NEVADA
MAGAZINE

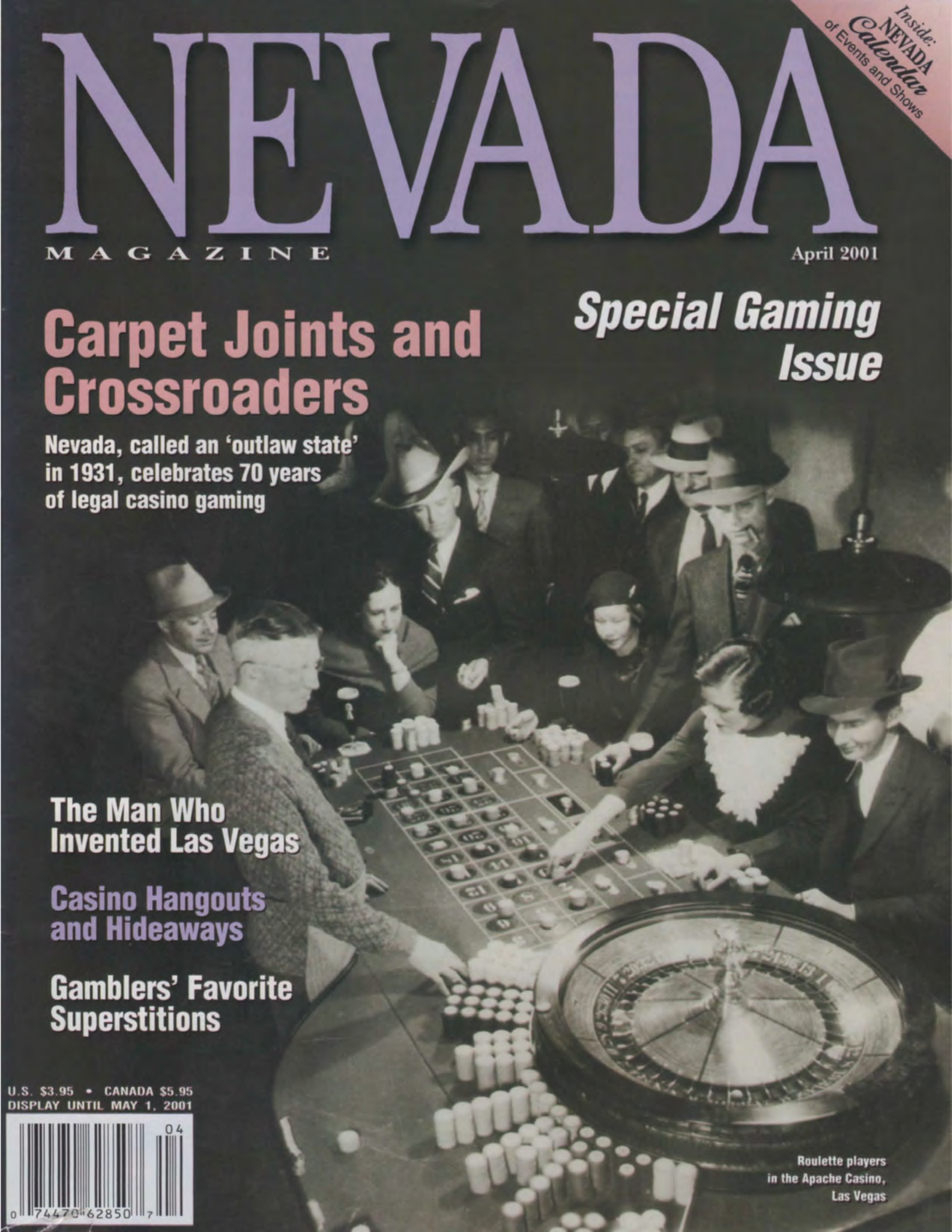
April 2001

Inside: NEVADA Calendar of Events and Shows

Special Gaming Issue

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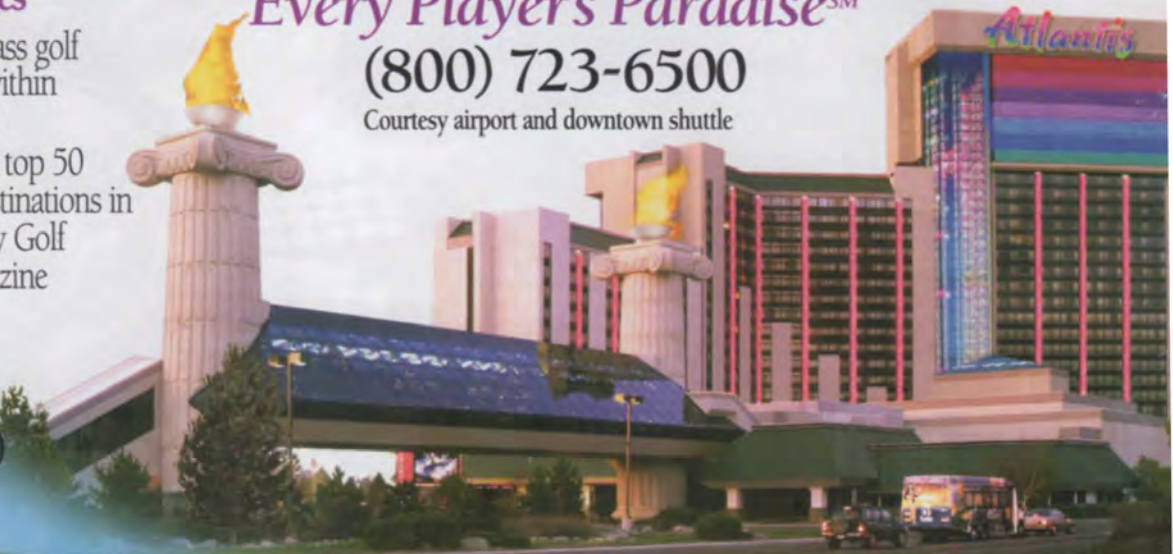
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NEVADA

MAGAZINE • VOL. 61 • NO. 2 • MARCH/APRIL 2001

Reno is a "frontier town, with the oldest of traditions and the newest of laws—a bright, colorful, and contradictory place." —New York journalist Quentin Reynolds, 1930s



On the Cover:
Gamblers play roulette at the Apache Casino in Las Vegas, circa 1930s.
Photo: L.F. Manis Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library

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Hanging With Mike

He has braved every sort of concert, from Marilyn Manson to Barbra Streisand. He has profiled every kind of entertainer, from Frank Sinatra to Cook E. Jarr. In this issue, which honors legal gaming's 70th anniversary in Nevada, **Mike Weatherford**, longtime entertainment reporter for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, presents a similar breadth of



Mike Weatherford during his hanging-out days.

experience. In the Calendar feature, "Shows That Don't Wait Until Dark," he reviews the afternoon revues in Las Vegas. Then Mike stayed out late to investigate an unusual offshoot of Nevada's new age of casinos—intriguing hangouts—in "Casino Hideaways."

Whether it's afternoon or evening, Mike's reviewer's pen stays sharp thanks to the vast variety of Las Vegas entertainment. He explains, "Las Vegas is at a crossroads—everyone's trying to figure out what to do next." Mike points to such unusual offerings as the "Blue Man Group" at the Luxor, which he adds has "been good for the Strip," and a recent full-blown Broadway version of "Cabaret" at the MGM Grand.

But the afternoon-show option has become a popular alternative. "Prices get so out of whack that afternoon shows are really the last bargain in Las Vegas," Mike says. Midday performers might not have the big budgets of the evening spectaculars, he adds, but they are a good option for showgoers who want a sampling of classic Las Vegas-style entertainment.

He adds that the city's entertainment options have expanded since he came to town 14 years ago from Kansas City, where he wrote concert reviews and worked for the neighborhood section of the *Kansas City Star*. Despite the fact that Southern Nevada has been a haven for gamblers since 1931, Mike notes in "Casino Hideaways" that the cool nightclubs, bars, and restaurants are a recent invention. Mike prowled the Las Vegas scene, while Sparks writer D. Brian Burghart covered hangouts in the Reno-Lake Tahoe area.

"I got married about the time Las Vegas started getting hip," admits Mike, who is married to *Nevada* contributor and former *R-J* features writer Joan Patterson. "When I first moved here, we hung out mostly at beer joints off the Strip. Now the young, single people on our newspaper's staff have a supermarket of places to go."

The 40-year-old writer says he discovered another form of nightlife when his daughter, Gillian, was born just over a year ago. "I've been doing much less hanging out in the last 13 months," he laughs.

Mike recently completed a book, *Cult Vegas*, which was just released by Huntington Press. *Cult Vegas* is a lighthearted retrospective on those facets of Las Vegas entertainment that have lingering cult interest, from Elvis and the Rat Pack to comedian Shecky Greene and stripper Lili St. Cyr. The book is meant to be a selective history, but Mike adds, "Anything about Las Vegas entertainment is pretty much limitless."—*Carolyn Graham*

Photo: Mark Antonuccio

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Letters

Backcountry snowriders, Eureka spirits, and a Picture Hunt critic.

Santa Rosas Snowrider

I enjoyed Charles Luce's fine article on "Backcountry Snowriders" in the last issue. I particularly enjoyed his reporting of the Santa Rosa Range, long one of my favorite Nevada mountain ranges. There are often great stretches of snow on the Santa Rosas late into May or even later. Some of the chutes are downright challenging. I often wondered why more people haven't found this "paradise," but I guess I am also thankful they haven't. Many years ago a group of us always camped on Granite in late June or early July, spending many hours riding "dishes" down slopes too steep to watch.

The author is correct in stating that Santa Rosa Peak is 9,701 feet in elevation. But he also implies that this is the highest peak in the range—not so fast! Granite Peak takes that honor at 9,732 feet, some 31 feet higher. However, noting that Mr. Luce resides in Hoboken, New Jersey, I'll let that one slide. I can imagine that after coming from Hoboken and skiing in the Santa Rosas, Mr. Luce was probably delirious at best!

Anthony L. Lesperance
Paradise Valley



Denise Tracy photographed this angel in Eureka's Catholic Cemetery.

Spirits of Eureka

Eureka may be a living ghost town with its old buildings and cemeteries, but it's also a town that carries memories and a legacy and attracts the artistic side of people. I have never seen such beautiful photos as those in "Spirits of Eureka" in the Jan/Feb issue. Photographer Denise Tracy became one with the town and was able to capture some magical moments. The angel statue in the cemetery was quite a haunting picture, and long after I finished reading *Nevada Magazine*, that picture lingered in my mind.

Paul Dale Roberts
Elk Grove, CA



Surprise in Calendar

We have long enjoyed the Nevada Historical Calendar. We make sure we have one by the beginning of each new year. But the calendar for 2001 turned out to be extra special. The January photo is of a group of 1899 University of Nevada students, and the caption includes the name of my aunt, Edna Bailey. I could not be sure it was my aunt, as I have no photograph to compare it with.

I called the University of Nevada, where a researcher found my aunt's name listed in the 1899 *Artemesia* yearbook, with her address listed as White. This definitely identified her because White was a ranch that for a time served as post office in the Eureka County area where my aunt was raised. Thanks so much for publishing such a great calendar.

Rachel Marshall
Eureka



A Bonanza of History

I have just received my first copy of your wonderful magazine. I especially enjoyed "In His Own Write," the article on Joe Goodman and the *Territorial Enterprise* by Lawrence I. Berkove. My love of Nevada history is one of the main reasons that I

Photo: Denise Tracy

decided to subscribe to *Nevada Magazine.*

I will be making my very first and long-awaited trip to Nevada in June 2002 to attend the Bonanza Friendship Convention held at Crystal Bay, and I have found the Nevada Calendar section useful in my long-term planning for the trip. Fans of the *Bonanza* television show from all over the world will be converging in Nevada for this convention on June 7-9, 2002. Some of the activities include a barbecue at the Ponderosa Ranch house in Incline Village, a buffet supper with guest speakers who had ties to the show, a trivia quiz, and a ride on the *M.S. Dixie II.* The convention Web site is www.bonanza-convention.com.

Marian Veneskey
State College, PA

Contest Didn't Click

The Nov/Dec story about the Great Nevada Picture Hunt winners just didn't click with me. A friend of mine who once mailed entries to the contest advised me not to mail my entries because the judges play favoritism and are biased. Didn't believe then but now I do.

The judges were way out of line awarding a winner's choice to a photo of an incongruous, dopey-looking clown. Is that an indigenous, native scene that one can see anywhere by anyone living within our state? No. Why not take a photo of a lobster enjoying the cool clear waters of the Truckee River, or a shot of several quahogs dozing in the pristine waters of Lake Tahoe? Unthinkable?

Well, after that blunder, judges, I will not renew my subscription. My friend was right after all.

Arthur J. Souza
Reno

Arthur, apparently you're referring to the photo "Burning Man Fashion Show," which Reno photographer Pete Slingland took at the Burning Man Festival in 1999. The photograph earned Pete third place in the 2000 Great Nevada Picture Hunt.—Ed.

The Route to Sparks Park

Last year, the City of Sparks celebrated the grand opening of the Sparks Marina Park. The city is extremely proud of the effort that has been invested in this project. The results are obvious. The Sparks Marina Park truly reflects the quality of life one has come to expect in Sparks.

The City of Sparks would like to thank you for including a brief article about the Sparks Marina Park in the Sept/Oct issue. However, we would like to request a minor correction. The story recommended that visitors take Interstate 80 and exit at Sparks Boulevard. Access from Sparks Boulevard to the Marina Park is not possible at this time. Instead, we suggest taking Interstate 80 to the McCarran exit. Go north to Lincoln Way and proceed east on Lincoln Way. For more information call Sparks Parks and Rec, 775-353-2376.

Bill Isaeff
Special Assistant to the City Manager
Sparks

Nevada Traveler

I just received my Nov/Dec issue of *Nevada Magazine.* I now have a favorite magazine to go along with my favorite state. I am a lifelong (47 years) Michigander but travel the great state of Nevada a couple of times a year. I have traveled from Wendover to Lake Tahoe and from Laughlin to McDermitt and everywhere in between. I never tire of the beautiful scenery and sights.

Paul Merucci
Farmington, MI

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NEVADA MAGAZINE *Presents*

Best of Nevada

2001 Official Ballot

4th Annual *Nevada Magazine* Readers' Poll

Cast Your Ballot!

Attached to this page is your 2001 *Nevada Magazine* "Best of Nevada" ballot. We want to know what you think are Nevada's best places and attractions—so please fill out the form and mail to Ballot Headquarters before **April 6, 2001.** The results will appear in the July/August issue.



Roadside Attractions

The Krispy Kreme craze, chopper tours, and a holey car.

Chopper Views

RENO—Visitors can take a helicopter sightseeing tour for views of the Biggest Little City, the Sierra, Lake Tahoe, and Washoe Valley. **Reno Tahoe Sky Tours**, presented by Skydance Helicopters, offers flights for up to four passengers, departing daily from the rooftop of Circus Circus in downtown Reno.

On a 12-minute tour of Reno at sunset, passengers fly above the city as it begins to sparkle. The helicopter offers 360-degree views as the sun drops behind the Sierra. The 20-minute tour of Old Nevada flies over Virginia City and the Dayton Valley. The aerial view of the historic mining towns often includes glimpses of herds of wild horses. On the 25-minute Lake of the Sky tour, you sweep across Washoe Valley and over the Sierra for a glimpse of Tahoe's north shore. The Jackpot tour combines all the destinations into one 45-minute flight.

During the narrated tours, the pilot points out landmarks and relates historical tidbits including stories of the Comstock Lode of Virginia City. Skydance pilot Nick Lopes has had local historians fly with him on tours to point out landmarks and explain the history of the Reno-Tahoe area.

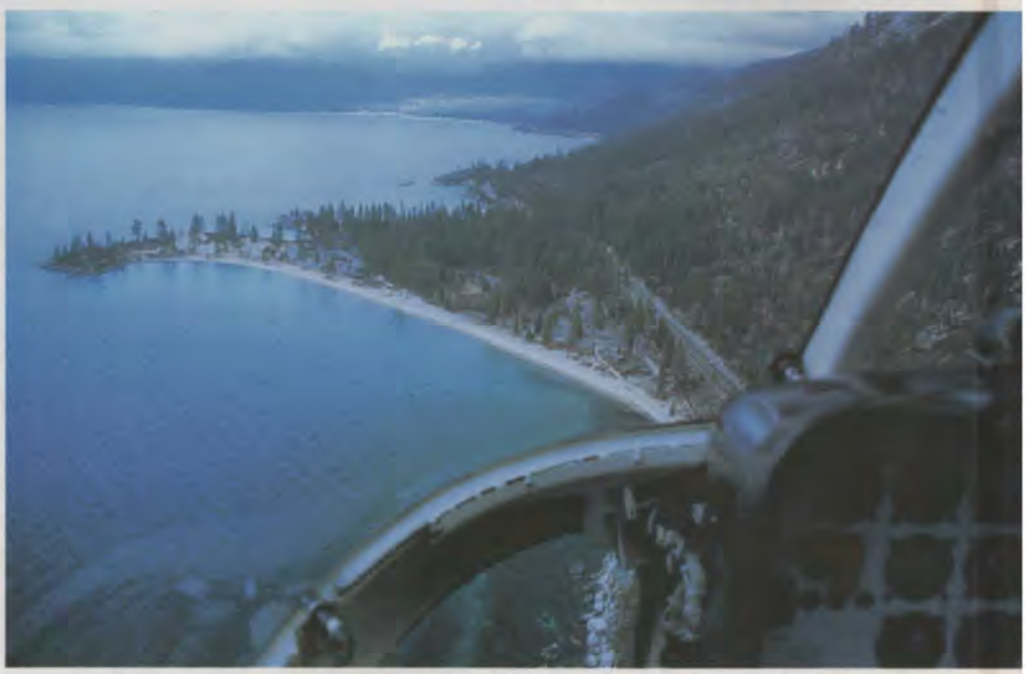
"The best part of being a pilot is getting a chance to introduce people to the thrill of riding in a helicopter," says Lopes. "I like to pass on some history along with the great views."

Lopes' custom tours have included taking a young couple up to Mount Rose so the man could propose to his girlfriend as a surprise. Lopes landed the helicopter in a clearing and waited while the couple hiked to an overlook with views of Washoe Valley. "She said, 'Yes!'" laughs Lopes.

Passengers who want to fly to remote mountain areas can book a picnic flight, land in an alpine meadow, enjoy a gourmet basket of food and wine, and fly back to Reno. Other custom tours offer heli-golf packages and weddings over Lake Tahoe or Reno.

Reno Tahoe Sky Tours operates year-round, weather permitting. Reservations are recommended. Tours cost $40 for the Biggest Little City, $78 for the Mother Lode, $90 for Lake of the Sky, and $160 for the Jackpot. Custom tours are available. Call 775-323-2359 or 877-9-SKY-TOURS. The ticket counter at Circus Circus is located on the mezzanine level.

—Shannon Montana



Reno Tahoe Sky Tours offers a whirlybird's-eye view of Tahoe's north shore (above) and other sights.



A Bit 'o Blarney

RENO—If you're looking for a bit of the green for St. Patrick's Day, one of the best places to spend the day is **Fitzgeralds Casino** in downtown Reno.

Throughout the year Fitzgeralds holds its Irish connections in high regard and has incorporated an authentic Irish theme. Portions of the Blarney castle have been used in the casino's interior as a permanent tribute to Ireland. During renovations of the castle, parts of the rock walls had to be widened, and Fitzgeralds received some of the castle's stone. Visitors touring Fitzgeralds' welcome center, also known as the Lucky Forest, can rub a real Blarney stone for good luck. The stone, part of the lucky fountain, is one of several good-luck charms inside the Lucky Forest. Others include a pot of gold, an Aladdin's lamp, and a smiling Buddha.

During the casino's St. Patrick's Day festivities, visitors can join an Irish *ceilieh* (pronounced "kaylee"), the Gaelic word for a grand celebration. Irish performers play everything from Irish rock to traditional music. Corned beef and cabbage and lots of green beer are served. "Last year we went through 75 kegs of the green stuff," says Kevin Crotchfelt, Fitzgeralds marketing manager.

This year's ceilieh is March 16-18. For the occasion, all 1,900 bulbs in the Reno Arch next to the casino are changed to green. Headlining the event, direct from Ireland, is the rock band Shanks Mare. A traditional military brass band and bag

Photo: Shannon Montana, Illustration: April Pedersen



Dough nuts can gaze at the glaze waterfall that is part of the Krispy Kreme assembly line at the Excalibur.

pipe performances are scheduled for the opening ceremony on Friday and again on Saturday.

Visitors also can explore the casino's Irish-themed eateries, including Limericks Steak House and Lord Fitzgerald's Buffet, both of which incorporate Gaelic architectural details. At Limericks artist D.J. Mac has created murals that feature views from the terraces of the Blarney castle overlooking the Shannon River. For more information call the hotel at 800-535-LUCK or 775-785-3300 or log onto the Web site at www.Fitzgeralds.com.

Shannon Montana

Kreme of the Crop

LAS VEGAS—Loosen the belt a notch and bring your sweet tooth: **Krispy Kreme Doughnuts** has invaded Las Vegas.

Many doughnut devotees consider Krispy Kreme to be the cream of the pastry crop, and Las Vegas now has four "hot shops" where the pastries are made. A bright-red neon "Hot Doughnuts Now" sign illuminates when the doughnuts are hot and fresh, signaling a rush of customers.

A popular Krispy Kreme hot shop is located inside the Excalibur. While waiting in line, you can watch the special-recipe dough plop onto trays, where it rises (Krispy Kremes are born in the shape of a doughnut—there are no holes) before landing on a conveyor belt filled with hot grease. Once they're perfectly browned, the doughnuts bob through a glaze waterfall and are packaged while still warm. Customers include showroom celebrities, like Carrot Top, who have left autographed Krispy Kreme hats.

The Krispy Kreme craze originated in North Carolina in the early 1930s, when entrepreneur Vernon Rudolph bought a doughnut shop and the secret doughnut recipe from a French chef from New Orleans. A hot commodity in the South, Krispy Kremes found favor with such high-profile fans as Elvis Presley, who always kept a box of the fresh raspberry jelly-filled at arm's reach.

Today's Krispy Kreme visitors should note these tips: First, buy more than you think you can eat, because you will eat them and won't want to stand in line again. Second, the "Krispy Kreme Original Glazed" are the best. The chocolate, cream-filled, and other varieties are good, but the glazed are what set Krispy Kreme apart from the average Dunkin' Donut. Third, eat them while they're warm—watch for the "Hot Doughnuts Now" sign to light up and then jump in line.

Krispy Kreme at the Excalibur (702-736-1306) is open 24 hours; "hot light hours" are 6:30 to 11 a.m. and 6:30 to 11 p.m. Other hot shops are located at 7015 West Spring Mountain Road (702-222-2320), 9791 South Eastern Avenue (702-617-9160), and 1331 West Craig Road (702-657-9575). You will find satellite shops at Texas Station, Palace Station, and Sunset Station.—*Carolyn Graham*

RVers Revved

STATEWIDE—The Extraterrestrial Highway, the Loneliest Road in America, and various Nevada scenic areas, campgrounds, and roadways are calling—it's time for RVers to gas up and hit the open road. In case you need a little extra incentive, the Nevada Commission on Tourism is offering a sweepstakes, the **Nevada RV Adventure**, with a chance to win a new Winnebago Adventurer.

RVers can enter the sweepstakes by visiting one of 74 participating RV parks, from the Double Dice RV Park in Elko to the Rio Rancho RV Park in Beatty, as well as state parks. Either drop an entry form in the official entry box at the park or mail the form to the Nevada RV Adventure, Box 8118, Calabasas, CA 91372-8118. You also can enter by mailing your name, address, zip code, age, and day and evening telephone numbers on a 3"x5" card. Participants can enter only once in each of Nevada's five territories: Reno-Tahoe, Cowboy Country, Pony Express, Pioneer, and Las Vegas (or a maximum of five 3"x5" cards).



While cruising the Silver State, RVers can enter the Nevada RV Adventure to win a Winnebago.

So get on the road: The contest ends August 31. Other prizes include five $500 gift certificates at Camping World. For more information contact the Nevada Commission on Tourism, 800-NEVADA-8, or log on to NCOT's Web site, www.travelnevada.com, which includes a statewide guide to RV parks.

The Art of Shopping

LAS VEGAS—Shoppers can find everything French among the surprisingly diverse and attractive shops at **Paris Las Vegas**. Visitors can stroll the cobblestone street resembling a quaint Parisian neighborhood where artsy boutiques are filled with French imports, from Cartier jewelry and Givenchy fashions to impressionist art and fine wine.

Art fans will find a couple of Paris shops to soak up the French art scene. At L Art de Paris, located beneath the stained-glass dome on the promenade between Paris and Bally's, you'll find replicas of famous French artwork. If you can't afford an original, you can purchase the *gicles-es*, a type of reproduction that captures brush

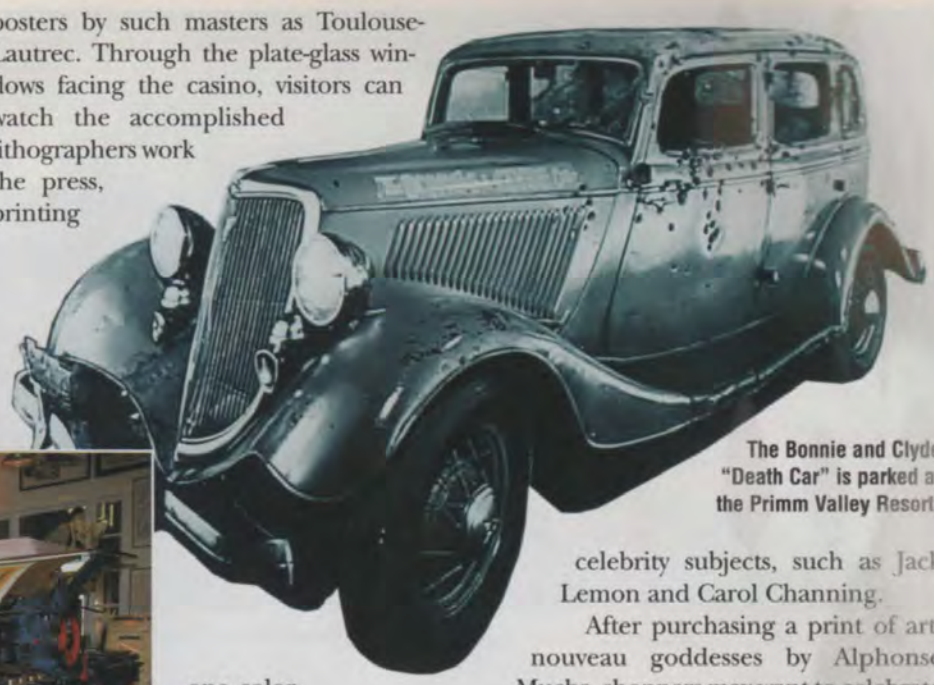
Photo: Chris Leedham (top)

strokes and textures. Overseeing the shop is a life-sized figure of Claude Monet, shown painting a Paris scene. You'll also find coffee mugs, writing paper, mouse pads, and other items emblazoned with French art.

Another unusual place to purchase art reproductions is Rè Society Galerie/Atelier of Paris, tucked into the casino at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. What makes this gallery unique is the eight-ton Marinoni Voirin press—the same type used by French studios to reproduce posters by such masters as Toulouse-Lautrec. Through the plate-glass windows facing the casino, visitors can watch the accomplished lithographers work the press, printing one color at a time, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Most of the posters begin at $400 and range from movie themes such as King Kong and other classics to Al Hirschfield prints signed by the celebrity subjects, such as Jack Lemon and Carol Channing.



Visitors can watch lithographers create authentic French-art posters on the printing press at the Rè Society Galerie/Atelier at Paris Las Vegas.



The Bonnie and Clyde "Death Car" is parked at the Primm Valley Resort.

After purchasing a print of art-nouveau goddesses by Alphonse Mucha, shoppers may want to celebrate with a fine wine. La Cave is a tiny wine and cheese shop near the buffet that offers premium French labels and wine tastings. You'll find everything from merlot to champagne, which you can pair with a block of imported French cheese. Bread peddlers, who ride through the boulevard on three-wheeled bicycles, sell loaves of fresh French bread from their baskets. Pastries and chocolates are available at Lenôtre.

Visitors hoping to decorate their home in a French country motif can peruse Les Elementes for such items as dishes and candles with a Parisian flair. Naturally, you'll find French fashions—the shops carry lingerie, Parisian clothing designers, and other items. Les Enfants features French toys, including Madeline dolls and the piece de resistance—a stuffed French poodle named Gigi.—*Carolyn Graham*

Fateful Ford

PRIMM—It's an unusual piece of Americana, a symbol of turbulent times and a doomed romance. The **Bonnie and Clyde "Death Car,"** as it's billed, is parked inside the Primm Valley Resort just steps from the Fashion Outlet of Las Vegas.

Visitors can gaze at the bullet-riddled 1934 Ford V-8 sedan, its windows smashed and seats ripped, and almost feel the ghostly presence of the criminal couple, who met their demise inside the car during a 1934 ambush by Louisiana police officers and FBI agents. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow had evaded police for several months following a number of bank robberies and more than a dozen murders throughout Texas, Oklahoma, New

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Photo: Chris Leedham (left)

Mexico, and Missouri. The Primm Valley display features a dateline of the couple's crime spree as well as a letter written by Clyde to Henry Ford showing his appreciation for the speed of his chosen getaway cars.

Near the fateful Ford, visitors also can see the tattered shirt that Clyde wore when he was shot to death. Blood stains and bullet holes cover the blue Western shirt, which was purchased at auction for $75,000.

Another relic of the gangster era on display nearby is a 1931 Classic Armored Lincoln built for Dutch Schultz, a notorious New York bootlegger.

The free displays are open 24 hours at the hotel in Primm, 43 miles south of Las Vegas on Interstate 15. Call 800-FUN-STOP for more information.

—*Carolyn Graham*



The Casino Legends Hall of Fame at the Tropicana houses an assortment of Las Vegas memorabilia.

A Legendary Collection

LAS VEGAS—The **Casino Legends Hall of Fame** inside the Tropicana Hotel showcases several decades of Las Vegas history, recalling the old casinos, entertainers, and memorabilia.

Museum curator Steve Cutler, who collects Las Vegas memorabilia, presents an excellent exhibit reflecting the city's past. In addition, the museum features a hall of fame honoring such influential figures as Benny Binion, Howard Hughes, Liberace, Siegfried and Roy, and Robert Goulet.

Five video presentations run continuously. The first honors Las Vegas movies such as *Ocean's 11*, *Viva Las Vegas*, and *Vegas Vacation*. The second describes various casino fires and implosions. The third features video clips of Sammy Davis Jr., Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and other entertainers, and the fourth provides a retrospective on showgirls. The fifth explores the mob's influence.

You'll find historical photos, celebrity photos, and casino chips, including some that had been buried in cement and were found following the implosion of the Dunes Hotel. You can peruse the old contracts between hotels and entertainers such as Jane Mansfield. There are costumes worn by Kenny Rogers, Liberace, Elvis, and showgirls.

