

Las Vegas Sins and Scams – Appendix to Book 2 – Old Casinos
Paul Wallace Winquist

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Freemont Street While it Still Had Trees, Las Vegas, NV

Photo by Paul Winquist

The following information is mostly from Wikipedia during October, 2011. It is edited to only have the material of interest for the context of the books Las Vegas Sins and Scams by Paul Winquist. No references are given, and the material has been seriously edited; to get the full story on each character, casino, or organization see the Wikipedia listing, and then the reference material given. All green writing is by me. (PWW)

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The Plaza Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas



Photo by Paul Winquist

The Plaza Hotel & Casino is a casino-hotel located in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada owned by the Tamares Group and Play LV is the leaseholder and operator of the property. It currently has 1,037 rooms and suites, as well as an 80,000-square-foot (7,400 m²) casino and there is more than 25,000 square feet (2,300 m²) of event space. The Plaza also features a classic showroom, seasonal roof top swimming pool, beauty salon, and fitness center, as well as a Race & Sports Book.

The Plaza began an extensive renovation project at the end of 2010 that included brand new guestrooms and suites, an entirely remodeled casino floor and lobby, and all new restaurants, bars and entertainment options. The renovations utilize contemporary furnishings and materials purchased from the Fontainebleau resort after it suspended construction on the Las Vegas Strip. The hotel and casino are scheduled to open as soon as Sept. 1, 2011.

History:

Opened on July 2, 1971 with the owners including local businessmen: **Sam Boyd, Frank Scott, Howard Cannon** and **Jackie Gaughan**. Its original name was **Union Plaza**, in reference to the Union Pacific railroad station that originally stood at the site.

Before the discontinuation of the Desert Wind train route on May 10, 1997, Amtrak made its Las Vegas, Nevada station near the Plaza. The station and ticket windows were directly connected to the hotel. It was the only train station in the United States located in a casino.

Barrick Gaming Corporation acquired the Plaza from Jackie Gaughan and in late 2005 later ceded operation to majority owner Tamares Group. On July 1, 2005 after Tamares took control of the Plaza mayor Oscar Goodman made his opinions clear in an article in the Las Vegas Press. He said if I had my druthers, I would like to have somebody in place to discuss imploding the Plaza. He was referring to his desire to see the Plaza replaced with new construction that would create a scenic entrance to Union Park.

During its ownership by Barrick Gaming Corporation, D.W. Barrick's good friend, Larry Manetti (Orville "Rick" Wright, of Magnum, P.I. fame) hosted a celebrity brunch every Sunday, featuring such guests as Pat Morita and Steve Rossi. He also owned Manetti's in The Plaza. When Barrick sold its interest in the hotel to the Tamares Group, Manetti closed his restaurant and severed his relationship with the hotel. The Plaza's famed glass-domed Center Stage Restaurant is now a second edition of the locally famed Firefly Tapas Kitchen and Lounge.

The hotel portion closed on November 11, 2010 for renovations that are estimated to last 12 months leaving just the sports & racebook, the showroom, one bar, and a portion of the casino open. The hotel closure is expected to cause the loss of 400 jobs in the hotel.

As of March 2011, the south tower has been fully renovated including all new furniture purchased from the postponed Fontainebleau project. The casino finished renovations and re-opened on August 24, 2011, with the hotel re-opening on September 1, 2011.

[ToC](#)



The Plaza Hotel & Casino taken from across the street at the Fremont Street Experience 19 April 2007

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[ToC](#)

Las Vegas Union Pacific Station

Prior to the construction of the casino, part of the site was used for a Streamline Moderne train station. Constructed in 1940 the station was upgraded with neon lights in 1946. This station existed until the 1960s when it was demolished and replaced by the Union Plaza Hotel which included a new station.

[ToC](#)

Monte Carlo Casino in Monaco



Casino in Monaco

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The Monte Carlo Casino is a gambling and entertainment complex located in Monte Carlo, Monaco. It includes a casino, the Grand Théâtre de Monte Carlo, and the office of Les Ballets de Monte Carlo.

Construction started in 1858, was completed in 1863.

The Monte Carlo Casino is owned and operated by the Société des bains de mer de Monaco, a public company in which the Monaco government and the ruling family have a majority interest. The company also owns the principal hotels, sports clubs, foodservice establishments, and nightclubs throughout Monaco.

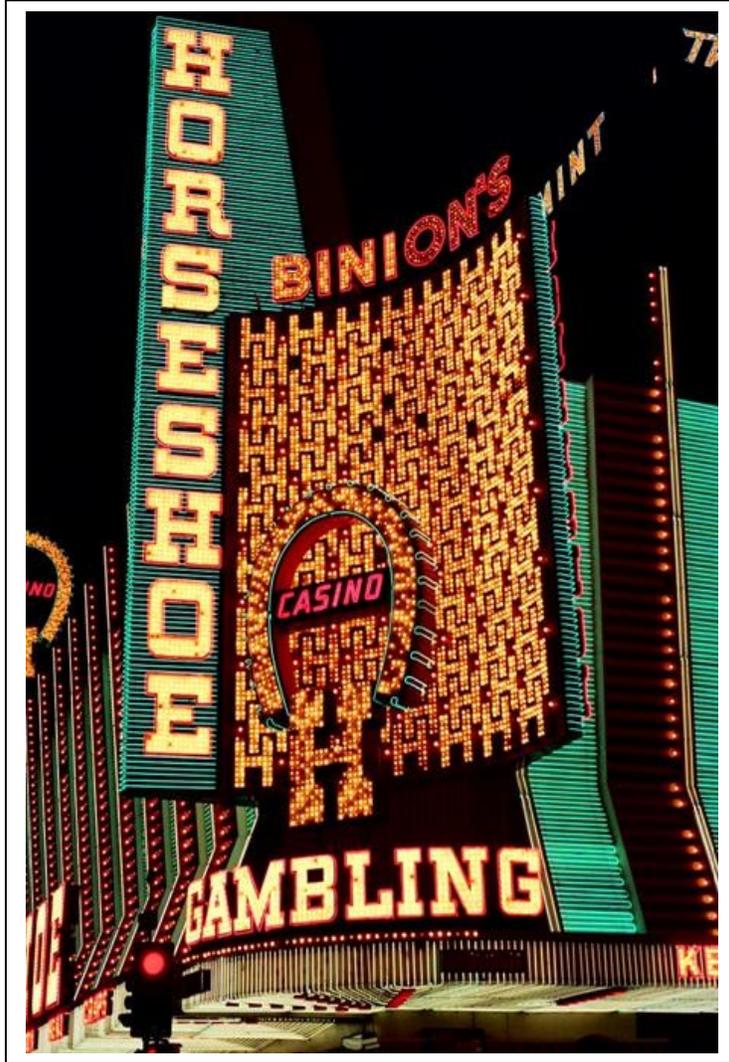
The casino was designed by the architect Charles Garnier, who also created the Paris Opéra. It has a distinctly Beaux Arts style.

The citizens of Monaco are forbidden to enter the gaming rooms of the casino. Identity documents are checked at the door to enforce this rule.



ToC

Binion's Horseshoe, Las Vegas



Binion's Horseshoe Date 1 September 1986

Photo © 1986 Larry D. Moore (CC-BY-SA), used under a Creative Commons ShareAlike License



Binion's with Fremont Street on the Left June 2005, Just Before the Name Change

Photo by Paul Winquist

Binion's Horseshoe, also known as **the Horseshoe Casino** or simply **The Horseshoe**, was a hotel and casino located in **downtown Las Vegas, Nevada** on what is now the Fremont Street Experience. The casino was named for its founder, **Benny Binion** and had 366 rooms, three restaurants and a rooftop pool.

The property is still open, but **Harrah's owns the Horseshoe brand name**. As of 2008 it is owned by **TLC Corporation** and runs under the name **Binion's Gambling Hall and Hotel**.

Binion instituted high table limits; when he first opened the Horseshoe, he set the craps table limit at \$500—ten times higher than any other casino in Las Vegas at the time. Ultimately, Binion's raised the table limit to \$10,000 and even eliminated table limits completely at times, which was an immediate hit.

Unlike other casinos, the emphasis at Binion's was on gambling, not on big performing acts. The casino was very egalitarian; there were no private pits for high rollers.

Binion's entire family was involved in the casino. His wife Teddy Jane managed the casino cage until her death in 1994. His sons, Jack and Ted, supervised the games. His daughter, Becky (later **Becky Binion Behnen**), managed the kitchen.

The Horseshoe brand was used for several casino properties owned by the Binion family members. While not part of the same company, the other Horseshoe Casinos were owned by **Jack Binion**, a co-owner of Binion's.

History:

Benny Binion bought the **Eldorado Club** and **Apache Hotel** in 1951, re-opening them as the Horseshoe Casino. He styled it like an old-style riverboat, with low ceilings and velvet wallpaper. It was the first Las Vegas casino to have carpeting, as well as comps that were offered to all gamblers. Benny believed that small-time gamblers should get the same comps as those who bet big money.

Benny served time in Leavenworth Penitentiary from 1953 to 1957 for tax evasion. He sold his share of the casino to fellow gambler **Joe W. Brown** to pay approximately \$5 million in legal costs. It was generally understood, however, that Brown was only a caretaker, and Benny regained controlling interest in 1957. He did not regain full control, however, until 1964.

While Brown operated the casino, he installed the famous \$1 million dollar display on the casino floor. He sold the display in 1959 and it was later recreated using 100 \$10,000 bills by Benny in 1964. The display became one of the casino's attractions.

As a convicted felon, Benny was no longer allowed to hold a gaming license, so his sons took over day-to-day control when the family bought out Brown. Jack became president while Ted became casino manager. Benny remained on the

payroll as a "consultant" until his death in 1989.

In 1970, Jack began hosting the World Series of Poker (WSOP) at the Horseshoe. Eventually, the WSOP became the largest set of poker tournaments in the world. In 1988, the Horseshoe expanded by acquiring **The Mint**, a high-rise hotel on the west side of the casino. The expansion of the casino from this purchase provided room for Binion's first poker room.

Ted was under constant scrutiny from the Nevada Gaming Commission from 1986 onward for drug problems and associating with known mob figure "Fat Herbie" Blitzstein. He would ultimately be banned from even entering his family's casino. In 1998, he was stripped of his gaming license for his continued association with Blitzstein. He was forced to sell his 20 percent interest to his younger sister, Becky.

In 1998 Becky Behnen acquired controlling interest in the casino following a protracted legal battle with her older brother Jack. The battle ended with Jack being bought out while retaining a 1% interest in the casino so that he could retain his Nevada gaming license. Jack moved on to other gambling interests. Behnen became president of the Horseshoe while her husband, Nick, took over as manager.

Behnen implemented several cost-cutting measures, most of which were unpopular with the gamblers. Among the most notable was the removal of the Horseshoe exhibit that held \$1 million, having been sold to collector Jay Parrino, who had served as a backdrop for free pictures of visitors.

She also made changes in the distribution of the money from the entry fees in the World Series of Poker that were unpopular with the casino dealers, and closed a popular restaurant in the casino. Benny had used one of the tables in the restaurant as his office. Despite these measures, the Horseshoe became bogged down in debt. Under her father and brothers, the Horseshoe had reportedly been the most profitable casino in Las Vegas (it was privately held, so it never had to report its earnings).

Behnen also attracted the attention of the state regulators by failing to keep sufficient funds available to pay winners in the casino cage. Bob Stupak also drew negative publicity to the casino when he tried to redeem his \$5,000 casino tokens, some of which were stored in the casino's own safe deposit boxes, and Becky refused to honor them.

Behnen's undoing, however, was a dispute with the unions that represented some of the Horseshoe's employees. In November 2002, the Culinary Workers Union and Bartenders Union filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board alleging that Behnen hadn't signed a collective bargaining agreement and had fallen behind on medical insurance and pension payments. The parties reached a settlement in March 2003 in which the Horseshoe signed the collective bargaining agreement and agreed to pay the owed money. However, the Horseshoe fell behind on its payments, leading a federal judge to issue two separate judgments ordering the Horseshoe to pay over \$1.5 million. The judgments gave the union the right to seize the money if regular payments weren't being met.

However, the casino stopped making payments in June. After holding off numerous times, on December 5 the Culinary Union obtained a court order authorizing the seizure of up to \$1.9 million from the Horseshoe casino cage. The seizure took place on January 9; ultimately federal marshals and IRS agents seized \$1 million in order to satisfy debts owed to the Southern Nevada Culinary and Bartenders Pension Trust Fund and to the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union Welfare Fund. The seizure effectively depleted the Horseshoe's bankroll, forcing it to close. A day later, the hotel was shut down as well, and Behnen reached an agreement with the Nevada Gaming Commission to keep the casino closed until its bankroll was replenished.

A few days later, on January 23, Behnen reached a deal to sell the Horseshoe to Harrah's Entertainment. The deal closed in March 2004. Almost immediately, on March 11, Harrah's sold the Horseshoe to MTR Gaming Group. Harrah's retained the rights to the Horseshoe brand and the World Series of Poker when it sold the casino and hotel, but sold the Binion's brand. The land the casino sits on is still leased from multiple owners.

Binion's reopened in April 2004, with MTR Gaming operating the hotel and Harrah's Entertainment operating the casino, while MTR Gaming completed the process of acquiring the required gaming license. Harrah's continued to operate the casino under a temporary contract with MTR Gaming until March 11, 2005 when MTR Gaming Group officially took control of the operation of the casino and renamed it **Binion's Gambling Hall and Hotel**.

MTR Gaming remodeled both the casino and hotel after the purchase. A notable feature of the remodeling was to replace the casino's worn carpet with surplus carpeting that Benny Binion had stored since initially carpeting the casino.

It was announced on November 30, 2009 that the property's 365 hotel rooms would cease operating on December 14, 2009.

Binion styled himself a cowboy throughout his life. He almost never wore a necktie, and used gold coins for his cowboy shirts. Despite being technically barred from owning guns, he carried at least one pistol all his life, and kept a sawed-off shotgun close by. His office was a booth in the downstairs restaurant, and he knew most of his customers by name.



Becky's Cheapness and 2 year strike killed the place
Photo by Paul Winquist

[ToC](#)

The Mint, Las Vegas



The Mint Casino in Las Vegas

[Wikipedia](#)

The Mint Las Vegas was a hotel and casino in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada. It opened in 1957, a 26-story hotel tower was added in 1965; in 1988, The Mint was sold and became part of Binion's Horseshoe.

The Mint was the sponsor of the Mint 400, the largest off road race from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s.

The Mint was made famous (or infamous) as the first night's stay in Hunter S. Thompson and Oscar Acosta's legendary 1971 weekend trip to Las Vegas, immortalized in Thompson's novel *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. According to the book, they stayed in room 1850.

History:

Del Webb assumed ownership around 1961.

Milton Prell, who also owned the Sahara Hotel and Casino and the Aladdin Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip, at one point owned The Mint.

Patsy Cline performed at the Mint Casino in December 1962 through January 1963, 3 months before her fatal plane crash. She performed with the Glaser Bros. and at one point developed "Vegas Throat" due to the dry desert heat. That night she mouthed the words to one of her LPs played over the loudspeakers. She was the 2nd country performer to perform in Vegas, the first being Loretta Lynn who also played the Mint. Upstairs in the lounge you could see the Johnny Elvis Foster Show For The Love Of Elvis & The Memphis Sound Packed the house every night for 3 months from February 1978 through May 1981. Dell said He was the best thing to hit downtown. Pat Moreno's Artists and Models kept the Mint going from 1960 to 1965; one of the first topless shows in Las Vegas

Peter Urquidi, "Man of Many Sounds", played the Top of the Mint in the "Sky Room" for more than a decade until the early 70's.

The casino can be seen several times towards the end of the 1987 U2 music video "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For", which was filmed entirely on Fremont Street and in the 1971 James Bond motion picture "Diamonds are Forever".

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Moulin Rouge Hotel, Las Vegas



Daytime Photograph of the Sign of the Closed Moulin Rouge Hotel & Casino, 20 June 2007
Wikipedia



Newest In Las Vegas: Girls At the Moulin Rouge" - Shot of two showgirls dancing onstage at the Moulin Rouge, cover for the story inside the magazine about the hotel - Life Magazine, June 20th 1955

Wikipedia

The Moulin Rouge opened on May 24, 1955, built at a cost of \$3.5 million; it was **the first integrated hotel casino in the United States**. Until that time almost all of the casinos on the Strip were totally segregated—off limits to blacks unless they were the entertainment or labor force.

The hotel was located in West Las Vegas, where the black population was forced to live.

The establishment was a model of eye-catching, 110 rooms, a gorgeous showroom, swimming pool, restaurant/coffee shop, dress-shop, and bar which was constructed of highly polished and expensive hardwoods.

Eiffel Tower appears vertically on the sign of the establishment, and also on the casino chips.

A French Chef is at the head of the largest gastronomic restaurant of the establishments.

From the entrance, security personnel are dressed in the uniform of the French Foreign Legion (allusion to France and Edith Piaf, who made a comeback after the war with Yves Montand at the Moulin Rouge), according of the press, adds a touch of glamour in Las Vegas.

Founding:

It was during this era that **Will Max Schwartz** saw the **need for an integrated hotel**. Will, along with other white investors—**Louis Rubin**, owner of Chandler's Restaurant in New York City, and **Alexander Bisno**, who worked in real estate in California—and black boxing great **Joe Louis**, built and opened the Moulin Rouge at 900 West Bonanza Road. This location placed it in a prime location between the predominantly white area of the Strip and the largely black west side.

Design:

The complex itself consisted of two "Googie-populuxe" Modernist style stuccoed buildings that housed the hotel, the casino, and a theater. The exterior had the hotel's name in stylized cursive writing and murals depicting dancing and fancy cars. The sign was designed by Betty Willis, creator of the "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign on the south end of the Strip. The Moulin Rouge in Paris was a source of inspiration. When the casino opened the revue "**Tropi Cancan**," was inspired by the French Cancan, created in the 19th century to the Moulin Rouge Paris: **The Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino opened on May 24, 1955** to fanfare, long lines of well-dressed visitors, and Las Vegas' newest showroom revue, the **Tropi-Can-Can Revue**: this inspiration comes from the first Afro-American star in France, Josephine Baker. The wall painted of the Moulin Rouge Las Vegas, included many references to Paris and Toulouse Lautrec. "**Black showgirls** performed on a stage amid a backdrop of walls featuring mahogany wood trim and Toulouse Lautrec-style murals of black French cancan dancers. The showroom featured "Tropi-Can-Can" under the tutelage of veteran producer Clarence Robinson."

Operating and direction:

When it opened, the Moulin Rouge was **fully integrated** top to bottom, from employees to patrons to entertainers.

The hotel made the June 20, 1955, cover of Life magazine, with a photo of two showgirls. A veritable "A" list of performers regularly showed to party until dawn. Great black singers and musicians such as **Sammy Davis Jr., Nat King Cole, Pearl Bailey, and Louis Armstrong** would perform often. These artists were banned from gambling or staying at the hotels on the Strip. In addition, white performers, including **George Burns, Jack Benny, and Frank Sinatra**, would drop in after their shows to gamble and perform. Eventually management added a 2:30am "Third Show" to accommodate the crowds.

Closure and landmark:

In **November 1955** the Moulin Rouge **closed its doors**, and by December 1955, the casino had **declared bankruptcy**.

Civil-rights heritage:

The short but vibrant life of the Moulin Rouge helped the civil-rights movement in Las Vegas. For a while the hotel was owned by the first African American woman to hold a Nevada Gaming License, Sarann Knight-Preddey. Many of those who enjoyed and were employed by the hotel became activists and supporters. The hotel was also the spark needed to bring an end to segregation on the Strip.

In **1960**, under threat of a protest march down the Las Vegas Strip against racial discrimination by Las Vegas casinos, a meeting was hurriedly arranged by then-**Governor Grant Sawyer** between hotel owners, city and state officials, local black leaders, and then-NAACP president **James McMillan**. The meeting was held on March 26 at the closed Moulin Rouge. This resulted in an agreement to **desegregate all Strip casinos**. **Hank Greenspun**, who would become an important media figure in the town, mediated the agreement.

In 1992 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and became a symbol of the expanding of black civil rights, and a monument of Las Vegas's racist past.

Preservation and fires:

Although the Moulin Rouge complex remained shuttered for decades, many plans had been hatched to rebuild and

reopen the cultural landmark. But on May 29, 2003, a fire ripped through the buildings, almost entirely gutting the complex. The facade with its signature stylized name was spared destruction. In 2004, a man arrested near the property was sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to one count of arson in connection with the fire.

