is **Mirage Resorts,** which spent more than $10 million in a four-year failed campaign to place a casino in Bridgeport, Conn. "Our company policy right now is that we are not going to go out in any jurisdiction and actively lobby to change any law, to actively try to convince people," said Richard D. Bronson, a member of Mirage's board and president of the company's development arm. "Look what happened in Connecticut."

Alan M. Feldman, Mirage's vice president for public affairs, added: "It has told us that this isn't our bag. We're just not political animals."

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

May 27, 1995, Saturday , FINAL

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A3

LENGTH: 356 words

HEADLINE: HEARING JOHN'S VOICE WAS JOLT FOR RINGO

BYLINE: P-I News Services

BODY: Ringo Starr and his old Beatles bandmates felt strange recording a new song with the disembodied voice of John Lennon.

The good news for Beatlemaniacs, though, is that "Free as a Bird" "really sounds like a Beatle track," the drummer said Thursday in New York.

The Beatles "could have made this in 1967," he said.

Starr joined Paul McCartney and George Harrison in working around an old Lennon vocal to create the new recording, one of two featured in a Beatles documentary airing in November.

Hearing Lennon's voice on tape wasn't easy, Starr said.

"It was pretty emotional," he said. "We had to feel that he's gone for a cup of tea, that he's gone on holiday, but he's still there. That was the only way I could get through it."

- --

She could turn the world on with her smile. So what effect would Mary Richards have in her undies?

Oh, Mr. Grant: Looks as if we'll find out next year.

Mary Tyler Moore will cavort in her underwear in a scene in the movie "Flirting With Disaster."

Moore won the role after arriving "dressed very sexily" for a meeting at a hotel, the director, David Russell, said in the June issue of GQ magazine.

Russell, mindful of Moore's wholesome image, originally wanted to cast her in a less provocative part. But the 57-year-old actress lobbied for the role, he said.

"Mary is not walking around the whole movie like some Marilyn Monroe type," Russell said. "We had a lot of conversations about it, and the role is not some cartoon."

Moore's publicist, Wendy Morris, confirmed yesterday that "there is a rather racy scene, where she's in bed with her husband, wearing a bra and panties."

-- --

The theater at the Mirage hotel in Las Vegas has been renamed for Siegfried & Roy because of the magic they've worked at the box office.

"I can't imagine where The Mirage would be without Siegfried & Roy," **Mirage Resorts** Inc. Chairman Steve **Wynn** told stockholders Thursday. "None of this happens by magic or by accident."

Wynn said the illusionists have drawn 3.6 million people and generated $250 million in revenue since they began performing at the resort in 1990.

Forbes

April 24, 1995

SECTION: THE FORBES 500; Pg. 352

LENGTH: 17078 words

HEADLINE: Where to find the Forbes 500s

BODY:

A

Abbott Laboratories	
100 Abbott Park Road	Drugs
Abbott Park, IL 60064-3500	708-937-6100
CEO: Duane L Burnham	Fax: 708-937-1511
Adobe Systems	
PO Box 7900	Computer software
Mountain View, CA 94039-7900	415-961-4400
CEO: John E Warnock	Fax: 415-961-3769
Advanced Micro Devices	
PO Box 3453	Computer peripherals
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3453	408-732-2400
CEO: Walter J Sanders III	Fax: 408-774-7010

Chicago Tribune

March 20, 1995 Monday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: BUSINESS; Pg. 6; ZONE: W

LENGTH: 944 words

HEADLINE: MIRAGE OWNER CREATING A VEGAS-TYPE FAIRY TALE;
BEST YEAR YET FOR RESORT HOTELS' GAMBLE ON GLITZ

BYLINE: Associated Press.

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
For a guy spending $2.3 billion on four of the world's largest and glitziest hotels-replete with pirates, white tigers and a volcano-it might seem unusual when Steve **Wynn** invokes a fable like the Three Little Pigs to describe his success.

But **Wynn** is a believer, in himself, his company and Las Vegas.

His **Mirage Resorts** Inc. owns two of the world's largest hotels, with construction beginning this year on two more that will give the company the sixth- through ninth-largest hotels worldwide.

"This is the biggest year in the history of The Mirage," he said in an interview, referring to the $630 million resort opened in 1989. "Our best year was not our first, our second or our third. Our best year was our fourth, exceeded now by our fifth.

"That's the kind of happy progression when you build a house of bricks, like the Three Little Pigs," he said. "That's when you don't have to worry about the wolf huffing and puffing and blowing your house down."

Wynn, chairman of **Mirage Resorts,** animatedly recited the firm's successes in his richly-appointed office, his German shepherd Iax snoozing at his feet. He also outlined his company's plans for the coming months:

- There's $55 million to dress up The Mirage.

- There's a joint partnership with Gold Strike Resorts for a new $300 million, 3,000-room resort to be called the Victoria, a mile up the Strip from the Mirage.

- And the crowning achievement: Beau Rivage, a 3,000-room, 50-story resort that will take shape on an island in the middle of a lake on the 110-acre site where the old Dunes Hotel stood. The price tag: $700 million to $900 million.

Wynn, not known for understatement, promises Beau Rivage will be "the most romantic hotel in the history of the world."

"The Beau Rivage is our most ambitious hotel by a substantial measure," said **Wynn.**

"We're trying design and environmental moves that pick up where we left off at The Mirage."

"The rooms are almost 30 percent larger than anything in Las Vegas, the bathrooms will be in marble-all those things you associate with five-star hotels. No one's ever built a hotel this large with those kinds of features."

The Beau Rivage and Victoria are scheduled for completion in the latter half of 1997.

Wynn, 53, is known for delivering on big promises. He first visited a far-different Las Vegas in 1952 as an impressionable 10-year-old when his father tried-and failed-to start a bingo parlor here.

Enamored by the glitz, he returned years later with his wife, Elaine, and two young daughters, parlayed a land deal into his first $1 million, and bought stock in the Golden Nugget, a casino that he transformed into a downtown showplace. His appearances in Golden Nugget TV commercials helped make him known to millions of Americans.

The Mirage was the first new hotel built on the Strip in 16 years when it opened in 1989. It sparked a building boom that continues to gain momentum, with four new megaresorts planned at a price tag approaching $1.8 billion. They include Beau Rivage, Victoria, MGM Grand's New York-New York and a new hotel linked to the Stratosphere Tower.

The four follow the late 1993 opening of the $1 billion MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park, the $375 million Luxor, and the $450 million Treasure Island, a **Mirage Resorts** property.

Mirage Resorts, which also includes the Golden Nugget hotels in downtown Las Vegas and Laughlin, Nev., reported operating income of $237.8 million on revenues of $1.25 billion in 1994, up from the $131.7 million in operating income and revenue of $953.4 million in 1993.

Wynn may be responsible for taking the giant leap with The Mirage that sparked the current multibillion-dollar boom, but he credits the late Jay Sarno, who built Caesars Palace, with providing the flair that changed the direction of this gaming capital.

"It was Jay who brought Las Vegas the first taste of the concept that the place itself is the show, from top to bottom, stem to stern, the costumes, the architecture. He thought that the design should be an imagination excursion. And Caesars Palace did that.

"Somebody, if not me, would have picked up on what Jay was trying to do in Las Vegas. We just got there first.

"I think probably we brought to the party the idea that you could dedicate more capital, more quality to one of these places than anybody had tried to do before me," **Wynn** said. "That was partially due to my personality, and my colleagues.

"But another thing to remember is that by the time I was ready to go, our company had matured and we were ready to do this. Capital markets had changed and big money was available. There was no big money available in the old days, except to a

guy like (billionaire Kirk) Kerkorian."

Kerkorian is the majority shareholder in the MGM Grand.

Wynn credits the sale of the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City in 1987, plus financing by junk bond financier Michael Milken, with providing the unheard of figure of $630 million to finance The Mirage.

With more than 87,000 hotel and motel rooms in the city, some have expressed concern about overbuilding. Not **Wynn.**

"The issue isn't overbuilding," he said. "The issue is the quality of the product. As long as the products are new and fanciful and kept up well, the people will continue to come and the properties will enjoy great times. If older places are not reinvigorated, they'll pass by the wayside."

"They were asking the question about saturation when we had 40,000 rooms and went to 50 (thousand), 50 and went to 60, 60 and went to 70. The answer has always been the quality of the development. If this town was full of motel rooms with slot machines in front, they'd all be closed."

Los Angeles Times

View Related Topics

March 14, 1995, Tuesday, Valley Edition

SECTION: Business; Part D; Page 3

LENGTH: 697 words

HEADLINE: MIRAGE BETTING BIGGER IS BETTER;
RECREATION: STEVE **WYNN** HAS BUILT TWO OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST HOTELS AND IS PLANNING TWO MORE.

BYLINE: From Associated Press

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
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Associated Press Worldstream

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March 13, 1995; Monday 19:08 Eastern Time

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 1033 words

HEADLINE: Steve **Wynn** Has Big Plans for **Mirage Resorts** AP Photo NY451

BYLINE: ROBERT MACY, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
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"That's the kind of happy progression when you build a house of bricks, like the Three Little Pigs," he said. "That's when you don't have to worry about the wolf, huffing and puffing and blowing your house down."

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his richly-appointed office, his German shepherd Iax snoozing at his feet. He also outlined his company's plans for the coming months:

_There's dlrs 55 million to dress up The Mirage.

_A joint partnership with Gold Strike Resorts for a new dlrs 300 million, 3,000-room resort to be called the Victoria, a mile (1,600 meters) up the Strip from the Mirage.

_And the crowning achievement: Beau Rivage, a 3,000-room, 50-story resort that will take shape on an island in the middle of a lake on the 110-acre (44-hectare) site where the old Dunes Hotel once stood. The price tag: dlrs 700 million to dlrs 900 million.

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"The Beau Rivage is our most ambitious hotel by a substantial measure," said **Wynn.** "We're trying design and environmental moves that pick up where we left off at The Mirage."

"The rooms are almost 30 percent larger than anything in Las Vegas, the bathrooms will be in marble _ all those things you associate with five-star hotels. No one's ever built a hotel this large with those kinds of features."

The Beau Rivage and Victoria are scheduled for completion the latter half of 1997.