The Casino Legends Hall of Fame at the Tropicana Hotel is open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Admission is $4 for adults and $3 for seniors. Call 702-739-2222 or log onto www.tropicanalv.com for more information.—*Elizabeth Nielsen*

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The Man Who Invented Las Vegas



Billy Wilkerson imagined the Flamingo as an upscale getaway.

Billy Wilkerson dreamed of building a lavish, European-style resort, the Flamingo, in postwar Las Vegas. Then Bugsy Siegel became his partner. From the book by W.R. Wilkerson III

The opening of the Flamingo Hotel in December 1946 should have been a time of triumph for Billy Wilkerson. The previous year Wilkerson, the influential publisher of The Hollywood Reporter, *nightclub owner, and compulsive gambler, had decided it would be better to operate his own Las Vegas casino than to continue losing at the town's tables. He made grand plans. He purchased 33 acres of desert on the Los Angeles Highway—the future Las Vegas Strip—nearly five miles south of the downtown casinos. Wilkerson, a world traveler who often vacationed in Paris, hired top designers to create a stylish European resort. It would have a spa, health club, golf course, sophisticated restaurant, showroom, and nightclub to lure a well-heeled clientele. The hotel would have 250 rooms, more than twice as many as either of its neighbors up the highway, El Rancho Vegas and the Last Frontier. Wilkerson, who was partial to bird names for his projects, named the hotel for the flamingos he'd seen on a trip to Florida.*

In his book The Man Who Invented Las Vegas *(Ciro's Books, Los Angeles, 2000), Wilkerson's son, W.R. Wilkerson III, traces the evolution of his father's dream and the events that led to his loss of the hotel that helped establish the Las Vegas Strip. The author relates how Wilkerson enlisted the operators of the downtown El Cortez, Moe Sedway and Gus Greenbaum, both connected to mob boss Meyer Lansky, to run the Flamingo's casino games. When Wilkerson ran out of money, Sedway and Greenbaum came up with the funds to continue construction. There was a catch, however. Wilkerson would have to take a partner to oversee their investment.*

The partner was Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel. At first the two men were friendly, but the mercurial mobster eventually turned on Wilkerson, ordering him to sign over his interest in the Flamingo. During a meeting with their lawyers Siegel revealed he had oversold shares in the resort, leaving his mob associates extremely unhappy. Siegel threatened to kill Wilkerson if he failed to cooperate. Thus, in this excerpt, Billy Wilkerson anticipated the hotel's opening as a part owner, proud but shaken, far from Nevada.



Hello, partner: Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel.

Photo: Wilkerson Archives (top)



The Flamingo wasn't the first low-rise resort to open on the Strip, but under Wilkerson's direction it was the first to boldly depart from a Western theme.

The dream project had become Wilkerson's worst nightmare. Instead of waiting for Siegel to act on his gruesome threat, he decided instead to avoid the gangster. All future communications between himself and Siegel were conducted through their respective attorneys and emissaries.

Wilkerson took further steps to secure his safety by catching the first flight to New York, where he boarded an ocean liner, the *Ile de France*, bound for France. From the French port of Le Havre he made his way by car to Paris, where he booked into the plush Hotel George V under a pseudonym. His whereabouts were kept secret from all but a few.

He phoned his attorney, Greg Bautzer, as soon as he reached Paris, and Bautzer relayed the details of the meeting with Cliff Jones [a Siegel legal advisor]. Wilkerson was not pleased.

"He was reticent about selling," Bautzer remembered. "He said, 'Forty-eight percent of this deal is rightfully mine. Why the hell should I sell?'"

Wilkerson's plan was simple: He would wait in Paris until things cooled down. He predicted, as he had for months, that once Siegel's partners learned about his lavish spending and excesses, it would only be a matter of time before they fired the incompetent gangster. There would then be a change of management under which Wilkerson would retain his interest and would once again be reinstated as creative director. He would then complete his hotel without interference.

In an attempt to accelerate this process, Wilkerson ran ads in *The Hollywood Reporter* publicizing the hotel's true cost. These lavish full-page ads boasted that the Flamingo had cost more than $5 million. If the syndicate's members had not already known how much the Flamingo had cost them, they certainly knew now. It was a dangerous ploy.

At the Flamingo's opening, Vegas residents sporting cowboy hats were insulted when asked to remove them.

Wilkerson spent a chilly Christmas in Paris. When the Flamingo opened in Las Vegas, he sat alone in his hotel room eating a quiet dinner and reading the newspapers.

A few days later he learned by phone that his dire predictions regarding the opening had in fact, been overly optimistic. To begin with, Siegel had managed to generate considerable confusion regarding the opening date itself. Acting on a whim, the gangster had suddenly decided that a weekend would be more likely to entice the much-needed celebrities away from home. Invitations were subsequently sent out for Saturday, December 28. Then the indecisive gangster changed his mind yet again. Invitees were hurriedly notified by phone that the opening had been changed back to its original date, the 26th.

While locals jammed the opening, the masses of celebrities Siegel had been counting on never materialized. After Wilkerson's departure Ben had tried rallying stars on his own, but few Hollywood celebrities would deal directly with the erratic gangster.

To transport the anticipated star-studded guest roster from Hollywood to the opening, the publisher had chartered two TWA Constellations from his friend Howard Hughes. If enough celebrities had

Photo: Wilkerson Archives





Wilkerson shares a laugh at his Club Trocadero with Cary Grant (top). The publisher mingled with movie stars and moguls at his Los Angeles nightclubs. Above, the Flamingo after its two grand openings.

changed their minds at the last minute, these planes could have been filled. In the end it didn't matter—bad weather plagued Los Angeles on the evening of the 26th, grounding all flights.

A handful of celebrities did motor in from Los Angeles despite the appalling weather. Some of the celebrities present were June Haver, Vivian Blaine, George Raft, Sonny Tufts, Brian Donlevy, and Charles Coburn. They were welcomed by a cacophony of construction noise and a lobby draped with decorators' drop cloths. The desert's first air-conditioning system collapsed at regular intervals, leaving guests cursing the heat. While visitors did find gambling tables in operation at the Flamingo, the luxury rooms that would have served as the lure for them to stay and gamble longer were not ready. Guests were housed at hotels in town.

Luckily, Wilkerson had arranged the opening night's entertainment months earlier. On stage, things went smoothly. The opening show consisted of Jimmy Durante, George Jessel as master of ceremonies, Xavier Cugat and his band, Rosemarie, Tommy Wonder and the Tunetoppers. All were top stars in their day.

Off stage, it was an entirely different situation. Desperately short of time, Siegel had decided to rely on the kitchen staff, chefs, waiters, and bartenders Wilkerson had recruited in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, these new recruits had yet to complete their training. They were thrown into an unfamiliar, unfinished building, prompting numerous complaints about poor service.

Wilkerson's idea of formal attire for the opening was abandoned at the last minute. As a result, the gala event was awash with curious locals who stared in amazement at croupiers and dealers in white tie and tails. Nevada residents sporting cowboy hats were insulted when they were asked to remove them. Wilkerson had always insisted on an all-male staff in the dining room. Siegel retained Wilkerson's idea without realizing that most of the locals were used to being waited on by friendly, chatty waitresses, not formal waiters and aloof captains.

A few days before this fiasco, Siegel's underlings had finally summoned up the courage to tell their boss that all the matchbooks cited Wilkerson as manager. In Las Vegas, "managers" were also the proprietors and owners. Thousands of these books had been printed. In a rage, Siegel ordered everything with Wilkerson's name on it destroyed. Because there wasn't enough time to reprint the matchbooks, some brave soul suggested a number be saved for the opening. Siegel hired a squad of women with black grease pencils to strike out the publisher's name wherever it appeared.

The gangster had also been overly optimistic about the revenues the Flamingo would bring in on opening night. As Wilkerson had predicted, a major reason why the casino lost money when it opened was because there were no hotel rooms available to keep guests gambling after hours. Gamblers and guests alike took their winnings elsewhere. After two weeks of operation the Flamingo's plush gaming tables were $275,000 in the red. Siegel couldn't understand what was happening. In desperation, he speculated that the local desert folk were more cunning than his newly-trained dealers.

His financial windfall having failed to materialize, Siegel shut the entire operation down in late January 1947. By now he blamed everything on Wilkerson.

Remaining in Paris, Wilkerson finally concluded in February 1947 that the Flamingo would never be his. He agreed to a sell-out price of $2 million. Siegel's group countered with a $300,000 offer, but Wilkerson balked.

Photos: Wilkerson Archives (top), Las Vegas News Bureau (bottom)



Wilkerson chats with Siegel while the gangster gets a shave from Hollywood barber Harry Drucker.

Concerned for Wilkerson's safety, Bautzer asked his client to consider dropping the amount to $1,000,000. After much cajoling he was successful. When Bautzer relayed the new amount, Siegel's camp countered with a final "take it and get out" offer of $600,000. Wilkerson, reasoning that the dollar amount was insignificant compared to the value of his life, accepted this deal.

Since both Bautzer and Wilkerson refused to meet with the gangster in person, the task of extracting payment from Siegel fell to Wilkerson's business partner, Tom Seward. Seward was dispatched to Las Vegas in late February by Wilkerson and Bautzer on what turned out to be an exercise in futility.

In Las Vegas, Siegel appealed to his partners for more time to make the hotel profitable, but the syndicate was impatient.

Siegel was in the process of reopening the hotel. The opening was scheduled for March 1, Wilkerson's original date. He was so determined to get it right this time, he had arranged a dress rehearsal. At the rehearsal, Seward sat next to Siegel in a booth that also held Meyer Lansky. Siegel was clearly annoyed by Seward's presence. Seward was a blatant reminder of the publisher. The fact that he was there to collect money Siegel rightfully felt belonged to him only infuriated the gangster further.

Siegel turned to Seward, made a symbolic revolver out of his hand, and pointed the barrel at Seward's head. Seward recalled feeling the pressure of the gangster's fingers against his skull.

"If your partner were here right now I'd blow his *#@* brains out," Siegel said.

"It was just terrifying," remembered Seward.

Just at that moment, the gangster was interrupted by a phone call. Once Siegel was out of sight, Seward made his excuses and hurried back to Hollywood. Empty-handed, he told Bautzer in no uncertain terms he wanted nothing further to do with the gangster.

After the Flamingo's second opening in March, Siegel agreed to pay Wilkerson in two installments in May and August. Wilkerson returned to Southern California but again fled to Paris after an anonymous caller warned him of a contract on his life. Walter Winchell broadcast the news of the threat against Wilkerson. Called in by the authorities, Siegel denied making any threats against the publisher. However, the mobster soon had trouble on another front.

In Las Vegas, Siegel appealed to his partners for more time to make the hotel profitable. But, having already invested considerable sums, the syndicate members were impatient to see a return. In May, however, Siegel surprised them. The Flamingo was at last making a profit. But it was too little, too late.

The gangster's failure to show any significant gains confirmed doubts about his ability to manage the enterprise. In mid-May an impatient syndicate angrily tabulated Siegel's errors. The image of the man they had trusted to mastermind their most important project had radically altered.

By late May, Wilkerson was thinking of returning home for good when his general manager called him with a mysterious warning. George Kennedy relayed the contents of an anonymous phone call he had received advising him to tell his employer to remain in Paris until "it was all over." Without identifying himself, the caller had hung up abruptly after delivering the message.

"The caller identified me by name," recalled Kennedy, suggesting that the man knew both him and his employer.

In light of the call in early April that had driven him back into hiding, Wilkerson had an uneasy feeling about this message. He decided to act on the warning and delayed his departure from Paris. Fearing transatlantic reprisals, Bautzer cautioned his client to remain in his hotel room as much as possible.

Nearly two months later, on the morning of Saturday, June 21, Wilkerson bought his newspaper, sat down at a sidewalk café, and ordered a Coke. When he unfolded the paper, he saw the article and immediately returned to his hotel.

Waiting for him was a cable from his general manager in Hollywood. Kennedy's cable confirmed the newspaper story. On the evening of June 20, as Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel sat reading a newspaper in longtime girlfriend Virginia Hill's rented Beverly Hills house, an assassin had riddled the gangster's body with bullets from a .30-30 military carbine. Hill was conveniently away in Paris at the time.

Minutes after the shooting, Moe Sedway and Gus Greenbaum took possession of the Flamingo. No one questioned or disputed their authority.

Wilkerson packed his bags and returned to Los Angeles on June 23, 1947. When Kennedy met him at the airport, Wilkerson greeted his general manager in characteristic fashion.

"What the *#@* did you waste company money on a cable for? It made every *#@* paper!"

W.R. "Willy" Wilkerson III is a writer and publisher based in Los Angeles. The preceding is an excerpt from his book The Man Who Invented Las Vegas, *which tells the story of his father, Billy Wilkerson, and the trend-setting Flamingo Hotel that he launched and lost.* The Man Who Invented Las Vegas *(176 pages, $17.00, paper, ISBN 0-9676643-0-6) was published last year by Ciro's Books, 6206 Orange St., Los Angeles, CA 90048 (323-939-9760, cirosbooks@yahoo.com), and is available from bookstores and the publisher.*

Photo: Wilkerson Archives

Just One Thing



If you needed to remember one important thing about each casino game, what would it be? Here's a sampling of single-minded strategies.

By Deke Castleman

After more than 10 years in the gambling-publishing business, I've learned a great deal about casino games, old and new. But I still admire my late Aunt Sadie's gambling system. She used to accompany Joe, her high-rolling, crap-shooting second husband, on junkets to Las Vegas, where she had great fun gambling even though she knew only one thing about one game, keno. She played only three-spot tickets and employed the same numbers every time—12, 17, and 20. "Those are my birthday numbers," she confided to me after returning from a successful trip, although she wouldn't tell me which number was the year. "I always play my birthday."

You can spend years studying to be an expert in baccarat, blackjack, craps, keno, slots, sports betting, and video poker. But Aunt Sadie taught me that often it's equally fun, and sometimes as profitable, to focus on just one aspect of the gambling challenge in front of you. So if you can remember only one thing about each game, here are some suggestions.

Baccarat: A Rich Game

The only thing you have to know about baccarat, a simple game of guessing whether the player or banker hand will come closest to 9, is to have a lot of money in your pocket when you step into the private pit to play. Traditionally, baccarat's betting minimums are rich for every type of blood but blue.

Even if you don't want to risk your hard-earned money on a guessing game, you can still partake of baccarat's glamour and exclusivity. Max Rubin, ex-pit boss, high-stakes player, and expert comp hustler, suggests that you don't even have to play to enjoy the pleasures of the baccarat pit. He says, "Sit down in one of the thousand-dollar chairs and regally inspect the surroundings, pretending that you're worthy of hanging out with the baccarat ilk. When a cocktail waitress comes by, order a double of her best cognac."

If you want to play baccarat while avoiding the high minimums, you can always sit down at a mini-baccarat table in the main pit, but what's the point? It defeats the whole purpose of hobnobbing with the nabobs and being treated like royalty just for displaying some attitude.

Blackjack: Memory Bank

The key thing to know about blackjack is that it is the only casino game that has a memory. This means that cards removed from play can be remembered, and cards yet to be played can be determined. Card counting is a highly demanding discipline that can take years to perfect.

Photo: Richard Cummins

If you don't have years, you can reduce the average house advantage to nearly a break-even game by learning a set of decisions for optimum play based on a player's hand versus the dealer's up card. This basic strategy consists of 35 possible blackjack hands and 10 possible dealer up cards for a total of 350 decisions. It usually takes a few days to memorize completely and another few days of practice to implement automatically.

If you don't want to be bothered by such an extensive analysis of the game of blackjack, you can learn the abbreviated basic strategy in about five minutes. It consists of six simple rules:

1) When your hand totals 12-16 and the dealer shows 2-6, stand.

2) When your hand totals 12-16 and the dealer shows 7-10 or ace, hit.

3) When your hand totals 17-20, stand.

4) When your hand totals 10 or 11 and the dealer shows 2-9, double down.

5) When you hold a pair of eights or aces, split.

6) Never buy insurance.

Craps: Say It Right

The one thing to know about craps, surprisingly, isn't about gambling. It's about grammar.

The word "craps" is a noun. You're playing the game of craps. You're shooting craps. You're losing between .5 percent and 17 percent of every wager to the house



Craps: "The one thing to know about craps, surprisingly, is grammar."

edge at craps. No betting scheme, no money-management system, no dice dance, no voodoo can alter the immutable mathematical admission fee that accompanies every bet at … craps.

The word "crap," on the other hand, is an adjective. You play at a crap table, in a crap pit. You're a crap shooter. The dice crew is made up of crap dealers.

You don't say, "Let's go shoot some crap." You also don't say, "Let's go find a craps table."

If you do, you're full of crap.

Keno: By the Numbers

Keno is one of the worst casino games for losing money. The average house advantage is roughly 20 percent, and that's all you need to know. Keno is a slow-paced, bad-odds, sucker's game for first-timers, drinkers, long-shot artists, and the walking wounded. Still, the keno lounge is a great place to sit, drink, and kill time as you wait a few minutes to see what happened to your wager, which should never be more than a dollar. It's also a good way to stay in the action when you're sitting in a bar or restaurant.

And it's the game of choice for teaching your kids about gambling at a bona-fide adult game. As long as you hand the keno runner the money, no one seems to care who picks the numbers.

Sports Betting: Mate in Heaven

Sports betting is one of the greatest entertainment values anywhere. Why? Because for the cost of a $10 bet you've earned two or three hours' worth of action riding on a sporting contest. You can sit at home on your living-room couch or, better yet, in the casino sports book, where hundreds of other fans are rooting for the same thing: their money.

Don't believe it? Try this experiment. Say your wife or husband is complaining that all you do is sit at home and watch ballgames on television. If you can talk your mate into going partners on a $10 or $20 bet, she or he will probably sit there with you and scream like a maniac through the whole game.

Slots: Join the Club

The one inviolable rule of playing slots has little to do with the game itself and everything to do with a little plastic card that the casino gives you for free. The rule is: Never stick as much as a plug nickel into a slot machine without putting your slot-club card in the machine as well.

Jean Scott, the famous low-rolling author, says, "Playing any slot machine in a casino without using a slot-club card is like going up to your hotel room after each gambling session and throwing fistfuls of dollars out the window."



Video Poker: "Like blackjack, video poker is a game of skill."

The list of slot-club benefits is long, and their value is strong. Slot clubs give you comps good for discounted or free rooms, food, entertainment, transportation, frequent-flyer miles, and even cash rebates. You often get offers in the mail for special promotions, private parties, and invitation-only slot tournaments.

Video Poker: The Program

Like blackjack, video poker is a game of skill. It takes time and effort to learn how to play and recognize the best payouts. You have to be able to withstand the swings of fortune, which can cost you a fortune while you're waiting for a jackpot.

The one thing to remember about video poker is that the easiest way to learn how to play is to use a computer program at home. You play the video-poker programs just as you would a video-poker machine, only they tell you when you make mistakes and show the proper play for each hand. You can also program them for auto-play mode, where you just sit and watch the computer play the game perfectly. If that's not a case where the computer is programming you, I don't know what is, but it's still one good thing to remember when you play the game.

Deke Castleman is senior editor of the Las Vegas Advisor.

Photo: Ellen Skye (right)

Casino Hideaways

From an old Sinatra haunt to a Klingon gathering place, Silver State casinos offer a variety of places to hang out.



Cutthroat's Saloon (above) inside the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe in Incline Village offers a woodsy, Western atmosphere. The V Bar (below) at the Venetian attracts a youthful clientele with its upscale, muted ambiance. The V-Bar's designers have evoked a classic Las Vegas style.

So you're looking for a haven in the casino, a place away from the slots where you can gather your thoughts and soak in the surroundings. You might prefer a piano bar, a disco with juggling bartenders, or a quiet spot to meet friends. Following are some of the best places to hang out in Las Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe casinos. While most dance clubs have cover charges, admission to other retreats requires only the price of a soda or cocktail.



Las Vegas

By Mike Weatherford

Most fanfare about the growth of Las Vegas focuses on the physical, leaving something equally important almost unsaid: The city is a lot more fun than it

Photos: Chris Talbot (top), Steve Spatafore (bottom)



Humans can rub shoulders with interplanetary beings at Quark's Bar inside the Las Vegas Hilton's Star Trek: The Experience, where the drinks are almost as exotic as the clientele.

used to be. The recent whirlwind of resort construction ushered in a whole new wave of funhouses that made the Strip not just a place where retirees gamble but also a play zone for 20-somethings, Gen-Xers, and baby boomers. Nightclubs and upscale and heavily themed bars have restored the Strip's '50s-era reputation for nightlife.

The young Hollywood crowd embraced the **Hard Rock Hotel** (800-HRD-ROCK) almost from the day it opened in 1995. On weekend nights, the center bar transforms the entire gaming floor into one big singles bar and people-watching zone. When crowds gather to watch Dennis Rodman or Ben Affleck at the tables, it's easy to see the scene as a modern version of what the Sands must have been in the heyday of the Rat Pack.

But the Hard Rock is an exception to the general trend of the hotter hangouts distancing themselves a bit from the casino action. Mandalay Bay (877-632-7800), for instance, set its grouping of restaurant-nightspots in a buffer zone between the casino floor and the parking garage favored by locals. The **China Grill** and adjacent **Rock Lobster** sport a retro-futuristic design reminiscent of '60s-era James Bond. **Red Square** is the toniest of the trio, serving a dizzying choice of spirits from its Arctic-chilled "vodka locker" amid authentically Russian mirrors, red-velvet drapes, and chandeliers. At the adjacent **Rumjungle**, *rodizio* cooking in the evening gives way to a wild Brazilian-themed nightclub. By midnight, patrons stand in Disneyland-style queues to get into a room where dancers gyrate on elevated platforms and aerialists dangle from the ceiling.

The concept of sharing expensive real estate carries over to **Drai's** (702-737-0555) in the basement of the Barbary Coast and **Jack's Velvet Lounge** inside the WB Stage 16 restaurant at the Venetian (877-857-1861). Both offer a refined, old-Hollywood vibe during restaurant hours, Drai's on the gourmet end and the WB tastefully rethinking the theme restaurant. But at night they turn into youth-driven clubs that capitalize on the city's 24-hour appeal. Unlike the Strip's big dance clubs—Ra at the Luxor, Studio 54 at the MGM Grand—Drai's and Jack's take their decadent-but-sophisticated attitudes from the respective interior designs. Drai's ironically mixes reserved, clubby touches such as bookshelves with overstuffed furniture covered in animal prints. Jack's is all plush and cream-colored, with a balcony offering splendid views of the Treasure Island pirate battle across the street.

Newer casinos such as the Bellagio and Venetian court an upscale crowd and in return have broadened the appeal of Las Vegas to affluent visitors who hadn't previously thought about spending time on the Strip. If you're in that class—or want to pretend to be while nursing a pricey drink—then you can cozy into **Napoleon's** cigar and cognac bar, located inside Paris Las Vegas (702-946-7000) at a strategic people-watching crossroads between the convention area and Le Boulevard retail section. Jazz bands play in the evening to patrons who convene at small cocktail tables or relax in overstuffed chairs arranged in conversation-area clusters.

For those who don't like dealing with fashion police or waiting in line at clubs, Harrah's Las Vegas offers the Carnaval Court.

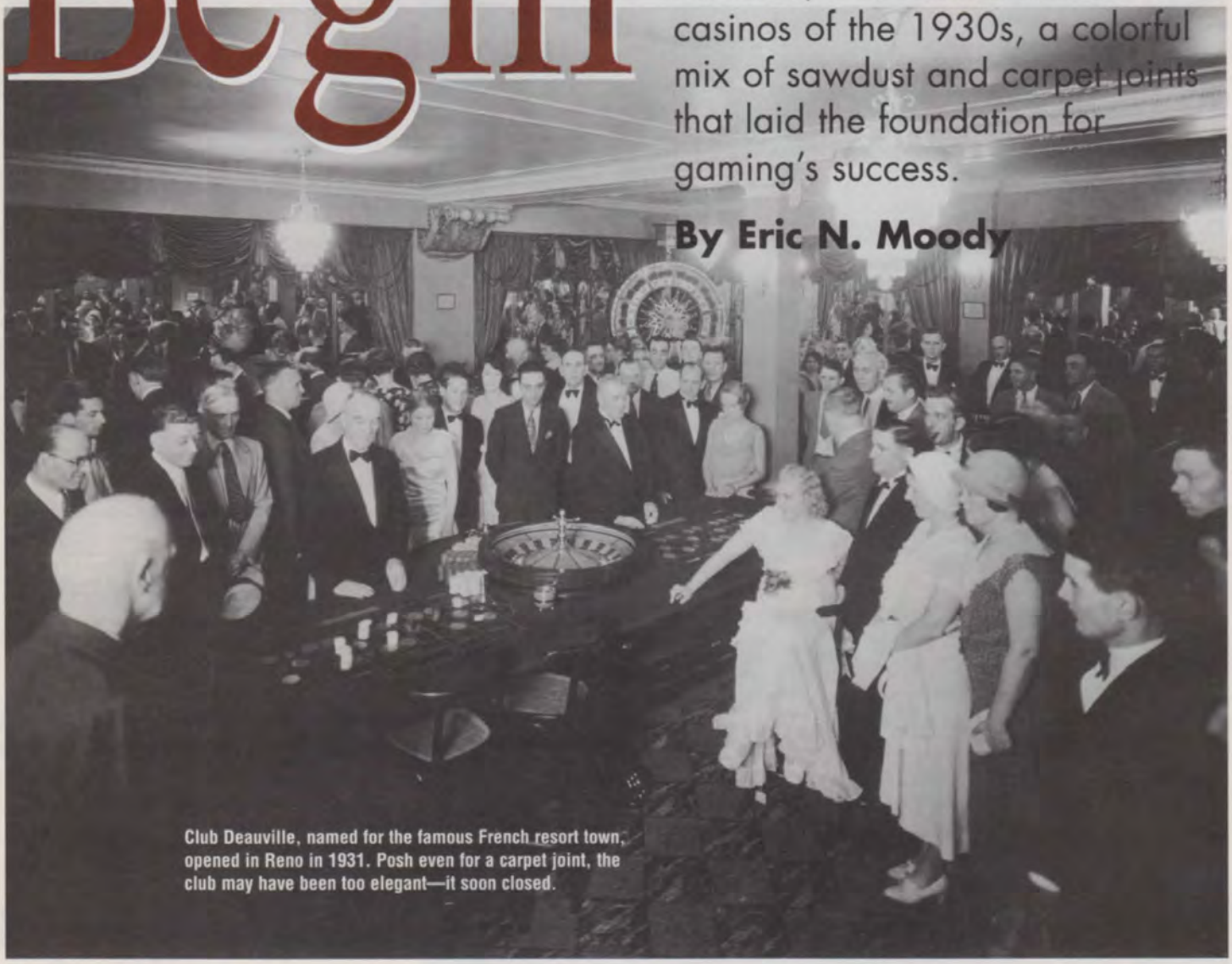
The Venetian's (877-857-1861) latest tenant is **V Bar**, a lounge that takes its hipster credentials from its ownership. David Rabin and Will Regan opened the New

(Continued on page 78)

The Games Begin

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of legal gaming in Nevada, it is time to revisit the casinos of the 1930s, a colorful mix of sawdust and carpet joints that laid the foundation for gaming's success.

By Eric N. Moody



Club Deauville, named for the famous French resort town, opened in Reno in 1931. Posh even for a carpet joint, the club may have been too elegant—it soon closed.

The news put Nevada in the national spotlight. The state's adoption of legal casino gambling and a six weeks' divorce law in March 1931 attracted the curiosity—and often the condemnation—of people throughout the United States.

Some applauded the state's experiment in liberality. Nevada already had quickie marriages, officially sanctioned prostitution, and a reputation for ignoring Prohibition laws. Now the state had made virtually all casino games legal.

Eager to see the results of the new legislation, journalists made the pilgrimage to Reno, Nevada's largest city and principal gaming center. Travel writer Basil Woon found Reno to be the "most amazing, the most interesting, and the most perplexing city in America." Journalist Quentin Reynolds characterized Reno as a "frontier town, with the oldest of traditions and the newest of laws—a bright, colorful, and contradictory place … whose watchword is tolerance."

But other commentators saw the new legislation as a sign of moral decay—an ill omen for not just the Silver State but the entire country. Laura Vitray, an investigative reporter sent out by the *Philadelphia Daily*

Photo: Nevada Historical Society



The Reno Arch frames a Virginia Street scene that shows clubs, cafes, and plenty of parking.

News in 1931 to write about "Rotten Reno," as her lurid series of reports was titled, found Nevada to be nothing less than an "outlaw state." She noted that Nevada was controlled by businessman George Wingfield ("Vice Czar Rules Lust-Mad Reno's Whirlpool of Graft and Corruption") and his cronies while ordinary citizens were treated like "peons" and "serfs." Nevada, Vitray contended, was implementing a "well-laid scheme to draw the poor and the wealthy of the United States into the circle of its power and strip them of their gold, by fair means and foul."

A writer for *Christian Century* magazine labeled Nevada a "Prostitute State." A convention of the International Christian Endeavor Society called Reno a "blot on civilization." One Seattle minister stated that Nevada had "repudiated its states' rights in the American commonwealth" and was a "disgrace to the nation, both in its divorce and gambling phases." Reno mayor E.E. Roberts, a Wingfield ally and foe of Prohibition, added fuel to the flames with a widely circulated remark that one way to deal with bootleggers would be to place a whiskey barrel and tin cup on every street corner in his city.

Amid all the publicity, good and bad, Nevada's legal casinos established a critical foothold during the decade between 1931 and America's entry into World War II. Those years saw casino gambling grow from a small-scale, somewhat disreputable activity into a substantial business that would emerge in the postwar decades as Nevada's dominant economic enterprise. Today, as Nevada celebrates the 70th anniversary of legal gaming, we can gain a new appreciation of how the early casinos survived the challenges of their first decade.



George Wingfield helped persuade Nevada lawmakers to legalize wide-open gaming in March 1931.

The clubs of the 1930s, the trailblazers that laid the foundation for the state's future prosperity, were a far cry from today's lavish resorts. The first legal casinos that appeared in 1931 resembled those that had already been operating in Nevada—legally or illegally. Contrary to popular belief, gambling had not been entirely prohibited in Nevada prior to the wide-open gambling law. In the 1920s, the state permitted parimutuel betting on horse racing, and local governments could license commercial card games such as poker, whist, and solo in which the deal alternated and the house took no percentage of the winnings. However, gamblers preferred the traditional casino games—faro, 21 (blackjack), roulette, and craps. Those games had been outlawed since 1910 but were available behind locked doors in illegal gambling clubs.

As the Depression settled heavily on Nevada as the 1930s began, pressure grew to lift the restraints on gambling. The state's boosters believed that legal casino gambling, along with a shorter residence requirement for those seeking divorces, would bring more people and money into the state and benefit its ailing economy. As a result, the 1931 Nevada Legislature passed both the wide-open gambling law and a measure that required only six weeks' residence in the state before obtaining a divorce.