January 2004 saw the Moulin Rouge sold again for \$12.1 million to the Moulin Rouge Development Corporation. The stylized "Moulin Rouge" neon sign was turned back on. A \$200 million renovation of the site was announced but was never completed.

Following a February decision to tear down the structures as a public nuisance, the third fire in four years on May 6, 2009, caused significant damage to the original hotel lobby building, but did not touch the remaining original exterior wall that held the signage. The signage had just been removed for storage at the Neon Museum boneyard. The property, which was in foreclosure at the time of the fire, had failed to sell at a foreclosure auction the day before. **(Jewish Lightin?? PWW)**

In June, 2010, the Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission approved permits for demolition of the remains of the buildings, citing numerous concerns by the city about the safety of the structures. This was, however, just a guise to cripple any efforts to preserve what was left of the historical integrity of the property. Instead of demolishing what was left of the hotel wings, which had seem to catch fire every few years, the city instead demolished the stone exterior wall, pillars, and facade that held the sign. Also destroyed was the landmark tower that stood over the West side and was a symbol to the residents. The tower, which the city claimed was unstable, took nearly half a day of weakening to finally pull down. As of February 2011, the red mosaic pillars still lie in the empty lot, and the unstable, fire hazard hotel wings still stand.

[ToC](#)

Hotel Del Rey, San Jose, Costa Rica

Hotel/Casino/Whorehouse/Resturants/Travel agency



Hotel Del Rey, Taken from the Back Door of the Key Largo
Photo by Paul Winquist



Almost Always 5 Bartenders at the Bar for Friendly Service
Left, Photo by Paul winquist - Right, Webcam Photo



Friendly Rent-A-Girls, Ready to Go
Photo by Paul Winquist



When you burn out on the girls you can play in the casino
Photo by Paul Winquist



Photo by Paul Winqvist



Fun Bartender (at a different bar in Costa Rica), Fine Costi Rican Girl

Photos by Paul Winqvist

What a wonderful place, for old retired vacationers from America and Canada.

(Not good for guys stifled from enjoying life, by religious hang-ups)

Built around 1880, it was totally remodeled to modern standards in the late 70's.

It is located in a neighborhood of casinos and bars, and 2 blocks from the main downtown street/mall.

These girls are the friendliest in the world; they spend an entire afternoon up in your room for the \$70 or so.

You can watch the bartenders in action, live, on their webpage: hoteldelrey.com PWW

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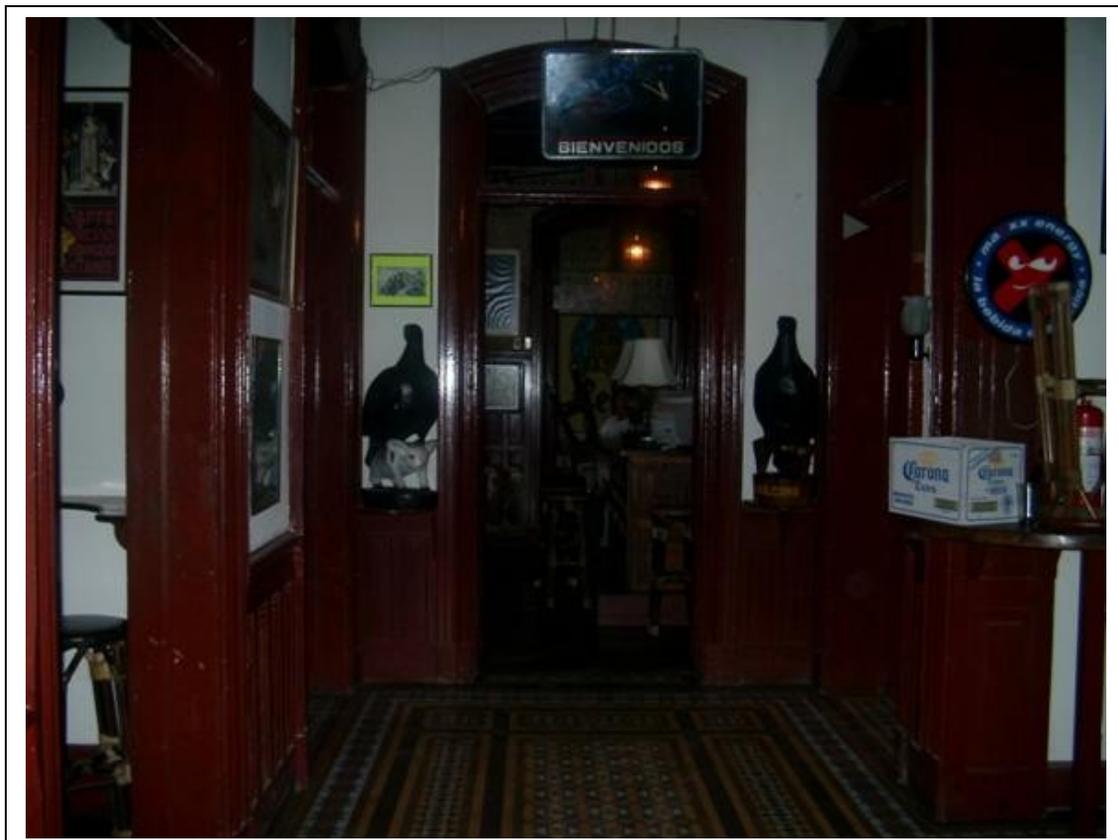
Key Largo, San Jose Costa Rica

Was a casino, now just 5 bars.



Key Largo entrance in 2001

Photo by paul winquist



Key Largo entryway 2001

Photo by Paul Winquist



Part of the Closed Down Casino on 2nd Floor

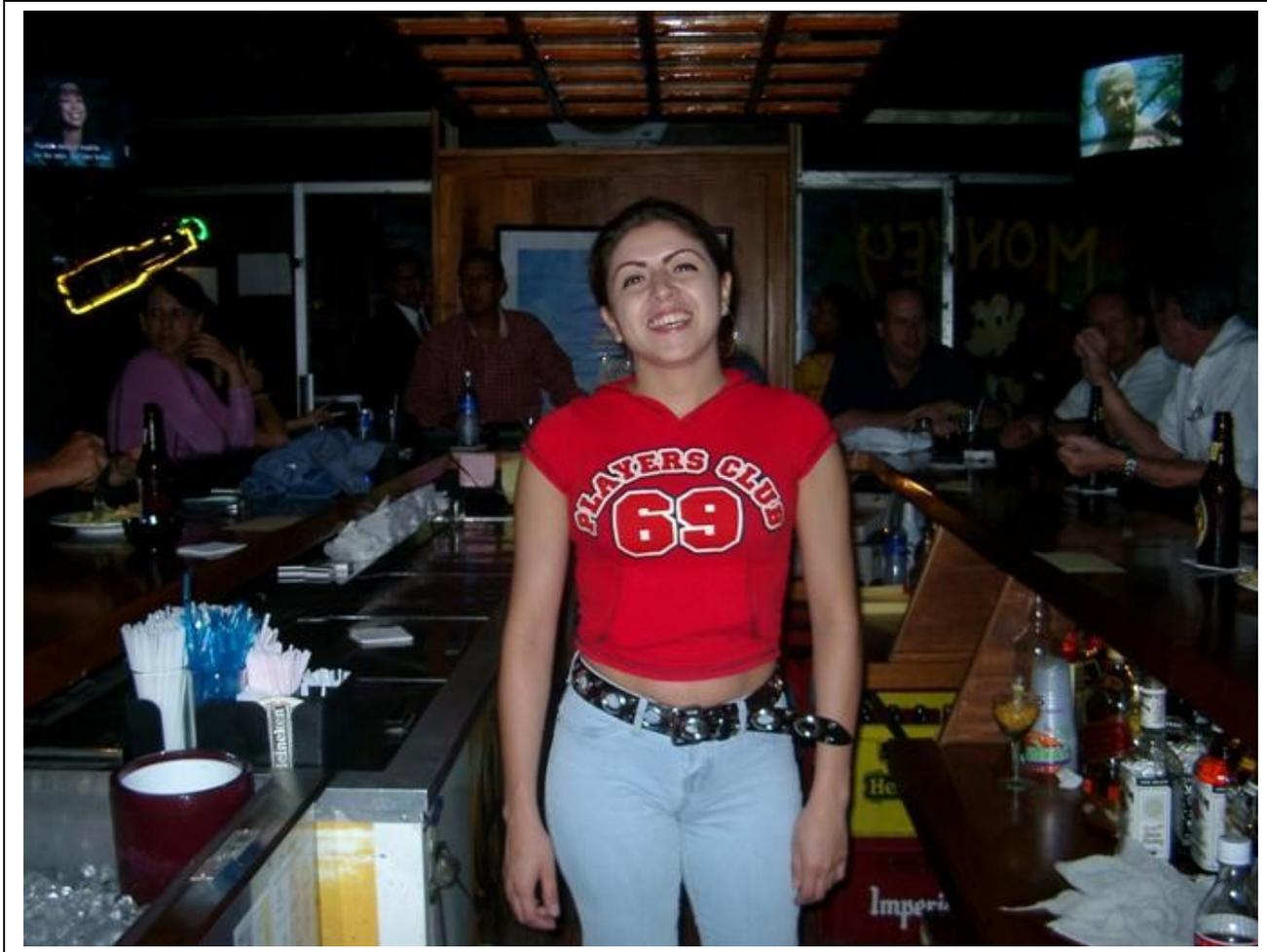
Photo by Paul Winquist



L: Key Largo in San Jose, Costa Rica , View from Morazan Park

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R: Photo by Paul Winquist



Always Fun/Cute Bartenders
Photo by Paul Winquist



Pictures Hanging in Key Largo
Photos by Paul Winquist



One of the 5 Bars
Photos by Paul Winquist



L: Key Largo in San Jose, Costa Rica, View from Morazan Park
R: Key Largo View from Holiday Inn's Casino.
Photos by Paul Winquist

Built around 1870, this is where Humphry Bogart and many other movie people went to vacation and make movies in the 1920s-1040s. The upstairs casino was closed down when I was last there in 2001, just after the 911 bombing; it has been closed for many years, but the downstairs is wildly open with 5 bars, a live band every night, and packed full of locals and tourists. PWW

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Bourbon Street Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



The marquee of w:Bourbon Street Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas at twilight Date 7 June 2004

Bourbon Street Hotel and Casino was an off-Strip hotel and casino located in Paradise, Nevada. The 166 room hotel and 15,000 sq ft (1,400 m²) casino was owned by Harrah's Entertainment (now Caesars Entertainment Corporation).

History:

In 1980, the hotel opened as **Shenandoah**. **Wayne Newton** was one of the original investors, however, Shenandoah went bankrupt after 4 years without the casino ever opening.

(Several owners never could make it a success even with the casino open. PWW)

In March 2005, Harrah's purchased the property and several surrounding properties to acquire an 8 acres (3.2 ha) land parcel just off the Strip and adjacent to a Las Vegas Monorail station.

The casino was closed in October 2005. Demolition work on the property began the following January. The tower was

imploded on February 14, 2006.

The property where Bourbon Street formerly stood is currently vacant. As of 2010, no plans exist for the lot.

(Too many idiots. PWW)

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Four Queens - Casino and Hotel, Las Vegas



The Four Queens Hotel and Casino is located in **downtown Las Vegas** on the Fremont Street Experience. Home to the Queen's Machine, the world's largest slot machine, the 690 room hotel and 40,000 sq ft (3,700 m²) casino is owned and operated by TLC Enterprises, which acquired the property from the Elsinore Corporation in 2003.



Photo of Paul Winquist In Hugo's Cellar in the basement of the Four Queens
Photo by Paul Winquist

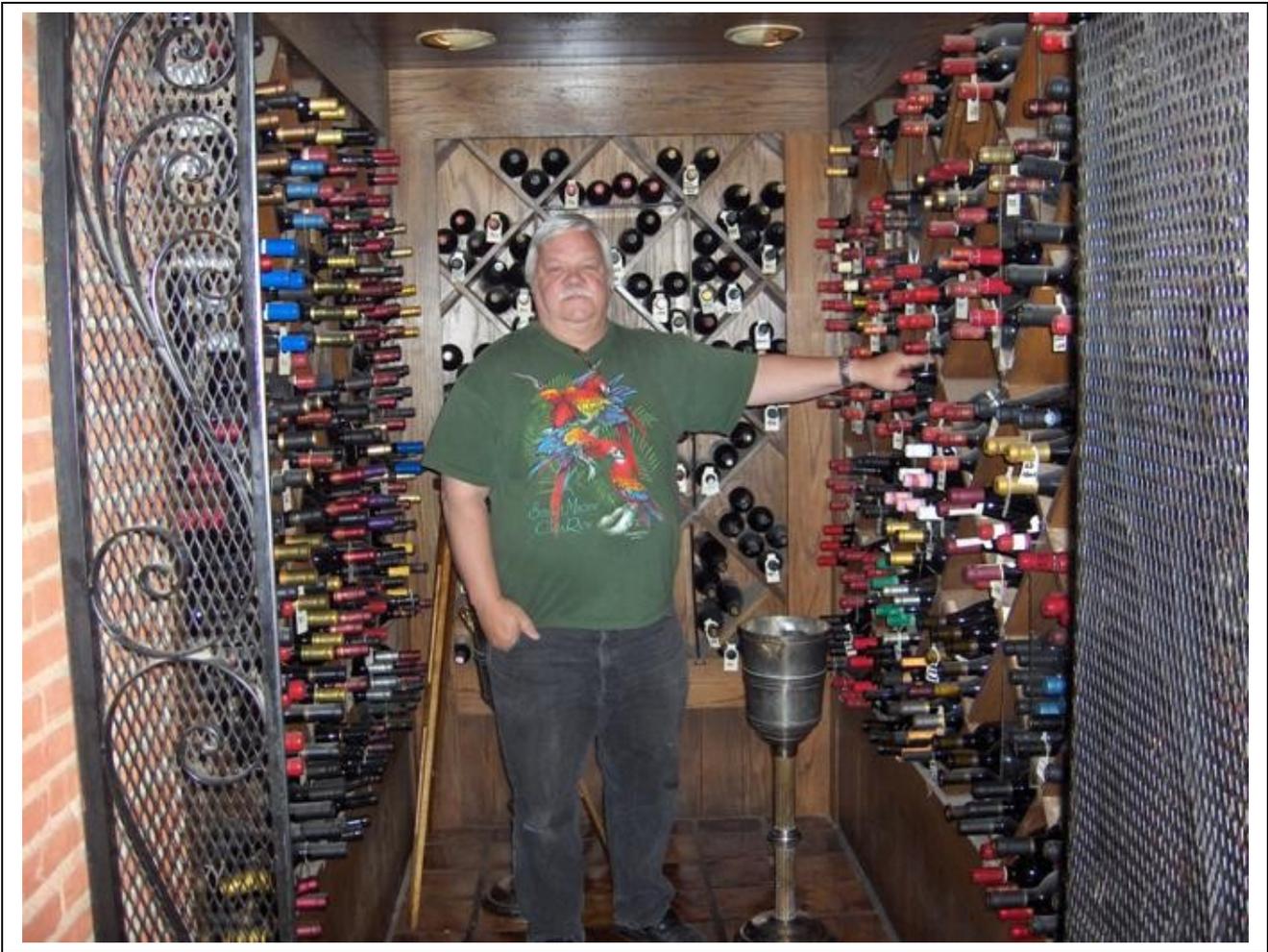


Photo of Paul Winqvist In Hugo's Wine Cellar in the basement of the Four Queens -
Photo by Paul Winqvist

(Note: I'm holding the wall for balance, and the Costa Rican T-shirt)

[ToC](#)

Main Street Station - Hotel, Casino , & Brewery, Las Vegas



Photo by Paul Winquist

The Main Street Station Hotel and Casino and Brewery is a hotel and casino located in **Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada**. It is owned by **Boyd Gaming Corporation**. The casino is connected to California Hotel and Casino by an enclosed skywalk over Main Street.

Main Street Station offers a self-guided tour which includes a portion of the Berlin Wall, stained glass from the Lillian Russell Mansion, doors and facade from the Kuwait Royal Bank, doors from the George Pullman Mansion, Louisa May Alcott pullman car, chandeliers from the Coca-Cola building and Figaro Opera House, and various statues. The portion of the Berlin Wall is located in the men's restroom and has urinals affixed to it. **(So you can piss on it PWW)**

Main Street Station was initially proposed as a redevelopment project, Church Street Station, controversially including a strip-frontage property acquired via eminent domain whose valuation persists in litigation. Failing to obtain the property in time, the casino-hotel was developed from the existing "Main Street Park Hotel" on an \$82 million budget by **Florida developer Bob Snow** in the image of his then-highly successful Orlando attraction in August, 1991. The hotel/casino/club-hop in that form lasted less than a year.



One of the Bars in Main Street Station Note the Extensive Use of Marble
Photo by Paul winquist



Pool Table on 2nd Floor
Photo by Paul Winqvist

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Golden Gate Casino & Hotel, Las Vegas



1906 Photo

The Golden Gate Hotel & Casino is located at **One Fremont Street in Las Vegas, Nevada**, in the United States. A part of the Fremont Street Experience, it is the oldest and smallest hotel (106 rooms) on the Fremont Street Experience.

History:

It opened in 1906 as the Hotel Nevada. In 1907 it was assigned Las Vegas' first telephone with the number 1. In 1931, with gambling being re-legalized in Nevada, the Hotel Nevada was expanded and renamed Sal Sagev (Las Vegas spelled backwards.)

The hotel gained its current name in 1955 when a group of Italian-Americans from San Francisco Bay Area started the Golden Gate Casino. The 106-room, four-story hotel was renovated in 2005.



Attribution: Mikerussell at en.wikipedia



One of the Bands in the Golden Gate
Photo by Paul Winquist

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El Cortez, Las Vegas



[Wikipedia](#)

The El Cortez, a hotel and casino is a relatively small **downtown Las Vegas** gaming venue a block from the Fremont Street Experience and Las Vegas Boulevard. The official marketing slogan has been "Where locals come to play" since the El Cortez has traditionally attracted Las Vegas residents weary of large casinos geared towards tourists. Slots, table games and a race and sports book occupy one floor of the main pavilion. It is one of the oldest casino-hotel properties in Las Vegas having continuously operated at the same Fremont Street location **since 1941**.

History:

Marion Hicks and J.C. Grayson built the El Cortez, downtown Las Vegas' first major resort, in 1941 for \$245,000. The location at 6th Street and Fremont was originally considered too far from downtown, but it quickly became so profitable, **Bugsy Siegel, Meyer Lansky, Gus Greenbaum** and **Moe Sedway** bought the property in 1945 from J. Kel Houssels for \$600,000. J. Kel Houssels had originally opened the fifty-nine room hotel and casino before the sale to the major organized crime figures. Houssels purchased the hotel back from Siegel's group in 1946 for \$766,000. In 1963, the Pavilion Rooms were added after the hotel was purchased by **Jackie Gaughan**. Another 15 story tower addition, was completed in 1980. The 64 room Cabana Suites were completed in the former Ogden House in 2009 bringing the total room count to its current 364. Gaughan, a casino owner and operator since the early 1950s, lives in the El Cortez tower penthouse and is known to be on the casino floor almost daily. The property is one of the few casinos to have never changed its exterior facade in Las Vegas, retaining the same signage and ranch themed architecture for over sixty years.

[ToC](#)



Attribution: Mikerussell at en.wikipedia

Current operation:

Jackie Gaughan's son Michael Gaughan owns the sports and race book in the current casino under the name South Point Race and Sports Book, which is run in other downtown casinos as well. Like most Las Vegas casinos, the El Cortez has undergone several renovations with the latest major remodeling completed in 2006. New carpet, marble flooring, gaming machines, refurbished guest rooms and an upgraded kitchen for the restaurant were added. Although only a block away from the Fremont Street Experience, the hotel is part of the newly created Fremont East section of downtown. It has also created a main entrance off Las Vegas Boulevard (5th Street) by opening a block long pedestrian walkway from the boulevard to the hotel's main entrance on 6th Street. The El Cortez is also well known in the casino industry as the most prominent "break-in house" for new table game dealers to get experience before moving onto bigger properties. In 2008 longtime owner Jackie Gaughan sold the hotel just before his 88th birthday. The buyers include his son, his nephew, and his business partner of many decades. Jackie will continue to live in the casino and greet customers and play poker. Recently the coffee shop has been extensively renovated and renamed Cafe Cortez. The fine-dining restaurant has been renamed The Flame. The separate hotel in the back, the 100 room Ogden House, has been completely renovated into the 64 suite Cabana Suites.