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The Mirage was the first new hotel built on the Strip in 16 years when it opened in November 1989. It sparked a building boom that continues to gain momentum, with four new megaresorts planned at a price tag approaching dlrs 1.8 billion. They include Beau Rivage, Victoria, MGM Grand's New York-New York and a new hotel linked to the Stratosphere Tower.

The four follow the late 1993 opening of the dlrs 1 billion MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park, the dlrs 375 million Luxor, and the dlrs 450 million Treasure Island, a **Mirage Resorts** property.

Mirage Resorts, which also includes the Golden Nugget hotels in downtown Las Vegas and Laughlin, Nevada, reported operating income of dlrs 237.8 million on revenues of dlrs 1.25 billion in 1994, up from the dlrs 131.7 million in operating income and revenue of dlrs 953.4 million in 1993.

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"I think probably we brought to the party the idea that you could dedicate more capital, more quality to one of these places than anybody had tried to do before me," **Wynn** said. "That was partially due to my personality, and my colleagues.

"But another thing to remember is that by the time I was ready to go, our company had matured and we were ready to do this. Capital markets had changed and big money was available. There was no big money available in the old days, except to a guy like (billionaire Kirk) Kerkorian."

Kerkorian is the majority shareholder in the MGM Grand.

Wynn credits the sale of the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City in 1987, plus financing by junk bond financier Michael Milken, with providing the unheard of figure of dlrs 630 million to fund The Mirage.

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"The issue isn't overbuilding," he said. "The issue is the quality of the product. As long as the products are new and fanciful and kept up well, the people will continue to come and the properties will enjoy great times."

The Associated Press

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March 12, 1995, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 8, 1995, Wednesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Business News

LENGTH: 949 words

HEADLINE: Steve **Wynn** Has Big Plans for **Mirage Resorts**

BYLINE: By ROBERT MACY, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:

For a guy spending $ 2.3 billion on four of the world's largest and glitziest hotels - replete with pirates, white tigers and a volcano - it might seem unusual when Steve **Wynn** invokes a fable like the Three Little Pigs to describe his success.

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"They were asking the question about saturation when we had 40,000 rooms and went to 50 (thousand), 50 and went to 60, 60 and went to 70. The answer has

always been the quality of the development. If this town was full of motel rooms with slot machines in front, they'd all be closed."

The Washington Times

March 5, 1995, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part E; TRAVEL; Pg. E2

LENGTH: 944 words

HEADLINE: Las Vegas growth is a sure bet

BYLINE: Marcia Levin; SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

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.

Hotel rooms now number more than 87,000, more than any U.S. metropolitan area. The projected number by the turn of the century is 123,000 rooms.

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 form 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-classentertainment.

The first Cirque du Soleil was created 10 years ago in Quebec.

"Cirque is the ideal complement to Treasure Island," says Steve Winn, 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 stated that "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. Winn 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 rotate at speeds up to 10 revolutions per minute. Cirque combines technology and circus skills andincludes a computer-controlled hydraulic rigging system, providing movememnt for all acts.

The theater is dark on Monday and Tuesday. 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 which also played in the Washington area last year, will be presented in Tokyo, representing 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: Steve **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, and 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.

Forbes

October 17, 1994

SECTION: THE FORBES FOUR HUNDRED; Pg. 76

LENGTH: 3204 words

HEADLINE: Inherited talents

BYLINE: By Frank Wolfe

HIGHLIGHT:
No longer mob-controlled, Las Vegas is today largely dominated by families with deep roots in the gambling business. More and more of them are sliding onto The Forbes Four Hundred.

BODY:
"GET THEM before they get you." We had just asked Ralph Engelstad what lessons he had learned as a varsity hockey player that had come in handy in business. The bluntness of the reply rather startled us, but then so had the man's garb and his office decor. This centimillionaire was wearing a short-sleeved bright red shirt and sported a diamond pinky ring. On the wall to the left of his desk was displayed a bull's penis stretched out to resemble a cane.

Deftly and ruthlessly applying that hockey-learned philosophy, Engelstad is one of six members of The Forbes Four Hundred who made their killing in Las Vegas and other Nevada spots.

Odds are that several mentioned here will make the list in the near future. These men come from assorted backgrounds. There's Engelstad, grandson of a Norwegian potato farmer and a native of Thief River Falls, Minn. There's the son of a onetime Basque shepherd, John Ascuaga. There's the son of a Dallas mule trader, Jack Binion. Peter Thomas, a Mormon, is the son of a Utah banker. Frank Fertitta III is the son of an Italian-American who started his gambling career after a stint as a hotel bellhop. William Boyd is the great-grandson of a Scotsman who reputedly played poker with Jesse James.

In America's postindustrial age, gambling is a growth business. Today there are 90 publicly traded gambling companies; five years ago there were only 30. Nevada's fiscal 1994 hold (what the house keeps from the total amount gambled, or handle) was up a solid 10.4%, to $ 6.7 billion, out of a total handle of $ 87 billion. The giant new MGM Grand and Luxor and Treasure Island gambling palaces are drawing tens

of thousands of awestruck customers.

Is the economy slowing? Not here. Vegas expects total visitors to be up 25% this year.

Not much surprise that there are now six gambling magnates among the The Forbes Four Hundred, a gain of two over last year. One dropout is John Connelly, head of President Riverboat, with its Mississippi riverboat casinos.

Ralph Engelstad
A refugee from the North Dakota construction trade, Engelstad started in Las Vegas as a home builder and made an early killing when he sold what is now the North Las Vegas Air Terminal to Howard Hughes for $ 5.7 million. In 1971 Engelstad bought "an old, rundown motel" directly across from Caesars Palace, on the Strip. Down it went, and in its place rose in 1974 the Imperial Palace.

Now this was more like it. No haggling with subcontractors, no fretting about interest rates, no worry about delivery of materials. Gambling was a cash business, few receivables. Customers give you money; you give some of it back, on an irregular schedule to keep them interested.

Of course, you have to make sure customers are having a good time, and entertainment can get expensive. But Engelstad doesn't book Sinatra. The Imperial Palace buys cheap entertainment: a collection of 250 antique autos; the twice-nightly "Legends in Concert" show, a staging of Elvis/Liberace/Madonna/Sammy Davis Jr. impersonators for $ 23.50 a ticket (two drinks included).

Rather less hard on margins than, for example, the ship outside the new Treasure Island complex, where a buccaneer battle is staged amid a tremendous light show.

Engelstad takes in an estimated cash flow of $ 50 million a year. "We're looking at Middle America," says Engelstad -- the Circus Circus market. His room rates start at $ 55 per night and go to $ 500 for a penthouse suite. "We don't lease any signs. We don't lease any slot machines. We don't lease anything. We own it, and it's paid for."

Also paid for are assets bought with Vegas profits: 4 million square feet of property in Texas and elsewhere, and two Boeing 727s equipped with beds, living rooms, showers and bars. "Sometimes debt is good," he says. "I just don't happen to be in the position where I need debt."

Engelstad is at the office by 9:30 a.m. and says he quits around midnight. The workload is not getting lighter, he says, as he prepares for the opening early next year of a 254,000-square-foot floating casino, part of a $ 110 million complex that includes a hotel and six movie theaters in Biloxi, Miss. If it works, fine. If not, it's about two years' cash flow, Either way, he's secure. "Ain't no stockholders, ain't no goddamn bondholders, ain't no friggin' mortgage holders that are going to bounce us out."

William Boyd
Boyd, another gambling magnate newcomer to The Four Hundred, is taking a flier on a riverboat out of Tunica, Miss., but nothing that could put a drain on his Vegas operation. He has the Fremont and the California downtown, the Stardust on the Strip, Sam's Town on the Boulder Strip (which serves residents on Vegas' East Side

and Arizona tourists) and the Eldorado and Jokers Wild in Henderson, just south of Vegas. The company plans another downtown casino, Main Street Station, next year,

Boyd Gaming went public last October at 80 times earnings. It sold 4.6 million shares at 17, hit a high of 26 three days later, then tanked -- to a recent 13. But who cares about that? Even at the current price Boyd, 62, still has stock worth $ 325 million. Meanwhile, he is banking not on Tunica but on the Fremont Street Experience, a $ 63 million metal mesh canopy over Fremont Street in downtown Vegas due to be completed next year. The canopy will create, in essence, one giant casino, featuring a misting system to cool visitors in summer, 32 kiosks, a light show and retail shops. Under the canopy will be one of Boyd's two downtown casinos. Boyd and other casino owners have kicked in $ 24 million; $ 39 million more will come from hotel taxes.

Bill Boyd figures that the game isn't over. "Only about 20% of Americans have been in a casino," he observes. Boyd has his dockside Tunica casino -- 1,800 slots and 70 table games, four restaurants and a 1,400-seat theater -- and minority interests elsewhere. But Vegas is his mainstay.

Gambling is, almost literally, in the Boyd blood. Boyd's paternal great-grandfather was in with Jesse James. Sam Boyd, Bill's father, was orphaned at 8, and quit high school to work on the gambling ships anchored off the coast of California in the early Thirties.

In 1941 Sam arrived in Las Vegas, which legalized gambling in 1931, with $ 30 in his pocket. He found a town of 10,000 and one hotel on the Strip. Sam, his sister and his wife worked at the Jackpot, then owned by Nate Mack, a founder of the Bank of Las Vegas with the Thomas family, whom we'll meet later. Sam invented a penny roulette game, and his sister helped him run it.

In 1947, after mobster Bugsy Siegel was gunned down, Sanford Adler and Charles Resnik (two old-time Vegas hands) bought 50% of Bugsy's Flamingo Hotel and hired Sam Boyd to represent their interests. Mobster Meyer Lansky owned the other 50%, Bill Boyd says. Sam Boyd personally steered clear of the mob. "He did his job and didn't have a problem," says Bill. "You had to live with the mob, but you kept them at arm's length."

In 1974 Sam's son Bill, a lawyer, made gaming a full-time career when he and his father sold their interest in another casino, and with a $ 4 million loan from Security Pacific (that bank's first casino loan) built their own California Hotel. Security Pacific was wary about lending to a casino -- most banks were -- but Sam's clean reputation and the fact that Bill was a director of the Nevada State Bank made a difference.

The California is a niche player, catering to people from Hawaii and attracting them in droves with cheap airfares and tour packages. Now the Boyds are adding 146 rooms to the 635-room hotel and will reopen the nearby Main Street Station around the time the Fremont Street Experience opens next year. Banks have learned to love casinos, in part thanks to their early experience with the Boyds.