Again contrary to popular belief, the new gambling law originated not in the legislature but in the business community. Leading business figures such as millionaire mining man, banker, and hotel owner George Wingfield of Reno and real-estate salesman and developer Thomas Carroll of Las Vegas were convinced that legal casinos and an expanded divorce trade would benefit not only their own enterprises but also



Las Vegas' Fremont Street in the '30s offered a lively nightlife to travelers and Hoover Dam workers.

Photos: Nevada Historical Society (top and middle), L.F. Manis Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library (bottom)

the entire state. Wingfield, indisputably the most powerful individual in Nevada, was instrumental in convincing lawmakers to support the gaming and divorce bills, while Carroll, in 1930, placed large advertisements in Southern Nevada newspapers promoting the legalization of casinos. Predicting the emergence of Las Vegas as a major tourist center and Nevada as the "Playground of the United States," Carroll urged his fellow Silver Staters to "make wide-open gambling the biggest industry in the state, so that it ... will bring more millions of dollars into Nevada."

Pro-casino interests prepared a wide-open gambling bill and then went looking for a lawmaker to introduce it. However, believing that many Nevadans disapproved of gambling, most legislators were leery of having their name attached to the measure. Several members of the state Senate and Assembly declined the honor of sponsoring the bill before Phil Tobin, a freshman assemblyman and rancher from the Winnemucca area, finally agreed to do so. After both houses overwhelmingly passed the gambling and divorce bills, Governor Fred Balzar, Wingfield's friend and political ally, signed both measures into law on March 19, 1931.



Faro, played here at Reno's Bank Club, was a popular game in Nevada's early casinos.


Poker players match wits at the Northern, a prominent downtown Las Vegas club with a famous name.

Dozens of gambling clubs soon opened, most of them in Reno and Las Vegas. Reno, with a population of about 19,000, was known as the "Biggest Little City in the World," as its famed Virginia Street arch proclaimed, and the "divorce capital" of the nation. Las Vegas had only about 7,000 residents, but the small town already was benefiting from the visitors that Hoover Dam's construction was drawing to the area. By the middle of the decade, when English writer J.B. Priestley noted Las Vegas' "all-night gambling," it was becoming known as a gambling town. Priestley predicted confidently that "one day the tourist world will find Las Vegas."

The state's new gambling houses were of two types—"sawdust joints" and "carpet joints." Sawdust joints often were nothing more than bars with a few table games. They could be found on main thoroughfares such as Fremont Street in Las Vegas and Center Street in Reno and on back streets and alleys. The customers tended to be males who smoked and drank freely as they wagered. Although some women might be present as gamblers, many were "shills," hired by the clubs to encourage play.

Some of the sawdust joints were more ambitious and reputable than others, although few offered entertainment or substantial restaurants. Such places included Reno's Palace Club, Harolds Club, and the Bank Club, which was owned by the notorious William Graham and James McKay, local racketeers who later served time in prison for fraud. On Fremont Street in Las Vegas, the Boulder, Las Vegas, and Northern clubs also fit into the high end of this category.

The carpet joints, in contrast, were classier, more lavish enterprises. They often were nightclubs or dinner houses as much as casinos, and their patrons included the wealthier and more socially prominent residents and visitors. Carpet joints tended to attract more women and members of the divorce colony. In Las Vegas, these rather exclusive gambling spots included fancy downtown clubs like the Apache Casino, located in the Apache Hotel. Customers also found nightlife at the 91 Club (earlier the Pair-O-Dice), the Green Shack, and the lavish Meadows—"the finest resort in the southwest."

Reno's upper crust visited downtown dinner-house clubs such as the Club Fortune, Deauville, Waldorf, Townhouse, and Colbrandt's, a sophisticated restaurant where a hostess in evening gown greeted the more moneyed locals and members of the divorce colony. The leased-out casino in George Wingfield's fashionable Riverside Hotel attracted a crowd, as did roadhouses such as the Country Club, the Tavern, and the Cowshed, operated by famed New York nightclub hostess Belle Livingstone. At Lake Tahoe, the Cal-Neva Lodge (operated by Graham and McKay) and the Stateline Country Club were hot spots.

(Continued on page 80)

Photos: Nevada Historical Society (top), Gladys Frazier Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library (bottom)

NEVADA Calendar

Nevada Magazine's Guide to Events and Shows in the Silver State

March/April 2001



The Early Shows

Casinos offer uplifting entertainment in the afternoon.



Rick Thomas gets a rise out of assistant Graci during his afternoon magic show at the Tropicana.

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Shows That Don't Wait Until Dark

Casinos' afternoon shows offer comedy, magic, gospel, showgirls, Elvi, and budget prices.

By Mike Weatherford



At the Tropicana in Las Vegas, magician Rick Thomas creates magic in the afternoons with a little help from his assistant, Graci, and Kyra, a white tiger.

When Breck Wall's burlesque-styled "Bottom's Up" revue accepted an afternoon time slot at the Thunderbird Hotel in the mid-1960s, Las Vegas resorts rarely offered entertainment before dark. Nevertheless, "Bottom's Up" was a success.

"It took off like a rocket," Wall recalls. "In those days, people didn't have anything to do in the daytime except sit in the sun. There were no shopping malls or anything like that."

But when Wall resurrected "Bottom's Up" at the Flamingo Las Vegas last fall, he joined several established shows that don't wait until dark. To distinguish his production he billed it as "the only topless afternoon show."

The afternoon trend offers a number of advantages to showgoers. As prices for the biggest evening shows crest the $100 mark, afternoon shows put Las Vegas entertainment within reach of the bargain-minded. Advertised prices are in the $10-to-$20 range, and many hotels offer coupons or promotions because the afternoon revues help generate foot traffic and keep people on property.

"Someday, someone's going to have a breakfast show," says Houdini re-creator Dixie Dooley.

More shows mean more variety for all tastes. Even the three magic shows are distinct, ranging from the comedic touch of Mac King to the dramatic stunts of Harry Houdini as recreated by Dixie Dooley.

"It's a 24-hour town, but we don't go as late as we used to," Dooley says of his 4 p.m. gig at the Plaza Hotel downtown. His prediction: "Someday, someone's going to have a breakfast show." Why not? They do in Branson, Missouri. But until they serve coffee with the magic tricks, here's what to see before sundown.

"Bottom's Up": Blackout sketches and dirty jokes are part of the simple formula that has kept this ensemble revue on the Strip periodically since 1964. Emcee Wall and rubber-faced David Harris go back 40 years together, and Sue Motsinger has been onboard since the '70s.

The chemistry of watching these old friends try to break each other up at the Flamingo Las Vegas offsets the old-and-older gags, staged in rapid-fire volleys or in brief sketches with campy costumes and outrageous props that may have inspired



The House of Blues at Mandalay Bay rocks during the club's Sunday brunch, which features gospel music.

the old *Laugh-In* TV series. (Dan Rowan and Dick Martin worked as Vegas opening acts before their TV fame and would catch the revue when they were in town.) "Bottoms Up" plays in the Flamingo Showroom at 2 and 4 p.m. daily except Sunday. Call 702-733-3111. Tickets are $12.95, plus tax, which includes one drink.

Circus Circus: You can see continuous free shows featuring trapeze artists, jugglers, animals—everything found under the Big Top—at Circus Circus in both Las Vegas and Reno. Shows are scheduled every half-hour from 11:15 a.m. to midnight in Las Vegas (702-734-0410), and 11:15 a.m. to 10:45 p.m. in Reno (775-329-0711).

"Houdini Lives Again": Dixie Dooley is a Houdini devotee who doesn't just collect the master's memorabilia. At the Plaza, he jumps right in—into an antique can filled with water, where he has to free himself of various manacles before breaking through the locked-down lid. That's the climax of a history-filled hour full of handcuff manipulations and straitjacket escapes. It's an informative change of pace from the usual magic on the Strip. Show time is 4 p.m. daily except Monday in the Plaza Showroom. Call 702-386-2110. Tickets are $19.95, plus tax, which doesn't include drinks.

"House of Blues Gospel Brunch": There is heavy competition among hotel restaurants for the Sunday brunch crowd, but only the House of Blues chain inside Mandalay Bay serves a weekly dose of salvation along with crab cakes, champagne, and omelets. Churches work in rotation to provide gospel choirs or bands for the music onstage. Seatings are at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Sundays. For reservations call 702-632-7777. Tickets are $34.60 for adults, $18.30 for children 11 and under.

"The Illusionary Magic of Rick Thomas": If it is Las Vegas-style magic you want, Rick Thomas' show at the Tropicana offers a solid overview of standard stage illusions for less than a third of the cost ($17.95 general admission) of some of his nighttime counterparts. The affable Thomas is a commanding six-foot-four and packs as much theatricality as possible

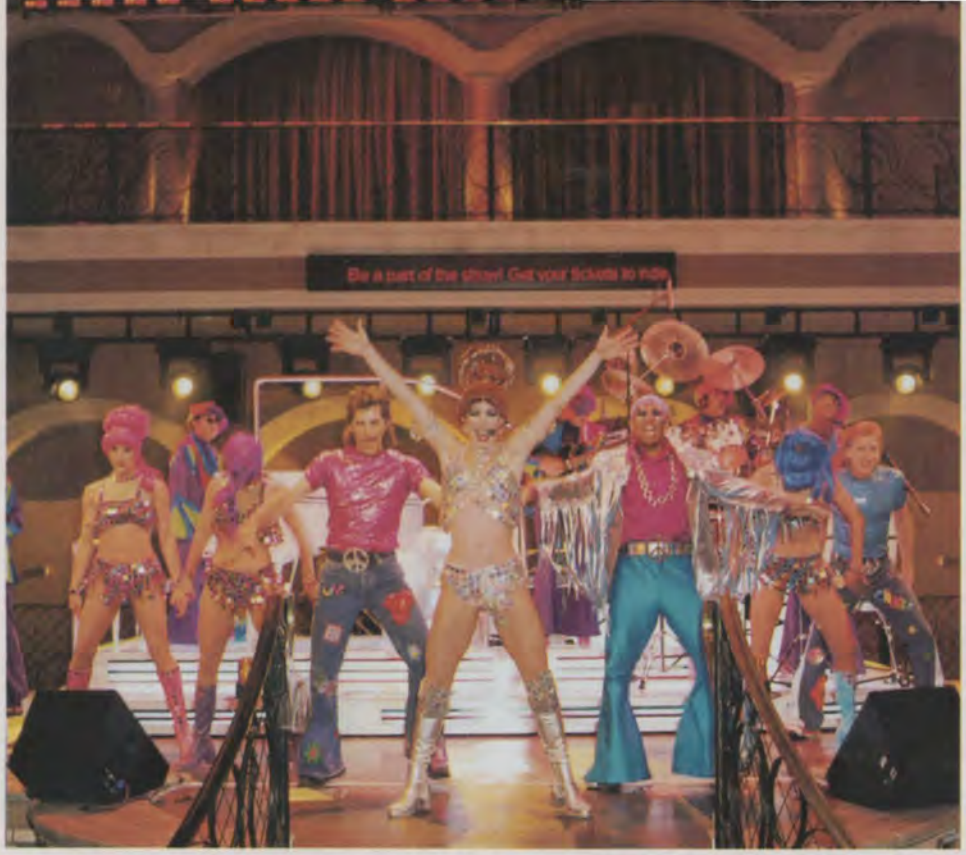
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Dancers take the stage and aerialists perform overhead during the Rio's "Masquerade Show in the Sky."

into his hour onstage in the Tiffany Showroom. The large setting offers plenty of space for a dramatic levitation of his assistant, Graci, along with the usual "cabinet tricks" of transforming women into tigers, or vice versa. Repeat business from the family market makes this a show that people line up for in the summer. Shows are at 2 and 4 p.m. daily except Friday. Call 702-739-2222. The ticket price of $17.95 includes tax but no drinks. VIP seating is available for $22.95.

Magician Mac King stuffs a paper cutout of a fish into his mouth and then spits out a live one.

Also at the Tropicana, the **"Bird Man of Las Vegas"** takes place at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 2 p.m. daily except Thursday. The free show in the Tropics Lounge stars Joe Krathwohe and his cast of feathered performers.

Jerry Tiffe and His Orchestra: Easy listening or dancing is the afternoon entertainment at three of the Station Casinos: Boulder, Sunset, and Texas. Tiffe performs 2 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays in the Club Madrid at Sunset Station, 2 to 4 p.m. Thursdays in the Railhead Saloon at Boulder Station, and 4 to 8 p.m. Sundays in the Armadillo Lounge at Texas Station. There is no charge for the shows at the Stations, and drink service is available.

"The King in Concert": Elvis is back in the building where it all began for him in Las Vegas—sort of. The New Frontier is a newer building on the same grounds where Elvis Presley made his Vegas debut in April 1956. When the Strip hotel converted its bingo parlor into a makeshift showroom last fall, impersonator Tim Welch moved in with an Elvis tribute sponsored by the Elvis-A-Rama Museum. "The King in Concert" offers a concentrated dose of '70s era sequined-jumpsuited Elvis. Welch sings to taped music, and a booth in the back of the room offers photo ops. Show time is 4 p.m. Saturday through Thursday. Call 702-794-8200. Tickets are $17.95, plus tax, which does not include drinks.

"A Tribute to Elvis": At the Riviera, Jim LeBoeuf is King. While other Elvi swivel their hips in white-jumpsuited imitations of imitators, LeBoeuf makes a goof of the whole impersonator phenomenon and his lack of resemblance to the King. But LeBoeuf takes the music seriously, digging out obscure songs only true Elvis fans would ask for along with the expected hits. He performs at 4 p.m. Friday through Sunday in the Le Bistro Lounge. Call 702-734-5110. There is a two-drink minimum.

"The Mac King Comedy Magic Show": Despite all the magicians in Las Vegas, the

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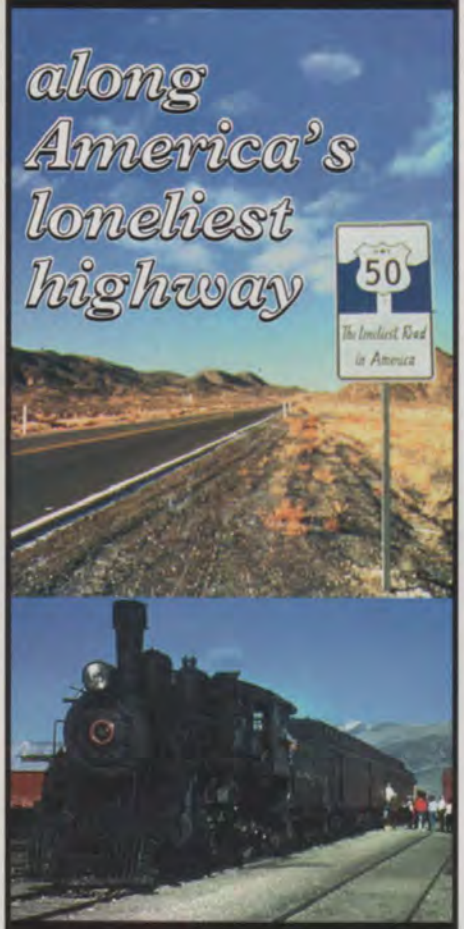
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Magician-comedian Mac King employs a few fishy tricks to entertain showgoers at Harrah's Las Vegas.

big showrooms usually don't lend themselves to the type of "close-up" magic popularized by the Magic Castle nightclub in Hollywood. Mac King's act plays more like a set of stand-up comedy—perfectly suited to the Comedy Cabaret room he uses at Harrah's Las Vegas—but there's no less mystery to how he can stuff a paper cutout of a fish into his mouth and then spit out a live one.

The Kentucky native is a childhood buddy of Lance Burton, but the similarities with the suave Monte Carlo headliner end there. Instead of a tuxedo, King wears deliberately awful suits, and freely volunteers that his stage persona is that of "a big, goofy dork." Shows are at 1 and 3 p.m. except Sunday and Monday in the Comedy Cabaret Showroom. Call 702-369-5000. Tickets are $12.05, which includes tax but no drinks.

"Masquerade Show in the Sky": This free, crowd-enticing spectacle repeats several times each day in the Rio's Tuscany-themed Masquerade Village. A cast of costumed performers work amid animatronic characters on the ground and in the air, cruising on floats that hang from a 950-foot ceiling track. The 12-minute shows take place at 4, 6, 8, and 10 p.m. Thursday through Monday. Call 702-252-7777. Although the show is free to watch, you can don a costume and ride the floats for $9.99.

"Stars of the Strip": The comic impressionists the Walkers—consisting of Kathy and brothers Bill and Greg—keep the golden age of the Las Vegas lounge alive in this old-school revue, available for the price of a drink in the Lady Luck's "bubble-dome" showroom. Because people come back for second and third doses, the two shows each day vary: Kathy may do Joan Rivers and Cher in the first show, then Dolly Parton in the second. Producer Robbie Howard joins the act as well, singing as Robert Goulet in front of the three-piece band. Most of the one-liners are ancient but classic, and the better impressions (Rod Stewart, Barbra Streisand) get the full-costume treatment in the second half of each set. Shows are at 2 and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call 702-477-3000. The show is free with the $5.95 one-drink minimum.

"Viva Las Vegas": This is the show that revived the afternoon trend when it opened at the Sands 10 years ago. Now it carries on at the Stratosphere as a budget-minded sampling of elements from the expensive evening shows, from a singer (Natalie Carson) and seven showgirl-dancers to wise-cracking comedians Bruce Mickelson and Dave Swan, who offer a send-up of fellow Welshman Tom Jones.

"Viva Las Vegas" plays in the Stratosphere's Broadway Showroom at 2 and 4 p.m. daily except Sunday. Call 702-380-7777. Tickets are $12.95, plus tax, which includes one drink.

Showgoers will note that the one constant in "Viva Las Vegas" is its chief claim to fame, "Golden" Joe Baker, an Elvis impersonator unlike any other. At least he's unlike any other retirement-aged Elvis who tosses his toupee at the end of a crowd-pleasing bump-and-grind.

Mike Weatherford is an entertainment writer for the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

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Nevada Events

March and April events in Las Vegas, Reno-Tahoe, and Rural Nevada.

Nevada communities hold a great variety of events throughout the year. March and April offer cultural festivals and racing and rodeo events, such as the Spring Awakening Powwow in Carson City, NASCAR racing at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, and pro rodeos in Laughlin and Logandale. *Nevada Magazine* presents the following events schedule for March and April. Be sure to call ahead to confirm dates and times. Please note that the area code is 702 for Las Vegas Territory and 775 for the rest of the state.

Las Vegas Territory

Pennzoil World of Outlaws • March 1-3 • Half-mile dirt oval race. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 702-644-4443.

Sam's Town 300 • March 3 • NASCAR Busch Series race. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 702-644-4443.

Motocross • March 3 • ZMA/Club MX series. Mesquite Raceway, Mesquite, 702-346-3766.

Gordy Ohlinger: Banjo-ologist • March 3 • Comedic presentation of entertainment, American History, and music fundamentals. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-565-2367.

NASCAR Winston Cup Series • March 4 • Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 702-644-4443.

Nevada Jazz Orchestra: Latin Connection • March 4 • 18-piece ensemble. Winchester Center, Las Vegas, 702-455-7340.

U.S. Army Field Band • March 8 • Famous composers, popular melodies, and band music. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-565-2367.

College Basketball Tournament • March 8-10 • Playoff with top finishers in the Mountain West Conference. Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-3900.

Las Vegas Intercollegiate Golf Tournament • March 8-11 • UNLV hosts 14 golf teams. Rio Secco Golf Club, Henderson, 702-242-3000.

Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra • March 9 • Featuring 1998 International Tchaikovsky winner Dennis Matsuyev. Performing Arts Center, UNLV, 702-895-ARTS.

U.S. Army Band • March 10 • Concert. Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, 702-895-2787.

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Race for the Cure • March 10 • 5K run and walk, one-mile fun run. Galleria at Sunset, Henderson, 702-252-RACE.

Las Vegas Region SCCA Autocross • March 10-11 • Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 702-897-3774.

Las Vegas Civic Symphony • March 11 • Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211.

Boulder City Days • March 11-17 • The Hoover Dam town celebrates its 70th birthday with walking tours, music from the '30s, and birthday cakes throughout



Spring Native American Festivals

Powwow dancers step into traditional celebrations during the Spring Awakening Powwow March 17 in Carson City, the Invitational Native American Arts Festival April 6-8 in Henderson (above), and the Snow Mountain Powwow May 25-27 in Las Vegas.

Photo: Gail Bandini

the community. Boulder City, 702-294-1988.

Cruise Night • March 16 • Free and open to all cars including classics, street rods, muscle cars. Location TBA, Las Vegas, 702-260-6960.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration • March 16-17 • Celtic entertainment, green beer, and traditional food. Fremont Street Experience, Las Vegas, 702-678-5777.

Extreme Monster Trucks • March 16-17 • Dirt track. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.

St. Patrick's Day Dance • March 17 • Boyd Coulter and the Good Times Band play music from the '40s to the '60s. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

Pot of Gold Slot Tournament • March 17 • $10 buy-in includes buffet. Eureka Casino, Mesquite, 877-854-7885.

Sand Drags • March 17-18 • Mesquite Raceway, Mesquite, 702-346-3766.

Las Vegas Jazz Society: Strings Attached • March 18 • Jazz band with 20-piece string section. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

Rockapella • March 23 • Street performers turned stars. Performing Arts Center, UNLV, 702-895-ARTS.

Super Mods, Outlaws, and Legends • March 23 • Bullring track. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.

"The Balcony" • March 23-25 and 29-April 1 • Residents of a bordello impersonate leaders of a revolutionary city. Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 702-895-2787.

"And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank" • March 24 • James Still drama, not recommended for children under 10. Nevada Theatre Company, Las Vegas, 702-873-0191.

Wild Bunch Hare Scrambles Motorcycle Race • March 24 • Off-road race. Goodsprings, 702-437-MRAN.

Catskill Klezmorim • March 24 • Traditional and contemporary music. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

Jazz Fest • March 24 • Bring lawn chairs and picnic. West Las Vegas Arts Center, 702-229-6511.

Super Mods, USAC Midgets, Legends, and Bicycle Races • March 24 • Bullring track. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.



A Delicate Delicacy

Cooks in Virginia City don costumes and sharpen knives as they prepare for the Mountain Oyster Cook-Off on March 17. Adventurous eaters can try samples of the delicacy. Others can test the green beer offered at Comstock bars and watch the St. Patrick's Day parade.

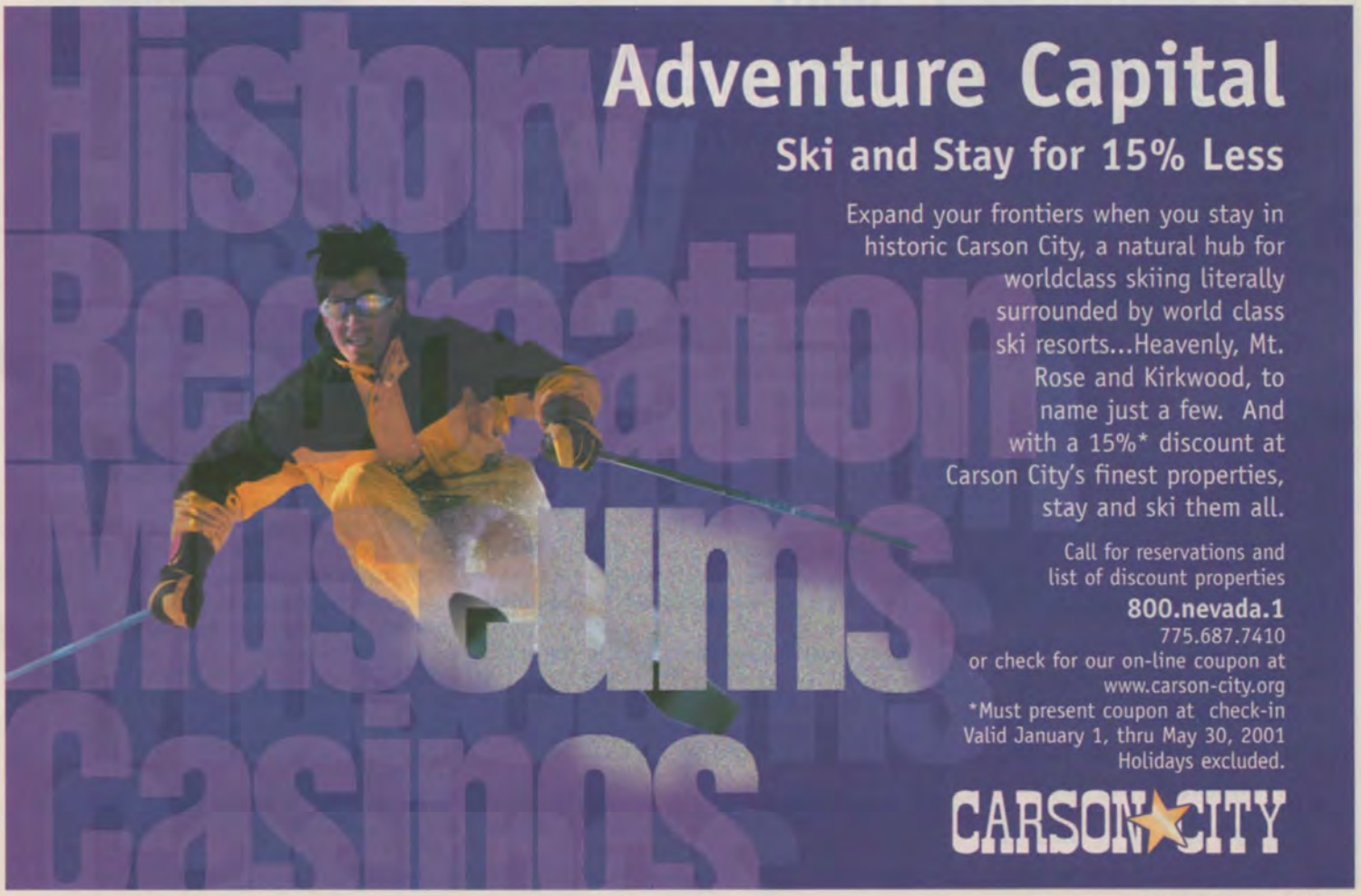
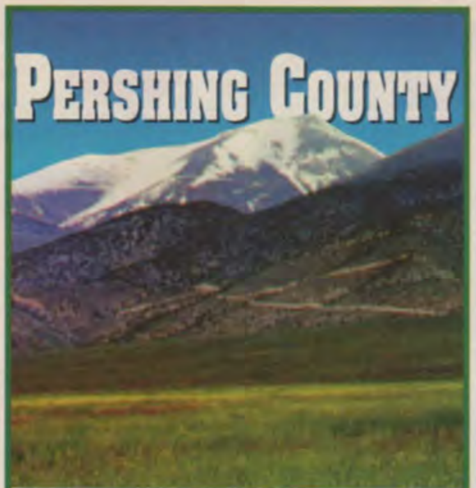


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Nevada Territory Map

To assist you in your travels through Nevada, the state has been divided into the following territories:

- Reno-Tahoe Territory
- Cowboy Country
- Pony Express Territory
- Pioneer Territory
- Las Vegas Territory
- Indian Territory

Jazz Ensemble • March 25 • Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, 702-895-2787.

Oscar Night America • March 25 • Dinner, silent auction, view the Academy Awards to benefit the Arthritis Foundation. Location TBA, Las Vegas, 702-367-1626.

Laughlin Rodeo Days • March 28-April 1 • PRCA rodeo featuring 700 competitors. Entertainment, vendor booths. Special Events Arena, Laughlin, 623-535-1949.

Big League Challenge • March 29 • Home run hitting contest featuring major leaguers from the Los Angeles Dodgers and Arizona Diamondbacks. Cashman Field, Las Vegas, 702-798-7825.

Rocky Mountain Tractor Pulls • March 31 • Dirt track. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.

"Behind the Broken Words" • April 1 • Anthony Zerbe and Roscoe Lee Browne present poetry, drama, and comedy. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211.

"Rumpelstiltskin" • April 2 • Missoula Children's Theatre performance. Black Mountain Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-565-2367.

Clark County Fair and Rodeo • April 5-8 • PRCA rodeo, music, carnival, junior livestock judging, juried art show, and antique farm equipment displays. Logandale, 888-876-FAIR.

NHRA SummitRacing.com Nationals • April 5-8 • Top fuel, funny cars, pro stock motorcycles, pro stock trucks. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.

Ballet Season Finale • April 6-7 • The Nevada Ballet Theatre performs "Handel Celebration," "Lark Ascending," and "Napoli." Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, 702-895-2787.

SNORE Buffalo Bill's 400 • April 6-7 • Off-road race featuring trucks and buggies. Primm, 702-452-4522.

Invitational Native American Arts Festival • April 6-8 • Demonstrations, dances, music, arts, crafts, lectures, and film. Clark County Heritage Museum, Henderson, 702-455-7955.

"Fool of the World" • April 6-8 and 12-15 • Adaptation of Russian folk tale. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211.

Nevada Jazz Artists • April 8 • Modern jazz concert featuring local performers. Winchester Center, Las Vegas, 702-455-7340.

"Rumpelstiltskin" • April 9 • Missoula Children's

Theater performance. Silver Spring Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-565-2367.

Liberace Museum's 22nd Anniversary • April 14 • Las Vegas, 702-798-5595, ext. 20.

Clark County Children's Festival • April 14 • Recreational and cultural activities. Winchester Park, Las Vegas, 702-455-7340.

Bunny Business Slot Tournament • April 14 • $10 buy-in includes buffet. Eureka Casino, Mesquite, 877-854-7885.

Boulder City Art Guild • April 14-15 • Art show at Lake Mead Marina. Boulder City, 702-293-0981.

Las Vegas Region SCCA Autocross • April 14-15 • Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.

"Rumpelstiltskin" • April 16 • Missoula Children's Theater performance. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-565-2367.

Las Vegas Senior Classic • April 16-22 • Senior PGA Tour stop. TPC Summerlin, Las Vegas, 702-242-3000.

Early Woody and Mel • April 17 • Featured film: *Young Frankenstein.* Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-5430.

World Mini • April 17-22 • MX track. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 800-644-4444.

Ho-Waiian Luau Slot Tournament • April 18 • Westward Ho, Las Vegas, 702-731-2900.

Cruise Night • April 20 • Free and open to all cars including classics, street rods, muscle cars. Location TBA, Las Vegas, 702-260-6960.

Mardi Gras Festival • April 20-21 • Parades, big heads, beads, and New Orleans-style entertainment. Fremont Street Experience, Las Vegas, 702-678-5777.

Neon Thunder • April 20-22 • Motorcycle show and rally, kickstand party, vendors, entertainment, naughty-wear fashion show. Bourbon Street Casino and San Remo Hotel, Las Vegas, 702-655-8976.

Henderson Heritage Days • April 20-29 • Parade, carnival, talent show, picnic in the park, chili cook-off, car show, dance, barbecue, softball tournament, and beauty pageant. Henderson, 702-565-8951.