[ToC](#)

New Frontier Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



Last Frontier Hotel, Texaco Gas Station, Antique Fire Engine Date 1948 or 1949

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Notice the blank desert where the Stardust was built later.

The New Frontier was a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip that had operated continuously **since October 30, 1942**. Actually located within the unincorporated suburb of Paradise, Nevada, USA, it was the second resort that opened on the Las Vegas Strip. The Frontier closed its doors for good at 12:00 A.M. (Pacific Time) on July 16, 2007, and was demolished on November 13, 2007. A new hotel casino, tentatively titled the Las Vegas Plaza, is proposed to be built in its place. The demolition and its preparation were filmed for the National Geographic Channel and a program called Blowdown: Vegas Casino.

The marquee of the hotel was still standing until December 10, 2008 when it was taken down at the request of Steve Wynn prior to the opening of the Encore Las Vegas across the street.



10 August 2006

[Wikipedia](#)

History:

The property started as a nightclub called Pair-O-Dice that opened in 1930, then The Ambassador Night Club in 1936 and was renamed the 91 Club in 1939 for its location on US-91. It was subsequently rebuilt and renamed the "Hotel Last Frontier" in 1942. On April 4, 1955, it was renamed the New Frontier, following a modernization of the resort.

The resort had the distinction of hosting Elvis Presley's first Vegas appearance in 1956, and the final performance of Diana Ross and The Supremes on January 14, 1970.

In the 1950s and the early 1960s, the New Frontier went through a succession of owners and operators. In 1966 and 1967 the New Frontier had secret ownership interests by **Anthony Joseph Zerilli** and **Michael Polizzi**, "two high-ranking members of the **Detroit Mafia family**" according to *The Boardwalk Jungle* by Ovid Demaris, along with Emprise Corporation (now called Delaware North Companies. (In 1971, a federal trial in Los Angeles found Zerilli, Polizzi and four other individuals, along with Emprise, guilty of concealing their interest in the casino.)

On September 22, 1967, the resort was purchased for about \$14 million by businessman **Howard Hughes**, who then shortened its name to "The Frontier". Mr. Hughes purchased the resort from the previous owners, which had also included Steve Wynn, with a 5% interest, in one of his early ventures when he first moved to the Las Vegas area. (Wynn indicated that he did not know that the other owners had mob connections.)

In 1988, **Margaret Elardi** bought The Frontier from the late Howard Hughes company, **Summa Corp.** Elardi had previously been the part-owner of the Pioneer Club Las Vegas and the Pioneer Hotel & Gambling Hall in Laughlin. She closed the showroom, which had featured Siegfried and Roy, and down-scaled much of the hotel. **In September 1991, union workers began a strike at the hotel, which would last for years.**

Developer Phil Ruffin bought the resort in 1998 from embattled owner Margaret Elardi and her two sons. In 1999, the name was changed back to The New Frontier.

Phil Ruffin sold the Frontier to ELAD, owners of The Plaza New York, who are planning The Plaza Las Vegas.

The New Frontier closed its doors on July 16, 2007, and demolished by implosion on November 13 (Claus Construction and Controlled Demolition, Inc.). The entire property will be rebuilt as a new mega-resort on the Las Vegas strip. **(Sometime??? PWW)**

Redevelopment plans:

In 2000, Ruffin announced plans to raze the current facility and replace it with a megaresort with a San Francisco theme, but high interest rates and the attacks of September 11, 2001 scuttled those plans. In March 2005, with Las Vegas' fortunes on the rise, Ruffin announced new plans to demolish the current facility and replace it with a new resort with 3,000 rooms. After 65 years of continuous operation, the Hotel/Casino permanently shut down on July 16, 2007, although the lights from its sign were still lit at night up to its demolition. Lettering on the hotel's marquees was removed on August

1, 2007.

Trump Tower:

Donald Trump, in partnership with **Ruffin**, has built a high-rise luxury hotel-condominium on some of its property, named the **Trump Hotel Las Vegas**.

Montreux Las Vegas:

Phil Ruffin planned to build a \$2 billion resort, Montreux, entirely funded by him (with no partners), on the site of the New Frontier. The name Montreux comes from the famed Swiss resort which sponsors the yearly Montreux Jazz Festival.

The upscale 2,750 room resort was intended to compete with the Mirage and Harrah's Paris. It was to use jazz music as a draw. Ruffin said, "We don't really have a Strip casino that advertises good jazz music." A second Montreux Jazz Festival could have been a yearly event at the resort.

The resort was to feature a 500 foot (152 m) tall Ferris wheel similar in size to the famous London Eye.

The site has 38.5 acres (15.6 ha) left after selling 3.5 acres (1.4 ha) to Donald Trump for the twin Trump Towers condo project located at the back of the property.

The Montreux bears a striking resemblance to the nearby Bellagio.

El Ad purchase:

On May 15, 2007 it was announced that El Ad Properties plans to purchase the New Frontier for \$1.2 billion. El Ad, which also owns the Plaza Hotel in New York City, intends to demolish the New Frontier and replace it with a replica to be called the Las Vegas Plaza.

On May 16, 2007, it was announced to the 1,000+ employees of the New Frontier that the property would be closing on July 16, 2007 and be **imploded on November 13, 2007**. At 2:30 am on that day, the Atrium Tower was imploded with over 1,000 pounds of explosives.

The New Frontier sign was purchased by The Killers frontman Brandon Flowers, who supposedly aims to erect it on a patch of desert he owns.

The longest strike:

From September 21, 1991 until February 1, 1998 members of the Culinary Workers Union Local 226 in Las Vegas staged a strike against the New Frontier and the Elardis. A settlement was reached on October 28, 1997 when Ruffin announced he would purchase the New Frontier from the Elardis for \$165 million. The strike ended when Ruffin officially took possession.

According to an article in the Las Vegas Sun, the following events occurred during the strike:

17 CWU Local 226 strikers died.

106 babies were born to CWU member mothers who have walked the picket.

The Dunes, Landmark, Sands and Hacienda were all closed and imploded

More than 21,340 hotel rooms were constructed in the Las Vegas Strip.

Construction on an additional 19,000 rooms and suites was started.

235 of the original 550 strikers had walked the line in shifts manned 24 hours a day.

Age:

The Atrium Tower lasted only 18 years, being built in 1989 and imploded in 2007. The other two towers were built in 1967 and were dismantled by January of 2008.

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The Landmark Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas Nevada



Landmark Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, United States 31 August 1986

Larry D. Moore This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

The Landmark Tower was a hotel/casino located in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Landmark opened on July 1, 1969 and closed on August 8, 1990.

The Landmark played host to famous celebrities such as Danny Thomas, Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, and Freddy Fender's first appearance.

With just 525 rooms, the Landmark was small in comparison to the newer Las Vegas megaresorts.



The Landmark as it looked in the '80s (This photo was taken in 1995 and was modified by Landmark historian Marc Wagner to depict its operational look)

Wikipedia

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Treasure Island Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



Treasure Island 28 February 2009

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Treasure Island Hotel & Casino (also known as "**TI**") is a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada, USA with 2,664 rooms and 220 suites, and is connected by tram to The Mirage, as well as pedestrian bridge to the Fashion Show Mall shopping center. Since March 2009, TI is owned and operated by real estate investor **Phil Ruffin**.

Treasure Island was opened by Mirage Resorts in 1993 under the direction of Steve Wynn at a cost of US\$450 million. It was designed by architect Joel Bergman. The initial plans called for a tower addition to The Mirage, but later evolved into a full-fledged separate hotel casino resort. Treasure Island originally intended to attract families with whimsical pirate features and icons such as the skull-and-crossbones strip marquee, a large video arcade, and staged pirate battles nightly in "Buccaneer Bay" in front of the casino entrance on the Strip.



A performance of The Sirens of TI

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In 2003, the hotel largely abandoned its pirate theme for a more contemporary resort with a focus on adult amenities and services. The original arcade and kid-friendly pool areas were replaced with an adult-friendly hot tub, contemporary nightclub, and party bar. The famous skull-and-crossbones sign at the Strip entrance was replaced by one reading simply "TI" that is also a large LCD video screen. The exterior color of the hotel was also changed from a light orange to a darker maroon color.

On December 15, 2008, MGM Mirage announced the resort would be sold for US\$775 million to Phil Ruffin, former owner of the New Frontier Hotel and Casino. Ruffin took full ownership of the hotel and casino resort on Friday, March 20, 2009.

(I worked on the construction project, sound wiring. PWW)

ToC

Caesars Palace, Las Vegas

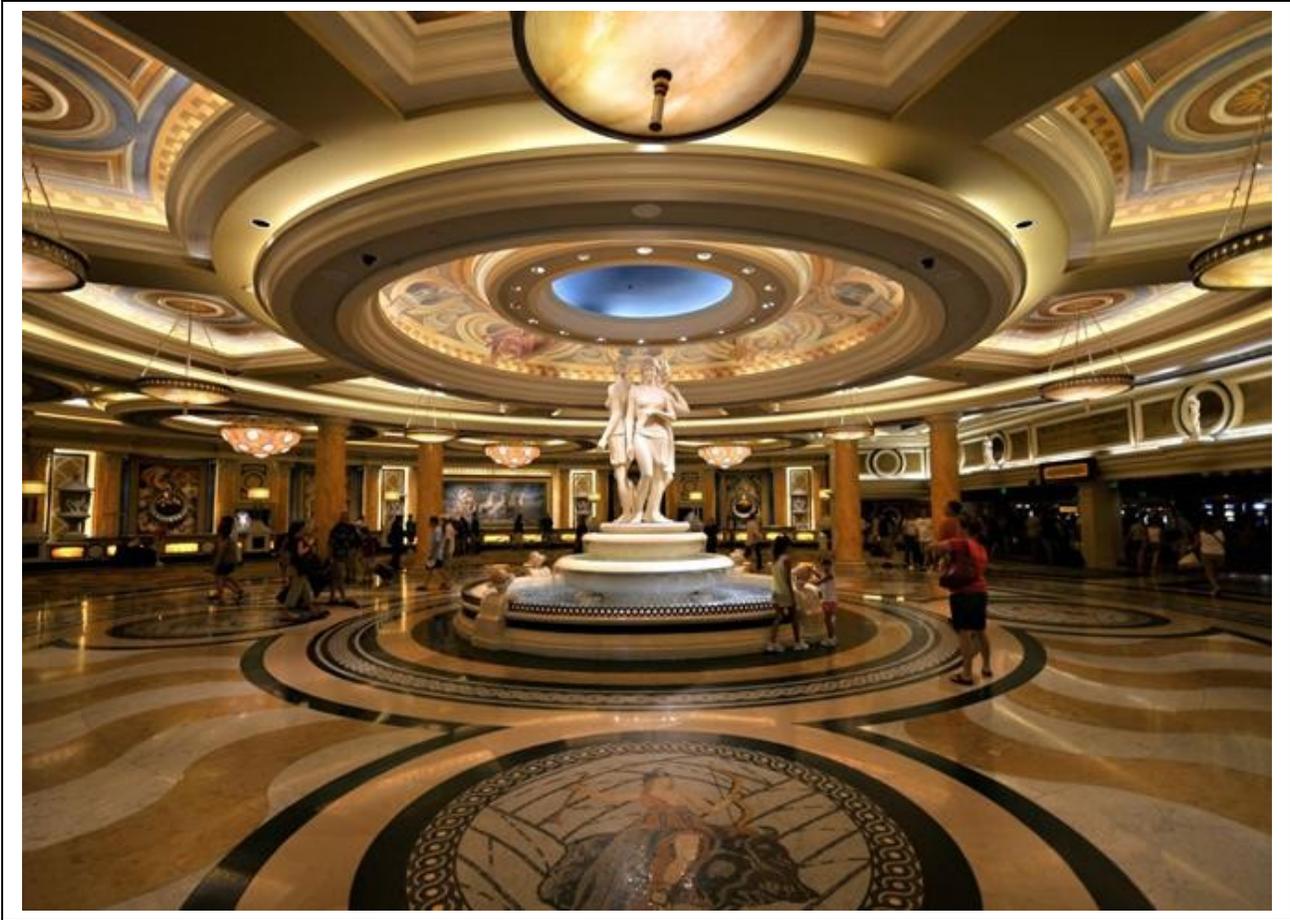


Caesars, with Bellagio Lake in the Foreground

This is a file from the Wikimedia Commons

Caesars Palace is a **luxury hotel** and casino located on the **Las Vegas Strip** in Paradise, Nevada, an unincorporated township in Clark County, Nevada, United States in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Caesars Palace is owned and operated by Caesars Entertainment Corp.. Caesars is located on the west side of the Strip, between the Bellagio and the Mirage.

Caesars has **3,349 rooms** in five towers: Augustus, Centurion, Roman, Palace, and Forum. The Forum tower features guest suites with 1,000 square feet (93 m²) of space. It is the only venue in Las Vegas to host a World Series of Poker Circuit Event.



Caesars Palace lobby

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History:

In 1962, Jay Sarno, a cabana motel owner, used US\$35 million that had been lent to him by the **Teamsters Central States Pension Fund** to begin plans for a hotel on land owned by **Kirk Kerkorian**. Sarno would later act as designer of the hotel he planned to construct.

Building of the 14-story Caesars Palace hotel began in **1962**. That first tower would have 680 rooms on the 34 acre (138,000 m²) site.

Sarno struggled to decide on a name for the hotel. He finally decided to call it Caesars Palace because he thought that the name Caesar would evoke thoughts of royalty because of Roman general Julius Caesar. Also he felt the name would attract a more seductive crowd of women to attract more men into the gambling portion of the casino. Sarno felt that guests should feel they were at a king's home while at his hotel. It is called "Caesars" and not "Caesar's" because every guest is a Caesar.

Sarno contracted many companies to build the hotel, from the Roman landscapes it presents, to the water fountains that have been stages of various events and the hotel's swimming pools.

On August 5, 1966, the hotel was inaugurated.

On December 31, 1967, Evel Kneivel unsuccessfully tried to jump 141 feet (43 m) over the hotel's water fountain with his motorcycle.

In 1969, a Federal Organized Crime Task Force accused the casino's financial manager, **Jerome Zarowitz**, of having ties with organized-crime figures in New York and New England. Although Zarowitz was never tried, the task force pressured Jay Sarno and his other investors to sell the casino. In 1969, Stuart and Clifford S. Perlman, founders of the Lum's chain of restaurants, purchased the hotel for \$60 million. On July 15 of that year, executives lay ground on an expansion area of the hotel, and they buried a time capsule in the area, but the time capsule was stolen days later.

In 1973, the Del Webb corporation was contracted to build a 16-story building adjacent to the Palace. The project was finished in 1975.

Many top performers, such as Pilita Corrales, Rod Stewart, Celine Dion, Cher, Bette Midler, Liberace, Elton John, George Burns, Pat Cooper, Diana Ross, Paul Anka and Odia Coates, Julio Iglesias, Judy Garland, David Copperfield, Stevie Nicks, Gloria Estefan, Phyllis Diller, Luis Miguel, Frank Sinatra, Jerry Seinfeld, Eric Tsang and Mariah Carey have performed at the hotel.

1980s:

In 1981, Stuart and Clifford S. Perlman sold their shares in Caesars World after trying to get a gaming license for a casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The New Jersey Casino Control Commission accused the brothers of doing business with people who had organized-crime connections.

During the 1980s, the hotel opened an Atari game room that had over 60 Atari video game arcade machines.

In 1989, Robbie Knieval successfully completed what his father could not do years before by completing the fountain jump.

Several championship boxing matches were held in Caesars Outdoor Arena. Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns, and Roberto Durán all headlined here, along with Larry Holmes against both Muhammad Ali and Gerry Cooney. England boxing captain Errol Christie was on the supporting bill with Hearns when he fought Duran. Also, three bouts between Evander Holyfield and Riddick Bowe were contested here, one of which included the infamous "Fan Man" incident which saw a parachuter with a fan attached to his back parachute down to the ring in the middle of the fight. Michael Moorer also won the Undisputed Heavyweight Championship of the World when he defeated Holyfield. The fight led to Holyfield's first of several retirements. Oscar De La Hoya also headlined several boxing cards here during the mid-to-late '90s, as did Shane Mosley.

1990s:

The arena also held one of its more interesting events during the summer of 1991: a pre-season National Hockey League game between the New York Rangers and Los Angeles Kings. A rink was laid out over the parking lot and held firm despite 85-degree temperatures. Behind a goal from Wayne Gretzky, the Kings came back from a 2-0 deficit to win 5-2 before a crowd of over 14,000. The game served as a predecessor to both the Frozen Fury (the Kings' annual preseason game in Las Vegas that began in 1997) and the Winter Classic (the annual regular season game played outdoors on New Year's Day that began in 2008).

In 1992, The Forum Shops at Caesars opened; it was one of the first venues in the city where shopping, particularly at high-end fashion house stores, was an attraction in itself. The fourth phase, which opened on October 22, 2004, has the second-built circular escalator in the United States. The other is at the Westfield San Francisco Centre.

WrestleMania IX, one of the annual World Wrestling Federation spectacles promoted by Vince McMahon, was held here in 1993. The theme was "The World's Largest Toga Party".

In 1993, the NBC game show Caesars Challenge was taped here.

Magician David Copperfield was a headliner for several stints in the Circus Maximus Theatre.

Comedian George Burns had performed there a number of times in the early 1990s and had stated that he wanted to perform there on his 100th birthday but could not due to failing health.

2000s



The spiral escalators are a defining feature of the Forum Shops

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Caesars has opened the Plaza, an open-air area with celebrity chef Bradley Ogden's eponymous restaurant and the Colosseum, where Céline Dion (A New Day...) and Elton John (The Red Piano) were regular performers. The Colosseum was specifically built for Dion's show, A New Day..., a spectacular produced by former Cirque du Soleil director Franco Dragone. Dion's show was also notable for having some of the highest ticket prices for any show in the city, with seats as high as \$220 each; nonetheless, the show regularly sold out.

On October 2, 2004, big-time boxing returned to the Palace, as Wladimir Klitschko and former Olympian Jeff Lacy headlined a card televised on Showtime.

Caesars Palace opened the Augustus Tower in August 2005 (designed by Bergman Walls Associates). It stands 46 floors high and is perpendicular to the Strip.



Race and Sports Book, near Mesa Grill

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In 2005, Harrah's Entertainment acquired the first Caesars Entertainment, Inc. and became the owner of Caesars Palace. On May 4, 2006, Mike Metzger became the first person to ever backflip on a motorcycle over the fountains.

In May 2007, Bette Midler was announced as Dion's formal replacement. Midler will reportedly only perform about 100 shows a year, with Elton John continuing to perform his popular Red Piano show 50 nights a year while Midler is on hiatus. After taking a three-year hiatus, Cher, following her Farewell Tour, returned to Caesars Palace with a three-year contract, performing 200 shows beginning May 6, 2008.

In September 2007, Latin superstar Luis Miguel, gave three shows celebrating the Mexican Independence Day.

Harrah's Entertainment announced in January 2009 that completion of the new Octavius Tower has been stalled due to lower demand. Only the exterior of the tower will be completed.

On May 26, 2009, **U.S President Barack Obama performed** in the Colosseum in the one-night show A Good Fight alongside Sheryl Crow, Bette Midler and Rita Rudner to fundraise for Nevada's senator Harry Reid re-election campaign. Several streets were closed and the Augustus tower was blocked as security precautions by the Secret Service during the visit.

[ToC](#)

Harrah's Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas



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Harrah's Las Vegas is a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada. The property is owned and operated by **Caesars Entertainment Corp.** Harrah's has over 1,200 slot machines.

The hotel offers 2,677 rooms with an attached casino providing 86,664 sq ft (8,051.3 m²) of space. The hotel consists of several towers, the tallest of which has 35 stories. The court yard entry houses a Ghirardelli Chocolate Company store.

There is a Las Vegas Monorail stop at the rear of the property, and a shuttle to the Caesars Entertainment Corp-owned Rio.

History:

In 1973, Shelby and Claudine Williams, former owners of the Silver Slipper casino, opened the Holiday Casino, a small casino in front of the Holiday Inn Las Vegas Center Strip.

In 1979, Holiday Inn bought a 40% share of the casino's parent company, Riverboat Inc. By 1982, the hotel had grown to over 1,000 rooms, making it the largest in the chain. Holiday Inn bought out the remaining 60% in 1983.

In 1992, the property was renamed Harrah's.