In early 1984 the Nevada Gaming Control Board recommended them to operate the Stardust on the Strip, a property formerly tainted by Teamsters loans and other mob connections. With a $ 185 million bank loan Boyd Gaming bought the Stardust and the Fremont Hotel from an associate of ex-Cleveland mobster and Vegas hand Moe

Dalitz. Sam died in 1993, but Bill carries on.

Peter Thomas
The Thomases are a Mormon banking family from Utah. E. Parry Thomas was the first Nevada banker to lend to casinos. In the 1960s and 1970s his Bank of Las Vegas (later the Valley Bank of Nevada and now the Bank of America Nevada) was also the disburser of Teamsters Pension Fund loans to casinos. Peter Thomas, now president of the bank, acknowledges that his father associated with some mobsters, but was not financially involved with them. "Because my father was the only bank that would lend money to the industry, the good guys protected the bank from the bad guys to a great extent," Peter Thomas says. Valley Bank had a corner on the Vegas casino market, until the entry of other banks in the 1970s.

In 1992 Valley Bank merged with Security Pacific and Bank of America to create Bank of America Nevada. Today Peter Thomas, 45, and his family own an estimated $ 100 million worth of BOA stock. With such powerful backing, Thomas can now make megaloans -- for example, a $ 750 million line of credit to Circus Circus and over $ 400 million to **Mirage Resorts.**

Is BOA Nevada worried about competition now that casino lending is respectable? Not very. "The profitability of these new ventures is going to be flattening out," says Warren Prostrollo Jr., Boa Nevada's senior credit officer, "and these banks are going to be jumping into these credits precisely at the wrong time."

Stephen **Wynn**
Wynn, 52, is getting close to making The Forbes Four Hundred, with an estimated net worth of $ 285 million. **Wynn** first came to Vegas as a 10-year-old, when his father was managing the bingo parlor at the Silver Slipper. The parlor failed, but **Wynn** was hooked. During weekends and summers off from the University of Pennsylvania, **Wynn** worked at his father's bingo parlor in Maryland.

In 1966 he was introduced to an owner of Vegas' Last Frontier casino and was invited to buy points in the Frontier: 3% for $ 45,000.

When the Frontier owners were forced to sell after evidence surfaced that management had been infiltrated by the Detroit mob, **Wynn** took his share of the proceeds and went into the liquor business, becoming supplier to many of the Vegas hotels and casinos. In 1971 he bought a parcel of land next to Caesars Palace for $ 1.1 million and flipped it to Caesars for $ 2.25 million.

With the cash, plus Valley Bank loans and the sale of his liquor distributorship, **Wynn** bought 6% of the Golden Nugget casino in downtown Vegas. In the spring of 1973 Jerome Zarowitz -- "a man of notorious reputation," in the words of Philip Hannifin, then chairman of the state Gaming Control Board -- sold 52,000 of his shares in Golden Nugget to **Wynn** as part of a state-mandated liquidation of Zarowitz's holdings in Golden Nugget.

Wynn walked into a Golden Nugget board meeting in June 1973 wearing jeans and eating a hamburger. Some older board members gasped. **Wynn** calmly informed the board that some employees were on the take. Maybe they should let **Wynn** run the company and fix that. The board went along. In August 1973 **Wynn** became chairman of Golden Nugget, which later became **Mirage Resorts,** today a leading Vegas casino/entertainment company.

Wynn, as Peter Thomas describes it, brought Disney to Vegas. "His idea," says Thomas, "is to take a person and transport him out of his everyday environment into another world, which is what Walt Disney did." Thus did he create an ambience attractive not just to gamblers but to a whole population seeking escape and fantasy.

Jack Binion

Jack Binion, 57-year-old owner of Binion's Horseshoe downtown, caters to gambling's carriage trade, people like Saudi business magnate Adnan Khashoggi. In Binion's World Series of Poker, the winner gets at least $ 1 million cash and a 14-karat bracelet with his or her name inscribed. (This year, for the silver anniversary of the tournament, Binion added another trophy: the World Champion's weight in silver. Warner Russ Hamilton, a Vegas professional, bent the scale at 330 pounds, costing Binion $ 28,512 in silver ingots.)

"I'm after the guy that's a serious gambler who understands odds," says Binion. "He's not looking for as much amenities, although we've got good, basic amenities."

Binion indeed offers good odds, boasting a 98% payback on slot machines as against the more usual 95%. For every $ 100 played, a bacearat gambler gives up 63 cents at the Horseshoe, versus $ 1.25 at other casinos. Value and the Horseshoe's nostalgic atmosphere (wood construction, old-time decor) make it, nearly 24 hours per day, a gambling whirlwind. Binion's father, Benny Binion, came to Sin City in 1946 with $ 2 million in cash in two suitcases, liquid capital from his days as a Dallas mule trader, bootlegger and gambler.

In 1951 the cider Binion bought the Eldorado downtown and renamed it Binion's Horseshoe. Two years later he went to jail for tax evasion and was a suspect in the murder of a rival, Herb Noble.

There were other scandals, but never mind: Annual cash flow on the Horseshoe has hit $ 15 million to $ 20 million in the last several years, supporting an estimated net worth for the Binion family of around $ 200 million. With his cash flow from the Horseshoe, Jack is also expanding into riverboats. But carefully: He favors Louisiana, where the limited number of licenses should dampen competition.

John Ascuaga

Each morning at 7:15 a.m. 69-year-old John Ascuaga, estimated net worth near $ 200 million, leaves his home in Genoa, Nev. in his red-and-white Chevy pickup and drives 42 miles down I-395 to the casino he's built -- John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks, a suburb of Reno.

The Reno market can resemble Vegas: nearly 25,000 guest rooms and aiming to be a destination market. Though the Reno/Sparks market is flat right now, Ascuaga is very likely making over $ 20 million in annual operating cash flow. High-yielding dollar slots are Ascuaga's big moneymaker. And the food is good. Ascuaga provides beef from his three ranches in Nevada and California to the eight restaurants in the Nugget.

Ascuaga's father came to the small town of Caldwell, Idaho from the Basque region of Spain in 1906, to herd sheep here. Ascuaga worked his way through the University of Idaho and Washington State's graduate program in hotel management. In 1955 he began working in the Sparks Casino Cafe, a 60-seat coffee shop with a

few slot machines, across the street from the present casino.

Ascuaga feels no wanderlust. No Mississippi riverboats for him. Reno suits him fine. He plans on adding about 800 rooms and renovating some of the cheaper ones among his existing 968. The Nugget draws visitors mainly from northern California, Oregon and Washington. A lot of tourists are elderly day-trippers from San Francisco, where Nugget marketers have worked with travel agents to offer special bus rates. High rollers they are not, but they love the slots, which are set to pay off at a low 90%. At $ 85 per night his occupancy rate is 96%. He and daughter Michonne Ascuaga, 33, a Stanford M.B.A. and casino senior vice president, see no reason to look anywhere else.

Gary Primm

At his three casinos 40 miles south of Vegas, on the state border with California, Gary Primm catches them as they drive up from Los Angeles or San Diego (FORBES, *June 6, 1994*). Primm pulls 2 million cars per year into the properties, and they leave enough cash behind to put Primm on The Forbes Four Hundred this year with a net worth of $ 340 million; the Primm clan overall is worth more than $ 600 million. Entertainment? You bet. Whiskey Pete's features the Bonnic & Clyde "Death Car"; Primadonna Resort & Casino has a Ferris wheel and indoor carousel. Buffalo Bill's, opened last summer, has the tallest roller coaster in the world (209 feet high), which passes through the casino. Then there's a water flume ride, a 618-room hotel and four restaurants.

Frank Fertitta III

The Fertitta family's shares in Station Casinos are down from $ 320 million a year ago to $ 220 million now (plus the $ 150 million they took out when it went public in May 1993). Blame the bust on its riverboat Casino St. Charles, operating out of St. Charles, Mo., near St. Louis. In April Missouri voters rejected games of chance on riverboats, so the 387-foot, 3-deck casino opened in May without slot machines. It is allowed only video poker machines and table games, where skill is supposed to be involved. But in Missouri, who understands video poker? So the Fertittas lobby hard. Undiscouragcd, Frank Fertitta III, chairman and son of founder Frank Fertitta Jr., has built a second $ 26.5 million, 292-foot riverboat but doesn't have a place for it yet. For this year's first half, the company reported losses on riverboat operations.

What keeps Station afloat is the Nevada market. Frank Jr. left Galveston for Las Vegas at age 21 and, after a stint as a bellman at the Tropicana, became a blackjack dealer at the Stardust. He scraped up $ 50,000 and three partners in 1976 to acquire a small casino on the west side of Las Vegas, and in the summer of 1977, the Bingo Palace opened. "The first night we opened, it was mobbed. You couldn't move in here," says Frank III. Today the casino, renamed Palace Station, has 84,000 square feet of gaming space (2,175 video poker and slot machines) and 1,028 hotel rooms. Marketed as "the Local Favorite," it caters heavily to locals and claims to offer better payoff rates for slots than the average on the Strip. Palace Station is a river of cash flow, and Fertitta's new $ 103 million Boulder Station, on the Boulder Strip, seems to be ramping up nicely. The company also plans to open another casino --Sunset Station -- in southeast Las Vegas in 1996.

"Our strategy has always been, even before we had the legalization of gaming in all these new markets, to continue to expand here in Las Vegas," says Frank III. Alongside all these is billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's gigantic MGM Grand, with a 5,005-room hotel and a packed amusement park. Kerkorian has $ 1 billion of MGM Grand

stock. And there are Four Hundred perennials William Bennett and William Pennington, both now mostly cashed out of the Circus Circus picture, as it goes through its well-publicized management troubles.

What has usually busted gambling in this country has been scandal -- from the Revolutionary War's crooked lotteries and Reconstruction Louisiana's lottery skimming to the seemingly ubiquitous role of the mob in American gambling since Prohibition.

Gambling has gone mainstream in America and become a kind of entertainment that respectable people -- many of them families -- purchase. Vegas casinos have become a $ 7-billion-plus destination resort industry. And the business community is dominated by billionaires, centimilllionaires and their bankers. Gambling is not something you leave to the crooks anymore.