Earthfest 2001 • April 21 • Activities promote environmental education and awareness. Dedication of Wetlands Park, Las Vegas, 702-455-8206.

An Evening in Old Vienna • April 21 • Dance to waltz and polka music. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

Las Vegas Jazz Society Concert • April 22 • Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

AIDS Walk Las Vegas • April 22 • 702-382-2326.

Wearin' of the Green

St. Patrick's Day celebrations are planned March 16-17 at the Fremont Street Experience in Las Vegas and March 16-18 at Fitzgeralds in downtown Reno. Las Vegas plans Celtic entertainment, green beer, and traditional food, while Reno features bagpipe-band performances, a military brass band, and an arts and crafts fair.

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Award-Winning Photo

Photographer Jack Hursh of Reno won last year's Speakers Choice Award at the annual Shooting the West symposium in Winnemucca for his image of an old barn on Valley Road near downtown Reno. This year's Shooting the West XIII is March 8-11.

Dynamic Trombone Quartet • April 22 • Free concert featuring country to classical. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211.

Early Woody and Mel • April 24 • Featured film: *Love and Death.* Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-5430.

Pantera Owners of California Las Vegas Fun Rally • April 25-29 • Annual auto rally to Las Vegas includes a concours d'elegance at the Fremont Street Experience on April 28. 909-305-8004 for more information.

Laughlin River Run • April 25-29 • The West Coast's largest motorcycle event features displays, exhibits, custom bike show, and concerts. Laughlin, 800-357-8223.

Mesquite Days • April 26-29 • Parade, carnival, entertainment, craft vendors. Recreation Park, Mesquite, 702-346-3868.

"Cabaret" • April 27-29 and May 3-6 • Broadway musical. Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 702-895-2787.

Las Vegas City of Lights Jazz Festival • April 28 • International performers entertain at Hills Park at Summerlin. Las Vegas, 702-228-3780.

Gateway Artist's Bazaar • April 28 • Exhibit and sale. Downtown Arts District, Las Vegas, 702-383-3133.

Southwest Symphony Orchestra Concert • April 28 • Virgin Valley High School, Mesquite, 702-346-2787.

Clark County Art Show • April 28-29 • Fine art by local artists, music, entertainment. Bicentennial Park, Boulder City, 702-293-2551.

Rattlin' Rails Hand Car Races • April 29 • Teams duel for the Southern Nevada long-course championship at the Yucca Street Rail Yard. Boulder City, 702-595-7223.

The Wonderful World of Opera • April 29 • Las Vegas Master Singers concert. Clark County Library Theater, Las Vegas, 702-228-8316.

Moscow Festival Ballet • April 29 • Excerpts from great ballets. Performing Arts Center, UNLV, 702-895-ARTS.

Las Vegas SCCA Rally Cross • April 29 • Jean Dry Lake near Jean, 13 miles south of Las Vegas off I-15, 702-897-3774.





Giddy-Up, Old Paint

Kids find plenty to squeal about at the Clark County Fair and Rodeo, April 5-8 in Logandale, 55 miles northeast of Las Vegas off Interstate 15. The fair features a pro rodeo, animal rides, music, carnival, livestock show, juried art show, and antique farm equipment displays.

Reno-Tahoe Territory

Snowfest • Thru March 4 • Winter carnival with 50 serious and fun races, ice carvings, polar bear swim, snow sculpture contests, parades. North Lake Tahoe, 800-824-6348.

Chaskinaskuy • March 2 • Music of the Andes. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-1976.

Winner Take All Slot Tournament • March 2-4 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Music With John Gorka • March 3 • Singer-songwriter performs. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-1976.

The Sick and Twisted Big Air Festival • March 3 • Big air and slopestyle competition. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 209-258-7389.

Bumps and Jumps Challenge • March 3-4 • Mogul and aerial races. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

2001-A Women's Odyssey • March 4 • National Women in History Month, Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center, Gardnerville, 775-782-2555.

Master Classic Concert • March 4 and 6 • Reno Philharmonic. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-323-6393.

Meet the Winemaker • March 5 • Gourmet dinner and wines from South Africa. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-6611.

Lake Tahoe Gay and Lesbian WinterFest 2001 • March 7-11 • Comedy night, dance party. Various locations, South Lake Tahoe, www.laketahoewinterfest.com.

Spring Poker Tournament • March 8-18 • Peppermill, Reno, 775-826-2121.

Faculty Recital • March 9 • Phillip Ruder and James Winn perform. Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6145.

"I Hate Hamlet" • March 9-10, 16-17, and 23-24 • Comedy about an actor who is terrified of playing Shakespeare until Barrymore's ghost appears. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-1976.

Cowboy Jubilee and Poetry • March 10 • Buckaroos perform Western life in rhyme. Community Center, Carson City, 775-883-1532.

Physicians' Spouses 50th Annual Rummage Sale • March 10 • Reno Livestock Events Center, 775-826-2324.

Kid Stuff Saturday • March 10 • Entertainment, art projects, and rides in a vintage fire truck. National Automobile Museum, Reno, 775-333-9300.

Bingo Blowout • March 10 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Huckfest Big Air Series • March 11 • Amateur competition. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

St. Patrick's Slot Tournament • March 11-13 • Flamingo Reno, 800-950-2WIN.

North American Special Olympics and Celebrity Winterfest • March 12-17 • Teams consist of a special Olympic athlete, celebrity, race coach, and corporate racer. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 209-258-6000.

"The Sound of Music" • March 14-17 • Starring Corbin Bernsen. Broadway Comes to Reno series. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-686-6600.

Broadway in Reno

Actor Corbin Bernsen, who is remembered as the playboy attorney Arnold Becker in TV's *LA Law*, stars as the head of the Von Trapp family in "The Sound of Music," March 14-17 in Reno. On March 30-April 1, the curtain goes up on "Jekyll and Hyde," the next play in the Broadway Comes to Reno series.

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Spring Treasure Hunt

Kids can participate in traditional Easter egg hunts April 7 at Reno's Idlewild Park and April 15 at Diamond Peak Ski Resort in Incline Village.

North American Freeride Championships • March 14-17 • Extreme skiers and riders qualify for the World Cup of Extreme Freeskiing. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 209-258-6000.

St. Patrick's Day • March 16-18 • Food, bagpipe band performances, military brass band, arts and crafts fair. Fitzgeralds, Reno, 775-785-3300.

Craps Tournament • March 16-18 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Mountain Oyster Cook-Off • March 17 • Creative cooking and festive booths. Day also includes the town's St. Patrick's Day parade. Virginia City, 775-847-0311.

Reno Chamber Orchestra • March 17 • Program includes Brandenburg Concerto No. 6. Nightingale Concert Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-348-9413.

Spring Awakening Powwow • March 17 • Native American dancers, arts, crafts, drummers, and singers. Stewart Indian School Museum, Carson City, 775-882-6929.

St. Patrick's Day Race and Celebration • March 17 • Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Keno Tournament • March 17 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Mountain Surf Banked Slalom • March 18 • Race open to all skiers. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 916-444-2776.

Heavenly Boarder-X • March 18 • Quarter-mile course with high-banked turns, rollers, and hits. Open to all ages. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

David Burgess Concert • March 20 • Classical guitar performance. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-1976.

Pro Shuffleboard Tournament • March 21-25 • Sands Regency, Reno, 775-348-2232.

Spring $20,000 Tri-Game-A-Thon • March 23-24 • Slots, blackjack, and keno tournament. Carson Valley

Inn, Minden, 877-783-7711 for further information.

Winners Weekend Slot Tournament • March 23-25 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Tahoe Chocolate Festival: For Chocolate and Lovers Only • March 24 • Chocolate specialties, wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, auction, and music, 6:30-10pm, to benefit Tahoe Women's Services and raise funds for a shelter. Tahoe Biltmore, Crystal Bay, 775-833-0533.

Keno Klassic Tournament • March 24 • Harrah's Reno, 800-HARRAHS.

Heavenly Boarder-X • March 24 • Quarter-mile course with high-banked turns, rollers, and hits. Open to all ages. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Echo to Kirkwood Race-Tour • March 24 • 13-mile Nordic race. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 209-258-7248.

Carson High School Rodeo • March 24-25 • Fuji Park, Carson City, 775-882-3657.

Pontiac Snowjam 2001 • March 24-25 • Big air contest, jousting. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 209-258-7248.

Night of Arts and Oscars • March 25 • Dinner, auction, Academy Awards viewing to benefit Sierra Arts. Peppermill, Reno, 775-329-ARTS.

Huckfest Big Air Series • March 25 • Amateur competition. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Singin' in the Rain Slot Tournament • March 25-26 • Peppermill, Reno, 775-826-2121.

Bart Bosco Bash III Slot Tournament • March 25-28 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

$1,500 Blackjack Tournament • March 27 • $25 entry fee. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-7711.

"The Merry Widow" • March 30-31 • UNR Opera Theatre. Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6145.

"Jekyll and Hyde" • March 30-April 1 • Broadway Comes to Reno series. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-686-6600.

SCCA Reno Region Autocross and School • March 31-April 1 • Stead Airport, Reno, 775-828-0608.

Meet the Winemaker • April 2 • Gourmet dinner and Fess Parker wines. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-6611.

Dr. Demento: "The Doctor Is In!" • April 4 • The Doctor will re-create his radio show drawing from his collection of 250,000 records and videos. Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6847.



Taking Aim at History

The days when pioneer traders and trappers would gather to swap stories and stock up on supplies are recalled in the annual Eagle Valley Muzzleloaders Spring Rendezvous April 27-29 in Carson City. The encampment includes colorfully garbed participants giving black-powder shooting demonstrations and other historical reenactments.

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Photo: Larry Taylor

ONGOING EVENTS

Museums and Exhibits

Black History Month Art Exhibit: Thru March 2. Drawings and paintings by Edward Shephard in various media. Western Nevada Community College, Carson City, 775-445-3238.

Desert Sands Pottery: Thru March 11 The Evans Family potters in Nevada, 1936-1997 Boulder City/Hoover Dam Museum, Boulder Dam Hotel, Boulder City, 702-294-1988.

Basque Painting/Works on Paper: Thru March 16. Collaboration of the Basque Studies Program and Sheppard Fine Arts Gallery. Sheppard Fine Arts Gallery, U of N, Reno, 775-785-6658.

Outsider Art from the House of Blues Foundation: Thru March 24. Three-dimensional ethnic and folk art. Clark County Government Center, Las Vegas, 702-455-4856.

Masterworks From the Phillips Collection: Thru March 25. Paintings by Picasso, Degas, Manet, Cezanne, and van Gogh from the Phillips Collection of Washington, D.C. Bellagio, Las Vegas, 702-693-7722.

Photography and the Old West: Thru March 26. Exhibit documents key events in the westward movement and everyday life. Clark County Heritage Museum, Henderson, 702-455-7955.

Art of the Road by Cinkel and Hayes: Thru March 30. Exhibit of oil paintings that depict cars in their place in time and sculptures made from roadside objects. National Automobile Museum, Reno, 775-333-9300.

Afterimages Revisited: Sylvester Collier: Thru March 30. Black History Month exhibit by Las Vegas artist. Winchester Center, Las Vegas, 702-455-8264.

Rosemarie Iliano Art Exhibit: Thru March 31 Boulder City artist works in watercolors. Boulder Dam Hotel, Boulder City, 702-293-2138.

Irish Scenes and Scenery: Thru March 31 Photographs by five Elko photographers documenting their impressions of Ireland. Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 775-738-3418.

Honest Horse: Thru March 31 Handpainted black and white photographs of mustangs at home in Nevada's Great Basin. Las Vegas Natural History Museum, 702-384-3466.

Las Vegas History of Entertainment IV: Thru April 1 Exhibition. Clark County Heritage Museum, Henderson, 702-455-7955.

Mel Pekarsky: Desert Abstractions: Thru April 15. Paintings focus on Great Basin topography. Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 775-329-3333.

Saltworks: Wayne Barrar: Thru April 15. Photos documenting the New Zealand landscape. Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 775-329-3333.

The Figure in Contemporary Ceramics: Fourth Generation: Thru April 20. Bay Area artists. Sheppard Fine Arts Gallery, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6658.

Carolyn Mazloomi: Thru April 23. Quilt paintings. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211

Exhibit Handed Down: Nevada's Living Folk Arts: Thru April 30. Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, 702-486-5205.

Sue Fridley Watercolors: Thru May 31 Boulder Dam Hotel, Boulder City, 702-293-2128.

Great Basin Gear Exhibit: Thru June 1 Features horse gear from the 19th and 20th centuries as well as contemporary pieces by regional craftsmen. Western Folklife Center, Elko, 775-738-7508.

Buckaroos of the Great Basin: Thru June 1 Watercolor artist William Mathews chronicles life in the Great Basin. Western Folklife Center, Elko, 775-738-7508.

Nevada 2001: A Photographic Odyssey: Thru June 15. Pioneer photographers including James H. Crockwell, Al Smith, E.W. Smith, P.E. Larson, and "Northeast" Johnson. Nevada Historical Society, Reno, 775-688-1191

Lost City, Nevada's Millennial City: 1,000 Years of Change: Thru June 30. Exhibit highlights the Pueblo people in Southern Nevada. Lost City Museum, Overton, 702-397-2193.

Ranching Families of the Great Basin: Thru June 30. Historic and contemporary photos, essays, and artifacts. Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 775-738-3418.

Dale Chihuly: The George R. Stroemple Collection: March 3-April 30. Hand-blown glass sculptures. Las Vegas Art Museum, 702-360-8000.

Medium and Message: March 5-April 12. Juried digital art contest. Western Nevada Community





Afternoon Safari

A number of Nevada museums have permanent wildlife exhibits. Notable animal collections are housed at the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko (above), the Las Vegas Natural History Museum, and the Wilbur D. May Museum in Reno.

College, Carson City, 775-445-3238 for further information.

Great Nevada Picture Hunt Traveling Photo Show: March 9-11 at Winnemucca Convention Center, March 13-31 at Humboldt County Library. Displays top finishers in *Nevada Magazine's* annual photo contest. Winnemucca. 775-687-5416.

Robert Lewis: Divine Humility: March 9-April 20. Photography exhibit. Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History, UNLV, 702-895-3381

Porsche Passion: A Private Collection: April 2-Sept. 30. National Automobile Museum, Reno, 775-333-9300.

Duane Hanson: Virtual Reality: April 20-June 24. Sculptures. Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 775-329-3333.

2001: A Model Car Odyssey: April 30-Oct. 12. Judged exhibit of model cars. National Automobile Museum, Reno, 775-333-9300.

Plays, Lectures, Tours

Nevada 2001: A Photographic Odyssey Lecture Series: Bernadette Franke on Comstock photographers, March 1 Erik Lauritzen, March 15. Peter Goin, March 29. William Binzen, April 12. 20th Century Photography in Nevada, April 26. Nevada Historical Society, Reno, 775-688-1190.

Hidden Cave Tours: March 10 and 24, April 14 and 28, May 12 and 26, and June 9 and 23. Guided tour of Hidden Cave archaeological site includes self-guided tour to nearby Grimes Point petroglyph site. Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 775-423-3677

Nevada Shakespeare Festival: "The Music Man," May 3-27 "Richard III," June 8-24 and in repertory Aug. 7-19. "Twelfth Night," July 12-29 and in repertory Aug. 8-19. "Romeo and Juliet," Sept. 20-Oct. 31 Piper's Opera House, Virginia City, 775-847-0600.

Sporting Events

UNLV Men's Basketball: The Runnin' Rebels play March 1 v. Colorado State, March 3 v. Wyoming. Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, 702-895-3900.

University of Nevada Men's Basketball: The Wolf Pack plays March 1 v. Tulsa, March 3 v. Rice. Lawlor Events Center, Reno, 775-348-PACK.

Las Vegas Outlaws: The team in the new football league, the XFL, plays March 17 v. Birmingham Bolts, April 1 v. San Francisco Demons, April 7 v. Memphis Maniax. Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas, 702-242-5489.

Las Vegas 51s (formerly the Las Vegas Stars), the Los Angeles Dodgers' Triple-A team, play April 5-8 v. Tacoma, April 9-12 v. Portland, April 21-24 v. Calgary, April 26-29 v. Edmonton, May 8-11 v. Tucson, May 17-20 v. Fresno, and May 21-24 v. Tucson. Cashman Field, Las Vegas, 702-798-7825.

Farmer's Markets

Seasonal produce, entertainment, and crafts are offered in Nevada farmer's markets.

Henderson Farmer's Market: Thursdays at Henderson Convention Center. 702-565-2181

Las Vegas Farmer's Market: Wednesdays at Bruce Trent Park. Las Vegas, 702-683-GROW.

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Pay to Play Golf Tournament • April 4-6 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

"Giselle" • April 6-7 • Performed by Nevada Festival Ballet. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-686-6610.

Pioneering in Film Festival • April 6-8 • Lake Tahoe casino venues. 530-577-7770.

"Lost in Yonkers" • April 6-8 and 13-15 • Neil Simon's play about a sad, funny family. Reno Little Theater, Reno, 775-329-0661.

Easter Egg Hunt • April 7 • Idlewild Park, Reno, 775-334-2262.

Douglas High School Rodeo • April 7-8 • Douglas High School, Minden, 775-782-5957.

Aerial Assault • April 7-8 • Big air competition. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Kirkwood Jammin' VIII • April 7-15 • Ski and snowboard party with slopeside events, outrageous contests, music, carnival. Kirkwood Ski Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 209-258-6000.

SpringLoaded'01 • April 7-22 • Ski festival includes cardboard-box racing, on-snow mountain-bike races, pond skimming, boarderfests. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Huckfest Big Air Series • April 8 • Amateur competition. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Spring Hall of Fame Keno Tournament • April 8-11 • Flamingo Reno, 800-950-2WIN.

"Proteus 7" • April 9 • Brass, winds, and percussion ensemble. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-686-6610.

Euro Sled Racing • April 10 • Downhill sled race. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.



A Concert of Two

The Lightwood Duo, consisting of clarinetist Eric Nelson and guitarist Mike Christiansen, will play jazz, rock, and the classics when they perform March 22 in Lovelock.

Dummy Gelande • April 13 • Race with one rule: no live dummies on the race course. The dummy that flies the highest and farthest wins. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Reno Chamber Orchestra • April 14 • Concert. Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-348-9413.

Top Gun on Gunbarrel • April 14 • Dual mogul competition. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Easter Egg Hunt • April 15 • Diamond Peak Ski Resort, Incline Village, 775-832-1177, and Heavenly Ski Resort, South Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Tax Break Slot Tournament • April 15-16 • Peppermill, Reno, 775-826-2121.

On-Snow Mountain Bike Racing • April 17 • Dual challenge course. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Reaching for the Stars • April 18 • Dr. Buzz Aldrin, Apollo XI astronaut, will speak about his moon landing and the importance of exploration in space, 8pm. Benefit for the building of the Jack C. Davis Observatory on the Western Nevada Community College campus. Community Center, Carson City, 775-445-3240.

Harrah's Reno Horse Handicapping Tournament • April 19-21 • $500 buy-in. Harrah's Reno, 775-788-2716.

Cardboard-Box Racing • April 20 • Race combines speed, creativity, costume design. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Dollar Slot Marathon • April 20-22 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Lahontan Fish Hatchery Open House • April 21 • Educational tours. Lahontan Fish Hatchery, Gardnerville, 775-265-2425.

Nevada Opera Black and White Gala and Auction • April 21 • Dinner, dancing, auction. Eldorado, Reno, 775-786-4046.

Chili Cook-Off and Craft Fair • April 21 • Competition to create the best salsa, chile verde, and traditional red chili. Live entertainment. Topaz Lodge, Lake Topaz, 775-266-3468.

Antique Show and Sale • April 21-22 • Includes an appraisal clinic. Town Hall, Genoa, 775-782-4951.

Dog Agility Trial • April 21-22 • Benefit for canine cancer research. Northgate Park, Reno, 775-847-5205.

Earth Day Celebration • April 22 • Music, entertainment, educational exhibits. Idlewild Park, Reno, 775-323-3433.

Huckfest Big Air Series • April 22 • Amateur competition. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Mustang Rockin' Street Hop Car Show • April 22 • Open to all makes, models, and years. Holiday Inn, Reno, 775-324-1154.

Reno Philharmonic • April 22 • Concert features the Reno Philharmonic Chorus. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-323-6393.

Fly Fishing Festival • April 22 • Equipment demonstrations, classes, and casting pond. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-782-7171 for further information.

The Collective • April 26 • Jazz ensemble concert. Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6847.



From Small Fry to Fish Fry

Future fishermen can learn about local fish and fishing holes during the tours offered by the Lahontan Fish Hatchery Open House April 21 in Gardnerville.

Reno Jazz Festival • April 26-28 • 39th annual event includes more than 250 performances and clinics featuring the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, 40 jazz artists, and approximately 280 school groups. Various locations, Reno, 775-784-4046.

Spring Stag Golf Outing • April 26-29 and May 3-6 • Play at the Golf Club at Genoa Lakes and Sierra Nevada Golf Ranch. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 800-321-6983, ext. 625.

Vanguard Jazz Orchestra Concert • April 27 • Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6847.

La Tania Flamenco • April 27 • Dance, music, and song. Frank Sinatra Celebrity Showroom, Cal-Neva Resort, Crystal Bay, 530-546-4602.

Craps Madness Tournament • April 27 • Harrah's Reno, 800-HARRAHS.

Arbor Day • April 27 • Ceremonial tree planting. Idlewild Park, Reno, 775-334-2270.

Eagle Valley Muzzleloaders Spring Rendezvous • April 27-29 • Traders, trappers, black-powder shooting, and encampment. Carson City, 800-638-2321.

Winners Weekend Slot Tournament • April 27-29 • John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 800-843-2427.

Festival Showcase • April 28 • Encore performances by groups and soloists in the Reno Jazz Festival. Nightingale Hall, U of N, Reno, 775-784-6847.

Slush Pond Mania • April 28 • Arctic swimmers are judged on grace, distance, and costume design. Heavenly Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

Multi-Cultural Festival • April 28 • Ethnic food, danc-

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- 7th Annual Fly Fishing Festival -- April 22
- Spring Stag Golf Tournament -- April 26-29 & May 3-6
- Memorial Weekend Motorcycle Jamboree -- May 25-27
- Gourmet Wine & Food Weekend -- June 1-2
- Spring Fishing Derby -- June 7-8

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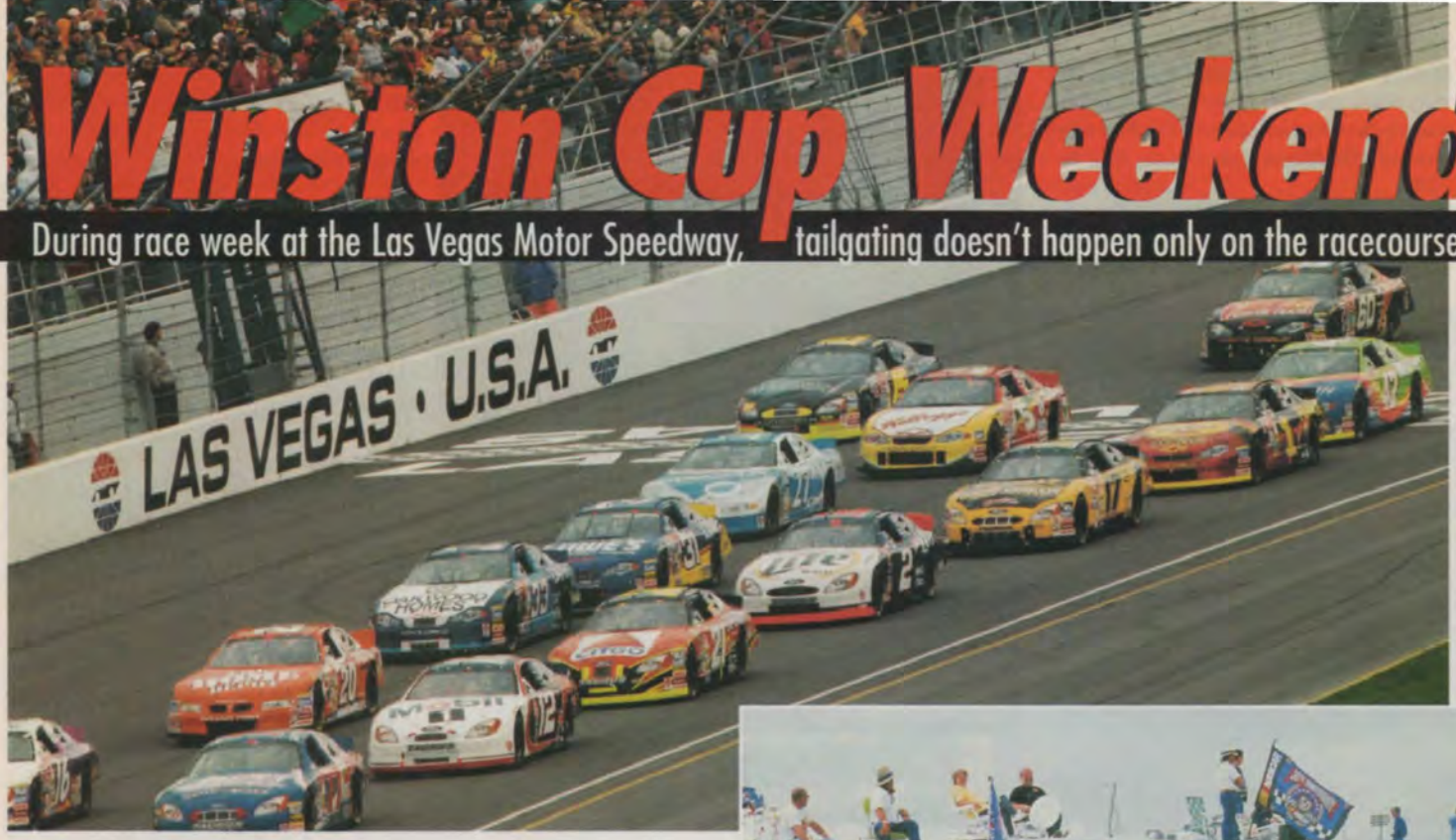
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Winston Cup Weekend

During race week at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, tailgating doesn't happen only on the racecourse.





By Mike Henderson

Amid the seriously fast action at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, spectators hone the time-honored skill of tailgating—the pre- and post-party tradition of sports events.

During the speedway's race week, February 28 through March 4, fans can attend as many as eight events. The week kicks off February 28 with a 300-lap Winston West meet. The reigning champion of the West NASCAR series is Brendan Gaughan, a Las Vegan and member of the casino-owning Gaughan family. The Winston West race will be preceded by a 20-lap dash featuring the 5/8-scale Legends cars—an open-wheel racer that can be compared to a '32 Ford after several years on Weight Watchers—and a 30-lap Grand American Modified race with local drivers behind the wheels.



Busch cars (top) get the green flag during Winston Cup race week February 28-March 4. Fans gather in RVs to tailgate and watch eight racing events including Winston West, World of Outlaws, Busch Series, and Winston Cup races. Entertainer Wayne Newton (left) congratulates Jeff Burton, last year's Winston Cup winner.

The Pennzoil World of Outlaws rolls into the speedway March 1-3 for three nights of dirt-track racing. On March 3, rising stars of the racing world line up for the Sam's Town 300 NASCAR Busch Series spectacle. Busch cars are lighter and less powerful than those driven by Winston Cup stars such as Dale Earnhardt, Dale Jarrett, Jeff Gordon, Rusty Wallace, and reigning champ Terry Labonte. Fans will see those pros in action March 4 during the Winston Cup UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400. Autograph seekers have a chance to meet Dale Jarrett from 5 to 6 p.m. on February 28 at the Winston West race.

Many spectators will spend more than one day at the track, enjoying not only the excitement of big-time racing but also that favorite American pastime—tailgate parties. Serious race fans show up with everything from pup tents to half-million-dollar motor homes, most flying the flag of their favorite driver's car number and carrying enough provisions to last until next winter. The tailgate parties start early on race day with Bloody Mary's and barbecues in the parking lot and continue well after the checkered flag has fallen. There's time to shop for souvenirs and discuss the merits of your favorite driver with tailgating neighbors. The smorgasbord menu and atmosphere can be compared to a college football game, but there is a heightened sense of drama because the players are doing 160 mph.

Last year nearly 120,000 people attended the Winston Cup race alone, and, except for the tailgaters and the few who could afford helicopter rides back to the city, those folks endured long lines of traffic in and out of the racetrack. Traffic is a way of life at major sporting events. There are, however, several ways to minimize the congestion. Overnight stays are not allowed in spectator parking, but the lot is open 24 hours. A 6 a.m. arrival should have you there in time for a pre-race nap and breakfast. The speedway offers an RV park where fans can park Tuesday through Monday at a cost of $125. Infield RV parking is $500 and $600, which includes six general admission wristbands.

Ticket Info: Race tickets cost: Winston West, $25; World of Outlaws, $25 general, $30 and $35 reserved; Busch Series, $30 to $60; and Winston Cup, $55 to $80. For the first time, fans attending Orleans Pole Day on March 2 can purchase pit passes for an additional $25.

Mike Henderson majored in tailgate parties at UNLV.

Photos: Tom Donoghue/Las Vegas Motor Speedway (top), Larry Cantrall (middle, bottom)

ing, music, art. Western Nevada Community College, Carson City, 775-445-3238.

Music by Women II • April 29 • Carson City Symphony performs Gwyneth Walker's "Symphony of Grace." Community Center, Carson City, 775-883-4154.

Meet the Author • April 29 • Book-signing with local and regional authors. Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center, Gardnerville, 775-782-2555.

Tax Time Blues Slot Tournament • April 29-May 1 • Flamingo Reno, 800-950-2WIN.

Carson Valley Inn/Genoa Lakes Pro-Am Golf Tournament • April 30 • Each pro player plays with a team of four amateurs. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 800-321-6983, ext. 625.

Rural Territories

Camelot Blackjack Tournament • March 4-6 • Peppermill, Wendover, 775-664-0521.

Shooting the West XIII • March 8-11 • Photography symposium for professionals and amateurs led by world-renowned photographers. Event includes a photo contest. Convention Center, Winnemucca, 800-962-2638.

Wells Chariot Races • March 9-11 • All the excitement of Ben Hur's crowd, with a calcutta for added interest. Wells, 775-752-3540.

Nevada State Indoor Motocross Championships • March 9-11 • Spring Creek Horse Palace, Elko, 775-753-7362.

Hidden Cave Tour • March 10 and 14 • Guided tour to archaeological site. Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 775-423-3677.

Tankslappers Off-Road Motorcycle Race • March 12 • Winnemucca Dry Lake, Winnemucca, 775-322-1499.

Lightwood Duo • March 22 • Clarinetist Eric Nelson and guitarist Mike Christiansen play jazz, rock, and the classics. Community Center, Lovelock, 775-841-5797.

Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats • March 25 • Community Concert Series. Convention Center, Elko, 775-738-5475.

Book Signing • March 30 • *Desert Tour* by Arthur and Bonnie Gersert, story about Montello in Elko County. Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 775-738-3418.

Terrible's Town 250 • April 6-8 • Off-road race. Pahrump, 702-457-5775.