In 1997, Harrah's completed a renovation intended to make it the company's flagship property, replacing the old riverboat theme with a Mardi Gras/Carnival motif. They extended the 35 story tower by adding 986 rooms. Included in the renovations were six 22,000 lb (10,000 kg) 23-karat gold-leaf sculptures; built from steel and glass reinforced polyester resin, the sculptures stand 32 ft (9.8 m) high and wear size 43 shoes.

At the grand re-opening Harry Connick, Jr. entertained at the Carnival Court. Tino Wallenda, son of legendary tight-rope walker Karl Wallenda, walked 139 ft (42 m) across a 1-inch (25 mm) steel cable, 99 ft (30 m) above the ground. Celebrities also appeared included Sidney Poitier, Sandra Bullock, Minnie Driver, Stephen Baldwin, Lea Thompson, Dick Butkus and Steve Wynn and his wife, Elaine.

[ToC](#)

Bally's, Las Vegas



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Bally's Las Vegas, formerly the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, is a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip. The Las Vegas resort is located within the unincorporated locale of Paradise, Nevada and is owned and operated by Caesars Entertainment Corp. The hotel features 2,814 extra-sized guestrooms that are 450 sq ft (42 m²) or larger and over 175,000 sq ft (16,300 m²) of banquet and meeting space. The casino occupies 67,000 sq ft (6,200 m²). About 75% of the rooms are in the North Tower, and have been renovated in 2004. The remaining rooms are in the South Tower with views of Paris Casino, with a limited number renovated.

One of the signature features of the hotel is the neon lighting wrapped around the covered moving sidewalk that brings guests from Las Vegas Boulevard to the entrance of the casino while old hits from the Rat Pack are pumped out. The resort has a large shopping area a floor below its gaming level, including several restaurants and there is a Las Vegas Monorail station at the rear of the property. Bally's is home for the long-running production show Jubilee! which opened in 1981.

On November 21, 1980, the hotel, then operating as the MGM Grand, was the site of one of the worst high-rise fires in United States history, in which 84 people died.



Bally's Hotel and Casino. Las Vegas, NV, USA

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History:

The 43 acres (17 ha) site was first occupied by the Three Coins Motel, which opened in 1963. The Bonanza Hotel and Casino opened on the site in July 1967. It was later renamed the New Bonanza Hotel and Casino shortly before construction on the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, owned by **Kirk Kerkorian**, began. It opened in 1973 with 2,084 rooms for the then staggering cost of \$106m and was the largest hotel in the world at that time.

The MGM Grand opened as one of Las Vegas' first megaresorts on December 5, 1973. **It was the largest hotel in the world at its opening** and would remain so for several years. When the hotel was built, it set a new standard of size and luxury in Las Vegas, and is considered to have made the biggest impact on Las Vegas until the construction of Steve Wynn's Mirage Hotel in the late 1980s.

The hotel had a movie theme to reflect Kirk Kerkorian's interest in movies from his ownership of MGM and the hotel's use of MGM in its name. The hotel was designed by architect Martin Stern, Jr. It featured many amenities, including numerous entertainment options. It offered live jai alai for betting and a large shopping arcade with numerous shops and restaurants.

It was also one of the Strip's most popular entertainment destinations. It featured two large theaters: The Zeigfield Stage and the Celebrity Room. The Zeigfield regularly featured productions by famed Las Vegas choreographer Donn Arden including the long running Jubilee! and Hallelujah Hollywood. The Celebrity Room hosted such acts as The Carpenters and Barry Manilow.

Fire:

On November 21, 1980 the MGM Grand suffered a fire that started in a casino restaurant and traveled up into the hotel, killing 85 guests and employees. The Grand was rebuilt in only eight months, and remodeling added a tower which opened in 1981. The tower had been under construction at the time of the fire, but remained undamaged. The fire made such an impact on hotel safety that it led to the implementation of fire safety improvements worldwide.

Sale to Bally:

The hotel was sold in 1985 to Bally Entertainment Corporation for \$594m and the property's name was changed to Bally's (the MGM Grand name was transferred to the former **Marina Hotel**, now known as MGM Grand Las Vegas). Bally Entertainment Corporation was purchased in 1995 by Hilton Hotels Corporation. On April 17, 1997 ground was broken on a sister property, the Paris Las Vegas. In September 1999 the new resort was opened and tightly integrated with Bally's property by a promenade. For many years, the two resorts operated under a single gaming license.

Hilton's casino resorts division was subsequently spun off, and became Caesars Entertainment Inc in 2003. The hotel North tower was renovated in 2004. Caesars Entertainment Corporation (formerly Harrah's Entertainment) acquired the property with its purchase of the now defunct Caesars Entertainment, Inc in June 2005

ToC

Sands Hotel, Las Vegas Nevada



The Rat Pack in front of the Sands Hotel

The Sands Hotel was a historic Las Vegas Strip hotel/casino that operated from **December 15, 1952 to June 30, 1996**. Designed by architect Wayne McAllister, the Sands was the seventh resort that opened on the Strip.

During its heyday, the Sands was the center of entertainment and "cool" on the Strip, and hosted many famous entertainers of the day. Regulars were able to mingle with the stars in the lounge after their late-night shows. In its time, the Sands was located next door to the Desert Inn. The two adjacent properties were once owned by reclusive businessman **Howard Hughes** in the mid-1960s. Today, The Venetian stands where the Sands once stood

The hotel first began as just a casino with a few hundred rooms. The hotel was designed by architect Wayne McAllister. It was founded by **Jakie Freedman** of Houston, Texas, grandfather of Houston socialite Carolyn Farb. In the late 1950s, **Senator John F. Kennedy** was occasionally a guest of **Frank Sinatra** at the Sands.

Arguably the hotel's biggest claim to fame was a three-week period in 1960 during the filming of *Ocean's Eleven*. During that time, the movie's stars **Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Joey Bishop, and Peter Lawford** performed on stage together in the Copa Room. The performances were called the "Summit at the Sands" and is considered to be the birth of the **Rat Pack**. Sinatra would also own a stake in the Sands for a time.

In the 1950s, (limited) integration came to heavily segregated Las Vegas when the Sands allowed **Nat King Cole** to stay at the hotel and gamble in the casino. In the 60s, Sammy Davis, Jr. convinced the Sands to hire more African-Americans, and to allow them into the casino.

When **Howard Hughes** purchased the hotel in the mid-1960s, architect Martin Stern, Jr. added a 500-room circular tower in 1967 and the hotel became a Vegas landmark. **Kirk Kerkorian (MGM)** bought the hotel in 1988, and seven months later in 1989 it was purchased by the owners of **The Interface Group - Sheldon Adelson, Richard Katzeff, Ted**

Cutler, Irwin Chafetz, and Jordan Shapiro.

In its final years, the Sands became a shadow of its former self—a throwback to the old days, and it ultimately could not compete with the newer and more exciting megaresorts that were being built on the Strip. The decision was eventually made by its final owner, Sheldon Adelson, to shut it down and to build a brand new resort. **On November 26, 1996, it was imploded and demolished** much to the dismay of longtime employees and sentimentalists. The Las Vegas scenes of Con Air were filmed at the Sands prior to its demolition.

With the Sands gone, its casino chips are now valuable collector's items due to the casino's musical history, with the average \$1.00 chip fetching around \$30.00. Some rarer chips reach hundreds of dollars, and sometimes over \$1,000.00.

[ToC](#)

Cheetah's - Topless Club, Las Vegas Nevada



Cropped Website Publicity Photo

Cheetah's Topless Club is a "gentleman's club" or topless bar located in San Diego, and Las Vegas, best known for being featured in the 1995 movie *Showgirls*, and also for having been owned by **Mike Galardi**, a nightclub owner who was investigated by the FBI with a controversial invocation of the Patriot Act. The Cheetah's club in San Diego is a full nude club, no alcohol is served. It has achieved notoriety for having been frequented by some of the September 11th hijackers.

The Las Vegas club was founded in 1991 by **Michael Galardi**, and employs about 150 dancers. In 2004 Galardi admitted in a San Diego federal trial that he bribed Las Vegas officials in an attempt to influence strip club regulations. In a Las Vegas federal court, he stated that he paid between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

The club is managed by Charles Wright, a retired professional wrestler best known for his stints in World Wrestling Entertainment as a voodoo witch doctor ("Papa Shango") and as a pimp ("The Godfather"), and was also part of the Nation of Domination under the name Kama Mustafa.

[ToC](#)

Crazy Horse Too - Closed Down Strip Club, Las Vegas

Crazy Horse Too was a strip club located at 2466 Industrial Road in Las Vegas, Nevada, Nevada on Industrial Road a few blocks west of the Las Vegas Strip. The club was patterned after the original Crazy Horse Saloon club on Paradise Road, which was owned by **Jack Galardi** (father of Mike Galardi, who opened Cheetah's). The club was owned by convicted racketeer Rick Rizzolo. The club is currently owned by USA Marshalls Service Lessee. **(Jack Galardi was my neighbor in the Scotch Eighties neighborhood of Las Vegas. I sold him a huge satellite dish that was used in the construction of the dome the entryway of his house. PWW)**

On February 20, 2003, 80 FBI, DEA and IRS agents removed files, video surveillance equipment, computers, cash registers, and other materials and documents as part of a lengthy criminal investigation. One of the items under investigation was the \$20,000 monthly consulting fee from the Crazy Horse Too bar in Chicago that was being paid to Rizzo. The investigation reportedly was under way for 10 years. As part of that investigation George Clooney, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci were interviewed. The case ended in 2006 when 17 defendants pleaded guilty to various offenses. As a part of the plea bargain Rizzolo was ordered to sell the Crazy Horse within one year.

On January 19, 2005, Robert D'Apice was arrested for alleged activities he participated in at the club including federal racketeering charges, assault from a 2001 crime, aided and abetted in prostitution or illegal sexual activity, and distribution of narcotics.

On September 6, 2006, the Crazy Horse lost its liquor license following Rick Rizzolo's guilty plea for tax evasion. The Crazy Horse closed its doors on September 7. Another local business owner unsuccessfully applied for a new license that October. The club remains closed.

[ToC](#)

Tropicana, Las Vegas



Promotional use to demonstrate new Tropicana Las Vegas changes through \$165 Million transformation by Alex Yemenedjian and Tropicana Las Vegas, Inc.

Tropicana Las Vegas is located on the Las Vegas Strip, in the township of Paradise, Nevada. It is owned by Tropicana Las Vegas Hotel and Resort Inc. and operated by Alex Yemenidjian's Armenco Holdings. It offers 1,658 rooms and is attached to a 50,000 sq ft (4,600 m²) casino. Tropicana Las Vegas also has 100,000 sq ft (9,300 m²) of convention and exhibit space.

This location, Tropicana - Las Vegas Boulevard intersection, has the most hotel rooms of any intersection in the world and is extremely busy. Pedestrians are not allowed to cross at street level. Instead, the Tropicana is linked by overhead pedestrian bridges to its neighboring casinos: to the north across Tropicana Avenue, the MGM Grand Las Vegas, and to the west across the Strip, the Excalibur.

[ToC](#)

Hotel Nacional de Cuba, Havana Cuba



Hotel Nacional January 2008

. The Hotel Nacional de Cuba is an historic luxury hotel located on the Malecón in **Havana, Cuba**. It was designed by the famous New York firm McKim, Mead and White and features an eclectic mix of architectural styles. **It opened in 1930, when Cuba was a prime travel destination for Americans**, long before the embargo.

Among its first illustrious guests were artists, actors, athletes and writers such as **Frank Sinatra, Ava Gardner, Mickey Mantle, Johnny Weissmuller, Buster Keaton, Jorge Negrete, Agustín Lara, Rocky Marciano, Tyrone Power, Rómulo Gallegos, Errol Flynn, John Wayne, Marlene Dietrich, Gary Cooper, Marlon Brando and Ernest Hemingway**. The hotel's reputation as a deluxe host is backed by patrons such as Winston Churchill, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, scientist Alexander Flemming, and innumerable Ibero-American Heads of State and European monarchs. Minnesota (United States) Governor Jesse Ventura stayed at the hotel while visiting Cuba on a trade mission in 2002.



Main entrance to the Hotel Nacional de Cuba. Poster reads "Welcome to FIT Cuba 2007 (International Tourism Fair)."

In 1933, after Fulgencio Batista's September 4, 1933 coup against the transitional government, it was the residence of Sumner Welles and was the site of a bloody siege, which pitted the Cuban Army officers who had been instrumental in the overthrow of Gerardo Machado (August 12, 1933), against the non-commissioned officers and ranks of the Cuban army who supported Batista.

In December 1946 it hosted an infamous mob summit run by Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky and attended by Santo Trafficante, Jr., Frank Costello, Albert Anastasia, Vito Genovese and many others. Francis Ford Coppola in his film *The Godfather Part II* memorably dramatized it.



Hotel Nacional and The Cascade fountain from Malecon Avenue

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By 1955, **Lansky** had managed to persuade **Batista** to give him a piece of the Nacional. That same year Pan Am's Intercontinental Hotels Corporation took over management of the hotel. Lansky planned to take a wing of the 10-storey

hotel and create luxury suites for high stakes players. Batista endorsed Lansky's idea even though there were objections from American expatriates like Ernest Hemingway. Under Lansky's impetus, a wing of the grand entrance hall was refurbished to include a bar, a restaurant, a showroom and a luxurious casino. It was operated by Lansky and his brother Jake, with Wilbur Clark as the front man.

The new wing of the elegant hotel, consisting of Clark's famous Casino Internacional, the adjoining Starlight Terrace Bar and the **Casino Parisién nightclub** (home of the Famous Dancing Waters) opened for business January 1956 with a show by Eartha Kitt. The casino and clubs were an immediate success. According to an unpublished article sent to Cuban Information Archives around 1956-57, "The bar was tended by local bartenders, and the casino managed by gentlemen from Las Vegas." By the spring of 1957 the casino, sublet by the hotel for a substantial rent to Lansky, was bringing in as much cash as the biggest casinos in Las Vegas.

Fidel Castro closed the casino in October 1960, nearly two years after the revolution. After years of neglect due to the disappearance of Cuba's tourism following the Cuban revolution, the hotel was mainly used to accommodate diplomats and foreign government officials. After the collapse of the USSR the Cuban communist party soon reopened Cuba to tourists in search of monetary support. Despite its restoration during the 1990s the hotel no longer carries the status and impact it once did; but its remaining splendor and history serves as tangible remainder to Cuba's past times.

The hotel has been depicted in several films and is a popular photographed and painted landmark. The last scene of the 2001's movie Nada + (Nothing more) takes place in top of the Cascade Fountain in the Hotel grounds.

Most recently, the Colombian-born singer-songwriter Juanes was a guest of the hotel during his participation in the Concert for Peace 2 alongside other performers such as connational Shakira, Miguel Bosé and Nelly Furtado in 2009.



Musicians at the Hotel Nacional, Havana October 2002

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Stardust Resort & Casino, Las Vegas



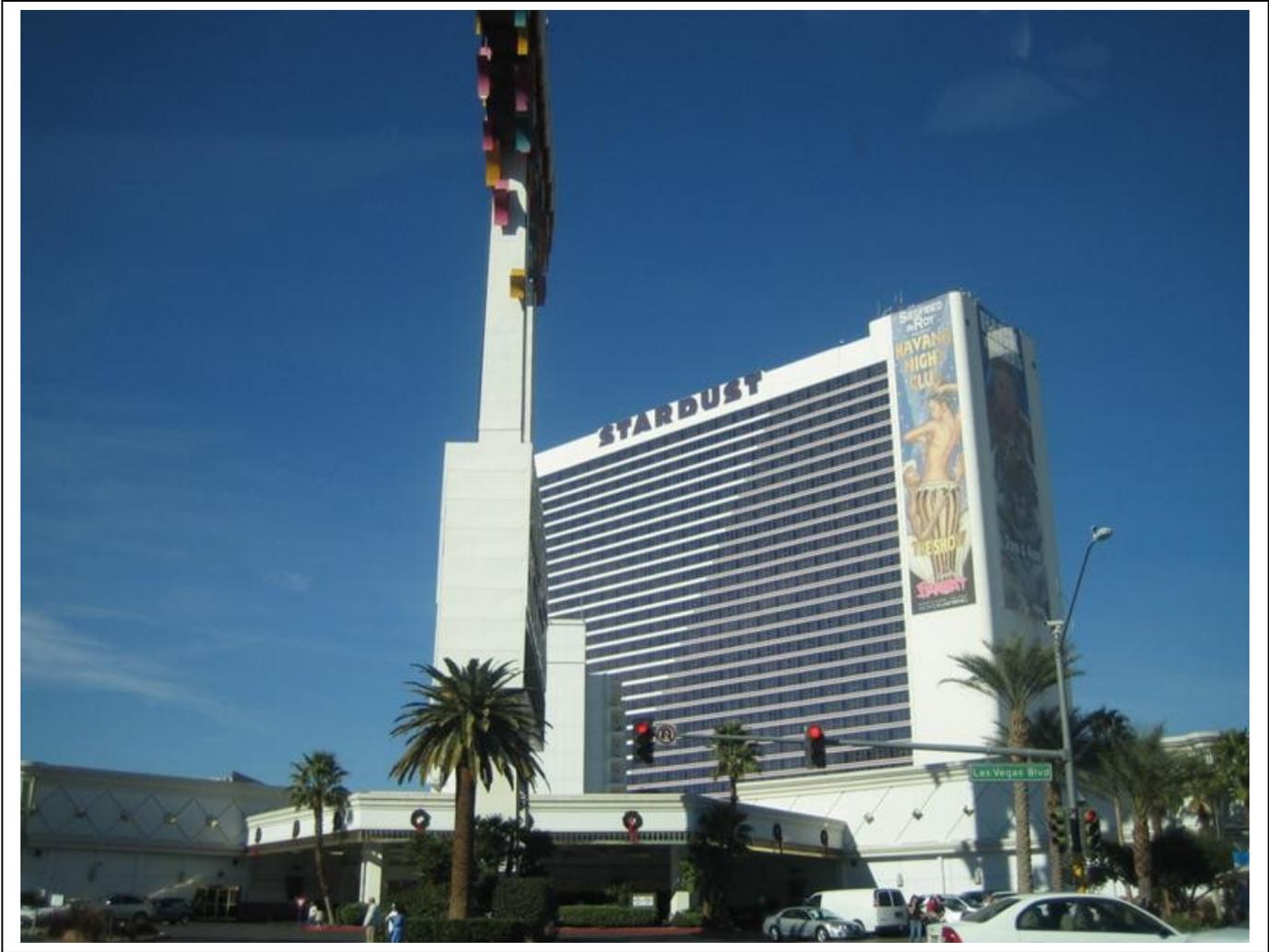
Las Vegas, NV Stardust Hotel sign in 1973

The Stardust Resort & Casino was a casino resort located on 63 acres (25 ha) along the Las Vegas Strip in Winchester, Nevada.

The Stardust opened in 1958, although most of the modern casino complex (including the main 32-story tower) was built in 1991. **At its March 13, 2007 demolition it was the youngest undamaged high-rise building to ever be demolished.**

The Stardust officially closed at 12:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) on November 1, 2006 after operating continuously for 48 years. It was imploded on March 13, 2007, around 2:33 A.M. In 2007, construction began on Echelon Place, which was planned to replace The Stardust. Construction on the Echelon development was suspended in 2008, and remains suspended as of March 2011.

The resort was conceived and built by **Tony Cornero**, who died in 1955 before construction was completed. The resort was bought out and completed by **John Factor (aka Jake the Barber)**, half-brother of cosmetics seller Max Factor, Sr. John Factor leased the casino out to a company controlled by **Moe Dalitz**. **When the hotel opened, it had the largest casino in Nevada, the largest swimming pool in Nevada and the largest hotel in the Las Vegas area.**



Stardust Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas Nevada Date 4th of January, 2006

Wikipedia

The Stardust opened at 12:00 noon on July 2, **1958**. The attendees of the opening included governors, senators, city and county officials and Hollywood celebrities.

The opening night lounge lineup offered, from dusk to dawn, Billy Daniels, The Happy Jesters, The Vera Cruz Boys and the Jack Martin Quartet. Daniels became the first entertainer to sign a long-term residency contract in Metropolitan Las Vegas when he agreed to appear for 40 weeks per year for three years.



Stardust at night as seen in 2004

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Tony Cornero's dream became a \$10 million 1,065 room reality, charging just \$6.00 a day; the resort featured the 105-foot (32 m) long Big Dipper swimming pool, a 13,500-square-foot (1,250 m²) lobby, a 16,500-square-foot (1,530 m²) casino, and a decor featuring rich red and deep brown colors and indirect lighting.