Las Vegas Business Press

May 16, 1994

SECTION: Vol 11; No 19; Sec 1; pg 2

LENGTH: 550 words

HEADLINE: Megaresort race on the Strip heats up -- Again

BYLINE: Jamie McKee

DATELINE: Las Vegas; NV; US

BODY:
The newest wave of megaresorts on the Strip started last week when **Mirage Resorts** and ITT Sheraton announced new projects back-to-back.

The day before a well-publicized press conference at which ITT Sheraton promised to unveil the new project it plans costing up to $ 1 billion building, **Mirage Resorts** suddenly announced it had taken on its first Nevada partner by joining Gold Strike Resorts to build a $ 250-million, 3,000-room resort on 43 acres at the Dunes/Flamingo intersection, formerly The Dunes Hotel & Casino.

Mirage demolished part of the Dunes in October and plans to level the remainder in July.

Gold Strike owns the Gold Strike Hotel & Gambling Hall and Nevada Landing in Jean, and the Gold Strike Inn and Railroad Pass on Boulder Highway. It is working on another 600-room hotel in Jean and is also developing riverboats in Elgin, Ill., near Chicago, and in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

Gold Strike is known as a value-oriented operator whose Interstate properties attract Californians more interested in gambling than fancy hotel rooms or entertainment.

Two of its principals, Michael Ensign and Glenn Schaeffer, have experience working for the most value-conscious operator on the Strip, Circus Circus Enterprises. Ensign was chief operating officer of Circus Circus and Schaeffer was president.

Industry sources bad little time to speculate about why Mirage Chairman Steve **Wynn,** known for demanding the best of everything regardless of cost, would team up with an operator whose success was founded on no-frills value.

At an elaborate luncheon the next day ITT Sheraton revealed Desert Kingdom, a 3,000-room, 135,000-square-foot hotel/casino as impressive as any megaresort now lining Las Vegas Boulevard.

Sheraton Desert Inn President Burton Cohen joked about the competition between the two operators.

He said Sheraton executives had taken great pains to keep the project a secret and he assumed they had failed when he picked up the morning newspaper and saw the headline, "New Strip Resort Planned."

"As I read further, I realized that my dearly beloved Steve **Wynn** had struck again," Cohen said.

Wynn showed up later at Sheraton's luncheon, staying long enough to poke at the project model and express his admiration.

Mirage and Gold Strike plan to open their resort in mid-1996, while Sheraton has slated the first quarter of 1997 for the debut of Desert Kingdom.

It should prove interesting to watch the megaresort competition in the meantime--**Wynn** has promised to announce a "wholly-owned, luxury property" on the remaining 121 acres of the Dunes property by year's end.

The hotel will likely follow the pattern of Sheraton's Desert Kingdom and most of the hotel/casinos that have been built on the Strip in the past five years.

All are complete destinations with enough extensive waterscaping, themed casinos, entertainment, bars and restaurants to make it possible for a vacationer to stay a week or two and not set foot outside the property.

Late last year, three megaresorts--Luxor, Treasure Island and the MGM Grand--created the same anticipation as they made announcements and scheduled openings within months, sometimes within days, of each other. The hoopla died down soon after the last opening of the MGM Grand in December.

The race is on--again.

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

February 24, 1994, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A2

LENGTH: 192 words

HEADLINE: High roller worth $ 1.7 billion

BYLINE: VANSUN

BODY:
Mirage Resorts Inc. is one of the wealthiest Las Vegas gaming companies with an asset base of $ 1.7 billion, the company's vice-president public relations Alan Feldman said Wednesday.

It owns and operates the **Mirage resort** and Treasure Island on the Las Vegas strip, the Golden Nugget in downtown Las Vegas and the Golden Nugget in Laughlin, Nev.

Gambling revenues bring in half a billion dollars a year.

According to the company's 1992 annual report, dated April 1993, casino revenue totalled $ 533,580,000 US and operating income was $ 125 million. It has 12,000 employees. The Mirage alone has 7,556 employees earning an average annual wage of $ 33,584.

"More than ever, casino gambling has become a growth industry," Mirage chair and chief executive officer Stephen **Wynn** reported to shareholders.

"Our industry is clearly joining the mainstream of American entertainment."

Wynn says the company's philosophy is that "gaming is not enough."

"It must provide the customer with an entertaining experience . . . that will inspire that customer to return again and again, regardless of whether he or she wins in the casino."

Fortune

January 24, 1994, Domestic Edition

SECTION: PORTFOLIO; Pg. 103

LENGTH: 427 words

HEADLINE: Welcome to the NEW Las vegas

BYLINE: by Andrew E. Serwer

BODY:
Wholesome enough for a church outing. As antiseptic as a modern theme park. Able to attract free-spending families in a single swoop. Look, it's a Disneyland. It's a futuristic fun world. No, betcha 5 to 2 it's Las Vegas!

Almost half a century after gangster Bugsy Siegel flipped on the lights at the Flamingo, this city of small sins is remaking itself, in a family way, the better to compete with the growing number of casinos nationwide. Going down are kitschy landmarks like the Dunes and even Bugsy's joint -- a part of the Flamingo Hilton. Going up are entertainment complexes pristine enough for Mr. and Mrs. Apple Pie.

Want to talk job creation? Since 1988 the number of employees toiling in casinos has climbed 35%, to about 135,000. The lure of jobs in casinos, construction, retail, and

other trades has swollen the population 28% since 1988, to almost 900,000.

The new Las Vegas was shaped by legitimate gaming godfathers like Stephen **Wynn,** CEO of **Mirage Resorts,** who realized that to expand the market they had to offer more than the same old craps. So they created vacation fantasy lands, complete with laser shows, roller coasters, and a replica of King Tut's tomb. "To grow we needed to attract people who didn't want to gamble 24 hours a day," says Circus Circus President Clyde Turner. Want to bring the kids? Sure. The new MGM Grand will babysit children (the ultimate collateral) while their parents gamble. A hotel-supplied pager lets them stay in touch.

The new look emerged in late 1989 when **Wynn** completed the Mirage, a $630 million, 3,050-room hotel/casino, on the city's tacky turnpike, the Strip. It features a 20,000-gallon aquarium and an immensely popular man-made volcano out front. Circus Circus countered with Excalibur, a 4,032-room Arthurian extravaganza. Last year was the high renaissance, with the opening of three mammoth hotel/casinos, including Luxor, **Wynn's** Treasure Island, and the MGM Grand, the "world's biggest casino hotel" at 5,005 rooms.

Despite the 20,000-plus new hotel rooms and 500,000 square feet of new casino space in four years, occupancy rates actually climbed from 85% in 1989 to near 87% today. The national average is about 67%.

The payoff: Gross gaming revenues -- money left with the casinos after winners are paid but before expenses -- climbed from $2.8 billion in 1988 to $4.4 billion in 1993, and that doesn't include the three new additions. One thing hasn't changed about Las Vegas: This town still knows how to separate a man -- better make that a family -- from its money.

Forbes

December 6, 1993

SECTION: MARKETING; Pg. 235

LENGTH: 915 words

HEADLINE: The pied pipers of Vegas

BYLINE: By Lisa Gubernick; EDITED BY JOSHUA LEVINE

HIGHLIGHT:
Las Vegas is going in for theme parks. Are they for little kids or for older folks who act like kids?

BODY:
ON OCT. 27 at 10 p.m., Steve **Wynn,** chief executive of **Mirage Resorts,** pushed a red button on a small metal box. Moments later the grand 19-story Dunes hotel crumbled in a heap.

Gone was a monument to the old Las Vegas with its mobsters, topless dancers and high rollers. Just 24 hours before he blasted the Dunes away, **Wynn** cut the ribbon on Treasure Island, a $ 475 million pirate fantasy featuring sword fights, white-sailed

galleons, a massive videogame arcade and a 40-foot slide in the pool area. Just think Disneyland with slot machines.

What's going on here? **Wynn** is wrestling with a tough marketing problem: parental guilt. "Parents want to travel with their kids these days," says Alan Feldman, vice president in charge of public relations for **Mirage Resorts.** But why would a kid want to go to Las Vegas? How does a guilty parent justify abandoning junior to watch TV in a hotel room while he works the slots and roulette wheels?

What makes the problem even more complicated is that **Wynn** wants to expand his market without alienating his original customers. "Gamblers don't like to trip over kids in a casino," **Wynn** says. But the Las Vegas moguls are facing a tough problem: How do you have your chips and spend them?

But Las Vegas has no choice these days but to go after the family trade. By the end of this year Las Vegas will add 1,524 new hotel rooms, for a total of 87,370. That will put Las Vegas ahead of Orlando, Fla., home to Disneyland, by more than 8,000 rooms. "To get a decent return, the visitation to Las Vegas in 1994 must absolutely go up a minimum of 10%, to at lest 25 million," says Dean Witter analyst Willard Brown.

Getting that additional 10% isn't easy at a time when people have plenty of other places to go for gambling: shooting dice in riverboats floating up and down the Mississippi or playing one-armed bandits on more than 60 Indian reservations in 18 states.

Circus Circus successfully went after the low-end family crowd over a decade ago. Rooms were cheap ($ 40 and under), and acrobats and arcades kept the kids amused on the mezzanine while their parents worked the slots on the floor below. But parents traveling with kids were a narrow niche -- less than 7%. Broadening that niche is now the name of the game.

Circus Circus Enterprises opened the $ 375 million Luxor on Oct. 15. Opening on Dec. 18 is the $ 1.1 billion MGM Grand Hotel, Casino & Theme Park. Each has its own theme-park trimmings. The Luxor is a 30-story, pyramid-shaped resort that dwarfs anything the pharaohs ever built. It is complete with sphinx and a boat ride throgh an ersatz Nile coursing around the hotel lobby.

Last August the original Circus Circus opened a $ 90 million theme-park addition called Grand Slam Canyon, with animated dinosaurs, a high-speed roller coaster and a laser-tag game with electronic guns and vests.

At the new MGM Grand, a 33-acre theme park offers Parisian Taxi bumper cars and a giant fume ride, while actors dressed as Betty Boop, Olive Oyl and characters from the Wizard of Oz stroll the grounds.

To help reinforce the new image, Vegas hotels are using family-oriented advertising on television shows in California, the state that provides 40% of its business. The Las Vegas Convention Center & Visitors Authority has prepared a 30-second commercial featuring a couple of rambunctious kids splashing in a pool, and a family chowing down at a wholesome-looking buffet. "Where else can you afford this much fun?" asks the voice-over. "Only in Las Vegas."