Summit Racing ET Series Opener • April 8 • Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.

Nostalgia Drag Racing • April 13-15 • American Drag Racing Association. Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.

Hidden Cave Tour • April 14 and 28 • Guided tour to archaeological site. Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 775-423-3677.

Ronnie Cole Trio • April 20 • Jazz concert. Convention Center, Elko, 775-738-5475.

Confederate Memorial Service • April 21 • Nevada Civil War Volunteers honor Confederate and Union veterans buried in the Churchill County Cemetery. Fallon, 775-423-8797.

Walker Lake Loon Festival • April 21 • Free boat rides to observe waterfowl. Sportsmen's Beach, Walker Lake, Hawthorne, 775-945-5896.

SCCA Reno Region Autocross • April 21-22 • Idaho and Nevada Challenge. Winnemucca, 775-828-0608.

Winnemucca Grand Prix • April 22 • 250-mile off-road motorcycle race. Winnemucca, 775-623-6888.

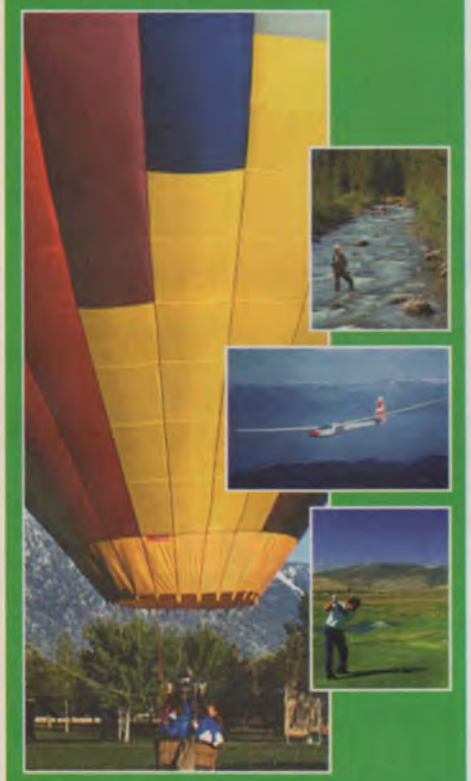
Nevada State Championship Motorcycle Race • April







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Summer Time is Fair Time

Fairgoers arrive early to watch the colorful parade during the Lyon County Fair and Rodeo, August 16-19 in Yerington. In addition to the rodeo, visitors will find a carnival, tractor pull, hay boom, dance, and demolition derby.

28 • Off-road race. Panaca, call 702-437-MRAN.
ET Race, Summit Play Day • April 28 • Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.
Street Stocks, IMCA Mods, Hobby Stock Cars • April 28 • Reno-Fernley Raceway, Fernley, 775-575-7217.
Slot Tournament • April 29-May 1 • Rainbow Hotel, Wendover, 775-664-0521.

Coming Events

Cinco de Mayo Chili Cook-Off • May 5 • Virginia City, 775-847-0311.
Spring Jamboree • May 5-6 • Car show. Boulder City, 702-293-2034.
Las Vegas Jazz Society Picnic • May 6 • Las Vegas, 702-455-7340.
ArtFest of Henderson • May 13-14 • Arts, crafts, and music. 702-566-2681.
RSVP Spring Fun Fair • May 16-20 • Carson City, 775-687-4680.
Fly-In and Air Show • May 19-20 • Fernley, 775-463-2245.
Portuguese Festa • May 19-20 • Fallon, 775-423-2223 for information.
Nevada Open Road Challenge • May 20 • Car race from Lund to Hiko. Pre-race activities in Ely. 775-289-8877.
Snow Mountain Powwow • May 25-27 • Las Vegas, 702-386-3926.
Kit Carson Trail Wild West Tour • May 26 • Home tour. Carson City, 775-687-7410.
Dayton's 150th Birthday, 1851-2001 • May 26-27 • Dayton, 775-246-3256.
Portuguese Festival and Parade • May 26-27 • Lovelock, 775-273-2566.
Lincoln County Homecoming • May 26-28 • Caliente, 775-726-3129.
VORRA Off-Road Race • May 26-28 • Yerington, 775-463-2245.
Spring Fling Car Show • June 1-2 • Yerington, 775-463-2245.
Railroad Days • June 1-3 • Historical festival. Beatty, 775-553-2424.
Mule Show and Races • June 2-3 • Winnemucca, 775-623-2220.
Portuguese Celebration • June 2-3 • Yerington, 775-463-2763.
Street Fever/Ramada Inn Show and Shine • June 2-3 • Classic cars. Lovelock, 775-273-3151.
Carson City Rendezvous • June 8-10 • Civil War reenactment. Carson City, 775-687-7410.
Winnemucca Basque Festival • June 9-10 • 775-63-5071.
Farwest Regional and International Wheelchair Tennis Championship • June 14-17 • Reno, 775-852-7077.
Fiddler's Contest • June 15-17 • Wells, 775-752-3540.
Cool Caddy Nights • June 15-17 • Cadillac and custom car show. Sparks, 925-634-1188.
Gridley Days • June 16-17 • Austin, 775-964-2200.
All-City Festival • June 16-17 • Classic cars. Carlin, 775-754-6354.
Father's Day Steam-Up • June 16-17 • Train ride. Carson City, 775-687-6953.
Toast of Victorian Square • June 16-17 • Art and jazz festival. Sparks, 775-353-2291.
Reno Rodeo • June 16-24 • 775-329-3877.
RC Flyers Fly-In • June 17 • Remote control aircraft. Wells, 775-752-3540.
Karson Kruzers' Run What Cha Brung • June 22-24 • Car show. Fuji Park, Carson City, 775-882-0829 or 775-883-0927.
Tonopah 300 • June 22-24 • Off-road race. Tonopah, 702-457-5775.
Snowshoe Thompson Festival • June 23-24 • Genoa, 775-265-6097.
HITS Tahoe • June 27-July 29 • Hunter-jumper horse show. Minden, 775-783-8907.
National Basque Festival • June 30-July 1 • Elko, 775-738-7135.

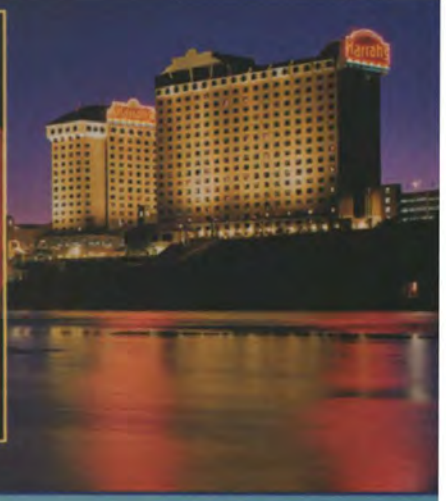
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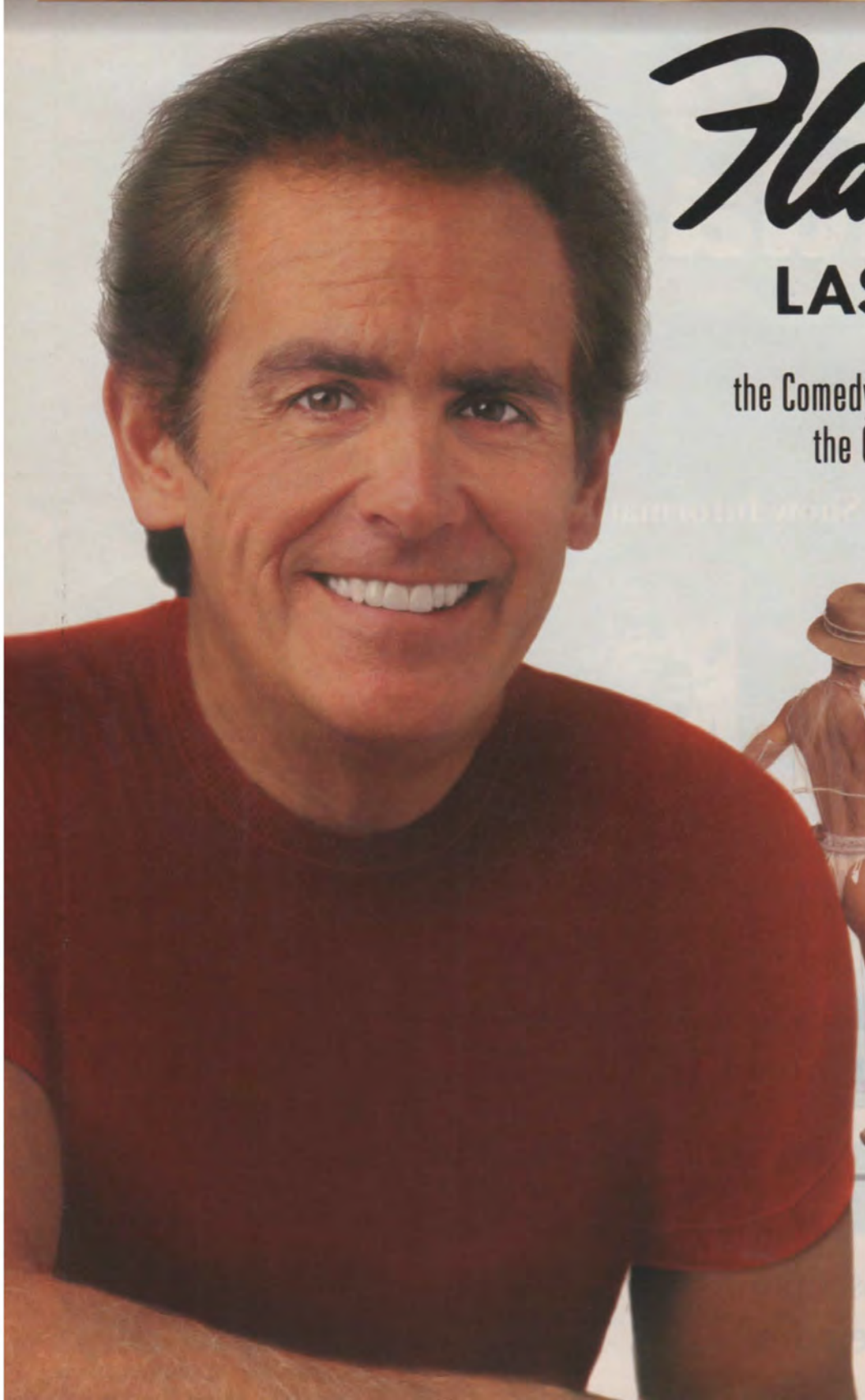
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Nevada Showguide

Where the stars and shows are playing in March and April.

Nevada clubs and hotels offer big-name entertainment and production shows. During March and April, Tim Conway and Harvey Korman appear in Las Vegas, Laughlin, and Reno. In Las Vegas, tenor Andrea Bocelli performs at Mandalay Bay, and the Backstreet Boys headline at MGM Grand. In Reno, Merle Haggard and Don McLean play the Peppermill, while Hootie and the Blowfish entertain at Caesars Tahoe. Here, *Nevada Magazine* presents a guide to featured performers. Showrooms often fill fast, so call ahead for show times and reservations. Las Vegas Territory's area code is 702; the rest of the state's area code is 775.



Egyptian Fantasy on the Strip

"Midnight Fantasy," the adult production show at the Luxor in Las Vegas, begins its second year with new music, costumes, and choreography. Dancer and impressionist Sean Cooper and equilibrist Jean Nedel have joined the all-female cast. Shown (clockwise) are Charidy, Betsy, Jennifer, and Stacy.

Las Vegas Territory

BOULDER CITY

Hacienda • 293-5000 or 800-245-6380: Between Boulder City and Hoover Dam.

HENDERSON

Joker's Wild • 564-8100: Live entertainment Wed.-Sun.

Reserve • 558-7000: Wasimba's Lounge: Bands play nightly.

Sunset Station • 547-7777: Club Madrid: Tommy Chong, March 2. Ahmad Jamal, March 3. David Benoit, March 10. Hiroshima, April 6. Fattburger, April 14. B.J. Thomas, July 21. Paula Poundstone, July 28. Michael Franks, Aug. 11. Don Williams, Nov. 10. Jerry Tiffe and His Orchestra play Wed. 2-4 p.m. Louie Louie plays Wed. 10pm-midnight, Fri.-Sat. at 11pm-1am. Sunset Amphitheater: Nazareth/Blue Oyster Cult, May 5.

JEAN

Gold Strike Hotel • 477-5000 or 800-634-1359: Bands play nightly except Tues.

Nevada Landing • 387-5000 or 800-628-6682: Bands appear nightly except Wed.

LAS VEGAS

Aladdin • 877-333-WISH: Theater for the Performing Arts: Sarah Brightman, March 3. Blue Note Jazz Club: Gato Barbieri, thru March 3. The Funky Meters, March 8-10. Ben E. King and His Jazz Big Band, March 26-31. Will Downing with Gerald Albright, April 2-7.

Alexis Park • 391-4634: Janis Carter, jazz singer, 5-8pm Fridays.

Arizona Charlie's • 258-5200: Naughty Ladies Saloon: Sonny Charles and Sweet Louie: The Checkmates, thru March 1. Tex and the Killa Band featuring Paris Red, March 6-18. Sonny Charles and Sweet Louie: The Checkmates, March 20-April 8. Bands play nightly.

Arizona Charlie's East • 951-5800: The Lounge: The Fortunes, thru March 4.

Bally's • 739-4111 or 800-237-SHOW: Jubilee Theater: "Jubilee!" (dark Tues.). Indigo Lounge: Van McGlothen on piano nightly except Tues.

Barbary Coast • 737-7111: Bands play nightly. Karaoke, Mon.

Bellagio • 888-987-6667: Cirque du Soleil's "O," indf. (dark Wed.-Thurs., and April 23-24.). Musicians play in the Allegro, Petrossian, and Fontana lounges and the Baccarat Bar at the Las Vegas Strip hotel-casino.

Boardwalk Casino Holiday Inn • 730-3194: Lighthouse Showroom: "Dream King: Trent Carlini," Elvis impersonator.

Boulder Station • 432-7777 or 800-683-7777: The Railhead: Merle Haggard, March 16-17. Chad Brock, March 23. Freddie Jackson, March 24. Loretta Lynn, April 12-13. Jerry Vale, April 27-28. Ronnie Milsap, May 12. Don McLean, July 6-7. Najee, Sept. 15. Jerry Vale, Oct. 26-27. Free blues concerts Thurs. Free rock concerts Sun. Jerry Tiffe and His Orchestra, Thurs. 2-4pm. KIXX: Rocco Barbato, 1-4pm Sun.; country music, Wed.; Tommy Rocker, Thurs.; Yellow Brick Road, Fri.-Sat.

Bourbon Street • 737-7200: Bourbon Street Theatre: Dr. Naughty, adult hypnotist show (dark Sun.). "Naughty Bones Comedy Troupe," adult stand-up comedy. "Viva Elvis Starring Michael Conti," 5pm (dark Sun.). "Aloha Elvis Starring Michael Conti," 8:30pm (dark Sun.). Bourbon Street Bar: "Mark Dejulio" (dark Tues.).

Caesars Palace • 731-7333 or 800-445-4544: Bands play in the Forum and La Piazza lounges, the Terrazza restaurant, and Cleopatra's Barge. Piano music in the Galleria Bar. Magicians such as Bob Jardine and Alain Nu perform Tues.-Sat. in the Secret Pagoda and Sultan's Palace theaters at Caesars Magical Empire.

Casino Royale • 737-3500: Cafe Trilussa: Piano music

nightly (dark Tues. and Wed.) at the Casino Royale.
Castaways (former Showboat) • 383-9232 or 800-826-2800: Castaways Lounge: Entertainment nightly (dark Mon.-Wed.). Bands play in the Castaways Outer Bar nightly except Mon.
Circus Circus • 734-0410 or 800-444-CIRCUS: Free circus acts from 11am to midnight.
Excalibur • 597-7600: King Arthur's Arena: "Tournament of Kings," music-dinner show. Court Jesters Stage: Strolling entertainers, 10am-10pm. Minstrels Lounge: Live bands and dancing. Music in the Lance-a-Lotta Pasta and Camelot restaurants.
Fitzgeralds Holiday Inn • 388-2400 or 800-274-LUCK (U.S. outside Nevada): Michael Kennedy's "Tribute to Elvis," Thurs.-Sun. on the casino floor.
Flamingo Las Vegas • 733-3333 or 800-221-7299: Flamingo Showroom: "Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus," musical comedy (dark Tues.). "Bottom's Up," 2 and 4pm, indf. (dark Sun.). "Bill Acosta: Lasting Impressions" (dark Fri.). Bugsy's Celebrity Theatre: "Second City," improv comedy sketches, opens March 20. "Hip-Nosis: Playin' With Your Head," starring Justin Tranz, R-rated comedy show, midnight Fri.-Sat., indf.
Flamingo O'Shea's • 737-1343: Comedy Theater: "Hip-Nosis: Playin' With Your Head," starring Justin Tranz, R-rated comedy show, 9pm Tues.-Sat. "Legends of Comedy," impersonator showcase, (dark Sun.).
Four Queens • 385-4011 or 800-634-6045.
Four Seasons • 632-5000: Piano entertainment during Traditional Afternoon High Tea in the Verandah restaurant, 2-5pm daily.
Gold Coast • 367-7111 or 888-402-6278 (U.S. outside Nevada): East Lounge: Bands play nightly except Mon. Karaoke nightly in the West Lounge. Gold Coast Showroom: "Honky Tonk Angels" with tributes to Dolly Parton, Reba McEntire, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, and Faith Hill, impersonator revue (indf.). Latin Breeze, Fri.-Sat. (indf.). Ballroom dancing with disk jockey Larry Taylor Tues. and Sun.
Golden Gate • 385-1906: Live piano, noon-midnight. Jazz trio Sun. and Wed. evenings.
Golden Nugget • 385-7111: Golden Nugget Showroom: David Brenner, thru April 29. Bands play in the Oasis Lounge nightly except Mon.
Hard Rock Hotel • 226-4650: The Joint: Face to Face, March 3. Erykah Badu, March 14.
Harrah's Las Vegas • 369-5111: Clint Holmes Theatre: Clint Holmes, musical variety show (dark Wed.). Comedy Cabaret: Comedy club nightly except Mon. "Skintight," musical production (dark Thurs.). Mac King Comedy Magic Show, 1 and 3pm Tues.-Sat. Carnaval Court: Cook E. Jarr, Fri.-Sat. 11:45pm. Bands play outdoors till midnight. Music nightly in the La Playa Lounge and Range Steakhouse Lounge.
Imperial Palace • 794-3261: Imperial Theatre: "Legends in Concert," celebrity impersonator show (dark Sun.). Kabuki Lounge: Bands play 4:30pm-1:40am.
Key Largo • 733-7777: Sand Bar Lounge: Bands provide live entertainment.
Lady Luck • 477-3000 or 800-523-9582: Lady Luck Theater: "Stars of the Strip," comedy impersonators, 2 and 3:30pm Mon.-Fri. Fielding West: Magic and comedy show, Sun.-Thurs.
Las Vegas Hilton • 732-5755 or 800-222-5361: Hilton Theater: Tim Conway and Harvey Korman, March 8-10. Wynonna Judd, March 22-24. The Commodores, March 30-31. Damon Wayans, April 27-28. The Night Club: Scintas, Tues.-Sun. Jazz in the Benihana Lounge, 4-8pm Mon.-Fri.
Luxor • 262-4400: Luxor Theatre: "Blue Man Group: Live at the Luxor," percussion theater. Pharaoh's Theater: "Midnight Fantasy," production show (dark Mon.). Ra Nightclub at Luxor: DJs Wed.-Sat. Nefertiti's Lounge: Entertainment nightly except Thursday.
Main Street Station • 387-1896 or 800-713-8933.
Mandalay Bay • 877-632-7400: Mandalay Bay Events Center: Events Center: The Last Word: Evander Holyfield v. John Ruiz 2, March 3, WBA heavyweight title match. Katarina Witt's Kisses on Ice, March 10, ice skating spectacular with Brian Orser, Viktor Petrenko, Alexei Urmanov, and Surya Bonaly. Andrea Bocelli with the Russian Symphony Orchestra, March 24. Mandalay Bay





Judd Country

Wynonna Judd has a full spring schedule in Nevada with appearances March 22-24 at the Las Vegas Hilton, March 30 at the Reno Hilton, and March 31-April 1 at Caesars Tahoe in Stateline.

Theatre: Entertainment TBA. House of Blues: BB King, March 3. Gospel Brunch, 10am and 1pm Sun. Live blues Thurs.-Sat. in the Courtyard. After-hours dancing begins at 11pm. Bands play in the Island, Orchid, and Coral Reef lounges.

MGM Grand • 891-7777 or 800-929-1111: EFX Theatre: "EFX," starring Rick Springfield, special-effects production show (dark Sun.-Mon.). Hollywood Theatre: David Copperfield, thru March 7. George Carlin, March 8-21. Rodney Dangerfield, March 22-28. Carrot Top, March 29-April 4. Cabaret Theatre: Entertainment TBA. Grand Garden Arena: Backstreet Boys, March 8 and 10. Copenhagen Cup, June 14-16, finale of the Wrangler ProRodeo Tour. Studio 54: Dancing nightly. Live entertainment in the Show Bar Lounge, Brown Derby, Betty Boop Bar, and Gatsby's.

The Mirage • 792-7777: Siegfried and Roy Theater: "Siegfried and Roy," magic spectacular (dark Wed.-Thurs.). Danny Gans Theatre: Impressionist Danny Gans performs nightly (dark Fri. and Mon.). Bands play in the Lagoon Saloon and Corner and Baccarat bars (piano bar). Samba Grill: Brasilia 2000, Fri. and Sat.

Monte Carlo • 730-7000: Lance Burton Theatre: "Lance Burton, Master Magician" (dark Sun.-Mon.). Top 40, disco, country, and classic-rock dance music nightly in the Monte Carlo Pub and Brewery.

New Frontier • 794-8200: Frontier Showroom: "The King in Concert" starring Tim Welch, 4pm. "All Shook Up," starring Tim Welch and the Inspirations, 7pm. Kenny Kerr and Friends, 8:30 and 10pm (dark Sun.) Gilley's Saloon: Bands play nightly Tues.-Sat.

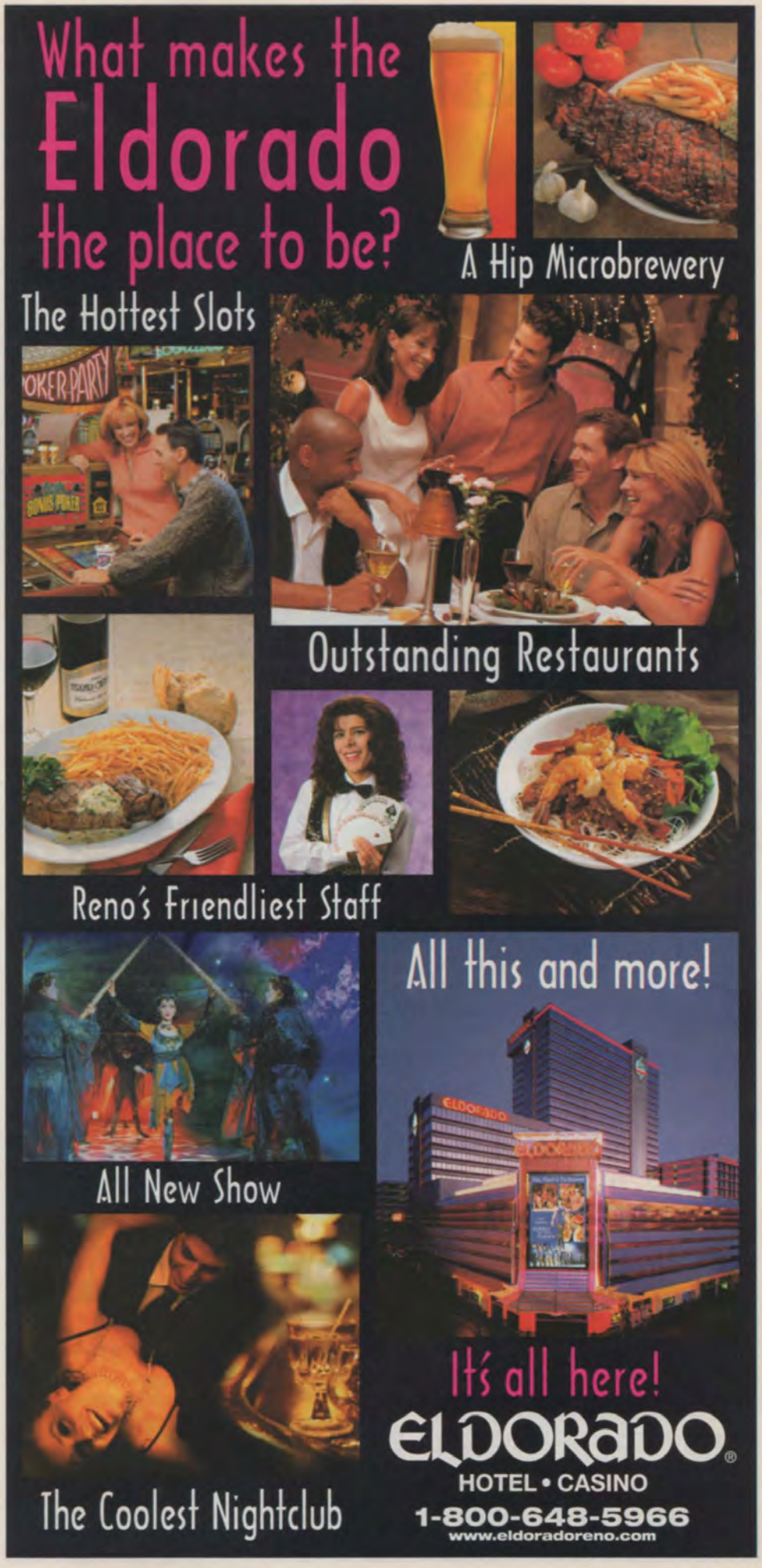
New York-New York • 740-6969: Broadway Theatre: "Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance" (dark Sun.-Mon.). Bands play in the Empire Bar. The N.Y.P.D. (New York Piano Duos) dueling pianos play 8pm-3am nightly in the Bar at Times Square. The Lounge at New York-New York: Café Karaoke.

The Orleans • 800-ORLEANS: Orleans Showroom: Righteous Brothers, thru March 4. Everly Brothers, March 7-11. Roy Clark, March 15-18. Jerry Lewis, March 22-25. Lorrie Morgan, March 30-April 1. Pat Benatar, April 6-8. Bo Diddley, April 12-14. Tanya Tucker, April 19-



Mr. Smooth

Clint Holmes, a saloon singer in the Las Vegas tradition, wraps his vocal cords around ballads, jazzy standards, and rock music as the headliner at Harrah's Las Vegas.



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22. Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell, April 27-29. Bourbon Street Cabaret: Bands play nightly (dark Mon.).

Palace Station • 367-2411 or 800-634-3101: Sound Trax Nightclub: "Rock The Palace," tributes to popular bands, Thurs.-Sat. Bands play Fri.-Sat. in the Palace Saloon.

Paris Las Vegas • 800-237-SHOW: Le Theatre de Arts: Bobby Vinton, March 9-10. Moody Blues, April 5-8. Dennis Miller, April 27-28. Bands like Darcus play in Le Cabaret Show Lounge (dark Tues.). Napoleon's Cigar Bar: Jazz trio plays nightly except Tues.

The Plaza • 800-634-6575: Plaza Showroom: "Naked Angels" with Pete Barbutti, revue, (dark Mon.). "Houdini Lives Again," magic show, 4pm Tues.-Sun. Omaha Lounge: Dusty Barron and the Sunspots play daily except Mon.

Regent Las Vegas • 877-869-8777: J.C. Wooloughan Irish Pub: John Windsor's Irish Sing-A-Long, Wed.-Thurs. Wild Celtic Boys, Fri.-Sat. "Sunday Jig Session," Irish step dancers, 4-8pm, Sun. Addison's Lounge: The Rave, thru March 14, Thurs.-Sat.

Rio Suite Hotel • 252-7776 or 800-PLAYRIO (U.S. and Canada): Copacabana Entertainment Complex: Entertainment TBA. De La Guarda Theatre: "De La Guarda," avante-garde off-Broadway interactive experience (indf.). Masquerade Show in the Sky: Carnival-themed parade with exotic floats and costumes above the casino, every two hours beginning at 4, 6, 8, 10pm (dark Tues.-Wed.). Samba Theatre: Entertainment TBA. RioBamba Cabaret: Earl Turner and his band. Entertainment in the Ipanema Piano Bar and Voodoo Lounge. Club Rio: Nightclub open for late-night dancing Wed.-Sat. at the Rio.

Riviera • 794-9301: Splash Theatre: "Splash," production show. Top of the Riv: Brett Butler, March 2-3. Amazing Jonathan, May 25-27. Royale Pavilion: Village People, April 20-21. La Cage Theatre (third floor): "An Evening at La Cage," celebrity female impersonators revue (dark Tues.) Mardi Gras Plaza (second level): "Crazy Girls: Sensuality and Passion," adult revue (dark Mon.). "Riviera Comedy Club," comedians appear nightly. Le Bistro Lounge: "Tribute to Elvis" with Jim LeBoef, 4-7:30pm Fri.-Sun.; Jazz on the Strip, Mon.; Lon Bronson's All-Star Band, Sat.; bands play Tues.-Sun. in the lounge.

Sahara • 737-2515: Sahara Theatre: Magician Steve Wyrick, indf. (dark Tues.). Congo Room: "The Rat Pack Is Back" (dark Mon.). Bands play in the Casbar Lounge.

Sam's Town • 454-8048: Sam's Town Live: Travis Tritt, March 1-3. Peabo Bryson/Regina Belle, March 8-9. Little Anthony and the Imperials/Spinners, March 10. Dave Koz, March 17. Isley Brothers, March 18. Jerry Lee Lewis, March 23-24. Latin concert, March 28. Player, March 30. Bill Engvall, April 6-7. Bella Fleck and the Flecktones, April 14. Roxy's Saloon: Bands play. Mystic Falls Park: Laser and water show at 2, 6, 8, 10pm.

San Remo • 739-9000 or 800-522-7366: Parisian Cabaret: "Les Trix," featuring the Showgirls of Magic and comedian Joe Trammel. Bonne Chance Lounge: Entertainers perform nightly.

Santa Fe • 658-4900: The Lounge: Soul'd Out, Fri.-Sat. Country line dancing and karaoke, Tues. Jerry Tiffe and His Orchestra, Wed. 7-11pm.

Silverton • 263-7777 or 800-588-7711: Rattlesnake Rickey's Saloon: Entertainment TBA. Bands play nightly.

Stardust • 732-6111 or 800-824-6033: Wayne Newton Theatre: Wayne Newton, March 1, 3-4, 18-April 30. Chicago, March 7-10 and 15-18. Conference Center: Ray Anthony, April 7. Russ Morgan Orchestra, July 14. Ray Anthony, Sept. 22. Bands play in the Stardust Lounge.