The Stardust also conveniently held Las Vegas Strip's only first run drive-in theatre in the rear of the resort.

The Stardust took over the closed Royal Nevada hotel-casino, remodeled the showroom, and converted it into a convention center and high-roller suite. From 1959 to 1964, this wing was occupied by the Stardust's "high roller" guests and The Stardust showgirls.

This Olympic size pool area was opened to the general public with the 1964 addition of the 9 story Stardust Tower that replaced half of the bungalow rooms.

In 1960, the resort added a new 4,800 sq ft (450 m²) screen surface to its drive-in theatre. The same year, the Aku Aku Polynesian Restaurant was opened, complete with a Tiki Bar, and a large stone Tiki head marking the entrance from the outside.



Fireworks light up the Stardust hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada as demolition charges inside begin to take down the building. On Tuesday March 13, 2007 at 2:33 a.m. (Pacific Time), the Stardust Resort was imploded in a grand ceremony which included fireworks prior to the East and West Towers' tumbling.

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By 1961, Stardust's management included Credit Manager **Hyman Goldbaum**, a career criminal with seven known aliases, fourteen criminal convictions including an assault conviction, and a three year prison sentence for income tax evasion. Casino Manager and 5% owner **Johnny Drew**, was a veteran associate of Al Capone and was once fined for running a crooked dice game at an Elks convention, and general manager **Morris Kleinman** had served three years for tax evasion.

In 1964, with the addition of the nine-story tower (later called the East Tower), the room count increased to 1,470. For the next 5 years The Stardust was the leader in rooms until 1969 when The International opened. In 1964 the landmark façade was updated, expanding out into the parking lot by the highway. The new façade raised the Stardust's name, still in electra-jag letters, onto a pole above the exploding universe.

From 1965 until 1970, the hotel operated the Stardust International Raceway in Spring Valley. The track drew the Can-Am and USAC Championship Car series, including drivers such as Mario Andretti, Dan Gurney, Bruce McLaren, Mark Donohue, and Jackie Stewart.

In 1966, Howard Hughes attempted to buy the Stardust for \$30.5 million but was thwarted by government officials on the grounds that his acquisition of any more gambling resorts might violate the Sherman Antitrust Act.

In November 1969, Parvin-Dohrmann Corporation purchased the Stardust for an undisclosed amount. The resort was bought by Argent Corporation in 1974 using **loans from the Teamsters Central States Pension Fund**. Argent was owned by **Allen Glick**, but the casino was believed to be controlled by various organized crime families from the Midwest.

In the 1970s Argent Corporation had siphoned off between \$7 and \$15 million dollars using rigged scales. When exposed by the FBI, this skimming operation was the largest ever exposed. A number of organized crime figures were convicted as a result of the skimming. The story of the skimming was featured in the book *Casino* by Nicholas Pileggi.

In 1977, the Stardust went through another remodeling. The bombastic galactic theme was abandoned, though the roadside sign remained, and the façade was covered with animated neon tubing and trimmed with mirrored finish facets. The new portico sparkled with 1,000 small incandescent bulbs. The encrustation of bulbs turned solid mass into ethereal form.

In 1980, the Aku Aku Polynesian Restaurant closed. The giant stone Tiki head that marked the entrance was later moved to an island in an artificial lake at Sunset Park in Winchester, Nevada.

After Argent Corporation was forced out of the gaming business in the late 1970s, the casino was sold to **Al Sachs and Herb Tobman**. However, the gaming authorities found that skimming was still going on. In 1984, the Nevada Gaming

Commission levied a \$3 million fine against the resort for skimming, the highest fine ever issued by the commission. Suspicions, accusations, and controversy about the Stardust's hidden ownership over the years was finally squelched when Sam Boyd's locally-based, **(Mar Bare Corp. of Texas)** squeaky-clean gaming company purchased the Stardust in March 1985.

The Stardust was a gold mine to the Chicago Outfit, the skim being absolutely fabulous. When it was taken over by the reputable Boyd family, they were surprised by its huge profits, with every penny of income recorded. Ex-FBI agent William F. Roemer Jr., longtime senior agent of the FBI's organized-crime squad in Chicago and an expert in Las Vegas doings, said, "The amount of skim had been so heavy that the profit and loss statement did not present a true picture of the gold mine that the Stardust was."

In 1991, a 32-story West Tower was added to the resort, overshadowing the older East Tower and bringing the total room count to 1,500. Two landscaped swimming pools, a golf course, and athletic facilities were also built. The renovation project totaled \$300 million. The bungalow rooms had been demolished, leaving the room count at 1,500.

At its peak size, the Stardust contained 100,000 sq ft (9,300 m²) of gambling casino including 73 gaming tables, and 1,950 slot, keno and video poker machines. The conference center was 25,000 sq ft (2,300 m²) and could accommodate meetings and banquets for groups of 25 to 2,000.

(I worked on the sports and race book TV systems for several years while Robert Walker was sports book manager, and continuing after Joe Lupo took over. PWW)

[ToC](#)

The Aladdin (Hotel & Casino), Las Vegas

Demolished to make room for the Planet Hollywood in a controlled demolition. PWW



Aladdin's Lamp, now part of the Neon Museum at the Fremont Street Experience

The Aladdin opened on March 31, 1966, with flower petals pouring from the ceiling and onto guests as they entered the hall. One guest was composer-pianist Warren Richards. The opening entertainment included comedian Jackie Mason, the "Jet Set Revue," a musical review that showcased The Three Cheers and the Petite Rockette Dancers in the Baghdad Theatre.

Prell introduced an innovative main showroom policy by offering three completely different shows twice nightly with no cover or minimum charges.

The Aladdin contained a 9-hole golf course.

A little more than a year after it was opened, the Aladdin was host to **Elvis and Priscilla Presley's wedding**.

In August 1969, the Aladdin completed a \$750,000 makeover including renovations to the Sinbad Lounge, which became enclosed and leveled above the casino floor with Arabic motif.

In 1969, **Parvin Dohrmann Corporation** took over the Aladdin, and in 1972, using the name **Recrion Corporation**, sold it to **Sam Diamond**, St. Louis politicians Peter **Webbe and Sorkis Webbe**, and St. Louis attorney **Richard L. Daly** for the price of just \$5 million. Under the new owners, a \$60 million face lift was conducted, including the addition of a 19-story tower and the new 7,500-seat Performing Arts Center replacing the golf course, which was \$4 million over budget.

A \$250,000 porte-cochere continued the tower's arabesques. The Aladdin added a new \$300,000 140-foot (43 m) blockbuster sign with little neon, huge attraction panels and none of the arabesque of the Aladdin's original sign.

The Aladdin had a grand re-opening in 1976 with singer Neil Diamond being paid \$750,000 for two shows.

In August, 1979, several individuals were convicted by a Detroit Federal Jury of conspiring to allow hidden owners to exert control over the resort, and the Nevada Gaming Commission then closed the hotel.

The resort was sold to **Wayne Newton and Ed Torres** in 1980 for \$85 million, snubbing an offer from comedian **Johnny Carson**. Newton sold his share to Torres 21 months later. Newton sued NBC, who had alleged in broadcasts, that his purchase of the Aladdin was tied to the mafia. He won a \$22.8 million judgment, which was overturned on appeal. In February 1984, the Aladdin went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

In 1981, heavy metal band Iron Maiden played at the Aladdin – it was their first ever concert in America.

In 1987 Japanese businessman **Ginji Yasuda** purchased the Aladdin, but was removed as the casino's operator by state regulators in September 1988, and the resort was placed in Chapter 11 bankruptcy due to financial difficulties.

In 1994, **Jack Sommer**, a Las Vegas real estate developer, and the Sommer Family Trust purchased the hotel.

The Aladdin closed on November 25, 1997. NCL/National Content Liquidators conducted an on-site liquidation sale beginning March 5, 1998 and continued until the building was "sold out". On April 27, 1998, the entire resort was

imploded, except for the Aladdin Theatre known as the Theatre for the Performing Arts, to make way for the construction of an entirely new casino. Sommer took on London Clubs International as a partner in developing the new casino resort. LCI initially paid \$50 million for a 25% interest, but took on additional equity after Sommer was unable to fund his share of cost overruns on the construction.

The Aladdin was scheduled to reopen on August 17, 2000, at 6:00 p.m., with fireworks at 10:00 p.m. The opening was delayed while the Clark County building inspector completed its fire safety testing. Another delay was caused by last-minute repairs to the casino surveillance system. This left thousands of Aladdin visitors leaving in disappointment, as well as opening night hotel guests wondering where they'd spend the night. Many high-rollers waited out on the sidewalks in front of the Aladdin for hours. Most were unable to even get to their luggage, since the hotel had been locked down for testing. Aladdin employees tried to arrange alternate accommodations for the guests with Paris and Bellagio.

Meanwhile, the Desert Passage mall was opened with I Dream of Jeannie star Barbara Eden opening the doors to let the large crowd in.

The Aladdin finally opened the next day at 7:45 a.m. 100 members of Culinary Workers Union Local 226, as well as more than 1,000 other workers were marching on Las Vegas Boulevard to protest the Aladdin opening without a union contract. Eden's speech as well as the other festivities were drowned out by the bullhorns and the rest of the protest.

According to Josh Axelrad in his 2010 book, Repeat until Rich, he and other professional gamblers, primarily card counters, took advantage of the Aladdin's inexperienced staff its opening weekend and fleeced the casino for an undetermined but large amount of money. The casino later introduced severe limits on mid-shoe bets in response.

The casino was in financial trouble from the start and was sold in bankruptcy on June 20, 2003, to a partnership of Planet Hollywood and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide.

[ToC](#)

Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino (Aladdin Continued)



The new Aladdin before being rebranded as Planet Hollywood

Renovations were carried out in stages, allowing the resort to remain open throughout. **Planet Hollywood Las Vegas** includes an expanded casino, new restaurants, new nightclub and retail space. A redesign of the facade and pedestrian plaza was intended to correct defects that made accessing the property from the sidewalks on The Strip difficult.

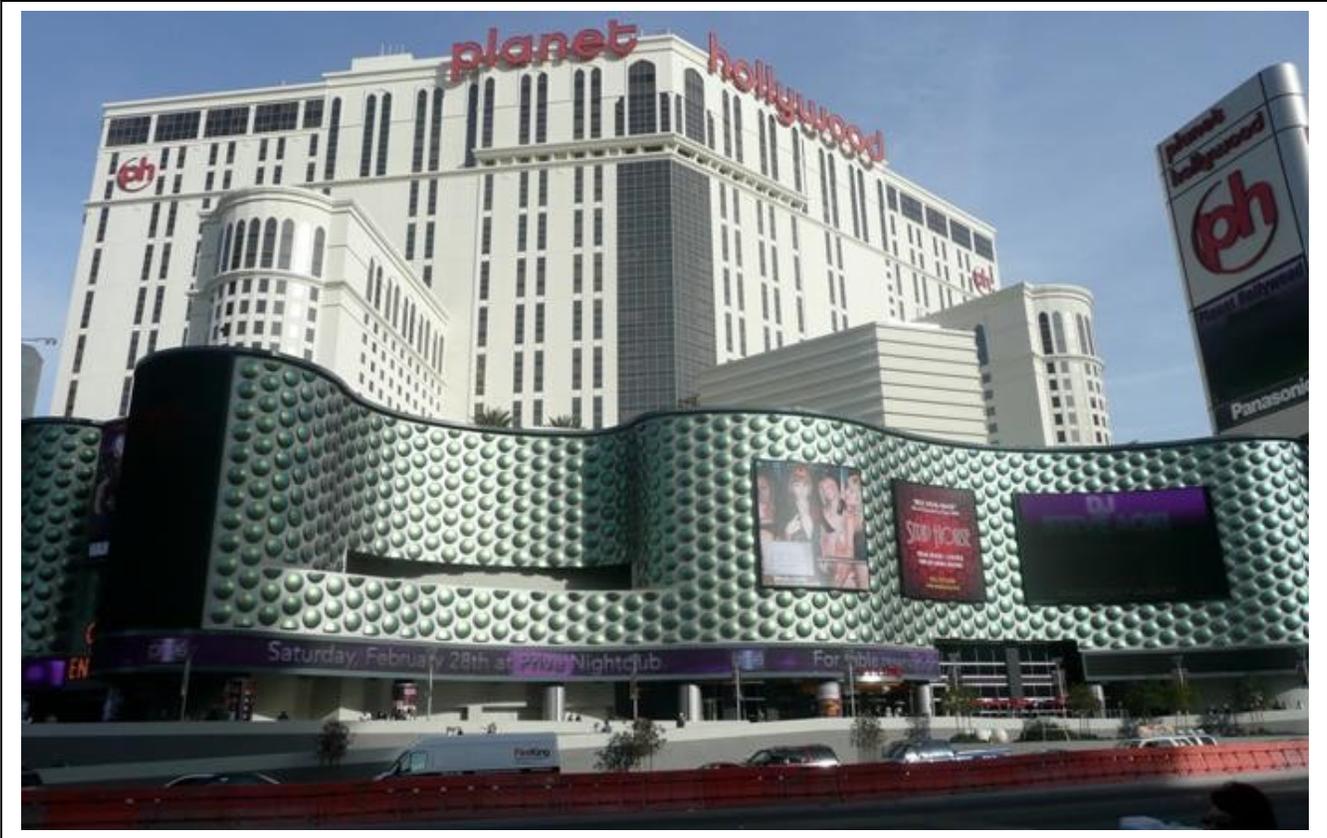
The retail space formerly known as "The Desert Passage" was converted into the Hollywood-themed "Miracle Mile Shops."

After the casino was renovated, it was **reopened on April 17, 2007 as Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino**. The official grand opening of was the weekend of November 16, 2007. The Planet Hollywood restaurant, however, remains at The Forum Shops at Caesars.

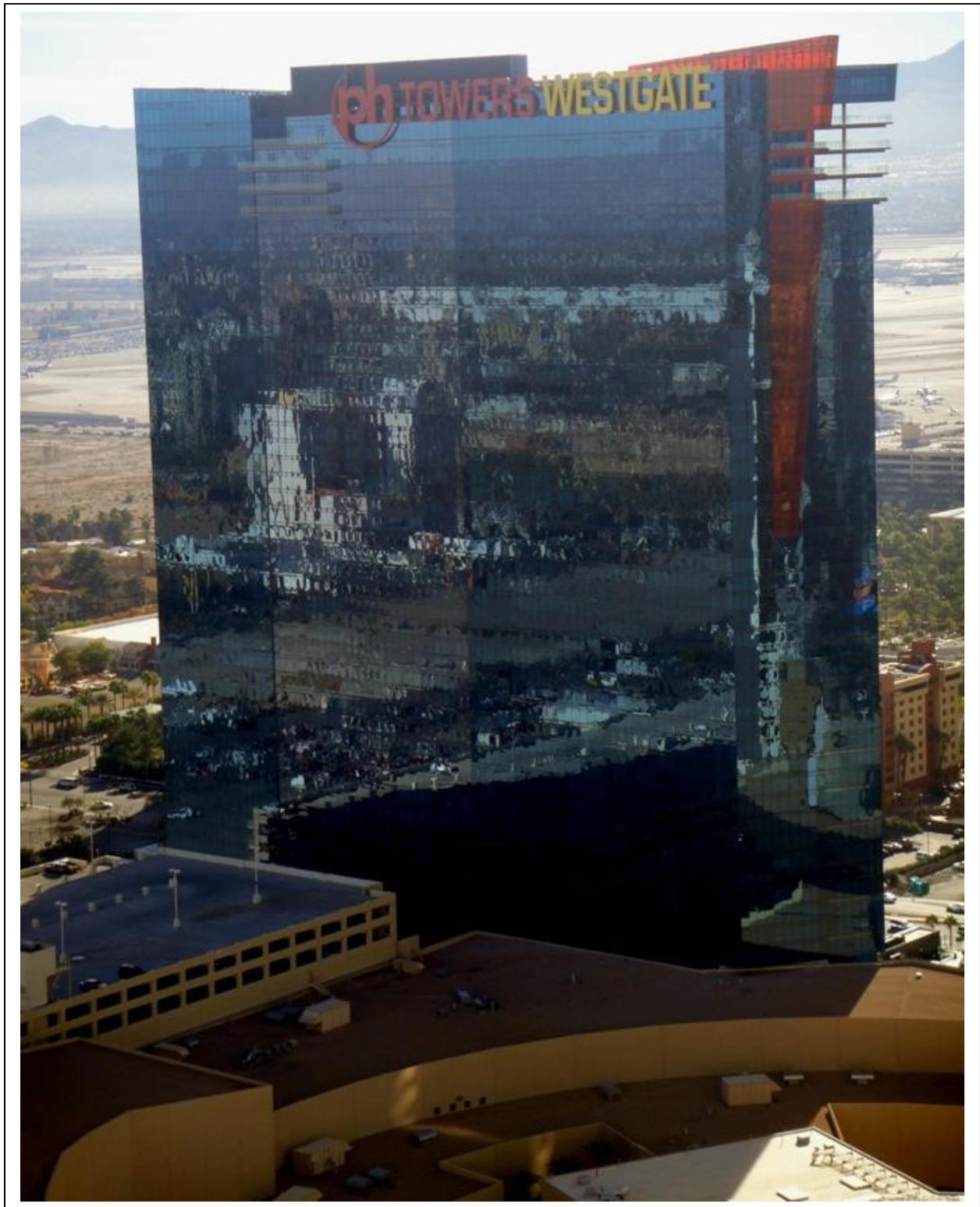
In late December 2009 Westgate opened the PH Towers, a timeshare and hotel linked with the casino and main hotel under Caesars Entertainment (formerly Harrah's)

Caesars officially acquired the property on February 19, 2010. Caesars began its process of taking over the property in December 2009 by purchasing some of the resort's debt. The casino defaulted on its mortgage and had failed to make scheduled payments in September, 2009.

On January 16, 2010 Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide dropped their affiliation so Caesars could take over hotel operations.



27 February 2009 Credit: Kris Ziel and Wikipedia



The PH Tower viewed from the Eiffel Tower. 12 December 2010

Credit: Cygnusloop99 & Wikipedia

Caesars does not own **Prive Nightclub**, nor some restaurants in the hotel. It does not own the newly opened PH Tower by Westgate that opened in December 2009; however, it does operate that tower's hotel operations. Through a licensing agreement, Caesars now has the right to use the Planet Hollywood trademark at other properties worldwide.

Combined with its earlier acquisition of the former Barbary Coast Casino (via a three-way-swap), the acquisition of Planet Hollywood's footprint on the Strip gave Caesars total control of the 126 acres (0.51 km²) on the east side of the Las Vegas Strip from Flamingo to Harmon Roads.

[ToC](#)

Fremont Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



Sam Boyd's Fremont Casino on empty night, Feb. 2009

[Wikipedia](#)

The Fremont Hotel & Casino is located in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada, on the Fremont Street Experience. The casino is operated by the Boyd Gaming Corporation.

The Fremont Hotel is located on 200 Fremont Street. It was designed by architect Wayne McAllister and **opened on May 18, 1956** as the tallest building in the state of Nevada. At the time of its opening it had 155 rooms, cost \$6 million to open and was owned by **Ed Levinson** and **Lou Lurie**. In 1963 the Hotel was expanded to include the 14 story Ogden tower and one of the city's first vertical parking garages.