Steve **Wynn** has produced *Treasure Island: The Adventure Begins,* a one-hour television movie on NBC in January that will be running as a paid advertisement for his new resort. The star is 13-year-old Corey Carrier, and the show will be smack in the middle of family-viewing hours at 8 p.m.

Are the families taking the bait? It's too early to say, but the very early signs are not very encouraging. Fred Blackington, a Las Vegas cab driver, says he hasn't seen any of this so-called family traffic. "I think this whole thing is a big mistake," he says. "People come here to get away from kids."

Irma Herrmann, a travel agent at La Cienega Travel Services in Beverly Hills, reports that she has had just one inquiry from a family for a trip to Las Vegas. "He was going for his second marriage, and he wanted to bring his two kids from his first," she says. "It just isn't really a place where parents go with their kids."

Paul Seelig, an energy management consultant from Torrance, Calif., agrees. He went to Treasure Island for a four-day holiday with his wife and 4-year-old son in October. "There was nothing there for my son to do," he complains.

Ann Shapiro, touring a video arcade with her 4-year-old son while her husband attends a convention, has a similar rection. "Keeping my son in some dark smoky place is not my idea of a vacation," she says.

On a recent visit to Treasure Island, the crowd jamming the video and game arcade, dubbed "Mutiny Bay," looked old enough to be hitting the crap tables -- legally.

"We are spending a little extra money to make our resorts friendly for people of all ages," says Steve **Wynn,** "because these days children travel with their parents. But we are not specifically pitching anything to people under 21. This is a place for big kids." **Wynn** had better be right, because it doesn't look like a lot of families with little ones will be showing up anytime soon.

Chicago Sun-Times

View Related Topics

November 21, 1993, SUNDAY, Late Sports Final Edition

SECTION: TRAVEL; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 2001 words

HEADLINE: Hotel Fever Sweeps Las Vegas;
Themed Casino Resorts Grow Bigger and Bigger

SOURCE: tr

BYLINE: BY JACK SCHNEDLER

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
The pyramid-shaped Luxor has fired its two performing ostriches, because the

ungainly birds were too stupid to learn their routines for the nightly dinner-theater spectacle at the newborn hotel.

Treasure Island is gripped by hourly pedestrian gridlock each evening as thousands of gawkers elbow for position to watch a fiery mock sea battle between full-size models of an 18th century pirate ship and a British Royal Navy frigate.

Such inevitable teething problems aside, the 2,526-room Luxor and the 2,900-room Treasure Island landed with a tidal-wave splash last month in Las Vegas. Their rooms are heavily booked well into 1994, and their jangling casinos swarm with tourists trying their luck with the newest brash big kids on the block.

As casino-hotel fever rages, this southern Nevada desert city seems hellbent on proving that Americans have bottomless pockets for legal wagering -- to the tune of an estimated $ 12 billion in betting losses nationwide for 1993.

At the same time, Las Vegas is working to refocus its longtime glitz-and-gambling image. With properties like the Luxor and Treasure Island, it aims to be -- in the words of a recent press release -- "a one-stop, multi-dimensional resort destination for the whole family."

These two latest family-themed casino resorts -- each substantially larger than Chicago's biggest hotel, the 2,019-room Hyatt Regency -- are mere steroid-pumped minnows compared to the whale waiting in the wings near the south end of the traffic-choked Strip. The official opening date is Dec. 18 for the 5,005-room MGM Grand, the $ 1 billion Kirk Kerkorian leviathan that comes complete with Las Vegas' first full-fledged theme park (about the size of California's original Disneyland).

Even by the neon-numbed standards of Las Vegas, where "big" is such a hypnotic mantra that two souvenir outlets within clear sight of each other both claim to be "the world's largest gift shop," the MGM Grand shapes up as a Guinness Book of Records glutton. Not only will it be the world's largest hotel, but it also will boast the world's biggest casino (171,500 square feet, equal to four football fields) housing the most slot machines (3,500) under one roof anywhere.

What's more, the MGM Grand's arrival will give Las Vegas the world's nine largest resort hotels, and 12 of the 13 biggest. Gaming properties have grown so gargantuan around here that the famed Caesars Palace, with its 1,518 rooms and suites, falls 700 rooms short of making the Top 13 list.

Luxor, which opened Oct. 15 as the newest Circus Circus Enterprises property, can lay claim to the world's largest atrium -- 29 million cubic feet, a space vast enough to stack nine Boeing 747 jumbo jets. And the brilliant beam of light shining straight up into the heavens from the pyramid's apex is billed as the world's most powerful illumination -- 40 billion candlepower.

Treasure Island at the Mirage (its full name) isn't quite so big on bragging. But the new Stephen A. **Wynn** resort's Oct. 27 opening was heralded by the biggest bang around -- the hyper-hyped implosion of the 37-year-old Dunes, once the pioneering setting for the Strip's first topless dancers, but now a casualty of the changing times in Las Vegas.

Perhaps the best pun in town also can be found at Treasure Island, where a women's

clothing shop bears the name Damsels in Dis'Dress. And the hotel's $ 32 million naval battle qualifies as the city's most expensive (and, for the moment, most exciting) free attraction. Its pyrotechnics make the erupting volcano at **Wynn's** next-door Mirage look like a sputtering sideshow by comparison.

This being Las Vegas, the pirates always win Treasure Island's sea duel. So it's just as well that the seven-minute bombardment between the Hispaniola and the Brittania is one of the few happenings here on which no legal bets are taken.

Beyond the $ 1.8 billion invested in this fall's three new mega-resorts, major money is being bet on a host of other Las Vegas projects.

Circus Circus opened the $ 90 million Grand Slam Canyon amusement park this summer under a huge dome built over its parking garage. The Rio Suites Hotel and Casino has doubled its size to 861 rooms with a new tower. The San Remo has added a wing. The 200-room Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Hotel/Casino and Movie Museum has set up shop a half-block off the Strip. The successful Boyd Gaming Group has bought the defunct Main Street Staion downtown for reopening next year.

On a grander scale, ITT Sheraton has entered the Las Vegas market by purchasing the prestigious Desert Inn for $ 160 million -- with plans to quadruple its casino space and add 1,200 rooms to the existing 820. By the turn of the century, ITT Sheraton intends to expand the Desert Inn to 5,000 rooms and suites.

Wynn, whose four-year-old Mirage has become Las Vegas' largest-grossing casino ($ 250 million annually), is expected to unveil plans next spring for another huge themed resort on his Dunes acreage. In the talking stages are a country-western themed pair of 20-story hotel towers shaped like cowboy boots on the El Rancho site, and an 1,800-room tower addition to the Sands.

As a token of Las Vegas' shift to a family focus, yet another project in the works is the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, expected to open by the end of 1994. A partnership between Hard Rock America Inc. and Harvey's Hotel of Lake Tahoe, the 350-room property will cost $ 80 million. It will target pleasure travelers in the 21-to-45 age bracket, according to Hard Rock America chairman and president Peter Morton, "and, of course, families, with a real emphasis on youth and energy and music."

It is a misconception, despite all the family hoopla, to think that Las Vegas wants to become another Disney World -- or so say local experts.

"Las Vegas isn't looking for children," says Alan M. Feldman, vice president/public relations for the **Mirage resorts.** "Las Vegas is looking for adults who travel with their children. Today's mindset is that many parents want to share quality vacation time with their youngsters, but in an adult setting. So we have to create activities to keep the kids happy, too. We want the whole family to leave saying, 'Wow, did we have fun in Las Vegas!' "

MGM Grand Adventures, that looming resort's theme park, "is not a kiddie park," emphasizes Tom Bruny, MGM Grand's director of advertising and public relations. "It is an adult-oriented theme park. It will appeal to youngsters, of course, but also to non-gambling spouses and companions."

Other MGM Grand allures beyond the casino will include Emerald City Dome, with a

"Wizard of Oz" light show, just inside the 88-foot-high lion's-mouth entrance; King Looey's Youth Activity Center, where parents can feel guilt-free dropping off their kids ages 4 to 16 from 8 a.m. to midnight; and the Grand Theater, Las Vegas' largest showroom, scheduled to open a $ 30 million original production next summer.

Treasure Island, in addition to its eye-popping sea battle, is now home to the inventive and sophisticated Cirque du Soleil. This Montreal-based troupe will open a new show, "Mystere," just before Christmas in a breathtaking, 1,500-seat arena built especially for its high-flying acts. Mutiny Bay, the hotel's 18,000-square-foot entertainment arcade, features video games and other diversions for actual kids and kids-at-heart. This is a place where fully grown adults try to "Whack a Mole" with a padded hammer and win a prize.

Luxor is jampacked with attractions, including "The Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid," a three-part, special-effects dazzler created by Hollywood hot shot Douglas Trumbull ("2001: A Space Odyssey" and Universal Studios' "Back to the Future" ride). Part one of Trumbull's Luxor extravaganza, featuring a simulated free-fall plunge in a runaway elevator, was operating only sporadically during the first couple of weeks due to high-tech hiccups. Luxor's games arcade, VirtuaLand, boasts simulated space adventures and Grand Prix racing.

Set to open before Christmas on Luxor's lowest level is a full-size reproduction of King Tut's ancient Egyptian tomb. Already running is the River Nile Tour, on an artificial stream that traverses the hotel's inside perimeter. The evening "Winds of the Gods" dinner-theater show, minus the malfunctioning ostriches, features chariot races plus cameo appearances by elephants and camels.

Among established casino resorts here, Caesars Palace has been a pacesetter in adding non-wagering attractions -- the 1 1/2-year-old Forum Shops at Caesars being the most spectacular recent example. Opening next spring in this glitzy shopping arcade will be a 400-seat outlet of the Planet Hollywood dining-entertainment chain. At the Las Vegas Hilton, meanwhile, a flashy production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's roller-skating musical extravaganza, "Starlight Express," has been playing to mostly full houses since mid-September.

All these new enterprises are giving the Las Vegas Strip traffic headaches almost as painful as the notorious gridlock in country-music mecca Branson, Mo. Las Vegas police are seeking to have cruising by local teenaged motorists banned on the Strip between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. as a way of reducing traffic congestion and crime. To ease the gridlock at the super-busy intersection where the Strip (Las Vegas Boulevard South) crosses Tropicana Boulevard, a pedestrian overpass is set to open next month in conjunction with street-level barriers that will force tourists on foot to go overhead.