Stratosphere • 382-4446 or 800-99-TOWER: Broadway Showroom: "American Superstars," impersonator revue (dark Thurs.). "Viva Las Vegas," musical revue, 2 and 4pm daily except Sun. Entertainment in the Top of the World and Oasis lounges.

Suncoast • 636-7111: Showroom: Elvin Bishop, March 10-11. The Smothers Brothers, March 16-18. The Lettermen, April 6-8. Jimmy Fitzgerald's Band plays for dancing on first Wed., and DJ Larry Taylor plays on second, third, and fourth Wed.

Treasure Island • 894-7111: Cirque du Soleil in "Mystère" (dark Mon.-Tues. and April 1 and 4). Music in Captain

Morgan's piano bar. Hideaway Lounge: Performers nightly in the lounge at Treasure Island on the Strip.

Tropicana • 739-2411: Tiffany Theatre: "The Best of the Folies Bergere" (dark Thurs.). "The Magic of Rick Thomas," 2 and 4pm daily except Fri. Tropics Lounge: "The Birdman of Las Vegas," 11am, 12:30, and 2pm except Thurs. "T. Fox and the Fox City Show" (dark Mon.-Tues.). Celebration Lounge: Bands play nightly. Comedy Stop Theatre: "The Comedy Stop," stand-up comedy nightly.

Vacation Village • 897-1700 or 800-658-5000: Koo Koo's Lounge: Bands play nightly.

Venetian • 733-5000: Showroom at the Venetian: Andre-Philippe, singing impressionist (dark Tues. and Thurs.). Melinda: First Lady of Magic (dark Wed.).

Westward Ho • 731-2900: Westward Ho Lounge: Crown Room: "Ho-Waiian Luau" dinner and show, Wed. and Sat. Bands play nightly except Sat.-Sun. in the lounge.

Wild West Gambling Hall • 740-0000.

World Trade Center • 369-5750: International Showroom: Michael la Rocca Show, one-man musical review (indf.).



Purely Classical

Tenor Andrea Bocelli performs March 24 at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. It will be the singer's only West Coast appearance, which also marks the hotel's second anniversary. Bocelli will be accompanied by the 78-piece Russian Symphony Orchestra.

LAUGHLIN

Avi • 535-5555: Arrowweed Lounge: Bands play nightly.

Colorado Belle • 298-4000: Bands play in the Boiler Room Microbrewery and Restaurant.

Edgewater • 298-2453: Kokopelli's Lounge: Bands play Tues.-Sun., karaoke on Mon.

Flamingo Laughlin • 298-5028 or 800-435-8469: Club Flamingo: "Dancing to the Hitz," thru May (dark Fri.). Flamingo Ballroom: Tim Conway and Harvey Korman, March 7. Neal McCoy, March 18. Outdoor Amphitheater: Engelbert Humperdinck, April 14. Styx, April 27-28. Billy Ray Cyrus, May 18.

Golden Nugget Laughlin • 298-7111 or 800-237-1739: Tarzan's Nightclub: Top 40 format dance bands play Thurs.-Sun. DJ Tues.-Wed.

Harrah's Laughlin • 298-4600 or 800-447-8700: Fiesta Showroom: "Ayala: The Time Is Now," magic production with illusionist Ayala, thru May 15 (dark Wed.-Thurs.).

Ramada Express • 298-4200 or 800-243-6846: Pavilion Theatre: Riders in the Sky, March 3-4. Blarney, March 14-17. Caboose Lounge: Bands play nightly except Mon. Karaoke Madness, Mon. Swing and Latin dance contests, 5pm daily. Train rides also are available at the hotel.

River Palms • 298-2242 or 800-835-7904: Bands or DJ music nightly in the Bermuda Club Lounge. Karaoke with Don West, 4-7pm Wed.

Riverside Resort • 298-2535 or 800-227-3849 ext. 616: Don's Celebrity Theatre: Mel Tillis, March 6-11. "Spirit of Ireland," March 13-27.

MESQUITE

CasaBlanca • 346-7529 or 800-459-7529: CasaBlanca Showroom: America, March 17. Hypnotist Michael Mezmer, April 13-14. Bellamy Brothers, April 28. Comedy shows Fri.-Sat. when there is no headliner. Bands play nightly except Mon. in the CasaBlanca Skydome Lounge.

Eureka Casino Hotel • 346-4646: Wild Cactus Lounge: Fun Fool's Karaoke, Tues. Bands play Wed.-Sat

Si Redd's Oasis • 346-5232 or 800-621-0187: Redd Boot Saloon: Video and live DJ, Fri. and Sat. Sandy Hackett's Comedy Club on Sat. Cabaret Lounge: Bands play.

Virgin River • 346-7777 or 800-346-7721: Bands like Wheels play in the casino lounge nightly except Mon.

NORTH LAS VEGAS

Fiesta Casino • 631-7000: Roxy's Theatre: Headliners TBA. Bands play nightly in the Cabo Lounge. Gardunos Restaurant: Mariachis play 10:30am-2:30pm Sun.

Jerry's Nugget • 399-3000: Royal Street Lounge: Dance bands play Fri. and Sat.

Texas Station • 631-1001: Dallas Events Center: Johnny Gill, March 17. Charlie Pride, Aug. 25. The Armadillo: Sunday Swing with Jerry Tiffe, 4-8pm Sun. Loveshack, 10pm-2am Fri. and Sat.

PRIMM

Buffalo Bill's Resort • 800-FUN-STOP: Star of the Desert Arena: Entertainment TBA. Stage Bar: Bands play Thurs.-Sun. Carolee's Comedy Club: Guest comedians, Fri. and Sat nights.



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Primm Valley • 800-FUN-STOP. The Piano Bar: Pianist Thurs.-Sun.
Whiskey Pete's • 800-FUN-STOP. Entertainment TBA.

Reno-Tahoe Territory

CARSON AREA

Carson Nugget • Carson City, 882-1626 or 800-426-5239 (continental U.S. including Nevada): Nugget Show Bar: Bands like Big Tiny Little, Motifs, Blind Date, and White Wing play nightly except Mon.
Carson Station • Carson City, 883-0900: Bands play nightly except Mon.
Carson Valley Inn • Minden, 782-9711 or 800-321-6983: Shannon Ballroom: California Beach Party performs the music of the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean, March 2. Captain Fantastic: A Tribute to Elton John, March 31. Comedy Night Live with Tom McGillen and Kristy McHugh, March 16. Bands play in the Cabaret Lounge for dancing nightly except Mon.
Piñon Plaza • Carson City, 885-9000: Sports Book Lounge: Bands play Wed.-Sun.
Sharkey's Nugget • Gardnerville, 782-3133: Live music and dancing, Fri.-Sat. Also, extensive displays of boxing, circus, and rodeo memorabilia.
Topaz Lodge • Topaz Lake, 266-3339: Bands play Fri.-Sat.

RENO/SPARKS

Atlantis • 825-4700 or 800-723-6500: Grand Ballroom: "Class of the 70s," March 16. "Thunder From Down Under," Australian male revue, May 14-19. Danny Marona, May 25-27. Bands play nightly in the Center Stage Cabaret.
Boomtown • 345-6000: Boomtown Cabaret: Entertainers play nightly (dark Sun. and Mon.).
Club Cal Neva-Virginian • 323-1046, 877-777-7303. Bands play on Fri. and Sat.
Circus Circus • 329-0711: Free daily circus acts, 11am-10:30pm at the downtown Reno hotel-casino.
Eldorado • 786-5700, 800-648-5966 (U.S. outside Nevada) or 800-648-3024 (Canada). Eldorado Showroom: "One World," production show, indf. (dark Mon.). Brew Brothers: Bands like the Dynatones, Rubber Biscuit, and Mud Puppies play nightly at the microbrewery. Piano music in Bistro Roxy. BuBinga Lounge: Dance to DJs and bands like Steel Breeze, Panama, and Fahrenheit.



Screaming Teenagers

Backstreet Boys Nick Carter, Howie Dorough, Brian Littrell, AJ McClean, and Kevin Richardson will make young hearts throb March 8 and 10 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.



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Eddie's Fabulous '50s • 329-1950: Lounge entertainment. DJ music at Reno Live at Eddie's.
Fitzgeralds • 785-3300 or 800-648-5022 (U.S. outside Nevada): Bands perform nightly.
Flamingo Reno • 785-7080: Flamingo Showroom: "Jubilation," adult dance production (dark Thurs.). Showspot Lounge: Colin Ross Duo on Thurs.-Sat., Nightflight on Wed.-Sun. Entertainment at the Top of the Flamingo restaurant (dark Tues.).
Harrah's Reno • 788-3773 or 800-HARRAHS: Sammy's Showroom: "Dancin' in the Streets," revue, 7:30pm Sun.-Fri. and 7pm Sat. (dark Thurs.). "erocktica 2000.com," adult revue, 10pm Sun.-Fri., 9:30 and 11:30pm Sat. (dark Thurs.). The Plaza: Entertainment TBA.
John Ascuaga's Nugget • Sparks, 356-3304 or 800-648-1177: Celebrity Showroom: War, March 9-10. Mel Tillis, March 15-18 and 22-25. Bellamy Brothers, April 6-7. Lou Rawls, April 19-22. Bill Engvall, May 18-19. Tower of Power, May 25-27. Rose Ballroom: Jeff Foxworthy, June 15-16. Bands play nightly in the Casino Cabaret and Trader Dick's at the Nugget.
Peppermill • 826-2121 or 800-648-6992: Tahoe Grand Showroom: Merle Haggard, March 11. Mickey Rooney, March 17. Highway 101, April 21. Don McLean, June 30. Bands play in the Cabaret Lounge.
Rail City Casino • Sparks, 359-9440: Entertainers play on weekends in Rail City's Side Track Lounge.
Ramada Inn and Speakeasy Casino • 329-7400: Pretty Boy Floyd's Bar features karaoke (Mon.) and live music.
Reno Hilton • 789-2285 or 800-648-3568 (U.S. outside Nevada): Hilton Theater: "Carnival of Wonders," magic revue (dark Fri.). Pat Benatar, March 23. Wynonna Judd, March 30. The Garage: RET plays thru April 1.
Riverboat • 322-1671.
Sands Regency • 775-348-2200: Empress Lounge: Entertainment nightly except Sun.-Mon. Comedians perform in the Just For Laughs Comedy Club (dark Mon.-Tues.).
Silver Club • Sparks, 358-4771 or 800-648-1137 (U.S. outside Nevada).
Silver Legacy • 329-4777 or 800-225-BASS (U.S., Canada, and Mexico): Grande Exposition Hall: Engelbert Humperdinck, March 30-31. Tim Conway and Harvey Korman, April 20-21. Carrot Top, May 26-27. Righteous Brothers, June 8-9. Johnny Mathis, July 6-7. George Carlin, Aug. 24-25. Anne Murray, Sept. 28-29. Comedians perform at the Catch a Rising Star comedy club (dark Sun.-Mon.). Silver Baron Lounge: Piano music.
Sundowner • 786-7050.
Western Village • Sparks, 331-1069 or 800-648-1170.

STATELINE, LAKE TAHOE

Bill's Lake Tahoe • 588-2455.
Caesars Tahoe • 588-3515 or 800-648-3353: Circus Maximus: Hootie and the Blowfish, March 10-11. Howie Mandel, March 17-18. Pat Benatar, March 24-25. Wynonna Judd, March 31-April 1. Kool and the Gang, dance party, April 7-8. Nero's 2000 nightclub has live music. Cleo's Bar and Entertainment Lounge: Pianist Arthur Hervey appears indf.
Harrah's Lake Tahoe • 800-HARRAHS: South Shore Room: The Improv at Harrah's (dark Sun.). Three Dog Night, March 2-4. Danny Marona, March 8-11. Bobby Vinton, March 17-18. Everly Brothers, March 23-25. David Cassidy, March 30-31. Louie Anderson, April 6-8. Bands play nightly in Harrah's Casino Center Stage.
Harvey's • 588-2411 or 800-553-1022 ext. 2883: Cabaret: "Passion 2000," adults only (dark Mon.).
Lake Tahoe Horizon • 588-6211 or 800-322-7723: Golden Cabaret: "Carnival Cabaret," male celebrity impersonator revue (dark Mon.). Club Z: Dance music at the trendy nightclub. Bands play in the Aspen Lounge.
Lakeside Inn • 588-7777: Entertainment TBA.

NORTH LAKE TAHOE

Cal-Neva Resort • Crystal Bay, 832-4000 or 800-225-6382: Frank Sinatra Celebrity Showroom: Entertainment TBA.
Crystal Bay Club • Crystal Bay, 831-0512: DJ Wed.-Sun.
Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe • Incline Village, 832-1234: Bands play in the Regency Grand Ballroom. Lone Eagle Restaurant: Music, Wed.-Sat. Casino Stage Bar: Pianist, Wed.-Sun.

Jim Kelley's Tahoe Nugget • Crystal Bay, 831-0455.
Tahoe Biltmore • Crystal Bay, 831-0660: Bands play nightly.

Cowboy Country

ELKO

Commercial Hotel • 738-3181: Bands play nightly.
Gold Country • 800-621-1332: J.R.'s Lounge: Entertainment on weekends.
High Desert Inn • 738-8425: Comedy show Fri.
Red Lion • 738-2111 or 800-545-0044 (Western U.S. outside Nevada): Club Max Showroom: Juice Newton, March 16-17. T.G. Sheppard, March 30-31. Exile, April 13-14. Highway 101, April 27-28.
Stockmen's Hotel • 738-5141 or 800-648-2345 (U.S. and Nevada): Bands play in the Stockmen's Showroom.

JACKPOT

Barton's Club 93 • 755-2341.
Cactus Petes • 800-821-1103: Gala Showroom: Entertainment TBA.
Horseshu Casino • 755-2321. Horseshu Cabaret: Entertainment TBA.

LOVELOCK

Ramada Inn • 775-273-2971: Center Club Showroom: Bands and karaoke are featured on weekends.

WENDOVER

Peppermill • 664-2255 or 800-648-9660 (U.S. outside Nevada): Bands play nightly except Mon.
Rainbow Casino • 664-4000: Cabaret Lounge: Bands play nightly except Mon.
Red Garter • 664-2111 or 800-982-2111 (continental U.S. outside Nevada).
Silver Smith • 664-2231 or 800-354-3671: Jim's Bar: Live entertainment nightly except Mon. at the Silver Smith.
State Line • 664-2221, 800-354-3671: Stateliner Lounge: Entertainment nightly.

WINNEMUCCA

Winners Hotel • 623-2511: Bands play nightly in lounge.
Model T Hotel • 623-2588. Bands play Wed.-Sun.
Holiday Inn Express • 775-625-3100.
Sundance Casino • 623-3336.
Red Lion • 800-633-6435.

Pony Express Territory

ELY

Hotel Nevada • 289-6665.

FALLON

Bonanza Inn • 423-6031.
Fallon Nugget • 423-3111.

Pioneer Territory

AMARGOSA VALLEY

Longstreet Inn • 372-1777: Weekend entertainment.

BEATTY

Stagecoach • 553-2419 or 800-4-BIGWIN (U.S. outside Nevada): Bands play Fri.-Sat.
Exchange Club • 553-2368: Karaoke on Fri.

HAWTHORNE

El Capitan • 945-3322: Bands like Impulse, Shake Rattle and Roll, and City Zu play in the casino lounge.
Joe's Tavern • 945-2302.

PAHRUMP

Mountain View Casino and Bowl • 727-7777: Bowling alley.
Saddle West Hotel, Casino, and RV Park • 727-1111.

TONOPAH

Banc Club • 482-5409: Bands play Thurs.-Sat.
Mizpah Hotel • 482-6200.
Station House • 482-9777: Shotgun Willie's Saloon: Bands play nightly except Mon.

YERINGTON

Casino West • 463-2481: Weekend music.
Dini's Lucky Club • 463-2868: Weekend music.

Boulder City
Calendar of Events

April
Clark County Artist Show

May
Spring Jamboree & Craft Fair
Boulder City Folk Festival

July
Fourth of July Damboree

August
Street Party

September
Chautauqua
Rattlin' Rails Handcar Races
Wurstfest
Lake Mead Boat & Ski Races

October
Art In The Park
Country Store Sale
St. Jude's Ranch Celebration

November
Boulder City High School Rodeo
Community Tree Lighting

December
Doodlebug Bazaar Craft Sale
Christmas Parade & Santa's Party
Lake Mead Parade of Lights



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Making an Impression

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By Kathy Espin



Impressionist Bill Acosta sings like Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett at the Flamingo Las Vegas.

When Bill Acosta walks out from stage left in the Flamingo Showroom, a line of chorus girls exits stage right. The impressionist nods toward the leggy dancers and declares, "I didn't have that much energy when I was three."

His show at the Flamingo Las Vegas belies that statement. "Lasting Impressions" lasts an hour and 20 minutes, and Acosta is on stage about 80 percent of the time as he re-creates the voices of more than 50 entertainment and political figures. Even after the show, when most of us would be dead tired, he stands through a 45-minute dressing-room interview to avoid mussing his tuxedo pants.

Acosta opened "Lasting Impressions" at the Flamingo last November after performing for nearly two years at the Luxor. The Flamingo version is a bigger production with 12 topless dancers in elaborate costumes and an eight-piece orchestra lead by Joey Singer. During the show, Acosta pays homage to the history of the Flamingo's showroom and its legendary performers.

"Sammy, Frank, and Dean played here," he says while pacing his dressing room. "I saw Frank perform, and Andy Williams." Acosta talks about other greats from the '60s. "I have a lot of admiration for Tom Jones. And Jack Jones, he's a friend. They are doing better than ever."

The 53-year-old Acosta uses his strong, flexible voice to conjure images of Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and Tony Bennett. Doesn't it take a special kind of courage to try to replicate such revered voices? "Only if it doesn't work," Acosta says. "I'm not going to fool myself that I am that person. I do impressions. I'm not an impersonator. I re-create a memory for the audience."

One memory he doesn't re-create is Elvis Presley. "When you do Elvis, people expect you to dress in an elaborate costume. I don't do that. There are just too many of them. Twenty years ago there were 900 Elvis impersonators. Now, I read somewhere, there are 35,000. No one wants to see me do that."

Acosta doesn't use a coach to nail his impressions. "Just practice, practice, practice," he says. "I learned a lot from the musicians I have worked with. They taught me how to breathe and phrase. As a kid, I would sit in my room for hours at a time singing Andy Williams' 'Moon River' over and over again."

The son of an Episcopalian minister, Acosta joined the church choir as a boy growing up in New Orleans. "But I didn't like singing in the choir," he says. "I fell in love with Dixieland jazz. It was more fun to sing. Then I went to progressive jazz."

From there, at age 15—"18, officially. I was really too young to be in the clubs"—he began a musical career that took him all over the world, including a stint at Nero's Nook, a lounge at Caesars Palace, in 1970. "Those were wonderful years," he recalls. "Boy, I had a good time."

Acosta was a singer who did a few impressions until 1988, when his wife and producer, Jeannie Bavaro, encouraged him to change the focus of his act. The result, after years on the road, was "Lasting Impressions," which debuted at the Trump Plaza in Atlantic City in 1995 and ran for three years. After he arrived in Las Vegas, Acosta signed for a limited engagement at the Luxor. The run lasted two years.

Acosta and Bavaro moved from Chicago to Las Vegas. "I love Chicago, but the weather stinks," he says. "You have sun here. In Chicago, we think of the sun as a yellow intrusion in the grayness. I like it here. The town has improved greatly over the years."

Acosta and his show are blossoming in the desert sun. He seems to absorb the echoes of the voices of Las Vegas' rich entertainment history and play them back with reverence. Especially touching is Acosta's tribute to Sinatra. "Frank is the most difficult voice to do. He is the most challenging and the most fun to do," Acosta says, glancing at a photo of Sinatra on the wall of his dressing room. Thanks to Acosta, Sinatra's voice and style still entertain audiences in the Flamingo Showroom.

Show Notes

"Bill Acosta: Lasting Impressions" plays Saturday through Thursday in the Flamingo Showroom at the Flamingo Las Vegas. Show time is 10 p.m., with an additional show at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday. Tickets are $49, $59, and $69, plus tax, and do not include drinks. Call 800-732-2111 or 702-733-3333 for reservations.

Kathy Espin is a Las Vegas freelance writer.

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Casino Notes

News from hotel-casinoland. **By Ann Henderson**

Las Vegas Territory

Hoist a Brew: Barley's Casino and Brewing Company earned a silver medal for its Brewmaster Select Hefewiezen at the ninth annual Great American Beer Festival in Denver. The Henderson casino is located in the Green Valley Town Center and is a favorite summer gathering place for parents who can sip coffee or have lunch while they watch their children play in Barley's outdoor fountain.

New Hotel Planned: The latest off-Strip property planned for Las Vegas is the 1,022-room **Tuscany Suites**, which will be located behind Bally's. Completion of phase one, which includes 716 suites, is expected this summer, while the 306-room phase two will be finished mid-December. The Tuscany will feature a 30,000-square-foot casino, three restaurants, and meeting space.

Art Alert: Opening date for the **Hermitage-Guggenheim Museum** at the **Venetian** on the Strip has been pushed back from spring to fall. The first exhibition at the 7,660-square-foot structure will be "Masterpieces and Master Collectors: Impressionists and Modern Paintings From the Hermitage and Guggenheim Museum." Visitors to the Vegas facility can expect to see masterpieces from Russian and American collections that are being introduced into worldwide circulation.

Reno-Tahoe Territory

CVI Expanding Again: Spring is the expected completion date on a $6-million expansion at the **Carson Valley Inn** in Minden. Changes in the 16,000-square-foot project include more casino space, an enclosed swimming pool, a fitness facility, cabaret lounge, and gift shop.

Laughs at the Lake: Comedians doing stand-up at the Reno Hilton's comedy club have moved bag and microphone to Stateline to become the resident jokesters at **Harrah's Lake Tahoe**. The Improv closed at the Reno Hilton and opened at Harrah's in January for an extended run in the South Shore Room nightly except Sunday. Show tickets are $19.50.

Boutique Hotel: When the **Siena** opens in July, the Reno property will cater to a business and upscale clientele. Renovating the former Holiday Hotel on the banks of the Truckee River into a Tuscany-themed hotel is expected to cost $60 million. The 215-room property will include a spa, a 23,000-square-foot casino, restaurants with outdoor seating, and an 18,000-bottle wine cellar. Room rates are estimated in the $100 range.



The Tuscany-themed Siena on the banks of the Truckee River in Reno has a summer opening date.

Good Deals

Spring Skiing: Fitzgeralds in Reno has a ski package that includes a room and lift tickets to Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, Northstar, or Mount Rose. The ski combination is $58 per person based on double occupancy and is good Sunday through Thursday.

Scratch and Win: Gamblers can win prizes for playing the **Flamingo Reno's** Scratch Fever promotion through March 31. Scratch cards are given to jackpot and keno winners and bingo players. Coffee-shop diners receive a scratch card for cash payments of $5 or more. Prizes include food, entertainment, and hotel stays.

A Really Good Deal: The **Red Lion** properties in Elko are offering a room and concert special for $29, plus tax. The package includes a single or double room and two tickets to see Juice Newton (March 16-17), T.G. Sheppard (March 30-31), Exile (April 13-14), or Highway 101 (March 27-28).

Entertainment Notes

Night of Laughs: Frizzy-haired Carrot Top returns to the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on March 29-April 4 with his trunks full of sight gags. During a recent show, audience members applauded his interpretation of a redneck on a cell phone. They howled when he took on the frustrations of airline travel and produced his "carry-on" luggage shaped like a chainsaw. One suggestion: Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to show time and enjoy the video moments of people and animals in ridiculous and embarrassing moments. Carrot Top also plays the Silver Legacy in Reno, May 26-27.

Regrouped Group: It will be a homecoming of sorts for the Lettermen when they play the Suncoast April 6-8 in Las Vegas. Before the trio's first hit, "The Way You Look Tonight," in 1961, the group was first noticed in 1958 after an appearance in the revue "The Newcomers of 1928" at the Desert Inn. Of the original Lettermen, only Tony Butala remains, but he has been joined by Donavan Tea, a 1984 graduate of two Las Vegas production shows, and Darren Dowler, who left Reno revues to become a member in 1995. Although the Lettermen were a bit stingy with some of their hits during a recent performance, choosing to sing them as medleys, the show was still well worth the ticket prices of $27.50, $30.75, or $34.

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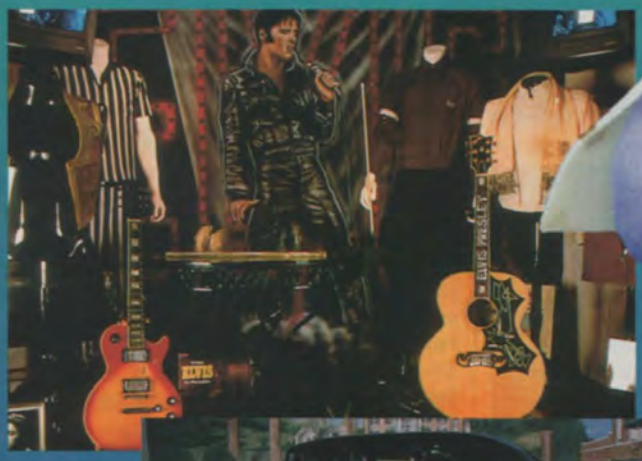
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Las Vegas Territory

BOULDER CITY

Black Canyon River Raft Tours • 293-3776 for information.

Boulder City Historic District • Walking tour. 1305 Arizona, 293-2034.

Boulder City/Hoover Dam Museum • Displays and books on the dam's construction in 1930s. 1305 Arizona, 294-1988.

Boulder Dam Hotel • 1305 Arizona, 293-7731.

Colorado River Tours • Gold mine, canoe, and kayak tours. 293-4422.

Hoover Dam and Hoover Dam Visitor Center • Tours, theaters, exhibit hall, High Scaler Monument. U.S. 93, 294-3515, 293-8367, 293-8000.

Lake Mead Cruises/Desert Princess • Excursions on Lake Mead, 293-6180.

Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Alan Bible Visitor Center • Visitor center is on U.S. 93 between Boulder City and Hoover Dam. 702-893-2906.

Skydive Las Vegas.com • Tandem jumps. 293-1860.

St. Jude's Ranch for Children • Children's Art Museum, artifacts, tours. 100 St. Jude's St., 294-7100.

HENDERSON

City of Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve • Self-guided or guided tours for more than 10 people of the 80-acre preserve. 2400 Moser Street off Sunset, Henderson, 565-4264.

Clark County Heritage Museum • 1830 S. Boulder Hwy., 455-7955.

Ethel M Chocolate Factory and Cactus Garden • Tours. 2 Cactus Garden Dr., 458-8864.

Mountasia Family Fun Center • 2050 Olympic, 898-7777.

Ron Lee's World of Clowns • 330 Carousel Pkwy., 434-1700.

LAS VEGAS

Adventuredome • Adventure park with rides and attractions. Next to Circus Circus, 800-444-CIRCUS.

A.J. Hackett Bungy • 810 Circus Circus, 385-4321.

Bellagio • Fountain shows, 693-7111.

Caesars Palace • Dining, magic shows, and special effects at Caesars Magical Empire, 731-7333.

Cowboy Trail Rides • Horseback riding. 387-2457.

Crystal Palace In-Line Skating and Hockey Complex • 9295 W. Flamingo, 253-9832.



Miles of Screams

The Big Apple's skyline at New York-New York on the Strip is neatly wrapped by the Manhattan Express roller coaster, which has a 144-foot drop at one point during the four-minute ride. The attraction is open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., and the cost is $10 per ride.

Elvis-A-Rama Museum • 3401 Industrial, 309-7200.

Excalibur • Dragon battle in front moat, motion simulators, 597-7777.

Flamingo Las Vegas • Wildlife sanctuary. 733-3111.

Floyd Lamb State Park • Picnicking and fishing. 9200 Tule Springs Rd., 486-5413.

Flyaway Indoor Skydiving • 200 Convention Center Dr., 731-4768.

Forum Shops at Caesars • "Race for Atlantis" IMAX 3D motion simulator. Caesars Palace, 893-4800.

Fremont Street Experience • Light show on the hour from dusk to midnight. Downtown Las Vegas, 678-5600.

Gameworks • Climbing wall and arcade. Showcase Mall, 597-3122.

Guinness World of Records Museum • 2780 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 792-3766.

Harley-Davidson Cafe • Motorcycle memorabilia, Harleys and other items on display. Las Vegas Strip, 740-4555.

Holy Cow! Casino • Brewery tours, 732-2697.

Howard W. Cannon Aviation Museum • McCarran International Airport. 455-7968.

Imperial Palace Auto Collection • Classic and antique vehicles, 794-3174.

Laser Quest • 7361 West Lake Mead, Las Vegas, 243-8881.

Las Vegas Art Museum • 9600 W. Sahara Ave., 647-4300.

Las Vegas Club • Sports memorabilia. Downtown, 385-1664.

Las Vegas Mini Gran Prix • 259-7000.

Las Vegas Motor Speedway • Guided tours. 644-4444.

Las Vegas Natural History Museum • From dinosaurs to desert creatures. 900 Las Vegas Blvd. N., 384-DINO.

Liberace Museum • Pianos and memorabilia. 1775 E. Tropicana, 798-5595.

Lied Discovery Children's Museum • Science and other learning exhibits. 833 Las Vegas Blvd. N., 382-KIDS.

Luxor • Motion rides, IMAX Theatre, and King Tut's Tomb and Museum, 262-4000 for Luxor information.

M&M's World • Showcase Mall, 736-7611.

Mandalay Bay • Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay. Exhibit of sharks, sea predators, and aquatic creatures. Visitors can ask questions of divers. 632-7777.

Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History • 4505 Maryland Pkwy., UNLV, 895-3381.

MGM Grand • Lion habitat open daily, 891-7979.

Mirage • Dolphin habitat, volcano, and Secret Garden with tigers, elephant, lions, and panthers, 791-7111.

Mount Charleston • Recreation info., 222-1597.

NASCAR Cafe • Race cars displayed. Sahara Hotel, 734-7223.

Nevada State Museum and Historical Society • Lorenzi Park, 700 Twin Lakes Dr., 486-5205.

Nevada Test Site History Center • Displays 50 years of nuclear testing. Open noon to 4pm, Tues.-Thurs. Building B-3, 2621 Losee Road, 295-3521.

New York-New York • Roller coaster, 740-6969.

Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort Historic State Park • Site of 1855 settlement. 908 Las Vegas Blvd. North at Washington Avenue, 486-3511.

Paris • Rides to the observation deck of the hotel's Eiffel Tower. 702-946-7000.

Race Rock Cafe • Race cars and monster trucks. Fremont Street Experience, 382-7223.

Rainforest Cafe • Bird habitat and animated creatures. MGM Grand, 891-8580.

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area • 363-1921 for information.

Rio Suite Hotel • Free carnival-themed sky parade. 252-7777.

Sahara Hotel • Speed: The Ride roller coaster, NASCAR Cafe, virtual-reality car racing, 737-2735.