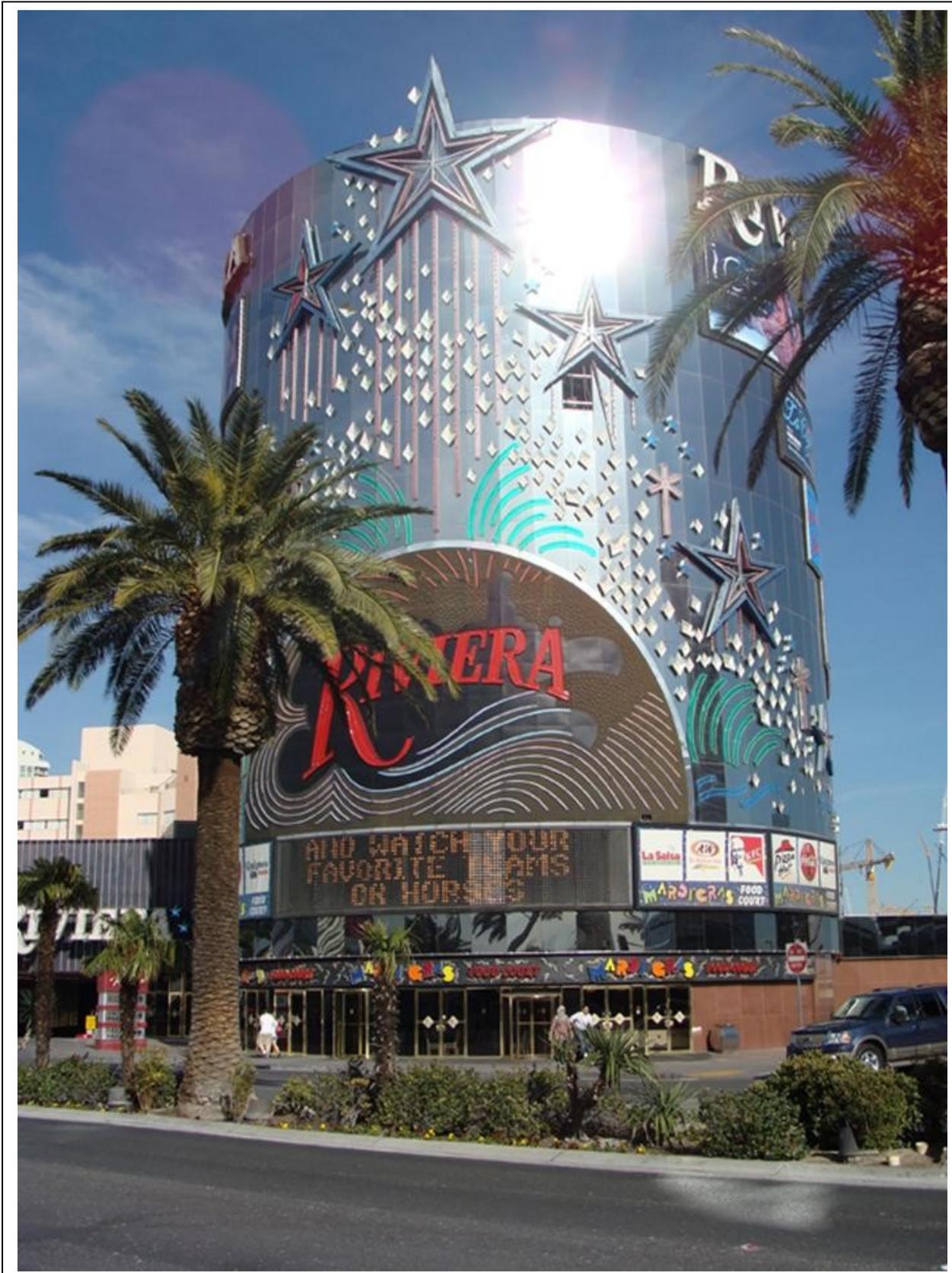
In 1974 Allen Glick's Argent Corporation purchased the Fremont and in 1976 expanded the casino at a cost of \$4 million. In 1983 Sam Boyd bought the Fremont to add to his Boyd Gaming group properties.

The Fremont Hotel and Casino is one of the casinos and hotels currently located in Downtown Las Vegas that is part of the Fremont Street Experience. The casino is located on what is commonly referred to as the four corners. These are the four main hotels that are located on the corner of Casino Center Boulevard and Fremont Street. The four casinos making up the four corners are The Fremont, the Four Queens, the Golden Nugget, and Binion's Gambling Hall and Hotel. Casino Center Boulevard is the only through street that passes under the canopy of the Fremont Street Experience. It passes between the Fremont and the Four Queens located on one side of the boulevard and The Golden Nugget and Binion's located on the opposite side of the Boulevard.

In 1959, Wayne Newton made his start in Las Vegas at the Fremont at its Carnival Lounge.

[ToC](#)

Riviera (hotel and casino), Las Vegas



Wikipedia Picture



Riviera Facade at Night

[Wikipedia Pictures](#)

The Riviera opened on April 20, 1955 as the first high-rise and the ninth resort on the Las Vegas Strip. The Riviera is one of the oldest and most famous casino resorts in Las Vegas. The Riviera also broke new ground in its design: previously, Strip resorts resembled roadside motor courts.

The Riviera was built by a group of investors from Miami. The resort has gone through many ownership changes over the years, including a period of control by owners linked to the Mafia (as was the case for many Vegas resorts in the 1960s

and 1970s). **Harpo Marx** and **Gummo Marx** held minority interests at the opening. The Marx brothers also owned slightly under ten percent of the Hotel. It is said that Gummo talked his brother into putting money into the Hotel, for it would be a great place for him to perform. Harpo was easily sold. **Dean Martin** once held a minority ownership stake while he was a headliner in the showroom. **Gus Greenbaum** was brought into manage the Riviera in 1955. He had successfully managed the Flamingo Hotel after the death of Bugsy Siegel. However, Greenbaum's drug and gambling addictions led to his embezzling from the casino. In December 1958, Greenbaum and his wife were murdered in their Phoenix, Arizona home, reportedly on the orders of either Meyer Lansky or Tony Accardo.

Meshulam Riklis bought the Riviera in 1973 for \$56 million. The hotel/casino filed bankruptcy in 1984 and then again in 1991, at which time Riklis lost ownership. Ownership was then acquired by Riviera Holdings Corp.

Liberace was the featured headliner at the resort's opening, and for many years afterward.

In 2006, Splash, a traditional Las Vegas revue, ended an extended run at the Riviera.

In 2009, An Evening at La Cage, featuring female impersonators including Frank Marino and his impersonation of Joan Rivers, ended one of the longest runs in Strip history.

(I worked there for one week; wasn't Mormon enough to stay on. PWW)

[ToC](#)

Circus Circus, Las Vegas



Circus Circus Las Vegas Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

[Wikipedia](#)

Circus Circus Las Vegas is a hotel and 126,000 sq ft (11,700 m²) casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Las Vegas, Nevada. It is owned and operated by MGM Resorts International now. Circus Circus features circus acts and carnival type games daily on the Midway. Circus Circus has the only RV park on the Strip providing additional accommodations in the 399 space park operated by Kampgrounds of America (KOA).

Circus Circus Las Vegas is the largest permanent big top in the world. The clown marquee at the entrance was provided by Young Electric Sign Company, and was constructed in 1976

Circus Circus was opened on October 18, 1968 by **Jay Sarno**, becoming the flagship casino for Circus Circus Enterprises. Architects Rissman and Rissman Associates designed a giant circus tent shaped main structure, which was built by R.C. Johnson Construction of Las Vegas.

At its opening, the \$15 million facility only included a casino. The lack of a hotel resulted in financial problems, as the casino was not able to attract high rollers. Sarno obtained a \$23 million loan from the **Teamsters Pension Fund** to construct a hotel. As part of the arrangement, the **Chicago Outfit's** enforcer, **Anthony Spilotro** (under the name of Tony Stuart) was granted a gift shop concession in the hotel. In addition to a government investigation into the organized-crime connections, Sarno was also being investigated for tax code violations. The casino's financial problems also continued and Sarno, along with his partner **Stanley Mallin**, decided to sell out.

In 1974 ownership changed with the sale of the casino to **William Bennett** and William Pennington for \$25 million. The facility was expanded with hotel tower additions in 1972, 1980, 1985 and 1986 and 1996 with additional tower renovations following. The hotel's West Tower rooms were renovated to look similar to Excalibur's Widescreen Rooms. The other towers will be receiving a renovation soon.

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Casino Royale Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas



Casino Royale Hotel & Casino 27 August 2007

[Wikipedia](#)

The first building on this site was Frank Musso's Restaurant, located next door to the Sands Hotel Casino. Musso's was in business during the 1950s and 60's. Later it became Joey's New Yorker Night Club, then the Nob Hill Casino.

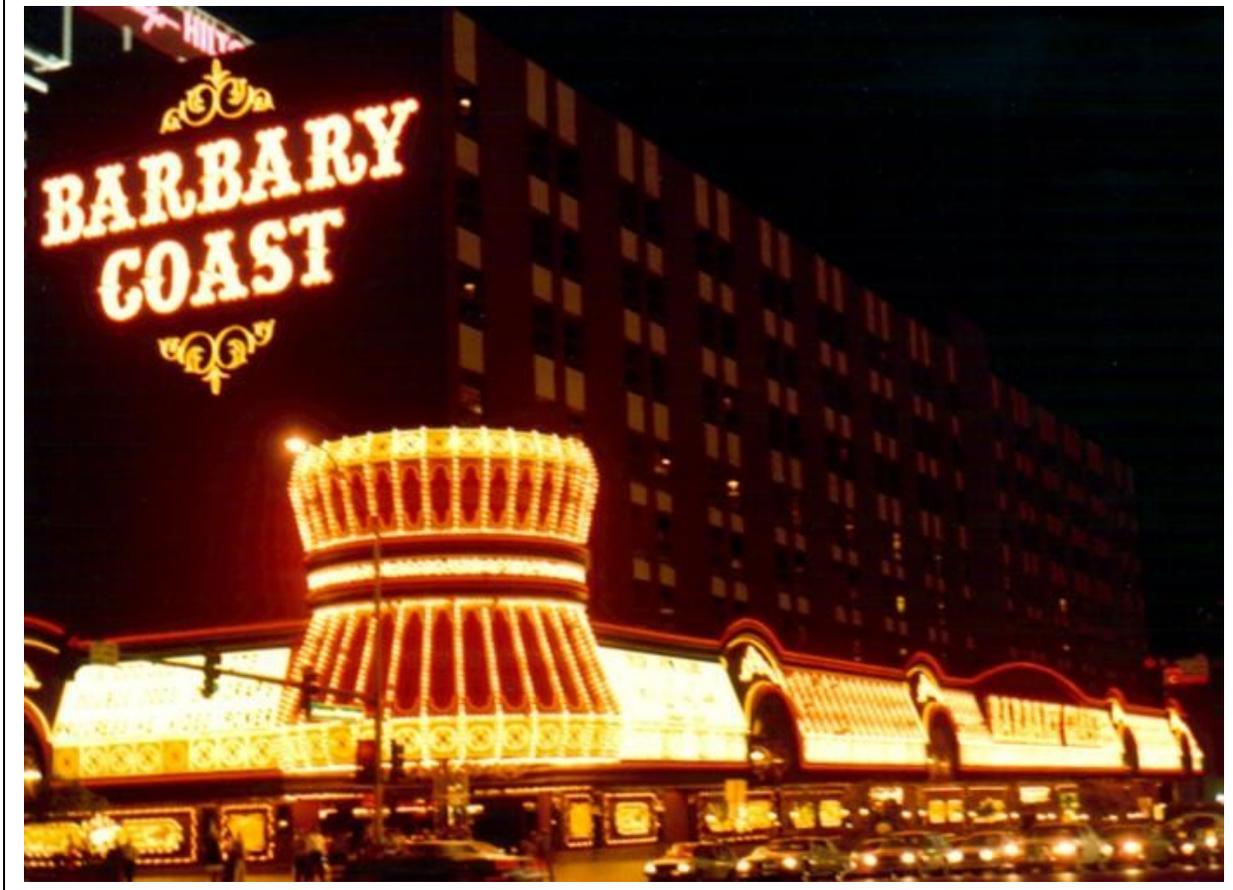
In the late 1990s Casino Royale had highest odds allowed in craps. The game was a 50 cent minimum bet game that allowed a player to place 100 times more in the odd bet. It was not uncommon to see 50 cent bets with \$25 to \$50 odds bets. This was when the rest of the Strip was allowed double to 10 times odds.

The Nob Hill closed in 1990.

On January 1, 1992 the casino reopened as the Casino Royale. The adjacent Travelodge was purchased and used for hotel rooms.

[ToC](#)

The Barbary Coast - Bill's Gamblin' Hall and Saloon, Las Vegas



The Barbary Coast in 1983
Wikipedia



2 November 2007

[Wikipedia](#)

Bill's Gamblin' Hall and Saloon is a casino and hotel located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada. It was opened as the **Barbary Coast Hotel & Casino** in 1979, and renamed in 2007 after being acquired by Harrah's Entertainment.

The casino was built by **Michael Gaughan** and it opened in March 1979 at a cost of \$11.5 million. Over time, this property, along with others owned by Gaughan would become Coast Casinos Inc.

Michael Gaughan shared partnership in the Barbary Coast with **Kenny Epstein**, **Tito Tiberti**, **Frank Toti** and **Jerry Herbst**.

On February 9, 2004, **Boyd Gaming** announced that they would purchase Coast Casinos, a Las Vegas locals casino brand, for \$820 million. The hotels included in this deal were the Barbary Coast, the Gold Coast, the Suncoast, the Orleans, and the South Coast, which was under construction at the time. The buyout was complete on July 1, 2005 at a cost of \$1.2 billion.

On September 6, 2005, Boyd Gaming purchased the 4.3 acres (17,000 m²) of land under the hotel for \$16 million. The hotel had been leasing the land prior to this point.

On October 2, 2006, Boyd Gaming announced plans to swap their Barbary Coast hotel for Harrah's Entertainment's 24-acre (97,000 m²) parcel on and around the site of the former Westward Ho next to Boyd's Stardust. With the Westward Ho parcel, Boyd would have 87 acres (350,000 m²) contiguous on the Strip to complete their Echelon Place resort, the replacement for their Stardust property.

On February 7, 2007, the Nevada Gaming Control Board gave approval to the plan for Boyd Gaming to swap the Barbary Coast with Harrah's 24-acre (97,000 m²) site next door to Boyd's Stardust property.

The Barbary Coast casino was closed at 2AM on February 27, 2007 after the acquisition was finalized. The hotel and casino were rebranded as Bill's Gamblin Hall and Saloon, in honor of Harrah's founder Bill Harrah, and reopened March 1, 2007 under Harrah's ownership.

Though the property is owned and operated by Harrah's and promotes other Harrah's shows and facilities, Bill's operates a single-property slot-club reward program with some interchange rights with Harrah's reward programs. As of 2009 many longtime Barbary Coast employees have remained through both ownership changes.

[ToC](#)

Gold Coast, Las Vegas



15:01, 5 February 2012

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The Gold Coast Hotel & Casino is a hotel and casino located in Las Vegas, Nevada. This locals' casino is owned and operated by Boyd Gaming Corporation. The Gold Coast is located one mile (1.6 km) west of the Las Vegas Strip on West Flamingo Road. It is located across the street from the Palms Casino Resort and the Rio All Suite Hotel and Casino. The hotel has 711 rooms and suites, five restaurants, a showroom/lounge, a beauty salon, a barber shop, and a 70 lane bowling center. The casino has a 700 seat bingo room, table games, slot machines, a non-smoking poker room, and a Race and Sports Book. The Gold Coast has a diverse customer base which is primarily anchored by the large Asian community north of the property in **Chinatown**.

[ToC](#)

Orleans Casino, Las Vegas



The Orleans Entrance

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The Orleans Hotel and Casino is a hotel with 1,885 rooms and a 135,000-square-foot (12,500 m²) casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. Owned by **Boyd Gaming Corporation**, it includes the large multipurpose Orleans Arena that can be converted into an ice rink. It is a major home for poker in the Las Vegas metropolitan area and was one of the biggest poker rooms in Las Vegas prior to the 21st century poker boom.

Though The Orleans attracts a fair number of tourists, it is primarily considered to be a locals casino. It is located about 0.8 miles (1.3 km) west of the Las Vegas Strip, but offers from 9:00 AM to 12:30 AM a free shuttle bus approximately every 30 minutes to Bill's Gamblin' Hall and Saloon, which is just across the street from Bally's Las Vegas and Caesars Palace.

[ToC](#)

Flamingo Capri - Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



Imperial Palace

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Imperial Palace is a 2,640 room hotel and a 75,000 sq ft (7,000 m²) casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada. The hotel and casino were owned by **Imperial Palace LLC** until purchased by the current owner, **Caesars Imperial Palace Corporation** a subsidiary of **Caesars Entertainment Corp.**

From 1959 to 1979 the property was called the **Flamingo Capri**. In November 1979, it was renamed to the Asian-themed Imperial Palace by new owner **Ralph Engelstad**. When Engelstad died in 2002, the casino ownership transferred to the Ralph Engelstad and Betty Engelstad Trust. The casino operated as its own limited partnership, Imperial Palace LLC, under the Trust's oversight.

(It is rumored that when Ralph Engelstad died, at his Bahaman Island place, he had three fine bitches in his bed. PWW)

The Imperial Theatre showroom with 850 seats was completed and opened in June of 1980.

A major expansion from August 1987 to July 1989 added the fourth 19-story tower with 547 rooms, which brought the room count to 2,637. The expansion also included a new swimming pool, a two-story waterfall, heated spa and poolside bar, a nightclub, race & sports book, health and fitness center, and office complex. In 1993, an independent 24-hour medical facility serving guests and employees was opened.

In 1984, a couple from Missouri were assaulted in their guest room by a man dressed as a hotel employee. They were beaten, bound, and gagged, and the wife was raped. The assailant was never caught. The couple sued the Imperial Palace, claiming that the hotel did not provide adequate security. The lawsuit lasted until at least 1989, with allegations that hotel employees destroyed evidence relating to their security practices. The case was ultimately settled on undisclosed terms.

The lawsuit would lead indirectly to more trouble for the casino. In 1988, several employees, angry about being placed on leave as punishment for talking to the plaintiff attorney, began speaking to the Gaming Control Board and local media about two Nazi-themed parties Engelstad had held at the Imperial Palace. The parties were held **in Engelstad's so-called "war room", which featured a large collection of World War II Nazi memorabilia, including a portrait of Engelstad in the likeness of Hitler.** A national controversy ensued. Engelstad claimed the collection was purely of historical

interest, and not meant to glorify the Nazis. The Gaming Control Board recommended that Engelstad lose his gaming license and be fined \$200,000 for reflecting poorly on the reputation of the Nevada gaming industry. An agreement was ultimately reached whereby Engelstad kept his license, but paid \$1.5 million in penalties.

On August 22, 2005, Harrah's announced plans to purchase this property. The acquisition was completed on December 23, 2005.

During a conference call with investors on November 20, 2005, the Chairman for Harrah's, Gary Loveman, noted that both the Imperial Palace and neighboring O'Sheas "are going to require very substantial modifications or complete tear-downs and rebuilds" in order to make room for a Harrah's and/or Flamingo expansion on the Strip. However, since then, Harrah's has invested millions of dollars into refurbishing both the hotel rooms and the casino itself.

In July 2009, Harrah's announced new plans for the area around the Imperial Palace, O'Shea's, and Flamingo casinos, confirming that the Imperial Palace will not be demolished at this time.

In August 2011, Caesar's Entertainment Corporation announced it will be building a massive Ferris wheel directly behind the Imperial Palace.

The Auto Collections at the Imperial Palace Hotel & Casino is the world's largest classic car showroom with more than \$100 million worth of inventory on display and for sale. More than 250 antique, classic, muscle and historically significant cars are on display and nearly all are for sale.



1930 Cord, part of the Auto Collection

[Wikipedia](#)

Excalibur Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



Excalibur During the Day

[Wikipedia](#)

The Excalibur Hotel and Casino is a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada, in the United States. It is owned and operated by **MGM Resorts International**.

Excalibur, named for the mythical sword of King Arthur, uses the Arthurian theme in several ways. Its facade is a stylized image of a castle. Until 2007, a wizard-like figure representing Merlin looked out from a high turret (since replaced by a figure advertising Dick's Last Resort).

Excalibur is situated at the Tropicana - Las Vegas Boulevard intersection. The hotel is linked by overhead pedestrian bridges to neighboring casinos to the north (New York-New York, across Tropicana Avenue) and to the east (Tropicana, across the Strip). There is a free tram that connects Excalibur to its sister MGM Resorts International properties to the south, Luxor and Mandalay Bay.



Excalibur from Tropicana Ave March 28, 2010

Wikipedia

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Boardwalk Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas



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The Boardwalk Hotel and Casino was a Coney Island style hotel located on the Las Vegas Strip. It was owned and operated by **MGM Mirage**. It was part of the **Holiday Inn** hotel chain but left after being acquired by **Mirage Resorts**. It was built before the era of the mega-casinos, and was consequently tiny in comparison to many of its neighbors, with only 654 rooms.

Most visitors to Las Vegas would argue the best feature of the Boardwalk was the location on the "Strip": in between the plush Bellagio and the Monte Carlo and across from the Paris, Aladdin, and MGM Grand.

The hotel's Coney Island theme could be seen in its facade with an original 1906 parachute jump ride and a wooden (non-functioning) roller coaster. The hotel was composed of three distinct buildings all built at different times. The newest building was the 16-story tower built in 1996. The Steeplechase building was 6 stories and the Luna Park building was the original four-story structure when the hotel first opened.