Las Vegas expects to tally a record 22 million-plus visitors for 1993. But this fall's arrival of more than 10,000 new hotel rooms, pushing the city's lodging capacity to an astonishing 86,000 rooms, has some observers expecting casualties among older properties (despite this year's amazing overall Las Vegas casino-hotel occupancy rate above 90 percent).

"The new hotels are a threat to places unwilling or unable to stay fresh," says the Mirage company's Feldman. "Otherwise, the increased competition is good for all of

us. Its gives visitors more to do and makes Las Vegas a multi-day experience (average stay: 3.5 days, up from 2.4 days a decade ago). To some extent, we all live and die together."

By virtue of its scale, the MGM Grand appears destined to be the brightest star in the Las Vegas galaxy during the year ahead.

"The MGM Grand will even steal the fire of the Luxor and the Treasure Island," predicts Anthony Curtis, publisher of the lively Las Vegas Advisor newsletter. "It's not just the size, but the whole concept of being like a futuristic, self-contained city. Once you're inside the MGM Grand, there'll be no reason to go anywhere else."

Curtis, like other observers, thinks the spread of legal casino gambling to at least 20 states is only helping create new customers for Las Vegas. "It's like the minor leagues," he says. "People go on a casino riverboat in Illinois, and it whets their appetite for the real thing in Las Vegas."

MGM Grand chief executive Rober R. Maxey notes that only 15 percent of Americans have ever been to Las Vegas. "We have plenty of room to grow," he declared in a recent Business Week report on the gaming boom. Indeed, one forecast for 1994 projects a record 88 million trips to U.S. casinos -- 55 million of those by funseekers going more than 100 miles from home.

While gambling is now a respectable pastime for many Americans, Las Vegas does still face challenges in shedding its erstwhile Sin City image. Organized crime has been pushed into the shadows, but parents strolling the Strip with their youngsters may have to run a sleazy gauntlet of pitches for escort services, all-nude revues and other variants of sex for sale. Many of these X-rated brochures and pamphlets are graphically illustrated.

It's enough to make even a worldly-wise daddy blush. But, as savvy local public-relations veteran Don Payne observes, "Las Vegas is exactly what it is -- and makes no apologies or excuses for it."

GRAPHIC: TOP: A sphinx guards the entrance to the Luxor, one of Las Vegas' new mega-resorts. LEFT: At Treasure Island, another newcomer, a pirate ship and a British Royal Navy frigate engage in hourly mock sea battles. ABOVE: Set to open Dec. 18, MGM Grand will house the city's first full-fledged theme park. (On Page 7, Dave Hoekstra delves into Las Vegas nightlife.) ABOVE: Luxor's interior boasts the world's largest atrium. BELOW: The dozen biggest casino hotels in Las Vegas, along with the relatively runty Caesars Palace, are located on this map. One of the best puns in Las Vegas is the name of a women's clothing boutique in the new Treasure Island at the Mirage. A victim of changing times in Las Vegas, the old Dunes is rubble after the much-trumpeted implosion of the property last month. MAP; See roll microfilm. See also related stories.

The Seattle Times

November 14, 1993, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: TRAVEL; Pg. L2

LENGTH: 2667 words

HEADLINE: LADY LUCK'S NEW CLOTHES -- IN BOOMING LAS VEGAS, THREE NEW 'MEGA- RESORTS' ARE BRINGING A FAMILY DIMENSION TO THIS GAMBLING OASIS

BYLINE: BY JACK BROOM

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:

LAS VEGAS - Sin, gin, and a chance to win. That simple formula, gangster Bugsy Siegel knew, could entice multitudes of fun-seekers to this desert gambling oasis.

As history proved, he was absolutely correct. He was also absolutely dead, encountering in 1947 that perennial hazard in the crime-boss trade: a hail of machine-gun fire.

Still, the Las Vegas he envisioned grew and flourished.

But nowhere in Siegel's plan was any mention of virtual-reality video games; nor were there water slides, roller coasters or life-sized cartoon characters strolling around waving at children.

Welcome to the "new' Las Vegas.

Last month, two huge hotel-casinos, pyramid-shaped Luxor and pirate-themed Treasure Island, opened amid the glamour and glitter of the Las Vegas strip, each billing itself a complete family destination resort.

Next month, MGM Grand ups the ante, opening the world's largest hotel atop the world's largest casino and in front of a 33-acre theme park.

If he were to walk Las Vegas Boulevard today, the dapper-but-deadly Siegel might wince at the wholesomeness of it all.

Or would he?

On close inspection, the new Vegas looks less like a city undergoing a personality change than one surviving - and prospering - in a permanent state of schizophrenia.

Yes, the family attractions are here, and more are on the way.

But free booze still flows in the casinos, smoke still curls above the craps tables, signs on taxicabs still boost the local topless clubs, and publications handed out on the street still give directions to Nevada's legal brothels, 40 miles north of town.

The new enticements in Las Vegas are monumental - in size and cost. But the basic goal remains the same: getting visitors to happily hand over their hard-earned cash.

"I'm not really a gambler," says a smiling Lorraine Zalusky,54, pumping nickels in to a slot machine at the Luxor. "I just do this for fun."

In front of her, dials spin brightly on a "Fire and Ice" slot machine. When flaming symbols line up on the center line, nickels fall loudly into a metal pan below. Usually, they don't fall at all.

For Zalusky, a vacationer from California's Napa Valley, fun is "warming up" at a nickel slot machine before moving on to ones that take quarters, and then dollars.

When the fun is over, she likely will have made a decent contribution to the local economy.

But that doesn't bother her. Late last month, she came to Las Vegas for the first time in years to see this mammoth pyramid, with its laser-

light shows and indoor Nile River.

"It's remarkable and certainly unique," she said, slipping a few more nickels into the slot.

These days, the biggest gamble in Las Vegas is not that of slot-machine players like Zalusky. For the most part, they play a few dollars they've already budgeted to lose.

A far bigger bet is money casino owners themselves are spending on new attractions.

As competition for America's gaming dollar increases, Vegas resort owners know gambling alone may not continue to fill the highways from Los Angeles and Phoenix, the airplanes from Seattle and Dallas and Chicago.

In addition to this fall's three new resorts, at least four other multi-million-dollar attractions, expansions or facelifts are planned around town.

Even Bugsy Siegel's own private hideaway is being sacrificed. His original Flamingo Hotel, which has survived as a wing of the 3,500-room Flamingo Hilton, is being demolished this month in a $ 130 million expansion that includes a new hotel tower and 15 acres of tropical gardens, pools and waterfalls.

"It's one giant game of can-you-top this," said Tom Bruny, a spokesman for MGM Grand.

Here's a look at the newest resorts:

MGM Grand Hotel, Casino & Theme Park Opening: Dec. 18 Rooms: 5,005 Cost: $ 1 billion

When you go to the MGM Grand, take a good pair of walking shoes. From the front of the casino to the back of the theme park is a mile of tile and pavement.

The sheer dimensions of this 112-acre "entertainment mega resort" are staggering. Its casino, the size of four football fields, will hold 3,500 slot machines and 165 table games (such as blackjack, craps and roulette) plus areas for keno and sports betting.

Elsewhere in the mammoth structure, one showroom will seat 630 people for big-name stars; another will hold 1,700 for production shows and an indoor arena will seat more than 15,000 for sporting events or concerts.

In the 30-story hotel, 93 elevators will take guests up the four emerald-green towers. The highest high rollers will stay in 751 suites, including three two-story penthouses, each of which has 6,000 feet of space, 27 telephones and its own private elevator.

Designers tapped MGM's symbols and movie history, particularly the Wizard of Oz, for the theme.

Visitors enter between the paws of an 88-foot tall gilded lion, the MGM trademark. Once inside, they'll follow a yellow brick road to a six-story tall crystal castle representing the Emerald City.

Visitors can either head straight to the casino, or walk inside the crystal structure, where a motion simulator and high-tech film convey a Dorothy-like transition from Kansas to Oz.

The property's most revolutionary feature is not in the hotel, but behind it, in a Disney-meets-Vegas theme park with seven rides,10 food outlets, two wedding chapels, five theaters and eight pedestrian streets, each with its own Hollywood back-lot feel, such as New Orleans Street, Asian Village and Tumbleweed Gulch.

Each theater has its own special gimmick. For example, at "You're in the Movies," people will be chosen from the audience, costumed and given a script, and their performances will be combined with pre-filmed scenes and backgrounds.

During a visit late last month, the theme-park grounds looked impressive, even down to the wrought iron on second-story balconies above New Orleans Street.

But it was obvious much work remained. Spools of cable, truckloads of paving tiles and whole trees were waiting to be moved into place. Still, MGM officials boasted that the project was on time and under budget.

(Construction was moving so well earlier this year that MGM moved up its opening date, originally set for next February, to Dec. 18. Despite the change, publicity pamphlets and the plywood fence in front of the project still carry the slogan, "Watch Us Roar in '94.")

Inside the 171,500 square-foot casino, MGM hopes to increase its take by tapping into a bit of gambler psychology.

"If gamblers are on a losing streak, they go to another casino to see if their luck will change," Bruny said. "Here, they'll be able to do that without leaving the building."

The casino space is broken into four areas, each with its own style. For example, in the Monte Carlo area, dealers will wear tuxedos, while another area features a sports theme.

The MGM Grand name is not new to Las Vegas. In 1980, 85 people died in a smoky fire at the former MGM Grand Hotel, located about a mile away.

After the fire, that building was sold and reopened as Bally's, and local building codes were rewritten to require all hotels to have sprinkler systems.

Luxor Opened: Oct. 15 Rooms: 2,526 Cost: $ 375 million

When visitors enter beneath the giant sphinx guarding this 30-story pyramid, their heads turn immediately upward, and what's most remarkable is what they don't see: a casino.

Dominating the field of view is the interior of the pyramid itself, which builders call the world's largest atrium - big enough to hold nine Boeing 747s.

All rooms are on the exterior walls, reached by "inclinators" that travel upward at a 39-degree angle.

There is a casino here, of course, 100,000 square feet of it, but it is slightly lower than the main entrance, reached by ramps or stairway.