Photo: Carolyn Fox

Sam's Town • Water and laser show, 456-7777.
Santa Fe Station • Ice arena. 4949 N. Rancho Dr., 658-4993.
Scandia Family Fun Center • 364-0070.
Shelby American • Shelby Cobra auto museum and factory tour. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 643-3000.
Southern Nevada Zoological Park • Home of 150 species, from apes to peacocks. 1775 N. Rancho Dr., 648-5955.
Spring Mountain Ranch State Park • Red Rock Canyon, 875-4141.
Star Trek: The Experience • Las Vegas Hilton, 697-8700.
Stratosphere • Roller coaster, Big Shot ride, and Strat-O-Fair midway, 380-7777.
Treasure Island • Sea battle every 90 minutes from 4 to 11:30pm, 894-7111.
Tropicana • Birds and gambling museum, 739-2222 for more information.
Venetian Hotel • Madame Tussaud's Celebrity Encounter wax museum, gondola rides, 733-5000.
Walker African-American Museum and Research Center • Exhibits and records, by appointment only, 647-2242.
Wet 'n Wild • Opens weekends on April 7; daily on May 21.

LAUGHLIN

Big Bend of the Colorado State Recreation Area • Nature and water sports, four miles south of Laughlin, 298-1859.
Colorado Belle • Cyber Roller Coaster and Boiler Room Microbrewery, 298-4000.
Colorado River Museum • Arizona Hwy. 95, 520-754-3399.
Del Rio Beach Club • Colorado River sightseeing boat tour, 298-6828.
Davis Dam • Self-guided tours, 298-2214.
Grapevine Canyon • Seven miles west of Laughlin. Inquire about road conditions, 298-2214.
Lake Mohave Resort • 602-754-3245.
Laughlin River Tours • Colorado River, 298-1047.
Ramada Express • WWII museum and multimedia tribute to American war heroes, 298-4200.
Riverside Resort • Classic cars, river tour boat, and bowling center, 298-2535.

MESQUITE

Desert Valley Museum • 346-5705.
Si Redd's Oasis • Gun club, hayrides, ATV and horseback rides, 346-5232.

NORTH LAS VEGAS

The Planetarium • Community College of Southern Nevada, 651-5059.
U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds • Tour of demonstration squadron facility, 2pm Tues. and Thurs. Nellis Air Force Base, North Las Vegas, 652-4018.

OVERTON

Lost City Museum of Archaeology • Pueblo culture, 397-2193.
Valley of Fire State Park • 397-2088.

PRIMM

Primadonna Resorts • Roller coaster, water flume, cyber coaster, and Turbo Drop rides at Buffalo Bill's; cars belonging to Bonnie and Clyde and Dutch Schultz and Clyde's bullet-riddled shirt at Whiskey Pete's, 382-1111.

SEARCHLIGHT

Searchlight Gallery • 297-1540.
Searchlight Historic Museum • 455-7955.

Reno-Tahoe Territory

CARSON CITY

Brewery Arts Center • 449 W. King St., 883-1976.
Carson and Mills Park Railroad • Mills Park, 887-2523.
Children's Museum of Northern Nevada • Museum has educational exhibits. 813 N. Carson St., 884-2226.
Kit Carson Trail • Walking tour. 687-7410 or 800-638-2321.
Nevada State Capitol • 687-5030.
Nevada State Library and Archives • State Constitution exhibit. 100 Stewart St., 687-5210.
Nevada State Museum • 600 N. Carson St., 687-4810.
Nevada State Railroad Museum • S. Carson St. at Fairview Dr., 687-6953.
Nevada Supreme Court • Tours. Stewart St., 687-8616.
Roberts' House Museum • 1207 N. Carson St., 882-1805.
Stewart Indian Museum and Cultural Center • 5366 Snyder, 882-6929.
Warren Engine Co. No. 1 Museum • 777 S. Stewart St., 887-2210.

DAYTON

Dayton State Park • 687-5678.
Dayton Historic Society Museum • Open weekends in the 1865 Old Dayton Schoolhouse on Shady Lane.

GARDNERVILLE

Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center • Old Douglas County High School on U.S. 395, 782-2555.
Sharkey's Nugget • Boxing, rodeo memorabilia. 782-3133.

GENOA

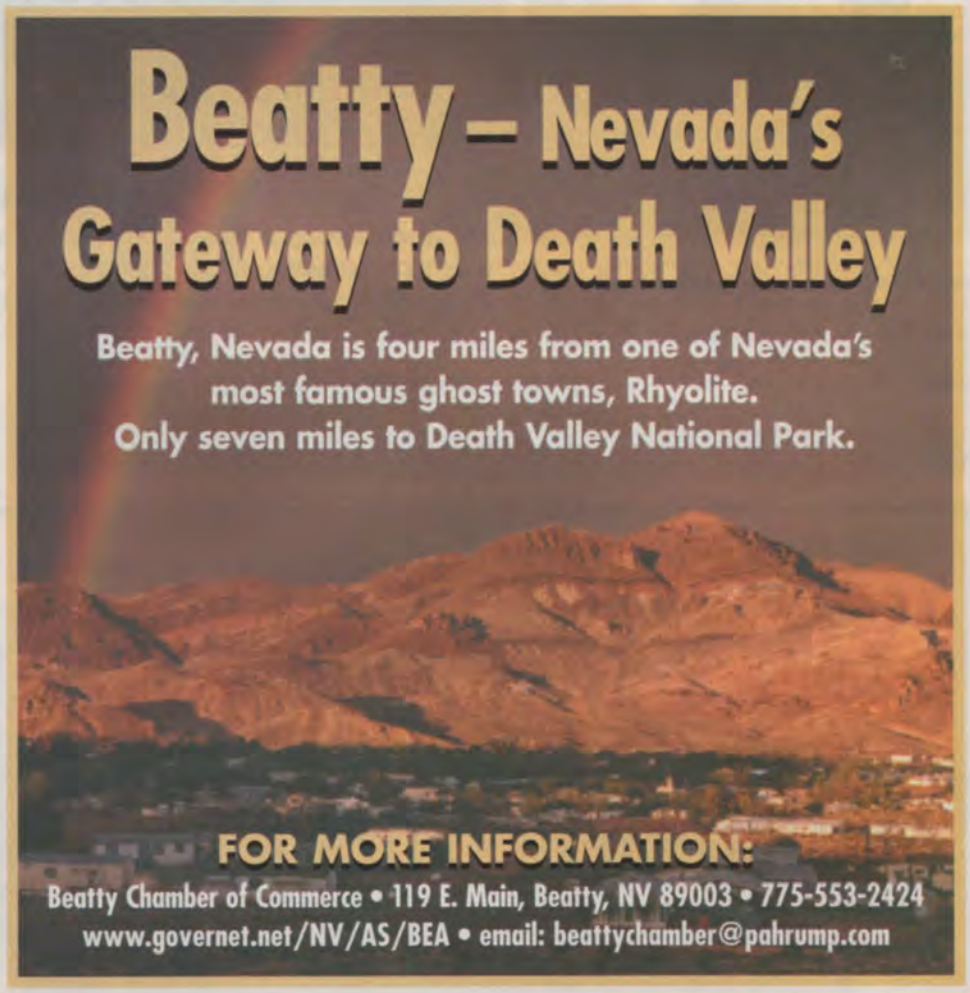
Genoa Courthouse Museum • 782-4325.
Mormon Station State Historic Park • 782-4325, 687-4379.
David Walley's Hot Springs • 782-8155.

LAKE TAHOE

Hard Rock Cafe • Harveys, Stateline, 588-2411.
Heavenly Aerial Tram • Seasonal. Stateline, 586-7000.
Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park • Sand Harbor, 2005 Hwy. 28, Incline Village, 831-0494.
M.S. Dixie II Sternwheeler • Zephyr Cove, 588-3508.
Ponderosa Ranch • Opens April 7, weather permitting, 831-0691.
Tahoe Gal Paddlewheeler • Tahoe City, 530-583-0141.
Tahoe Rim Trail • 150-mile system, 588-0686.
Tallac Historic Site • Tours daily Memorial Day through Sept., South Lake Tahoe, 530-544-3029.
U.S. Forest Service Visitors Center • Stream-profile chamber, 530-573-2600.
Vikingsholm • Tours, 530-525-7232.
Zephyr Cove Resort • Cruises, boat rentals. 588-5021.

RENO

Animal Ark • 10 mi. north of Reno on U.S. 395, then 12 mi. on Red Rock Road to reach Animal Ark, 969-3111.
Bartley Ranch Regional Park • Hiking, horse arena, and one-room Huffaker Schoolhouse. Reno, 828-6612.





Earth Window Museum • Native American artifacts, 100 N. Sierra St., Town Center Mall, 333-2828.
Fleischmann Planetarium • Stargazing programs, U of N campus, 784-4811.
Galena Creek Regional Park • Mount Rose Hwy., 785-4319.
Harrah's Reno • Laser show nightly at the outdoor plaza, 786-3232.
Liberty Belle Slot Collection • Liberty Belle Saloon, 4250 S. Virginia St., 825-1776.
National Automobile Museum (the Harrah Collection) • 10 Lake St. S., 333-9300.
National Bowling Stadium • Tournaments and IWERKS theater. 300 N. Center St., 334-2695.
Nevada Historical Society Museum • 1650 N. Virginia St., U of N campus, 688-1190.
Nevada Museum of Art, E.L. Wiegand Gallery • 160 W. Liberty St., 329-3333.
Playland • Rides, picnicking. Idlewild Park, 329-6008.
Raymond I. Smith Truckee River Walk • 334-2077.
Reno Hilton • Water golf, Ultimate Rush thrill ride, putting course, add go-kart center 789-2000.
Reno Tahoe Gaming Academy • Tours. 215 S. Wells Ave., 329-5665.
Riverside Artist Lofts • Arts and cultural center. 775-329-2787.
Sierra Arts Center Gallery • Gallery and offices, 200 Flint St., 329-2787.
Sierra Safari Zoo • 10 mi. north of Reno at Red Rock Rd., 677-1101. opens April 1.
Silver Legacy • Giant mining machine and laser shows every hour, 325-7396.
Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden • Rancho San Rafael Park, 785-4153.
Wilbur D. May Great Basin Adventure • Seasonal, Rancho San Rafael Park, 785-4064.
Wilbur D. May Museum • Rancho San Rafael Park, 785-5961.

PYRAMID LAKE

Numana Hatchery Visitors Center • 574-0290.



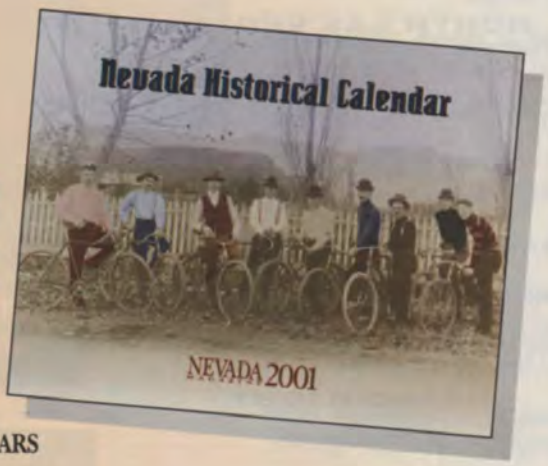
Time Travel to Eureka

The mining town of Eureka has two historic attractions. The Eureka Sentinel Museum (above) has an extensive collection of artifacts from when the building served as the town's newspaper office. Also open for tours is the restored Eureka Opera House, which hosts first-rate cultural events.

SPARKS

John Ascuaga's Nugget • Ranchers' brands exhibit, 356-3300.
Sparks Heritage Foundation and Museum • Local history, Southern Pacific train cars, 1864 Glendale School. Victorian Square, 355-1144 for more information.
Sparks Marina Park • Fishing, walking paths. 353-2376.
Victorian Square Fountain • Choreographed water shows.
Wild Island • Water park open in summer, miniature golf and raceway open year-round. Off I-80, 359-2927.

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Photo: Jay Aldrich

VERDI

Boomtown Family Fun Center • Motion Theater rides, Ferris wheel, and miniature golf, 345-8668 for details.

VIRGINIA CITY

Assay Office Museum • 847-0777.
The Castle • 847-0275.
Chollar Mine • Tours of workings, 847-0155.
Fourth Ward School Museum • 847-0975.
Julia C. Bulette Red Light Museum • 847-9394.
Liberty Engine Co. No. 1 Comstock Firemen's Museum • 847-0717.
Mackay Mansion Museum • 847-0173.
Mark Twain Museum of Memories • 847-0454.
Nevada Gambling Museum • 847-9022.
Piper's Opera House • 847-0433.
Ponderosa Mine • Tours, 847-0757.
Territorial Enterprise Mark Twain Museum • 847-0525.
Virginia and Truckee Railroad • 847-0380.
Virginia City Radio Museum • 847-9047.
Virginia City Tours • 786-0866.
Way It Was Museum • 847-0766.
Wild West Museum • South C Street, 847-0400.

WASHOE VALLEY

Bowers Mansion Park • Historic mansion of Comstsock millionaires, 849-1825.
Davis Creek Park • 849-0684.
Washoe Lake State Park • Birdwatching, windsurfing, fishing, East Lake Blvd., 687-4319.

Cowboy Country

BATTLE MOUNTAIN

Trail of the 49ers Interpretive Center • Pioneer exhibits, research room, 453 N. Second St., 635-5720 for more information.

ELKO

Jarbidge Wilderness Area • North of Elko, 752-3357.
Northeastern Nevada Museum • 1515 Idaho St., 738-3418.
Sherman Station Complex • Restored 1875 ranch, tours. Visitor information, 738-7135.
Western Folklife Center • 501 Railroad St., 738-7508.
Wild Horse State Recreation Area • 65 miles north of Elko, 758-6493.

LOVELOCK

Giant Tufa Park • West of Lovelock, 273-7213.
Pershing County Marzen House Museum • Lovelock-area history, 273-7213.

WENDOVER

Bonneville Salt Flats • 801-977-4300.

WINNEMUCCA

Buckaroo Hall of Fame • 623-2225.
Humboldt Museum • Winnemucca-area history, 623-2912.
Midas Schoolhouse • Call for tours of the two-room schoolhouse located in Midas, 46 miles by dirt road from the Golconda exit east of Winnemucca on I-80. 529-0302.

Pony Express Territory

AUSTIN

Hickison Petroglyph Recreation Site • Self-guided tour with interpretive signs, 24 miles east of Austin on U.S. 50, 635-4000.

ELY/GREAT BASIN N.P.

Cave Lake State Recreation Area • 15 miles south of Ely, 728-4467.
East Ely Railroad Depot Museum • Tours, 289-1663.
Great Basin National Park • Hiking, camping, ancient bristlecones, and tours of Lehman Caves. Baker, 65 miles east of Ely, 234-7331.
McGill Historical Drug Company • Call for tours of an old-fashioned drug store. McGill, 235-7082.
Nevada Northern Railway Museum • Train rides on historic locomotives. 1100 Ave. A, East Ely, 289-2085 for more information.
Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Site • 16 miles (11 dirt) south of Ely, 728-4467.

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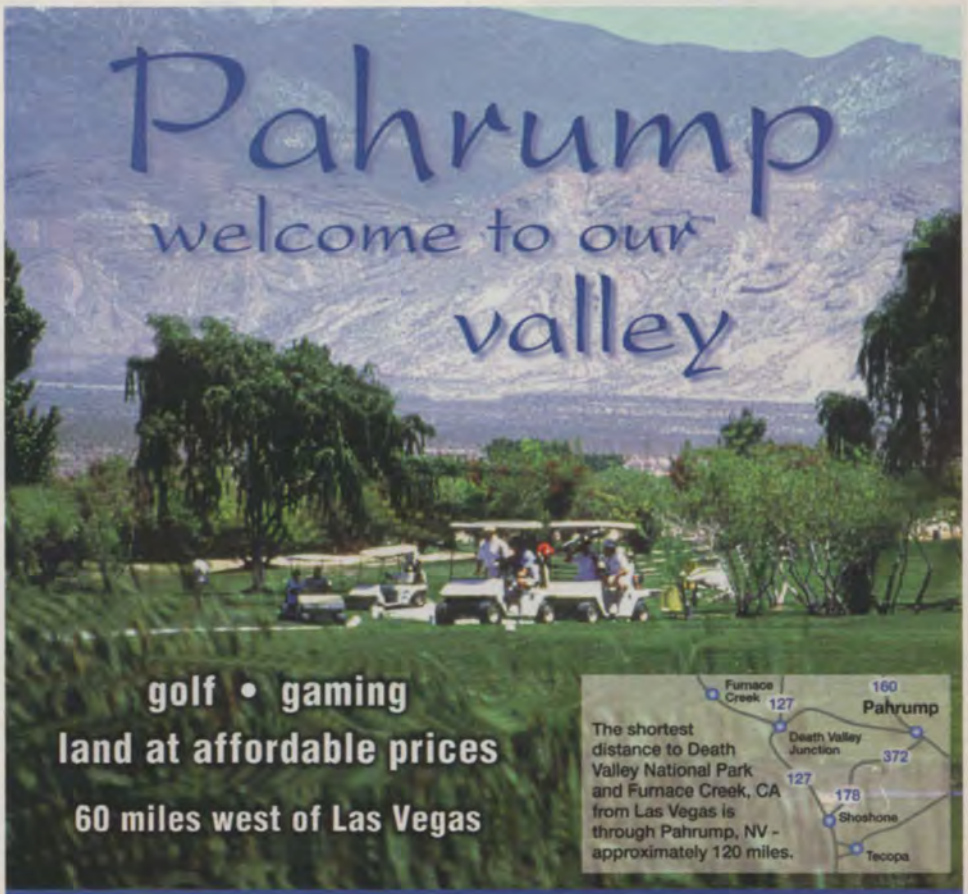


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White Pine Public Museum • Exhibits on history of Ely area. 2000 Aultman St., 289-4710.

EUREKA

Eureka Opera House • Open Mon.-Fri. or by appointment, tours, 237-6006.

Eureka Sentinel Museum • 237-5010.

FALLON

Churchill County Museum and Hidden Cave • Tours. 1050 S. Maine St., 423-3677.

Fort Churchill State Historic Park • Eight miles south of Silver Springs, 577-2345.

Sand Mountain • Giant sand dune, 20 miles east of Fallon, 885-6000.

Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge • 15 miles east of Fallon, 423-5128.

SILVER SPRINGS

Fort Churchill State Historic Park • Eight miles south of Silver Springs, 577-2345.

Pioneer Territory

BEATTY

Beatty Museum • Mining exhibits, 553-2424.

Death Valley National Park • Park can be reached via Beatty, 553-2200.

Rhyolite • Historic bottle house and the Gold Well Open Air Museum sculpture exhibit, four miles west of Beatty, 553-2424.

GABBS

Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park • Dinosaur fossils and ghost town, 23 miles east of Gabbs, 964-2440.

GOLDFIELD

Historic Buildings and Mining Tour • Telegraph Office, Florence Mine, and Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Building, 775-485-3486.

HAWTHORNE

Mineral County Historical Museum • Exhibits on the history of the Hawthorne area, 400 10th St., 945-5142.

Walker Lake State Recreation Area • Fishing, camping, and birdwatching, 945-5896.

PAHRUMP

Death Valley National Park • Park can be reached via Pahrump, 727-5880.

Pahrump Valley Winery • Tours. 3810 Winery Rd., 727-6900 or 800-368-WINE.

PIOCHE/CALIENTE

Box Car Museum • Railroad and local history. Caliente, 726-3129.

Cathedral Gorge State Park • South of Pioche, 728-4460 for information.

Elgin Living History Schoolhouse Museum • Open for weekend tours or by appointment. Located 21 miles south of Caliente via Rainbow Canyon. Write Lynn Wood, Box 266, Caliente, NV 89008.

Kershaw-Ryan State Park • South of Caliente, 728-4460.

Lincoln County Historical Museum • Pioche, 962-5207.

Million Dollar Courthouse • Pioche, 962-5207.

Spring Valley State Park • 728-4460.

Stone Cabin Living History Museum • One mile north of Spring Valley State Park near Pioche, seasonal, 728-4460.

ROUND MOUNTAIN

Smoky Valley Museum • 1935 schoolhouse and assay equipment. Open second Wednesday of the month and by appointment, 377-2243.

TONOPAH

Belmont Courthouse State Historic Site • 50 miles north of Tonopah, 867-3001.

Central Nevada Museum • Artifacts and photographs on Tonopah-area history, 482-9676.

Tonopah Historic Mining Park • 482-9274.

YERINGTON

Lyon County Museum • Exhibits and photos on the history of the Yerington area, 463-2245.

A Reminder: To confirm hours of operation, please use the phone number listed with each attraction. The area code is 702 in the Las Vegas area, and the rest of the state is 775.

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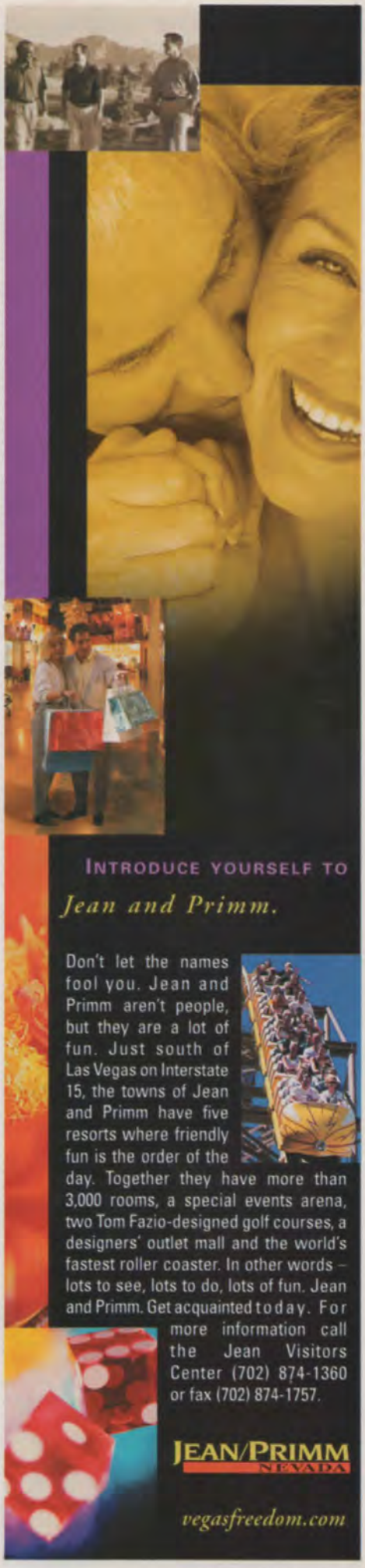
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When planning your Nevada trip or vacation, be sure to write or phone these one-stop sources for information. Also, Internet users can visit the Web sites listed. If you plan to stop by a chamber of commerce (C of C) office, chances are it will be open in the daytime Monday through Friday.

Statewide Information

Nevada Commission on Tourism: 401 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701; www.travelnevada.com; 775-687-4322 or 800-NEVADA-8 anywhere in U.S. and Canada.

Las Vegas Territory

African American Activities: 3838 Raymert Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89121; 702-456-3838.

Asian C of C: 900 E. Karen, No. C217, Las Vegas, NV 89109; 702-737-4300.

Boulder City C of C: 1305 Arizona, Boulder City, NV 89005; www.bouldercitychamber.com; 702-293-2034.

Boulder City Visitor Center: 100 Nevada Hwy., Boulder City, NV 89005; 702-294-1252.

Henderson C of C: 590 S. Boulder Hwy., Henderson, NV 89015;www.hendersonchamber.com; 702-565-8951.

Henderson Convention Center: 200 Water St., Henderson, NV 89015; www.cityofhenderson.com/convention; 702-565-2171.

Hoover Dam Visitors Services: Box 60400, Boulder City, NV 89006; www.hooverdam.com; 702-294-3524.

Jean Visitor Center: Interstate 15 South, Exit 12, Box 19470, Jean, NV 89019; lasvegas24hours.com; 702-874-1360.

Las Vegas C of C: 3720 Howard Hughes Pkwy., Las Vegas, NV 89109; www.lvchamber.com; 702-735-1616.

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority: 3150 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109; www.lasvegas24hours.com; 702-892-0711.

Latin C of C: 829 S. Sixth St., Las Vegas, NV 89125; www.LasVegasLatincc.com; 702-385-7367.

Laughlin C of C: Box 77777, Laughlin, NV 89028; www.laughlinchamber.com; 702-298-2214 or 800-227-5245 outside Nevada.

Laughlin Visitor Center: 1555 Casino Dr., Box 502, Laughlin, NV 89029; www.visitlaughlin.com; 702-298-3321 or 800-4LAUGHLIN.

Mesquite Area C of C: 850 W. Mesquite Blvd., Mesquite, NV 89027; www.mesquite-chamber.com; 702-346-2902.

Mesquite Visitor Center: Interstate 15, Exit 122, 460 Sandhill Blvd., Mesquite, NV 89027; 702-346-2702 or 877-MESQUITE.

Moapa Valley C of C: Hwy. 169, Box 361, Overton, NV 89040; www.moapavalley.com; 702-397-2160.

North Las Vegas C of C: 2290 McDaniel, North Las Vegas, NV 89030; 702-642-9595.

Reno-Tahoe Territory

Carson City C of C: 1900 S. Carson St., Suite 100, Carson City, NV 89701; www.carsoncitychamber.com; 775-882-1565.

Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau: 1900 S. Carson St., Suite 200, Carson City, NV 89701; www.carson-city.org; 775-687-7410 or 800-NEVADA-1 in U.S.

Carson Valley C of C and Visitors Authority: 1512 Hwy. 395, No. 1, Gardnerville, NV 89410-5283; www.carsonvalleynv.org; 775-782-8144 or 800-727-7677 in U.S.

Dayton Area C of C: 200-B Main St., Box 2408, Dayton, NV 89403; www.daytonnvchamber.org; 775-246-7909.

Greater Reno-Sparks C of C: 1 E. First St., Reno, NV 89501; www.reno-sparkschamber.org; 775-686-3030.

Incline Village/Crystal Bay C of C: 969 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village, NV 89451; www.laketahoechamber.com; 775-831-4440.



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Photo: Richard Cummins

Lake Tahoe, Incline Village/Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau: 969 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village, NV 89451; www.gotahoe.com; 775-832-1606 or 800-GO-TAHOE anywhere in U.S.

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority: 1156 Ski Run Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150; www.virtualtahoe.com; 530-544-5050, 800-AT-TAHOE in U.S. for Lake Tahoe information.

North Lake Tahoe C of C: 245 N. Lake Blvd., Box 884, Tahoe City, CA 96145; www.tahoefun.org; 530-581-6900.

North Lake Tahoe Resort Association: 245 North Lake Blvd., Box 5459, Tahoe City, CA 96145; www.tahoefun.org; 530-583-3494 or 800-824-6348.

Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority: 4590 S. Virginia St., Box 837, Reno, NV 89504; www.renolaketahoe.com; 775-827-7600 or 800-FOR-RENO in U.S.

Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Tribal Council: 98 Colony Rd., Reno, NV 89502; 775-329-2936.

South Lake Tahoe C of C: 3066 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150; www.tahoeinfo.com; 530-541-5255.

Sparks C of C: 831 Victorian Ave., Sparks, NV 89431; www.sparkschamber.org; 775-358-1976.

Tahoe-Douglas C of C: Box 7139, Stateline, NV 89449; 195 Hwy. 50 at Round Hill, Zephyr Cove; www.tahoechamber.org; 775-588-4591.

Virginia City C of C: V&T Railroad Car, 131 South C St., Virginia City, NV 89440; www.comstocklode.com; 775-847-0311 for information.

Cowboy Country

Battle Mountain C of C: Box 333, Battle Mountain, NV 89820; 775-635-8245.

Elko C of C: 1405 Idaho St., Elko, NV 89801; www.elkonevada.com; 775-738-7135.

Elko Convention and Visitors Authority: 700 Moren Way, Elko, NV 89801; www. elkocva.com; 775-738-4091, 800-248-3556 outside Nevada.

Jarbidge Community Association: Trading Post, 72 Main St., Box 260072, Jarbidge, NV 89826; jarbidge@aol.com; 775-488-2315.

Lovelock C of C: Box 821, Lovelock, NV 89419; 775-273-7213.

McDermitt Information: Box 278, McDermitt, NV 89421; 775-532-8742.

Wells C of C: 395 Sixth St., Box 615, Wells, NV 89835; www.wellsnv.com; 775-752-3540.

Wendover Area Chamber of Commerce: 735 Wendover Blvd., Box 2468, West Wendover, NV 89883; www.wendover.org; 775-664-3414 or 877-WENDOVER.

Winnemucca C of C: 30 W. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, NV 89445; www.winnemucca-nv.org; 775-623-2225.

Winnemucca Convention and Visitors Bureau: 50 W. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, NV 89445; www.winnemucca.nv.us; 775-623-5071 or 800-WMCA-NEV.

Pony Express Territory

Austin C of C: Box 212, Lander County Courthouse, Austin, NV 89310; 775-964-2200.

Ely's Bristlecone Convention Center: 150 Sixth St., Box 958, Ely, NV 89301; www.elynevada.net; 775-289-3720.

Eureka County C of C: 111 N. Main St., Box 1078, Eureka, NV 89316; 775-237-5484.

Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority: 100 Campus Way, Fallon, NV 89406; 775-423-4556 or 800-874-0903.

Fernley C of C: 70 N. West St., Box 1606, Fernley, NV 89408; www.fernleynevada.net; 775-575-4459.

Great Basin Business and Tourism Council: Information on Baker and Great Basin National Park. Box 166, Baker, NV 89311; 775-234-7323.

Greater Fallon Area C of C: 65 S. Maine St., No. B, Fallon, NV 89406; 775-423-2544.

Silver Springs EDASS (Econ. Dev. Authority of Silver Springs): Box 269, Silver Springs, NV 89429; 775-577-2069.

White Pine Chamber of Commerce: 636 Aultman, Ely, NV 89301; www.elynevada.net; 775-289-8877.

Pioneer Territory

Amargosa C of C: HCR 69-2, Box 401W, 821 E. Farm Rd., Amargosa, NV 89020; www.armagosavalley.com; 775-372-1515.

Beatty C of C: 119 E. Main St., Box 956, Beatty, NV 89003; www.governet.net/nv/as/bea; 775-553-2424.

Caliente C of C: Depot Building, Box 553, Caliente, NV 89008; 775-726-3129.

Gabbs, City of: 509 Main St., Box 176, Gabbs, NV 89409; 775-285-4019.

Goldfield C of C: Box 219, Goldfield, NV 89013; members.xcom.com/gfldchamber; 485-3560 for Goldfield information.

Greater Smoky Valley C of C: State Route 376 at Carver's Station, Box 1977, Round Mountain, NV 89045; 775-377-2490.

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Mineral County C of C: 932 E Street, Box 1635, Hawthorne, NV 89415; www.mineralcountynvchamber.org; 775-945-5896.

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Tonopah Convention Center: Box 408, 301 Brougher Ave., Tonopah, NV 89049; www.tonopahnevada.com; 775-482-3558.