Norm Jansen founded the Boardwalk in 1977. He started out at the Pioneer Club and then opened a gift shop at what was to be the site of the Boardwalk in 1972. When he sold the Boardwalk out, he still retained a gift shop in the hotel. His daughter continued to operate that gift shop until the hotel closed.

The Boardwalk became owned by a public corporation (**Boardwalk Casino, Inc.**) in 1994. Mirage Resorts later acquired it in 1997.

The hotel and casino **closed on January 9, 2006**, and the main hotel tower was imploded on May 9, 2006 at 2:34 a.m. PST in order to prepare the **site for CityCenter**.

[ToC](#)

Luxor, Las Vegas





[Wikipedia](#)

Luxor Las Vegas is a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada. The 30-story hotel, which is operated by **MGM Resorts International**, features a 120,000 sq ft (11,000 m²) casino floor that includes over 2,000 slot machines and 87 table games.

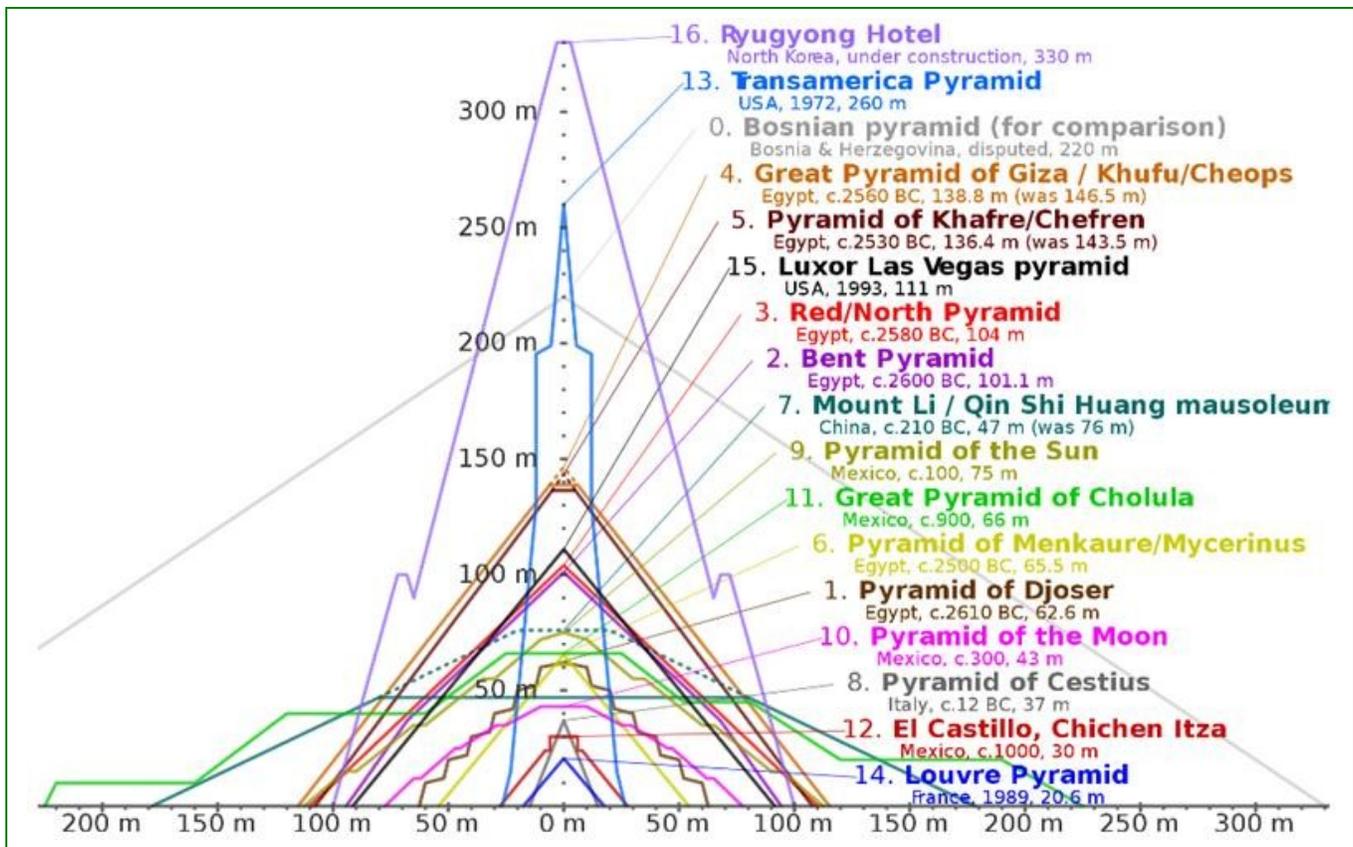
It has a new, highly modernized, and contemporary design and contains a total of 4,400 rooms, including 442 suites, lining the interior walls of a pyramid style tower and within twin 22-story ziggurat towers that were built as later additions.

The hotel is named after the city of Luxor (ancient Thebes) in Egypt. Luxor is the second largest hotel in Las Vegas (the largest being the MGM Grand Las Vegas) and the third largest in the world. As of 2010, the Luxor has a 4 Key rating from the Green Key Eco-Rating Program, which evaluates "sustainable" hotel operations.



Sphinx at Luxor hotel Las Vegas showing big light on top on pyramid behind

Credit: Tim (Timothy) Pearce



Comparison of approximate profiles of some pyramidal or near-pyramidal buildings; where the base is rectangular, the longer side is shown. Dotted lines indicate original heights, where available..

Credit: Cmglee

Designed by hotel architect Veldon Simpson and interior designer Charles Silverman, the Luxor has received recognition as being among the most recognizable hotels on the strip because of its unique design. The main portion of the hotel is a 365-foot (111 m)-high, 30-story pyramid encased in 11 acres of dark bronze glass. The guest rooms are situated on the outer walls of the pyramid and are reached by riding in "inclinators" that travel along the inner surface of the pyramid at a 39-degree angle. The hotel also features a 29 million cubic feet (820,000 m³) atrium, which was the largest open atrium in the world when it was built in 1993. The hotel is marked by a 140-foot (43 m)-high obelisk and a 110-foot (34 m)-tall re-creation of the Great Sphinx of Giza.

The tip of the pyramid contains a fixed-position spotlight that points directly upward and is claimed to be **the brightest beam in the world at over 42.3 billion candlepower.**

Ground was broken for the Luxor in 1992 and officially opened eighteen months later at 4 A.M on October 15, 1993 to a crowd of 10,000 people. When it opened, the pyramid, which cost \$375 million to build, was the tallest building on the strip and contained 2,526 rooms and a 100,000 sq ft (9,300 m²) casino. **The resort was financed by "petty cash" earned from other Circus Circus Enterprises properties** and did not include any outside financial investors.

[ToC](#)

Desert Inn - Las Vegas



May have copyright problems

Opening date April 24, 1950, closing date August 28, 2000

The Desert Inn was a Paradise, Nevada, hotel, casino. Designed by noted New York architect Jac Lessman, it was the fifth resort to open on the Las Vegas Strip. The property included an **18-hole golf course**. Locals nicknamed the resort "The D.I." or just "D.I."

The original name was **Wilbur Clark's Desert Inn**. Wilbur Clark originally began building the resort, but when he ran out of money, the **Cleveland mob** led by **Moe Dalitz** took over the construction. Clark became the public frontman of the resort while Dalitz remained quietly in the background as the principal owner. Much of the financing came from the American National Insurance Company (ANICO), which at the time had indirect ties to the **Cleveland crime syndicate** and the **Maceo crime syndicate** in Galveston, Texas. The resort would eventually be renamed Desert Inn, and was affectionately called the "DI" by Las Vegas locals and regular guests.

The Desert Inn's most famous guest, businessman **Howard Hughes**, arrived on Thanksgiving Day 1966, renting the hotel's entire top two floors. After staying past his initial ten-day reservation, he was asked to leave in December so that the resort could accommodate the high rollers who had been promised those suites. Instead of leaving, Hughes decided to start negotiations to buy the Desert Inn. On March 1, 1967, **Hughes purchased the resort from Dalitz for around \$13 million**. This purchase was the first of many Las Vegas resort purchases by Hughes.

Almost every major star of the last fifty years played at the Desert Inn. Its famous "crystal showroom" hosted Liberace, Frank Sinatra, Noel Coward, Ted Lewis, Joe E. Lewis, Bobby Darin, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett, Paul Anka, Neil Sedaka, Dionne Warwick, Wayne Newton, Barry Manilow, Cher, Tina Turner, and more. Comics and variety acts like Myron Cohen, Pat Cooper, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Bob Newhart, Don Rickles, The Smothers Brothers, Roseanne Barr, Garry Shandling, Buddy Hackett and Rich Little all worked the Desert Inn along with thousands of others.

In 1997, the Desert Inn went through a \$200 million renovation and expansion, giving it a new exterior with white stucco and clay tile roofs. Its previous major renovation occurred during the mid-1970s. Unlike other expansions, the 821 rooms were reduced to 715 to provide extra accommodations. The Palms tower was completed and the lagoon-style pool was also added. The seven-story lobby with a vaulted ceiling and large windows was also a major part of the renovation. Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide owned the hotel until 1998 and, during their ownership, the hotel became known as the **Sheraton Desert Inn**. MGM Grand Inc. also owned it for a time in the late 1980s.

On April 24, 2000, the Desert Inn turned 50 years old, and celebrated with a full week of activities. There was a celebrity golf tournament with **Susan Anton, Robert Loggia, Chris O'Donnell, Robert Urich, Vincent Van Patten, Tony Curtis, Rip Taylor** and various local dignitaries, celebrities and media. A time capsule was buried in a custom-designed granite burial chamber on April 25, 2000, to be opened on April 25, 2050. Three days later, on April 27, 2000, the resort was purchased for \$270 million by **Steve Wynn**, who closed it several months later.

On October 23, 2001, the main tower of the Desert Inn was demolished to make room for a megaresort that Wynn planned to build. Originally intended to be named Le Rêve, the new project opened as **Wynn Las Vegas**. The remaining towers, The Palm and St. Andrews towers, were used as a small museum to display some of Wynn's art collection and as offices for Wynn Resorts. It was closed due to poor ticket sales. The Palms and St. Andrews Tower were the last towers and they were imploded on November 16, 2004. The Palms tower was only seven years old at the time.

Prior to completion of **Wynn Las Vegas**, the Desert Inn was the last Strip hotel with its own golf course. In fact, the Desert Inn had its own country club. When the hotel underwent a major renovation during the mid 1970s and reopened in 1978, the property was renamed the Desert Inn and Country Club; it featured full country club amenities open to guests of

the hotel including a club house and tennis courts. People owned homes on the far end of the golf course. The large white Desert Inn and Country Club sign on The Las Vegas Strip which welcomed guests and players to the property was shown regularly on the ABC television program Vega\$. Shortly after the show was cancelled, the sign was changed from white to red and only said Desert Inn - and Country Club was removed. The DI's country club's golf course became part of Wynn Las Vegas, after a rebuilding associated with the new resort's opening.

[ToC](#)

Dunes & Oasis (Hotel and Casino), Las Vegas



1983 Credit: Larry D. Moore This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

The Dunes Hotel was a Paradise, Nevada; the hotel and casino that operated from May 23, 1955 to January 26, 1993, and was the tenth resort to open on the Las Vegas Strip. The **Bellagio** now stands on the former grounds.

The Dunes opened on May 23, 1955, as a low-rise resort with Hollywood star Vera-Ellen providing the entertainment in the Magic Carpet Review. When the North Tower was added in 1961 it was one of the finest and largest hotels on the strip. The South Tower was added in 1979. The hotel was built in part with financing from movie mogul **Al Gottesman** and the **Teamsters Pension Fund**. The major investors were **Joseph Sullivan**, **Alfred Gottesman** and **Bob Rice**. (it was later believed that **Raymond Patriarca**, the head of a **Providence, Rhode Island crime family** was the source of Sullivan's investment.) The resort soon ran into financial difficulties and the casino closed after a year. The resort was purchased in 1956 by two businessmen, **Major A. Riddle** and **Jake Gottlieb**, who had dealings with the **Chicago Outfit**. The resort boasted an 18-hole golf course, a rooftop health spa and a 90 ft (27 m)-long pool. The Hotel's Slogan was "The Miracle in the Desert."



neon signs on the facade of "The Oasis Casino in The Dunes" Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA as of 1990

Henning Schlottmann (User:H-stt) This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 1.0 Generic license.

In its early years, the Dunes was known for the 35 ft (11 m) tall fiberglass sultan (1964) that stood above its main entrance. Many top performers, such as **Dean Martin, Jayne Mansfield, Liberace, George Burns, Pat Cooper, Judy Garland, Violetta Villas, Phyllis Diller, and Frank Sinatra** performed at the hotel.

Although it opened to much fanfare, it struggled from the start: one reason was its location at what was then the southernmost part of the Strip. The hotel frequently had to borrow money, and even the Sands Hotel lent its executives to help out, as well as bringing in numerous famous celebrities and entertainers such as Frank Sinatra's surprise appearance dressed as a sultan. On January 10, 1957, in a desperate move to keep the resort afloat, the Dunes became the first hotel/casino in Nevada to offer a topless show, called Minsky's Follies - the first of which was "Minsky Goes to Paris." The State Legislature was "in an uproar," but the show set a record for attendance in a single week at 16,000. In 1961, a 24 story tower was built, bringing the number of rooms up to 450. In 1970, there were unrealized rumors Howard Hughes would buy into the hotel. In 1979, the hotel expanded to 1300 rooms. In the late 1960's, **Morris Shenker** bought an interest in the Dunes and became its Chairman of the Board. In 1984, Shenker filed for bankruptcy, and soon after, **Major Riddle's** company (**M & R Investment Company**) also filed bankruptcy, leading to the resort's sale. The sultan statue, by now on the golf course, caught fire in 1985, reportedly due to an electrical short in its stomach. In 1987, Japanese investor **Masao Nangaku** purchased the Dunes "for \$155 million but could not make it a financial success".

On November 17, 1992, the Dunes was sold for the last time to developer **Steve Wynn's** company, **Mirage Resorts, Inc.** for \$75 million. On January 26, 1993, the Dunes closed its doors for good. A liquidation sale was conducted by National Content Liquidators to clear the property of its contents as a prelude to the building's implosion. Like many of the legendary properties of its era, it could no longer compete with the newer and more exciting megaresorts that were being built.

Steve Wynn bought the Dunes and started the implosion trend with the North Tower. On October 27, 1993, the **Dunes was imploded** in a grand ceremony that involved **major fireworks displays** and the use of several "cannon blasts" from the English ship 'HMS Britannia' of Treasure Island Hotel and Casino. Over 200,000 people watched the implosion. **(Including me; it was the best ever fireworks display and implosion. PWW)** The Dunes Sign itself was lit and the sign read "No Vacancy" as if it was still open. Steve Wynn, along with Controlled Demolition, Inc. stood by and said "Captain of the Britannia, prepare broadside; Ready, Aim, Fire." Cannon shots from the ship were simulated to coincide with explosions along the Dunes property. The neon sign was destroyed and a fireball fueled by 16,000 liters of aviation fuel engulfed the

Diamond Tower shortly before explosives brought it down. Everything except the south tower was destroyed "amid a shower of fireworks never before equaled west of the Mississippi." **(There was about ¼ inch of dust that fell on the folks watching from the east side of the strip at Bally's. PWW)**

The Dunes counts as two implosions as the South Tower was obliterated in July, 1994, with no fanfare and minimal media attention.

The implosion also held symbolic significance for the city. Many longtime residents knew the Dunes was controlled by the mafia, having been first **built with money from it and the mob-controlled pension funds of the Teamsters and Pipefitters unions.** The implosion signaled the end of significant mafia control and influence in Las Vegas **(Or so the illusion goes; or is it the greedy huge corporations owned by the same guys?).** For many years, the hotel was owned by **Major Riddle** from the "**Chicago Outfit**" and later sold in part to **Morris Shenker**, an "attorney associated with the **St. Louis Mafia, Meyer Lansky, Jimmy Hoffa, and Frank Foster**, owner of Athony Alarm." **Riddle** and **Shenker** later became a target of the Organized Crime Strike Force in St. Louis.

The Bellagio now stands in its place. During its construction, workers found four bags of Dunes casino chips that were buried at the site.

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Stratosphere, Las Vegas



An aerial view of The Stratosphere Las Vegas during November 2003

Original uploader was Timjarrett at en.wikipedia

Stratosphere Las Vegas is a tower, hotel, and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Las Vegas, Nevada, United

States. Its tower is also the tallest observation tower, and the 5th-tallest structure, in the United States, as well as being the tallest structure in Las Vegas.

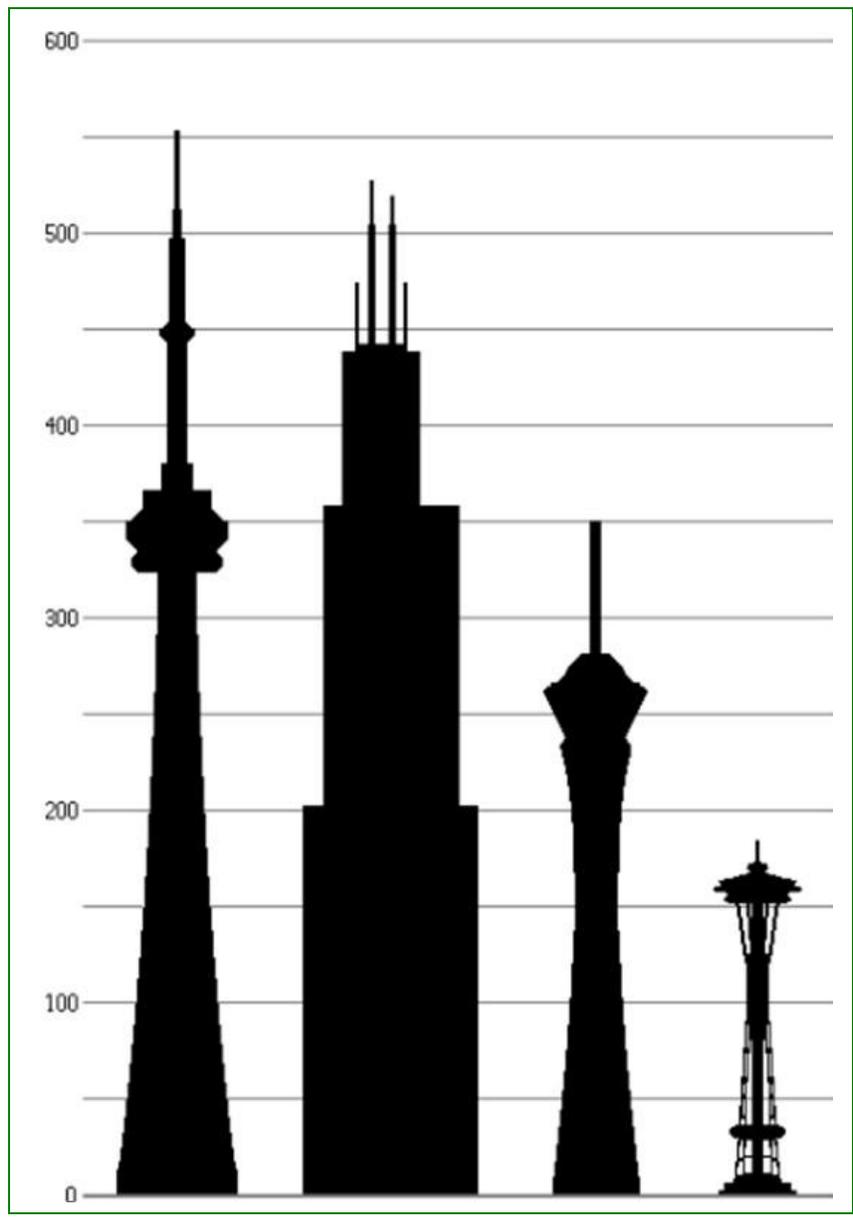
It is owned by Whitehall Street Real Estate Funds, an affiliate of Goldman, Sachs & Co who purchased American Casino & Entertainment Properties which includes the Stratosphere along with three other properties. The sale closed on February 21, 2008 for US\$1.3 billion. The property's signature attraction is the 1,149 ft (350.2 m) Stratosphere Tower, the tallest freestanding observation tower in the United States,[1] and the second tallest in the Western Hemisphere, surpassed only by the CN Tower in Toronto, Ontario. The hotel is a separate building with 24 stories, 2,427 rooms and an 80,000 sq ft (7,400 m2) casino.