A narrow waterway circles the interior of the pyramid; guests ride barges that carry them to the four corners. The journey takes them through the hieroglyphic-enscribed tunnels of Luxor, the Egyptian city that holds the Pharaohs' tombs.

Parts of the ride seems a bit incongruous; one moment, travelers pass through tunnels and vaults of ancient Egypt, and the next, they glide by a snack bar and bank of slot machines.

Luxor's outer surface is 11 acres of black glass, topped by a 40 billion candle-power beam shooting heavenward. Promoters calls it the brightest light on earth, and claim it can be seen from the skies above Los Angeles, 250 miles away.

Inside the pyramid, one's eyes are drawn to an ancient-looking temple, a present-day street scene and a sleek, tall futuristic

structure. These house Luxor's high-tech theater presentations set in the past, present and future, each showing part of a story dealing with a powerful crystal obelisk found beneath the desert.

(The attractions suffered from Luxor's push to open as early as possible. In a visit two weeks after the opening, the first theater still was not working and the second stopped running part way through its presentation. A replica of King Tut's tomb on Luxor's lower level won't be ready until December.)

Luxor also houses VirtuaLand, an arcade including several high-tech video features such as a flight simulator and race cars that actually twist and turn as the driver responds to images on a screen.

The pyramid-shaped resort is a project of Circus Circus Enterprises, whose properties include the adjacent Excalibur, a medieval castle connected to Luxor by a monorail.

Luxor's laser-light display, held every 15 minutes in the evening, is so dramatic it has been stopping traffic on Las Vegas Boulevard. Sometimes police are on hand just to keep cars moving.

In the show, colored beams from the eyes of the sphinx strike an obelisk and a pool, causing waters to boil and rise as a screen, on which video images of ancient Egypt are projected.

Treasure Island Opened: Oct. 26 Rooms: 2,900 Cost: $ 430 million

Simply opening a new resort wasn't a big enough bang for Steve **Wynn.** So when he opened Treasure Island last month, he blasted another hotel, the Dunes, to bits.

Fortunately, **Wynn** owns both. The chairman of **Mirage Resorts,** Inc., has been the most visible architect of the new Las Vegas.

In 1989, **Wynn** opened the $ 610 million Mirage, now adjacent to Treasure Island. The Mirage is a tropical resort that features a fire-belching volcano in a five-acre lagoon, an indoor rainforest, and exhibits of Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins and Royal White Tigers.

At Treasure Island, connected to the Mirage by a monorail, pirates dominate the scene, from the 35-foot tall skull on the casino's sign to the images of gold doubloons in the carpet to the Jolly Roger emblem projected on the convention hall curtain.

The names of suites (Captain's Suite, Pirate's Cove) the restaurants (The Plank, the Black Spot Grille) and game arcade (Mutiny Bay) echo the pirate theme.

In Mutiny Bay, a dark and cavernous castle, skeletons on the walls and piped-in sounds of a pirate village surround youngsters playing the carnival, video and pinball games. On a stage, two pirates duel with swords.

Other family-style attractions are a 40-foot water slide into the swimming pool (opening in the spring) and a $ 20 million showroom custom-built to house "Mystere," a new production by the Montreal-based Cirque du Soleil.

Treasure Island's signature attraction is Buccaneer Bay, a man-made lagoon in front of the hotel. In that $ 33 million waterfront scene, a pirate ship and British frigate, each 90 feet long and rigged with sails, battle to the finish seven times a night.

Thirty-three actors are involved in the production, which starts when the British ship sails in from the right and spots the motley pirate crew unloading its ill-gotten goods.

After threats and warning shots are exchanged, a blast from the

British ship breaks the pirates' main mast, triggering fireworks and flames, and several scoundrels drop into the drink. (One, stunt man, Sonny Tipton, falls 36 feet from a yardarm, his back in flames.)

But just as things look bleak for the pirates, their captain swings on a rope with a smoldering fuse in hand to fire the ship's final cannon. The shot strikes the British ship's ammunition deck, and a fireball roars from royal vessel as it sinks slowly into the lagoon.

There was never a doubt, when the fireworks-enhanced show was being designed by Hollywood special-effects experts, just which side would prevail in the battle.

As resort owner **Wynn** likes to put it - in a line that could comfort the wandering spirit of Bugsy Siegel: "In Las Vegas, the pirates always win."

Chicago Sun-Times

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October 10, 1993, SUNDAY, Late Sports Final Edition

SECTION: TRAVEL; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 981 words

HEADLINE: Hype Hits New Heights In Las Vegas Fantasy War

BYLINE: By David Henry

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:

Dick Hseuh, a physicist at the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, N.Y., was beaming with pride about his good fortune at the Circus Circus casino here.

No, Hseuh hadn't won at black jack or the slots. But he had won big with his 15-year-old son, Daniel, by spending the afternoon on roller-coaster and river-rapid rides at Grand Slam Canyon, a $ 90 million amusement park Circus Circus opened this summer at the back of the casino under a five-acre translucent dome.

The prospect that Hseuh, and maybe millions of other parents, might come to view Las Vegas as a family friendly entertainment center is the point of a $ 2 billion bet slapped on the table by the city's casino operators.

Three of the city's biggest companies have invested nearly that amount on an expansion of their product line: three huge new casino-hotels, all scheduled to open before the end of this year, and all built around extravagant themes of fantasy.

One, the new MGM Grand, will be the world's biggest resort hotel: 5,000 rooms, the country's largest casino and a 33-acre amusement park modeled after a Hollywood back lot. Another, Luxor, takes the shape of a 30-story pyramid and features high-tech theaters, the latest in video arcades and 2,500 rooms. And Treasure Island, with 2,900 rooms, will have a cast of 30 stuntmen and actors out front staging a battle every hour in which pirates sink a full-sized British frigate.

The Luxor pyramid is supposed to open Friday, setting off the city's biggest-ever blowout of fanfare, laser shows and hype beyond anything imaginable outside of the Nevada desert.

This fall, all you're going to hear about is Las Vegas, boasts Bill Paulos, a senior vice president of Circus Circus Enterprises Inc., the company building Luxor.

What's behind the hype?

What's driving this investment and hype? In short, Indians, riverboats and Disney.

Las Vegas fears the spread of casinos throughout the nation and covets the spectacular growth of Orlando, Fla., into a major tourist destination. Gambling is becoming so commonplace that Las Vegas' leading companies have decided to embrace spectacular malls, theme parks and sophisticated video games to protect the Strip's $ 2.6 billion-a-year casino franchise.

At the same time, as television presents more sexual images, it apparently becomes easier for adults with children to tolerate the city's bawdy advertisements for topless dancers and call girls.

Gaming itself isn't all that exciting anymore, says Alan Feldman, a vice president at **Mirage Resorts.**

The proof of Las Vegas' need to reinvest appeared this year just outside of Mystic, Conn., at the Mashantucket Pequot Nation's Foxwoods casino. Foxwoods doubled in size to become the nation's biggest casino, doing nearly twice as much business as any other casino and raking in winnings at an annual rate of more than $ 700 million.

A bigger threat is a huge casino planned for New Orleans, a city that has long had enough non-gambling attractions to lure the vacationers Las Vegas wants. Also worrisome are riverboats close to big cities like Memphis and St. Louis, Indiana's approval of riverboats on the Ohio River and Lake Michigan, and the chance of a huge casino eventually opening in Chicago.

Las Vegas is responding with something it still provides without rival: the lure of excess.

Take Luxor, for instance. Not content with the way the pyramid itself stands out on the skyline, Circus Circus is building a sphinx and an obelisk out front. Lasers will bounce between the sphinx, obelisk and a lagoon; the lagoon will boil and a water screen will appear displaying projections of King Tut's head. An enormous spotlight will beam into space from the pyramid's apex, shining brightly enough to be seen by air travelers 250 miles away.

The purpose is to draw people into the pyramid's atrium, the world's largest, where Circus Circus is installing retail shops, special effects theaters with moving seats, seven theme restaurants, including a Kosher deli on a River Nile flowing around the perimeter. Helping keep people near a 2.3-acre casino will be reproductions of Egyptian artifacts and a full-size model of King Tut's tomb.

Four separately themed casinos

Across the Strip and one casino up, legendary billionaire Kirk Kerkorian plans to open the new MGM Grand in mid-December. The MGM Grand's casino will actually be four separately themed casinos, covering nearly four acres, with 3,500 slot machines and 165 gambling tables. Kerkorian is also putting in a 15,200-seat arena, a $ 27 million theater for extravagant shows and a seven-story replica of the Emerald City from "The Wizard of Oz."

With a construction tab of $ 1 billion, the MGM Grand will cost 50 percent more than anything ever built before in Las Vegas.

Between the Luxor and MGM Grand openings, **Mirage Resorts** chairman Steve **Wynn** intends to create the biggest scene of all. **Wynn** already made his name by building the Mirage in 1989 for $ 630 million, adorning it with white tigers and spending $ 14 million for an erupting 40-foot volcano.

Now, at Treasure Island next door to the Mirage, **Wynn** is spending $ 30 million to build a lagoon and its battle royale. For the Oct. 27 grand opening, the ship's first theatrical cannon shot is to miss by about three-quarters of a mile, passing over Caesars Palace and crashing into now boarded-up Dunes hotel-casino. The Dunes is to crumble, demolished by explosives synchronized to the cannon blast.

The Dunes site is where **Wynn** intends to build his next resort. He bought the property out of bankruptcy and, assuming this year's three new casino-hotels don't falter, will start the new project next year. Thus, **Wynn** is turning Treasure Island's opening blast into a symbol for the city's reinvestment.

Los Angeles Times

August 9, 1993, Monday, Home Edition

NAME: STEPHEN A **WYNN**

SECTION: Part A; Page 3; Column 1; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 2121 words

HEADLINE: CASINO MOGUL **WYNN** IS VEGAS' BIGGEST PLAYER;
BUSINESS: HOTEL OWNER WIELDS FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL POWER, AND IS PRAISED FOR HIS 'AMAZING VISION' FOR THE CITY. BUT THE WORD IS: DON'T GET IN HIS WAY.

BYLINE: By TOM GORMAN, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:
When kidnapers mugged Kevin **Wynn** and demanded $2.5 million in ransom for her safe return, they were messing with perhaps the most powerful person in this town.

Casino developer Stephen A. **Wynn** won his daughter's return not by calling authorities, but by paying $1.45 million in hundred-dollar bills -- all that he could quickly get his hands on, he said. His handling of the kidnaping accurately suggests

that **Wynn** is frustrated by convention, especially if he has the money to sidestep it.

Indeed, the **Wynn** story is captured on some of the garishly decorated dollar slots at his most famous hotel, the Mirage.

One is called "Midas Touch" and, yes, **Wynn** is reportedly the highest-paid executive in the nation. He made $34 million last year -- including the value on stock options, Fortune magazine calculated in its annual tally. The hotel from where he chairs **Mirage Resorts** Inc. shimmers in gold, day and night.

Another dollar slot is called "Nevada Jones" and, yes, **Wynn** is the leading adventurer in the gambling business. Although his company is not the most financially successful casino operation in the country, he did strike an unchartered course when he opened the place with a fake volcano out front and introduced a new generation of theme resorts along the Las Vegas Strip.

Admirers say **Wynn** is immersed -- obsessed, even -- in the Disneyfication of the Strip, eschewing lounge acts and glitzy showgirls for white tigers and dolphins, techno-magic and New Age circus shows, in order to attract a more diverse customer base -- which will, he figures, be inexorably drawn into gambling.

But maybe most telling about Steve **Wynn** is the slogan flashed on the animated marquee in front of his newest project, Treasure Island, which opens next to the Mirage in October and where the pirates, they say, will always win.

"You're Either For Us," the sign warns, "or You're Against Us."

Wynn has put in lights the very philosophy that directs his life, say those who know him: Like a pirate fortified by the booty of smaller conquests, **Wynn** sees no limits and takes no prisoners.

The son of a compulsive gambler who operated a bingo operation in Maryland, **Wynn** arrived in Las Vegas as a 25-year-old, invested $45,000 for a 3% interest in the Frontier Hotel and became its slots manager. He looked and talked smart, befriended the most important banker in town and, with the banker's help, purchased a liquor distributorship.

Wynn's first headlines came when he bought from Howard Hughes a slice of property adjoining Caesars Palace, threatened to build there and walked off instead with a $766,000 profit when a nervous Caesars bought the land from him.

He invested in the downtown Golden Nugget and, as a 31-year-old Wunderkind, became its corporate chairman. While elevating the Nugget into a Strip-level hotel-casino of a sort never before seen downtown, he built a Golden Nugget casino in Atlantic City.

He survived a scare when he was brought before New Jersey authorities for having hired an old friend who, it turned out, had associated with a New York crime family. **Wynn** fired the man and received only a reprimand.

Wynn sold the Atlantic City casino in 1987 for $440 million and sank his profits into the Mirage project. Today, the corporate holdings -- the Golden Nugget here and its sister in Laughlin, Nev., Treasure Island and the flagship Mirage -- are valued at $1

billion, and **Wynn** is looking to expand at home and overseas.

And so today, **Wynn** is something of a legend here, a man slowly losing his eyesight to retinitis pigmentosa but whose vision for Las Vegas is limited only by the ability of his designers to create drawings and models.

He is 51 now, as articulate, charismatic and commanding as they come, surrounded by a wife and two grown daughters (who both work at the Mirage) as handsome as he. He is a man who knows he is on a roll and is parlaying it in ways that are raising eyebrows all around Las Vegas. And the word is: Don't get in his way.

"He's done incredible things. His hotels are monuments to his amazing vision," said one casino executive who -- like most others -- asked for anonymity. "For that, he is great.

"But dynamic visionaries are accustomed to getting their own ways," the executive said. "Casinos are fiefdoms, a place to feed your ego, and they offer a very intoxicating life. And the problem with **Wynn** is that you can agree with him 99% of the time, but if you disagree once, you're the enemy. There's no balance in how he takes measure of people."

Wynn can strike out in various ways against those who affront him.

When a reporter for the Las Vegas Sun wrote a column chiding Steve and Elaine **Wynn** for meddling in athletic affairs at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the newspaper editor lost his privileges at **Wynn's** private, $45-million golf course, Shadow Creek -- a place stocked with 20,000 imported pines and exotic wildlife for the pleasure of high rollers, friends and favored employees.

When a radio talk show host, who had formerly been a city councilman, landed a scathing broadside on **Wynn's** reputation, the show was dropped by the station -- after the offender first read *four times* an on-air apology crafted by **Wynn's** attorneys.

When the sheriff pulled the work permit for **Wynn's** casino host because he allegedly allowed mobsters to play at the Mirage, **Wynn** won the permit back at an appeals hearing -- and then sued the sheriff. **Wynn** claimed that the lawman was retaliating because one of his sons was not promoted as a pit boss at the Mirage, and because another was dropped as an attorney for the Mirage.

And when Donald Trump hired Dennis Gomes, the president of the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas, to head his Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, **Wynn** sued Trump, citing breach of contract and fearing loss of trade secrets.

In his legal papers, Gomes complained that **Wynn** never allowed him to run the place anyway. He characterized **Wynn** as a womanizer and said **Wynn** would launch into spontaneous, denigrating tirades against casino executives in the presence of others, sometimes reducing them to tears.

"His face turned completely red and all puffed up and his eyes bulged and he started screaming at the top of his lungs and banging his head on the table," Gomes said of one **Wynn** outburst.

A local trade reporter once characterized **Wynn** as a "sunshine-thunderstorm" kind of guy -- a characterization **Wynn** does not dispute -- and business people in town say they alternately admire and abhor the man.

One casino owner, who would not speak for attribution, credits **Wynn** "for starting a new era in Las Vegas that certainly woke me up to the fact that I was going to fall by the wayside like others have if I didn't get my act together too."

But he complains that "in the early '80s, Steve started walking on water. He thinks he *is* the industry and that he knows what's best for you."

Wynn brought a political operative onto the corporate staff to conduct polling on behalf of favored candidates. His office also publishes "Silver Voice," a newsletter sent free to about 30,000 senior citizens in Clark County that features recipes -- and updates on legislative issues.

"I don't think there's anyone more concerned about the community than Steve **Wynn,**" said Dan Hart, the operative hired after he advised Mayor Jan Laverty Jones in her election two years ago. "He sees the big picture, that you can't have a healthy business climate without balance on the civic side."

Although **Wynn** typically does not forcefully campaign for any one candidate, last year he sent a letter to voters in a state Assembly district, urging them to turn the incumbent out of office. The incumbent -- who had won **Wynn's** disfavor after criticizing him as a community meddler -- won anyway.

But **Wynn** knows the power of the ballot: He led a drive to register 97% of his employees as voters, and now boasts that his workers account for 10% of the people most likely to vote in any Clark County election.

"It was the right thing to do," **Wynn** said of motivating a 14,000-member work force to register to vote, but insists that if he dare suggested how they cast their ballots as a voting bloc, "they'd spit in my eye."

The **Wynns'** presence is felt keenly at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, where they are among the strongest boosters of President Robert Maxson. The **Wynns** and their longtime banker friend, H. Parry Thomas, funded $1 million each for an endowed chair for Maxson when he retires as president -- an endowment that collapses when Maxson quits the university for good.

Thus, the **Wynns** are considered by insiders to have strong influence on Maxson and are believed to have urged Maxson to fire controversial basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian.

"What are they going to do, call it Mirage U?" Tarkanian remarked to a local reporter, complaining of what he called the **Wynns'** heavy-handed involvement in the university's athletic program.

The **Wynns,** according to university officials, offered the use of the Mirage jet and the hotel to recruit the next basketball coach, Rollie Massimino.

More recently, when Maxson's job was on the line with the elected university regents for his handling of a cheating scandal, the **Wynns** lobbied heavily in the president's

defense. They told one regent -- according to multiple sources -- that if support for Maxson wasn't forthcoming, the regent could count on opposition in the next election. Two swing votes softened and Maxson kept his job.

Local politicians are now wondering whether the **Wynns** will exercise their political influence in next year's elections for governor, mayor, sheriff and district attorney. One of the district attorney candidates is a former county prosecutor who serves as **Wynn's** corporate counsel.

Wynn said when he heard of his attorney's intentions, he immediately offered equal cash donations to both candidates. The other candidate said he declined the gift.

"The **Wynns** are probably the most potent political force in the state of Nevada at this time," said Shelly Berkeley, a university regent, an attorney for the Sands casino and a former assemblywoman.

Politics notwithstanding, **Wynn** remains the casino mogul, the man who shook up the Strip with his $670-million hotel -- a place that needed $1 million a day to break even, and made it easily from the start.

For added measure, **Wynn** custom-built a high-tech, 1,500-seat showroom with a stage more than four times larger than Radio City Music Hall, and installed top-draw magicians Siegfried & Roy as permanent entertainers. Their act commands $72.85 per ticket -- and sells out each of its 480 shows a year.

"He may call this the hotel business," independent producer Kenneth Feld, the owner of Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey circus said of **Wynn,** "but he's in the entertainment business and he stands up there with Michael Eisner and Steve Spielberg for their combination of vision and the ability to make it happen."

Meanwhile, the city wonders what **Wynn** will do with his newest property, the site of the old Dunes hotel on which he will build his fourth hotel-casino in Las Vegas.

He will not reveal details, but has said he wants to put 15 acres of the site under water as a lake for championship skiing and other events. That project will force **Wynn** to exercise his political influence: Clark County has barred man-made lakes in Las Vegas.

Wynn likes water. He has lagoons in front of the Mirage and Treasure Island -- junk water from a tainted aquifer that he first runs through his own water treatment plant.

And he proposed that downtown be reinvigorated by turning Fremont Street into a canal. Las Venice? casino owners asked. He built a scale model, but after viewing it through cameras, he admitted that it did not have the "Wow!" impact he seeks in a project.

Instead, renowned architect Jon Jerde -- in town to help the **Wynns** build a new home -- suggested putting three blocks of Fremont Street under a single canopy, to incorporate the downtown casino district as one mega-casino sharing a single promenade. The canopy would provide shade by day, Jerde said, and sparkle at night with a blanket of lights, a Vegas version of the Disney Main Street Parade.

Wynn said he went "Wow!" with that idea. Other casino operators did too, and groundbreaking on the project is set for this fall with the city's blessing.

He cheers the new hotel resorts opening down the street from him and says he will continue to stretch his imagination. "What I do for a living and what keeps me young and happy is creating places where people go 'Wow!' and have fun. It's not that I'm insatiable. It's that I love the exercise."