The Stratosphere is the northernmost of the major Strip casinos and the only one actually in the City of Las Vegas, as the rest of the Strip south of Sahara Avenue is in the unincorporated townships of Paradise and Winchester. Note, however, that the Nevada Gaming Control Board does not include the Stratosphere in its definition of the Strip, instead grouping it with Downtown Las Vegas casinos.

In the early 1990s, The Stratosphere was conceived by **Bob Stupak** as an addition to his Vegas World casino. At the conception of the project, one of the planned rides was to be a giant ape that would carry riders up and down one of the tower's columns. The original plans envisioned the Stratosphere exceeding the height of the CN Tower at 1,815 ft (553 m), making it the world's tallest freestanding structure at that time. However, due to possible interference with nearby McCarran International Airport, and any possible flights that come through Las Vegas, the Tower's proposed height shrank multiple times until its current height of 1,149 ft (350 m).

On August 29, 1993, the Tower caught fire while still under construction. No one was injured, but the fire forced repairs and rebuilding that led to numerous delays in the construction of the Tower. (We sat in my back yard drinking beer and watching the fire that looked like a giant torch from the Roman era. PWW)

Units= meters



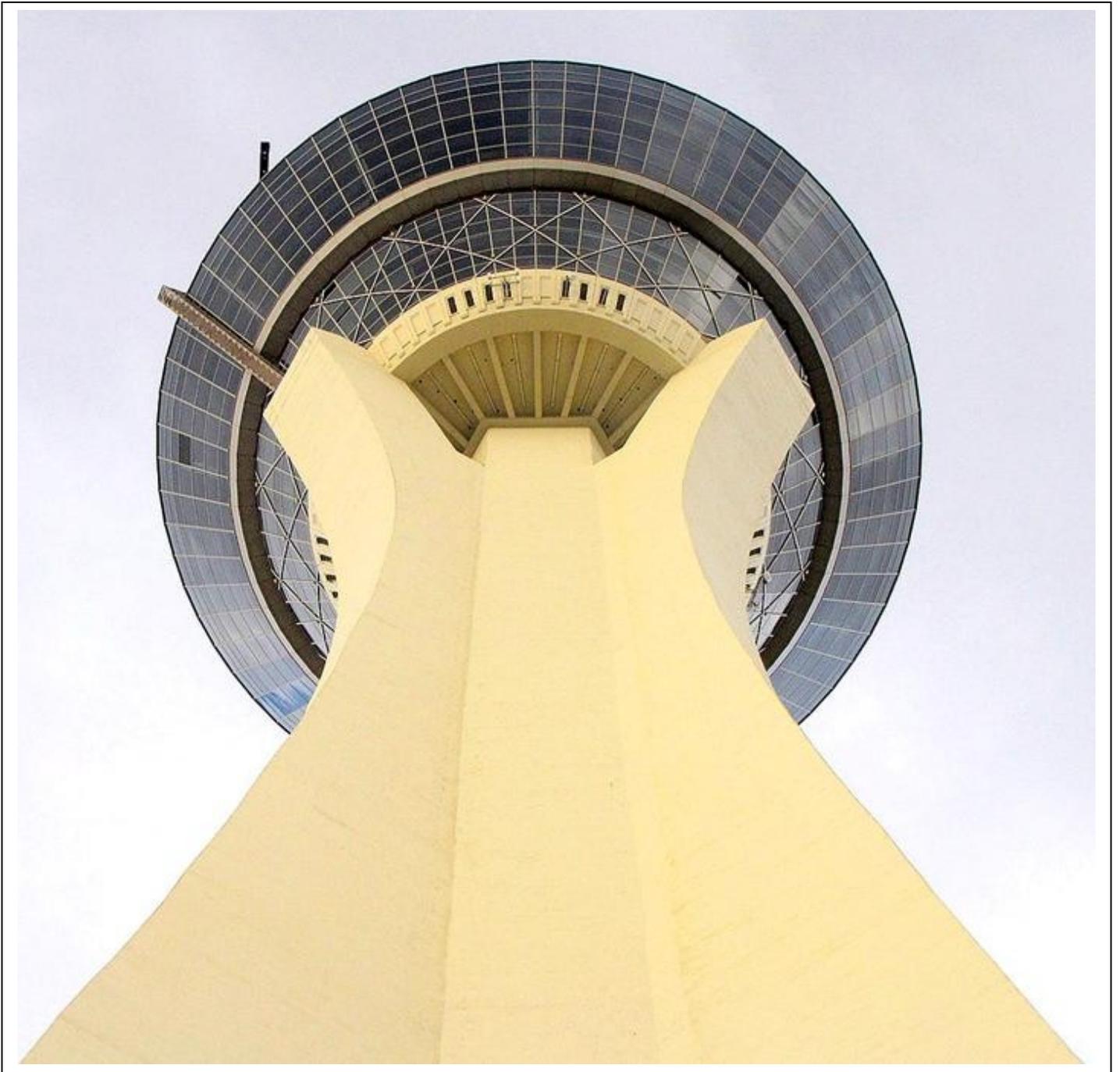
• CN Tower, Toronto • Willis Tower, Chicago • Stratosphere, Las Vegas • Space Needle, Seattle

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View from Stratosphere during construction

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The landmark Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas is the tallest free-standing observation tower in the U.S. at 1149 feet (350 meters) in height. Only the upper half is seen in this picture. In addition to observation decks that provide a great view of Las Vegas and vicinity in all directions, the top of the tower is home to a restaurant and three open-air thrill-rides.

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Golden Nugget, Las Vegas



The Golden Nugget Las Vegas (Around 2005)

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The Golden Nugget Las Vegas is a luxury casino-hotel located in Las Vegas, Nevada on the Fremont Street Experience. The property is owned and operated by Landry's Restaurants now.

It is the largest casino in the downtown area, with a total of 2,345 deluxe guest rooms and suites. It has also maintained AAA's Four Diamond rating consecutively for 32 years from 1977 through 2009. It is one of only two resorts inside the city limits of Las Vegas to earn this distinction, the other being The Resort at Summerlin.

The Golden Nugget was originally built in 1946, making it one of the oldest casinos in the city. **Steve Wynn** bought a stake in the Nugget, which he increased so that, in 1973, he became the majority shareholder, and the youngest casino owner in Las Vegas. In 1977 he opened the first hotel tower and the resort earned its first four diamond rating from Mobil Travel Guide. It was the foundation for Wynn's rise to prominence in the casino industry. The second hotel tower opened in 1984 along with the showroom, and the third tower was opened in 1989. On 31 **May 2000**, the Golden Nugget (and all of Steve Wynn's other properties) was **sold to Kirk Kerkorian**; the consolidated corporation was known as MGM Mirage and has been the largest casino corporation in Las Vegas since that date.



The Golden Nugget in 1983

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Flamingo, Las Vegas



Flamingo Las Vegas at night, Jan. 2007

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The Flamingo Las Vegas is a hotel casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada and is owned and operated by **Caesars Entertainment Corp.** The property offers a 77,000 sq ft (7,200 m²) casino along with 3,626 hotel rooms. The 15-acre (6.1 ha) site's architectural theme is reminiscent of the Art Deco and Streamline Modern style of Miami and South Beach, with a garden courtyard housing a wildlife habitat featuring flamingos. It was the third resort to open on the Strip, and the oldest resort on the Strip still in operation today.

The Flamingo has a Las Vegas Monorail station at the rear of the property.

History”:

A Hollywood Beginning:

The Flamingo site occupies 40 acres (16 ha) originally owned by one of Las Vegas' first settlers, **Charles "Pops" Squires**. Mr. Squires paid \$8.75 an acre for the land. In 1944, Margaret Folsom bought the tract for \$7,500 from Squires, and she then later sold it to **Billy Wilkerson**. Billy Wilkerson was the owner of the Hollywood Reporter as well as some very popular nightclubs in the Sunset Strip: Cafe Trocadero, Ciro's and La Rue's.

In 1945, Wilkerson purchased 33 acres (13 ha) on the west side of U.S. Route 91, about one mile (1.6 km) south of the Hotel Last Frontier in preparation for his vision. Wilkerson then hired George Vernon Russell to design a hotel that was more in the European style and something other than the "sawdust joints" on Fremont Street. He planned a hotel with luxurious rooms, a spa, health club, showroom, golf course, nightclub and an upscale restaurant. Due to high wartime materials costs, Wilkerson ran into financial problems almost at once, finding himself \$400,000 short and hunting for new financing.

Bugsy Siegel:

In late 1945, **mobster Bugsy Siegel** and his "partners" came to Las Vegas, after the fledgling resort city piqued Siegel's interest due to its legalized gambling and its off-track betting. Siegel at the time held a large interest in Trans America Wire, a racing publication.

Siegel began by purchasing The El Cortez on Fremont Street for \$600,000. His expansion plans were hampered by unfriendly city officials aware of his criminal background, so Siegel began looking for a site outside the city limits. Hearing that Wilkerson was seeking extra funding, Siegel and his partners, posing as businessmen, approached him and bought a two-thirds stake in the project.

Siegel took over the final phases of construction and convinced more of his underworld associates to invest in the project. The problem was, Siegel had no experience in construction or design, causing costs to mount from constant changes and gouging from construction firms and suppliers — including, it was reputed, workers who delivered by day, stole by night, and resold the next day. Siegel may actually have bought some of the same materials twice thanks to this kind of scheming.

Siegel lost patience with the rising costs, and his notorious outbursts unnerved his construction foreman. Reputedly, Siegel told him, "Don't worry — we only kill each other."

The Flamingo Hotel & Casino:

Siegel finally opened The Flamingo Hotel & Casino at a **total cost of \$6 million** on December 26, **1946**. Billed as the world's most luxurious hotel, the 105-room property and first luxury hotel on the Strip, was built seven miles (11 km) from Downtown Las Vegas, with a large sign built in front of the construction site announcing it was a William R. Wilkerson project, with Del Webb Construction as the prime contractor and Richard Stadelman (who later made renovations to the El Rancho Las Vegas) the architect.

Siegel named the resort after his girlfriend Virginia Hill, who loved to gamble and whose nickname was Flamingo, a nickname Siegel gave her due to her long, skinny legs. Organized crime king **Lucky Luciano** wrote in his memoir that Siegel once owned an interest in the Hialeah Park race track and viewed the flamingos who populated nearby as an omen.

The Murder of Siegel:

Siegel's trouble with the Flamingo began when, a year after the official groundbreaking, the resort had produced no revenue and drained the resources of his mob investors. Then **Meyer Lansky** charged — at a major mob meeting in Cuba — that either Siegel or Hill was skimming from the resort's building budget, a charge amplified when Hill was revealed to have taken \$2.5 million and gone to Switzerland, where the skimmed money was believed going.

"There was no doubt in Meyer's mind," Luciano recalled in his memoir, "That Bugsy had skimmed this dough from his building budget, and he was sure that Siegel was preparing to skip as well as skim, in case the roof was gonna fall in on him." Luciano and the other mob leaders in Cuba asked Lansky what to do. Torn because of long ties to Siegel, whom he considered like a brother, Lansky nevertheless agreed that someone stealing from his friends had to go — at first. Lansky persuaded the others to wait for the Flamingo's casino opening: if it was a success, Siegel could be persuaded in other ways to repay. Luciano persuaded the others to agree.

The splashy opening — stars present included Cuban band leader **Xavier Cugat** (whose band provided the music), **George Jessel**, **George Raft**, **Rose Marie**, and **Jimmy Durante** as entertainment, with guests including Clark Gable, Lana Turner, Cesar Romero, Joan Crawford, and others — **was a flop**. Lansky managed to persuade the mob chiefs to reprieve Siegel once more and allow the Flamingo more time. However, by January 1947 Siegel had to order the resort closed until the hotel could be finished.

The Flamingo re-opened in March despite the hotel not being complete, and this time, the results proved different. By May, the resort reported a \$250,000 profit, allowing Lansky to point out that Siegel was right about Las Vegas after all. But it wasn't quite enough to save Siegel. On 20 June 1947, relaxing in the Hollywood bungalow he shared with Hill, who was away at the time, Siegel was shot to death.

A memorial plaque exists on the Flamingo site near the outdoor wedding chapel.

After Siegel's death:

Casino management changed the hotel name to The Fabulous Flamingo on March 1, 1947, and in time the Flamingo presented lavish shows and accommodations for its time, becoming well known for comfortable, air conditioned rooms, gardens, and swimming pools. Often credited for popularizing the "complete experience" as opposed to merely gambling, the Flamingo staff became known for wearing tuxedos on the job, and in 1950 the resort's Champagne Tower opened.

From 1955 to 1960, Albert Parvin of the Parvin-Dohrmann Company operated the Flamingo. In 1960, it was sold for \$10.5 million to a group including **Samuel Cohen**, **Morris Lansburgh**, and **Daniel Lifter**, Miami residents with reputed ties to organized crime. Lansky served as middleman for the deal, receiving \$200,000.

Kirk Kerkorian acquired the property in 1967, making it part of Kerkorian's International Leisure Company, but the **Hilton Corporation bought the resort in 1972, renaming it the Flamingo Hilton in 1974**. The last of the original Flamingo Hotel structure was torn down on December 14, 1993 and the hotel's garden was built on the site.

The Flamingo's four hotel towers were built (or expanded) in 1967, 1975, 1977, 1982, 1990, and 1995. A 200-unit Hilton Grand Vacations timeshare tower was opened in 1993

In 1998, Hilton's gaming properties, including the Flamingo, were spun off as Park Place Entertainment (later renamed to Caesars Entertainment). The deal included a two-year license to use the Hilton name. Park Place opted not to renew that agreement when it expired in late 2000, and the property was renamed Flamingo Las Vegas.

In 2005, Harrah's Entertainment purchased Caesars Entertainment Inc and the property became part of Harrah's Entertainment Company, which changed its name to Caesars Entertainment Corp in 2010.

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Casino Divenezia, Malta



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Bellagio, Las Vegas



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Bellagio is a hotel and casino located on the Las Vegas Strip in the Paradise area of unincorporated Clark County, Nevada, USA and a member of The Leading Hotels of the World. It is owned by MGM Resorts International and was built on the site of the demolished **Dunes hotel** and casino.

Inspired by the Lake Como resort of Bellagio in Italy, Bellagio is famed for its elegance. One of its most notable features is an 8-acre (3.2 ha) lake between the building and the Strip, which houses the **Fountains of Bellagio**, a large dancing water fountain synchronized to music.

Inside Bellagio, Dale Chihuly's Fiori di Como, composed of over 2,000 hand-blown glass flowers, covers 2,000 sq ft (190 m²) of the lobby ceiling. Bellagio is home to Cirque du Soleil's aquatic production "O".

The main (original) tower of the Bellagio, with 3,015 rooms, has 36 floors and a height of 508 ft (151 m). The Spa Tower, which stands to the south of the main tower, had 33 floors, a height of 392 ft (119 m), and contains 935 rooms.



Las Vegas Strip Bellagio & Caesar's Palace

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History:

Bellagio was **conceived by Steve Wynn** and built by his company, Mirage Resorts, Inc. following the purchase and demolition of the legendary Dunes hotel and casino in 1993. Bellagio was designed by DeRuyter Butler and Atlandia Design. **Bellagio had an original construction cost of US\$1.6 billion.**

The Bellagio opened October 15, 1998, just before 11 p.m. in a ceremony that was reported to cost US\$88 million. The VIPs invited to the grand opening were expected to donate to The Foundation Fighting Blindness US\$1,000 a person or US\$3,500 a couple, which entitled them to an overnight stay at Bellagio's suite rooms.

Opening night's entertainment began with Steve Wynn giving a 40-minute welcome speech followed by the opening of the Cirque du Soleil production "O." Performing in Bellagio lounges that night were New York cabaret and recording artist **Michael Feinstein, George Bugatti and John Pizarrelli.** **When it opened, it was the most expensive hotel ever built.**



Flower display inside the en:Bellagio (hotel and casino)

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In 2000, it became an MGM Mirage property when Mirage Resorts merged with MGM Grand Inc. to create MGM Mirage. In 2010 the company was renamed MGM Resorts International in a move to go worldwide with its brands. The Bellagio employs approximately 10,000 people. In the fall of 2006, the casino floor was remodeled and new

uniforms were issued, changing the original color scheme to a more elegant type.

On December 15, 2010, a helmet-wearing gunman robbed the casino of \$1.5 million in chips. In August 2011, he was convicted to a prison term of 9-27 years.

The Bellagio has won the prestigious AAA Five Diamond Award (the highest level of the AAA Diamond Ratings System for restaurants and lodgings) 11 times.

The Bellagio's main tower is currently undergoing a \$70 million upgrade. By December 2011, all of the main tower's 2,500 rooms will be remodeled.

Fountains of Bellagio:

The Fountains of Bellagio is a vast, choreographed water feature with performances set to light and music. The performances take place in front of the Bellagio hotel and are visible from numerous vantage points on the Strip, both from the street, and neighboring structures. The show takes place every 30 minutes in the afternoons and early evenings, and every 15 minutes from 8 p.m. to midnight. Before a water show starts, the nozzles break the water surface and the lights illuminating the hotel tower turn to a purple hue (usually), or red-white-and-blue for certain music. Shows may be cancelled without warning because of wind, although shows usually run with less power in face of wind. The fountain display is choreographed to various pieces of music, including songs by Andrea Bocelli, Frank Sinatra, and Gene Kelly.

The fountains are set in a 9-acre (3.6 ha) manmade lake. Contrary to urban myth, the lake is not filled with treated greywater from the hotel; the lake is actually serviced by a freshwater well that was drilled decades prior to irrigate a golf course that previously existed on the site; the fountains actually use less water than irrigating the golf course did. They incorporate a network of pipes with more than **1,200 nozzles** that make it possible to stage fountain displays coordinated with more than **4,500 lights**. It is estimated that the fountains cost \$40 million to build. The fountains were created by WET, a design firm specializing in inventive fountains and architectural water features.

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RC Regency, Tirana Albania





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Harrah's, Laughlin Nevada



Harrah's Laughlin is the second largest hotel and casino located in Laughlin, Nevada, USA. It has 1,561 rooms, including 115 suites, as well as a 55,000 sq ft (5,100 m²) casino. There are several restaurants, a poker room, keno, and a race and sports book.

History: Opened in 1988:

Harrah's Laughlin was the site of the River Run Riot, a fight between the Hells Angels and the Mongols during the annual Laughlin River Run. Three people were killed during the fighting.

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Hacienda, Las Vegas

Hacienda (resort) -

The Hacienda was a Paradise, Nevada hotel/casino that operated on the Las Vegas Strip from 1956 to 1996. It was one of four Hacienda properties owned by Standard Motels, Inc., with the other three being located in Fresno, Bakersfield, and Indio, California. The other Haciendas also featured the distinctive Horse and Rider sign. (The Las Vegas sign is now prominently displayed at the entrance to the Neon Museum. The fate of the other signs is unknown.)

Located by itself on the far south end of the Las Vegas Strip, it was the first resort seen by tourists driving up from California. Since it was so far from the other resorts at the time, many people who stayed at the Hacienda would not go elsewhere. The Hacienda was also located close to McCarran International Airport, and at one point they had their own airline, Hacienda Airlines, so they could fly in gamblers from all over the world. The Hacienda was known for their inexpensive, all-inclusive junkets marketed to American Midwestern retirees

History:

Hacienda owner "Doc" Bayley formed Hacienda Airlines in 1957. Offering packages that included transportation from Los Angeles to the Hacienda as well as a room and some casino chips; the airline included DC-3s, DC-4s and Lockheed Constellations numbering as many as 30 aircraft.

In the 1970s, Argent Corporation owned the casino.

In 1995, the Hacienda was purchased by Circus Circus Enterprises from Archon Corporation. By this time, it was dwarfed by the many new megaresorts that were being built, in particular the Luxor which had just been recently completed. On December 1, 1996, the Hacienda was closed to the public, and imploded later that month. This implosion was broadcast on the Fox Network as a part of their New Year's Eve 1996 telecast. Despite the implosion, parts of the old resort still stood, due to the building not falling into its footprint, but toppling into its parking lot. The next day a wrecking crew was brought in to bring down the remaining parts.

Lance Burton, magician, produced, directed and wrote his own show at the Hacienda beginning in 1991. The show ran for five years before Lance moved to the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino.

In March 1999, it was replaced by the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino.

The Hacienda name lives on in the Boulder City casino property, which is unaffiliated.

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