Indian Territory

Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada: 680 Greenbrae Dr., No. 265, Sparks, or Box 7440, Reno, NV 89510; 775-355-0600.

Indian Territory: Nevada Commission on Tourism, 401 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701; www.travelnevada.com; 775-687-4322 or 800-NEVADA-8.

State and National Parks

Death Valley National Park: Beatty Visitor Center: 307 Main St., Beatty, NV 89003; 775-553-2200. Park: Death Valley, CA 92328; 760-786-2331.

Great Basin National Park: Nevada Hwy. 488, Baker, NV 89311; www.nps.gov/grba; 775-234-7331.

Lake Mead National Recreation Area: 601 Nevada Hwy., Boulder City, NV 89005; www.nps/gov/lame; 702-293-8907.

Nevada Division of State Parks: 1300 S. Curry St., Carson City, NV 89710; www.state.nv.us/stparks; 775-687-4370.

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area: HCR 33, Box 5500, Las Vegas, NV 89124; www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov; 702-363-1921.

More Outdoor Activities

Bicycling in Nevada: Nevada Department of Transportation: 1263 S. Stewart St., Carson City, NV 89712; www.bicyclenevada.com; 775-888-RIDE.

Bureau of Land Management: Main office: Reno, www.nv.blm.gov, 775-861-6400; Las Vegas, 702-647-5000; Elko, 775-753-0200; Winnemucca, 775-623-1500; Carson City, 775-885-6000; Ely, 775-289-1800; Caliente, 775-726-8100; Battle Mountain, 775-635-4000; Tonopah, 775-482-7800 for BLM information.

Nevada Division of Wildlife: Main office: 1100 Valley Rd., Reno, NV 89512; www.state.nv.us/cnr/nvwildlife/; 775-688-1500; Southern Nevada: 4747 W. Vegas Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89108; 702-486-5133.

Pyramid Lake Fisheries: Star Route, Sutcliffe, NV 89510; www.pyramidlakefisheries.org; 775-476-0500 for Pyramid Lake Fisheries information.

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest: www.fs.fed.us/htnf/; 1200 Franklin Way, Sparks, NV 89431; 775-331-6444; 2881 S. Valley View, Suite 16, Las Vegas, NV 89102; 702-873-8800; 2035 Last Chance Rd., Elko, NV 89801; 775-738-5171.

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Dining Directory

The following Nevada dining directory includes current magazine advertisers. Each listing gives sample dishes, whether breakfast, lunch, or dinner (B, L, D) are served, and accepted credit cards. Price ranges refer to typical entree price per person: up to $10 ($), $11 to $20 ($$), $21 to $30 ($$$), and more than $30 ($$$$). Nevada's area codes are 702 in the Las Vegas area and 775 in the rest of the state. Major credit cards are accepted at the restaurants unless otherwise noted.

Las Vegas Area

AMERICAN

Imperial Palace/Betty's Diner—794-3261. Shakes, malts, and sundaes as well as sandwiches, soup, breakfast bakery. B, L, D. $.

Imperial Palace/Burger Palace—794-3261. Burgers, fries, and other fast-food items. B, L, D. $.

Imperial Palace/Emperor's Buffet—731-3311. Buffet offers carving station, roast baron of beef. B, L, D. $.

Imperial Palace/Imperial Buffet—794-3261. Prime rib and champagne dinner nightly at the buffet. B, L, D. $.

Imperial Palace/Rib House—794-3261. Barbecued ribs, chicken, blackened entrees. D. $$.

Imperial Palace/Teahouse—731-3311. Carving station with prime rib. Weekend brunch. B, L, D. $.

Riviera/Kady's Coffee Shop—794-9403. B, L, D. $-$$.

INTERNATIONAL

Riviera Hotel/Mardi Gras Food Court—734-5110. Nine quick-service eateries featuring international cuisine. B, L, D. $, no credit cards.

Riviera Hotel/World's Fare Buffet—794-9400. Buffet offers international cuisines plus prime rib. B, L, D. $.

ITALIAN

Imperial Palace/Pizza Palace—794-3261. Pizza, pasta, salads. L, D. $.

Riviera Hotel/Ristorante Italiano—794-9363. Italian eatery serves lobster Francaise, fresh seafood. D. $-$$$.

ASIAN

Imperial Palace/Ming Terrace—794-3261. Mandarin and Cantonese cuisine, abalone, kung pao shrimp, roast duck. D. $$.

Riviera Hotel/Rik' Shaw—794-9537. Pineapple duck, orange roughy with black pepper sauce. D. $-$$.

STEAK & SEAFOOD

Imperial Palace/Embers—794-3261. Steaks and continental dishes, 28 menu choices. D. $$.

Imperial Palace/Seahouse—794-3261. Alaskan crab legs, seafood salads. D, $$.

Riviera Hotel/Kristofer's—794-9233. Steak, seafood, and chicken. D. $$.

Reno-Carson Area

AMERICAN

Atlantis/Purple Parrot—Reno, 825-4700. Breakfast and American favorites served 24 hours a day. B, L, D. $-$$.

Atlantis/Toucan Charlie's Buffet—Reno, 825-4700. Friday-night seafood buffet and Sunday champagne brunch. B, L, D. $-$$.

Best Western Piñon Plaza Resort/Branding Iron Cafe and Margarita Saloon—Carson City, 885-9000. Western favorites at moderate prices. B, L, D. $-$$.

Carson Nugget/Buffet—882-1626. Sunday champagne brunch, Saturday breakfast buffet, Friday seafood buffet. B, L, D. $.

Carson Nugget/Coffee Shop—882-1626. Open 24 hours. B, L, D. $.

Carson Station/Station Grill and Rotisserie—883-8400. Baby back ribs, fish specials. L, D. $$.

Carson Station/Station Restaurant—883-0900. Homestyle cooking. B, L, D. $.

Carson Valley Inn/Fiona's—Minden, 783-6650. Steaks, seafood, and nightly specials. D, $$.

Carson Valley Inn/Katie's—Minden, 782-9711. Four-course prime rib dinner, steak and lobster, half-pound burgers, and breakfast specials. B, L, D. $-$$.

Carson Valley Inn/Michael's—Minden, 782-9711. Rack of lamb and seafood creations. D. $$.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Farm House Coffee Shop—Sparks, 356-3300. Old-fashioned home cooking, omelettes, pancakes, and fried chicken. B, L, D. $.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Gabe's Pub and Deli—Sparks, 356-3300. Quick-service deli offers snacks, sandwiches, desserts, pastries. B, L, D. $.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/General Store—Sparks, 356-3300. Prime rib, giant apple pancake, seafood Louis, Sunday brunch. B, L, D. $.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Rotisserie—Sparks, 356-3300. Buffet, Sunday brunch. B, L, D. $-$$.

Peppermill/Island Buffet—826-2121. Chicken, seafood, prime rib, salads. B, L, D. $, major.

Peppermill/Food Court—826-2121. Mexican, Asian, Italian, hamburgers, and salad bar. B, L, D. $, major.

Peppermill/Peppermill Restaurant—826-2121. Hamburgers, salads, seafood, chicken. B, L, D. $-$$, major.

Ramada Inn & Speakeasy Casino/The Gatsby Cafe—329-7400. B, L, D. $, major.



The White Orchid offers continental cuisine at the Peppermill in Reno.

ITALIAN

Atlantis/Café Alfresco—Reno, 825-4700. Brick-oven pizzas, pastas. L, D. $.

Atlantis/MonteVigna Italian Ristorante—Reno, 825-4700. Tuscany-style Italian cuisine, 4,000-bottle wine cellar. D. $$-$$$.

Eldorado/La Strada—Reno, 786-5700. Northern Italian cuisine featuring a variety of veal, chicken, and seafood entrees. The restaurant has an award-winning wine list. D. $$.

INTERNATIONAL

Eldorado/Bistro Roxy—Reno, 786-5700. Gourmet dishes include Chilean sea bass with Yukon gold potatoes and creamed spinach. D. $$.

Eldorado/Chefs Buffet—Reno, 786-5700. USDA prime rib, homemade pastas, Mongolian grill, salad bar, dessert bar. B, L, D. $.

Eldorado/Choices—Reno, 786-5700. Deli, espresso bar, bakery, Asian Noodle Kitchen. B, L, D. $.

Eldorado/Tivoli Gardens—Reno, 786-5700. Multi-ethnic, 24-hour restaurant. B, L, D. $.

BASQUE

Louis' Basque Corner—301 E. Fourth St., Reno, 323-7203. Sweetbreads, tripe, paella, other seafood dishes. L, D. $$.

ASIAN

Eldorado/Golden Fortune—Reno, 786-5700. Hong Kong-style cuisine. D. $$.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Trader Dick's—Sparks, 356-3300. Cashew chicken, Szechwan specialties, flaming dagger brochette. L, D. $$.

CONTINENTAL

Peppermill/White Orchid—826-2121. Filet mignon, seared ahi, medallions of elk, lobster. D. $$$-$$$$, major.

STEAK & SEAFOOD

Atlantis/Atlantis Seafood Steakhouse—Reno, 825-4700. Steaks, prime rib, seafood, and pastas. D. $$$.

Atlantis/Oyster Bar on the Sky Terrace—Reno, 825-4700. Oysters, clams, shrimp, and lobster. L, D. $$.

Carson Nugget/Oyster Bar—882-1626. Clam chowder, fish and chips, and pan roasts. L, D. $.

Carson Nugget/Steak House—882-1626. Veal scaloppini, scampi in dill sauce. D. $$.

Eldorado/The Grill Steakhouse—Reno, 786-5700. Prime rib, seafood, and grilled entrees. D. $$.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Oyster Bar—Sparks, 356-3300. Lazyman's cioppino, seafood stews. L, D. $$.

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Steak House—Sparks, 356-3300. Prime rib, steak, and lobster. L, D. $$.

Peppermill/Steak House—826-2121. Steaks, seafood, chicken, salads. D. $$$-$$$$, major.

MEDITERRANEAN

John Ascuaga's Nugget/Restaurante Orozko—Sparks, 356-3300. Veal medallions saltimbocca, braised lamb shank, paella valenciana. D. $$-$$$.

BREW PUBS

Eldorado/The Brew Brothers—Reno, 786-5700. Gourmet pizzas, ribs, barbecue shrimp, sausage sampler. L, D. $.

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Caesars Tahoe/Cafe Roma—Stateline, 588-3515. Lamb chops, prime rib. B, L, D. $-$$.

ITALIAN

Caesars Tahoe/Primavera—Stateline, 588-3515. Linguini carbonara, tenderloin pizzaiola. D. $$.

ASIAN

Caesars Tahoe/Empress Court—Stateline, 588-3515. Szechwan, Mandarin. D. $$.

STEAK & SEAFOOD

Caesars Tahoe/Broiler Room—Stateline, 588-3515. Prime rib, seafood, Cajun specialties. D. $$.

Around the State

LOVELOCK: Ramada Inn/Sturgeon's—273-2971. Coffee shop open 24 hours, family dining room. Fiesta Room supper club Tuesday-Saturday. Steaks, seafood, Mexican dishes. B, L, D. $-$$$.

WINNEMUCCA: Model T/Casino Restaurant—623-2588. Chicken strips, chicken-fried steak, prime rib special, ribeye steak, fried prawns. B, L, D. $.

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A New 'World' Order

"One World" brings a universe of dance and amazing feats to the Eldorado Hotel. **By D. Brian Burghart**

The Eldorado Hotel's latest production, "One World," works hard to engage its audience. Even as audience members get comfortable in the Reno hotel-casino's showroom, jugglers and clowns play a "think fast" game of catch with the crowd and pull folks from their seats to blow up balloons. The showgoers become the entertainment, and after a moment of stage fright or a fumbled toss, they love it.

That sense of engagement carries "One World" through its nine high-energy movements. However, the show, created by David King, who also developed the Eldorado's "Spirit of the Dance," offers more than audience participation. There's even a story. "One World" begins in a bruise-colored, post-apocalyptic world. After doomsday, all the world's survivors come together to search for a new Eden through dancing.

But who needs a story when you have such storytellers? The 45 cast members come from 10 groups of nationalities and training. Dance styles include tango, flamenco, salsa, Latino, Irish, Scottish, and tap.

The stars are the Celtic International Dance Company, the Russian Cossacks, and the Cirque Acrobats of China. Each group adds a spectacular something to the show, and it would be difficult to say which group is best. If you like Celtic dance, you're going to enjoy the Irish dance number and the Scottish sword dance. For fans of operatic singing, critics have sung the praises of Benjamin Lake, the show's 22-year-old tenor.

The Chinese Cirque Acrobats from Beijing begin with impressive, gumball-colored dancing dragons and acrobats and women twirling saucers at the end of long poles. It's a later act, the Lights of the Orient, that'll drop your jaw. There's a moment when three female contortionists create a column in a spine-wrenching, foot-to-ear discombobulation that defies description. Frankly, if these young women weren't so beautiful and graceful, the pose would be perverse.



Gavin Skinner and Lydia Lym are among the cast of international dancers appearing in "One World," the production show at the Eldorado in Reno. The Australian duo are world-champion ballroom dancers.

The Russian Cossacks, contrary to their name, aren't black-hatted high kickers. They are gymnasts, acrobats, and clowns. The Cossacks appear in two of the show's best numbers. During a Hula Hoop bit one Cossack is raised on a rope to the ceiling, where he wiggles four hoops into motion. The Grand Russian Olympia features double-dutch rope jumping, and, in a stunning, surreal exhibition, a 12-year-old Russian boy, Valeri Kouznetsov, is used as the rope.

The dancing in "One World" is military in its precision. Two couples in particular, Miriam Jones and Daniel Wilkinson and Lydia Lym and Gavin Skinner, do extraordinary work. The whole cast shines in the tribute to Broadway choreographer Bob Fosse, especially when they sit on the edge of the stage for an over-the-top hand jive.

The last number is a '50s-style rock 'n' roll medley. Performers invite the audience to stand and clap while dancers boogie frenetically on the stage and in the aisles. It's yet another chance for cast members to bring the audience into their world.

Show Notes

"One World" appears at the Eldorado Hotel in downtown Reno. Show times are 7 and 9:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (dark Monday). Adult show tickets are $26.95 every night except Saturday, when the cost is $31.95. Children under 12 pay $19.95; so do seniors (60 and over) for all shows except Saturday's. Call the Eldorado, 800-648-5966 or 775-786-5700, for reservations.

D. Brian Burghart is a Reno writer.

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Alley Cats

Blackjack, baccarat, and…bowling? Yes, and a growing number of Nevada casinos will let you rock while you roll.

By Sharon Carter







The Gold Coast offers 72 lanes in Las Vegas (top). At left, David Richardson shows his form at the Castaways. At right, Carson City keglers Bill Evans and Rick and Judy Watkins replay their last game at the Piñon Plaza.

As a teenager in the 1960s, I often baby-sat my two younger cousins on Thursday nights while my aunt and uncle bowled in a league at the Showboat Lanes. The fact that the bowling alley was tucked inside a Las Vegas casino didn't seem out of the ordinary. Still, my aunt and uncle and their fellow keglers felt a special pride. They could tell out-of-towners not only that they bowled in a Nevada casino, but that their 24-lane alley was big enough to attract American Bowling Congress tournaments, including the national finals.

Today the Showboat, recently renamed the Castaways, still counts bowling as a major attraction and, at 106 lanes, is the largest bowling center in the United States. But as a bowling-minded casino, it is no longer alone. Seventeen casinos throughout Nevada now offer bowling alleys along with blackjack, baccarat, and bingo.

Of course, these aren't simply alleys. They are state-of-the-art bowling centers that feature automatic scoring, ball tracking, professional instruction, child care, and video monitors that will replay your last game just as they do on TV. Some centers hold "moonlight," "cosmic," and "xtreme" bowling nights—while bowling in the dark, you try to knock down glow-in-the-dark pins. Add hypnotic laser shows, foggers, and thundering music from numerous speakers, and the bowling centers turn into disco nightclubs—places where you can rock while you roll.

Much of casino bowling's growth derives from hotels' efforts to attract local gamblers and the booming population of the Las Vegas Valley. For example, bowling is a major attraction at the Gold Coast, Texas Station, and other Las Vegas hotel-casinos that have big local followings.

Thus visiting bowlers can take advantage of the growing number of casino lanes (as well as the state's many excellent bowling centers that are not affiliated with casinos). Although leagues take up most lanes in the evening, drop-in players will find open lanes at other times (see "Rock and Bowl" on page 73). Some centers have open bowling on weekends, and Texas Station keeps 20 lanes open at all times. Even during prime league time, promotions managers may be able to reserve lanes for groups of 40 or more and, depending on the season, put together special package deals that include rooms, dining, and bowling.

Cruise the lanes at the Orleans or Sam's Town, and you'll see a few serious keglers who could flirt with 300, but most players will be league members and hotel guests who have found a low-budget way to relieve stress and hang out with friends, family, beers, and Buffalo wings. After all,

Photos: Chris Leedham (bottom left), Shannon Montana (bottom right)









Players have lots of elbow room on the Castaways' 106 lanes (top left). Suncoast bowlers get in a cosmic mood (top right). Kids find bowling right down their alley during a birthday party at Piñon Plaza (left) while a bowler cleans her ball (below).

the sport's appeal cannot be denied. Doné Sharp, bowling manager at the Suncoast in Las Vegas, points out, "Bowling is a great sport because it can be played year-round, is good exercise, and provides the chance to meet people and socialize."

Reno Hilton bowling manager Todd Thompson, a former touring professional, says bowling is particularly compatible with gaming. "Bowlers just like to wager. You know, 'I bet I can make it, and 'I bet you can't. Another reason bowlers come is that the bowling center is attached to the casino," he adds. The Reno Hilton's bowling center, which opened with the hotel (then the MGM Grand) in 1978, is open 24 hours. Thompson says, "Our league play brings in 3,000 to 4,000 locals per week."

Some casinos use bowling, like slot tournaments and golf packages, to lure groups. For instance, the Piñon Plaza in Carson City schedules leagues and holds bowling parties for corporate groups, traveling tournaments, family reunions, and other special occasions. To help bowlers keep in tune with their game, the Piñon Plaza's bowling center, located next to the main casino, offers a kids' arcade and supervised child care.

"Bowling is a great sport because it can be played year-round and provides the chance to socialize."

Rural casinos credit their bowling operations with enhancing a sense of community. Bill Santoro, director of non-gaming operations at the Mountain View Recreation Center, says that when he moved to Pahrump, the town had 6,000 residents. "In less than 10 years we've grown to 30,000," he says. "With many of our residents commuting to Las Vegas, 60 miles away, we saw the need to give something a little different." Mountain View schedules three youth leagues. Santoro adds, "The student of the month at each of our schools is awarded a free hour-and-a-half of bowling and pizza. One day a week we have free bowling for home-schooled kids."

Casino West, a casino on Yerington's Main Street, opened its bowling center in 1991. Director Marty Howard sees his 12-lane operation both as a boost to the

Photos: Chris Leedham (top left), Shannon Montana (bottom left and right)

casino and its Pizza Factory and also as a community gathering place. Howard says the bowling center and the casino's 80-room motel elevate Casino West to "mini-resort" status.

"At $1.50 per game, we probably still have the cheapest open bowling in the state," Howard says. "The majority of the people who play here are in local leagues … but we also host statewide tournaments and special events. And while the bowling by itself doesn't turn a profit, it is a major plus for the community. It brings the people in."

In Laughlin, the Riverside Resort opened its 34-lane bowling center in 1999. Bowling Center Manager Brian Markowitz, a former touring pro, helped create the center's ergonomic design and dictated its modernistic style. "We won the 1999 *Bowlers' Journal* design award, and for our size, we are the busiest bowling center in the country," Markowitz says. The Riverside's lanes, like most in Vegas and the Reno Hilton's, are open 24 hours.

Visitors to downtown Reno can stop by the National Bowling Stadium and tour its public areas. The six-year-old bowling mecca, operated by the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, hosts major tournaments of the American Bowling Congress and the Women's International Bowling Congress on its 78 lanes. Generally, the public can bowl there only during special periods, as during Hot August Nights, but the stadium has several public attractions: a big-screen theater, a pro shop selling clothing and equipment, and Paul Revere's Kicks! Diner and Dance Club. Visitors also can watch tournaments like the big ABC event this summer.

As bowling has become part of the fabric of Nevada gaming, the state's original tenpin casino has adapted. "For years we've been the largest bowling center in the country—and still are," says former touring pro bowler Meida Johnson, the Showboat/Castaways' tournament manager. "We're famous for our High Rollers tournaments. We've had our High Roller Military, Super Bowl, and various holiday tournaments for years."

One change at the Castaways, Johnson notes, is that now the 106-lane bowling center has two distinct sides. While 70 lanes remain traditional tournament style, the other section of 36 can go cosmic. "It has the lights and the sound system," she says. "It's our party side."

Sharon Carter, a Jacks Valley writer, has bowled in both Southern and Northern Nevada but declines to reveal her scores.

Photo: Shannon Montana

ROCK AND BOWL



Here's a kegler's guide to 17 casino bowling centers in Nevada.

By Wilma LaRocca

Casino guests ready to go on a real roll will find bowling alleys in 17 Nevada casinos. The bowling centers range widely in size. The Castaways in Las Vegas has 106 lanes, making the former Showboat bowling center the largest in the country. Others range from 12 lanes at Casino West in Yerington to 72 lanes at the Gold Coast in Las Vegas. Many are open 'round the clock.

Visitors who wish to go bowling will find that leagues usually dominate play in afternoons and evenings, so mornings and after 9 p.m. are the easiest times to get a lane. Late-night visitors will find plenty of open lanes. Some centers offer more flexible hours for drop-in players. For example, Texas Station designates 20 lanes for open bowling 24 hours a day.

Several casino bowling centers feature "cosmic," "midnight," or "glow" bowling. This innovation transforms the bowling center into a glow-in-the-dark disco with strobes, lasers, black lights, glow balls and pins, and a sound system to complete the magic. Some centers offer cosmic bowling suitable for children and teenagers.

Following are special features of Nevada's casino bowling centers. Be sure to call ahead to confirm open-bowling times. Bowlers also will find numerous noncasino bowling centers in Las Vegas, Reno, and other Nevada communities.

Las Vegas Area

Castaways (formerly the Showboat): 2800 Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104. Call 702-385-9153, e-mail info@showboat-lv.com, www.showboat-lv.com. 106 lanes. Cost per game $2.25, juniors and seniors $1.75, shoe rental $1.75. Open 24 hours. Snack bar and coffee shop. With 106 lanes, the Castaways is the largest bowling center in the U.S. and hosts many prestigious tournaments, including Mega-Buck High Roller. The enormous pro shop is being doubled in size. Private and group lessons and clinics, child care, lockers, and meeting rooms are offered. The Family Fun package ($19.95) includes 90 minutes of bowling for up to four, including shoe rental, snack, and soft drink. Open play is usually available except from 6-9 p.m. daily, when leagues occupy the lanes.

Gold Coast: 400 W. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89103. Call 702-367-4700, www.goldcoastcasino.com. 72 lanes. Cost per game $1.50-$2.50 (evenings more), shoe rental $1.75. Open 24 hours. Snack bar features pizza. Cocktail lounge. Private instructors, equipment lockers, video arcade, and many league programs are offered. Cosmic bowling 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Fri.-Sat. at $3 per game. Open lanes daily except 5:30-9 p.m., when leagues play, and after 9 p.m.

"Cosmic" or "midnight" bowling transforms the tenpin center into a glow-in-the-dark disco.

Mahoney's Silver Nugget: 2140 N. Las Vegas Blvd., North Las Vegas, NV 89030. Call 702-320-2695. 24 lanes. Cost per game $1 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (evenings more), shoe rental $1.75. Open 9 a.m.-midnight Sun.-Thurs., till 1:30 a.m. Fri.-Sat. Snack bar with pizza and chicken fingers. Cocktail bar. Cosmic bowling 7 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Fri.-Sat. and 9 p.m.-midnight Tues. Open lanes are available 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and after 9 p.m. except on cosmic bowling days.

The Orleans: 4500 W. Tropicana Ave.,

Las Vegas, NV 89103. Call 702-365-7111, www.orleanscasino.com. 70 lanes. Cost per game $2.35, seniors and juniors $1.75, shoe rental $1.50. Open 24 hours. Snack bar has fast food. Cocktail lounge. Pro shop provides ball fitting, drilling, and coaching. Video arcade, lockers, meeting rooms, and party and group packages are offered at the Orleans. Open lanes till 5 p.m. and after 9 p.m.

Sam's Town: 5111 Boulder Highway, Las Vegas, NV 89122. Call 702-456-7777, www.samstown.com. 56 lanes. Cost per game $1.60-$2 (specials 75¢), shoe rental $1.50. Sunday Rent-a-Lane $5 per hour 9 a.m.-noon for up to six players. Open 24 hours. The snack bar is a McDonald's. Cocktail lounge. Xtreme bowling Fri.-Sat. midnight-4 a.m. at $16 per hour per lane for up to six players. Amateurs Bowlers Spring Nationals Tournament is scheduled March 26-April 1. Leagues play 6-9 p.m. daily. Open lanes 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. weekdays, noon-5 p.m. Sat., and all day Sun. Open play after 9 p.m. Tues., Wed., and Thurs. and after 11 p.m. Mon. and Fri.

Santa Fe Station: 4949 N. Rancho Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89193. Call 702-658-4995, www.santafecasino.com. 60 lanes. Cost per game $1.75-$2, shoe rental $1.75. Open 24 hours. Snack bar has hamburgers, chicken fingers, and tacos. Nursery services, video arcade, instant replay, and events packages

Reno's National Bowling Stadium has a big-screen theater, Kicks! dance club, and huge pro shop.

are offered. Open bowling mornings and after 9 p.m. daily except Friday, when lanes are open after midnight.

Suncoast: 9090 Alta Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89145. Call 702-636-7111, www.suncoast casino.com. 64 lanes. Cost per game $1.40-$2.35, shoe rental $1.50. Open 24 hours. Snack bar and cocktail bar are next to the lanes. Lockers, arcade, and tables with touch screens are offered. Cosmic bowling 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Fri.-Sat. at $3 per game. Open lanes daily before 9 a.m., from 3-5 p.m., and after 9 p.m. except Fri.-Sat. evenings.

Sunset Lanes: 4451 E. Sunset Rd., Henderson, NV 89014. Call 702-736-2695, www.renatas.com. This small casino (slot machines only) has 40 lanes. Cost per game $1.75-$2.50, shoe rental $1.50. Open 8:30 a.m.-1 a.m. Mon.-Thurs., till 4 a.m. Fri.-Sun. Snack bar specializes in nachos; the Alligator Sports Grill has food and drinks. Private instruction can be arranged. Open bowling 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. and after 9 p.m. daily; 5:30-8:30 reserved for leagues.



The pro shop at Sam's Town in Las Vegas carries shirts, shoes, balls, and other bowling necessities.

Terrible's Town: 642 Boulder Highway, Henderson, NV 89015. Call 702-564-7118. 16 lanes. Cost per game $1-$1.25, midnight-8 a.m. two for $1 (more on weekends), shoe rental $1. Open 24 hours. Snack bar has full menu, including breakfast. Scotch Doubles Tournament 9 p.m. Sat., man-woman team, 21 and older. Open lanes till 5 p.m. daily and after 9 p.m. Leagues play from 5-9 p.m. Thurs.-Fri., when some lanes are open.

Texas Station: 2101 Texas Star Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89032. Call 702-631-1000, www.texasstation.com. Cost per game $1.75-$2.75, shoe rental $1.75. 60 lanes. Open 24 hours. Snack bar and cocktail bar with lounge. Cosmic bowling suitable for families 5-10 p.m. Fri.-Sat., with nightclub bowling beginning at 11 p.m. The center designates 20 lanes for open bowling 24 hours daily.

Laughlin

Riverside Lanes: 1650 Casino Dr., Laughlin, NV 89029. Call 702-298-2535, www.riverside.com. 34 lanes. Cost per game $1.75-$2.75. Open 24 hours. Snack bar and Hall of Fame cocktail bar. Laughlin's only bowling center offers Bowler Track lanes that chart ball reaction from foul line to head pin, touch-screen scoring, supervised children's play center ($5 per hour), meeting rooms, seating for guests, 27-inch monitors over lanes, lockers, and sweeper packages with room rates. Cosmic bowling Mon., Fri., and Sat. beginning at 9 p.m. Open play Mon.-Fri. before 5 p.m. and after 9 p.m. and all day Sun. Sat. is reserved for leagues.

Mesquite

Virgin River: 915 Mesquite Blvd., Mesquite, NV 89024. Call 702-346-7777. 24 lanes. Cost per game $1.50-$2.50, shoe rental $1. Open 24 hours. Snack bar features hot dogs, hamburgers, and soup. Lounge with bar. Bleachers available for tournaments. Free instruction during play. Open play till 5:30 p.m. and from 9 p.m.-midnight most evenings. Sun. special: 9 a.m.-noon, $10 for three hours play, including shoe rental, for six. Mon. special: 9 p.m.-midnight, 50¢ per game, shoe rental, hot dog, or beer. Fri. special: 9 a.m.-4 p.m, 75¢ per game.

Pahrump

Mountain View Recreation Center: Calvada Blvd. and Pahrump Valley Blvd., Pahrump, NV 89048. Call 775-727-7777. 24 lanes. Cost per game $2 open bowling, $1 league, shoe rental 75¢-$1. Open daily 8:30 p.m.-midnight. Snack bar offers three games plus large Hot Stuff Pizza for $12.99, or three games for $5 per player. Cosmic bowling for families 2-5 p.m. and supervised cosmic bowling for teenagers 9 p.m.-midnight Sat. (no smoking, no drink-

ing), $5 per hour, shoes included. The center hosts the Women's State Bowling Tournament in May. Open lanes till 12:30 p.m. daily and after 9 p.m. except Sat.

Reno

National Bowling Stadium: 300 N. Center St., Reno, NV 89504. Call 775-334-2600 for Kicks! Diner and Dance Club, 702-334-2434 for Stadium Theater, 800-304-2695 for Personal Video Analysis (CATS) and bowling instruction. 78 lanes. Not open to the public for bowling but open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. daily for visitors to look around, shop, and attend movies. Open to spectators for tournaments, to convention groups and parties, and for open bowling during special events such as Hot August Nights. Parties can arrange for glow bowling. The pro shop is the state's largest. Paul Revere's Kicks! Diner and Dance Club has lunches and a soda fountain. The NBS has a scoring wall, Pendleton shop, giant-screen theater, and computer-aided bowling instruction lane. The NBS hosts the American Bowling Congress (ABC) tournament in June 2001.



Judy and Rick Watkins compare computer-tallied scores at Piñon Plaza.

Reno Hilton: 2500 E. Second St., Reno, NV 89595. Call 775-789-2295, www.renohilton.com. 50 lanes. Cost per game $1.80-$2.40, $2.95 after 6 p.m., shoe rental $1.75-$2. Open 24 hours. Snack bar and cocktail lounge with darts and billiards. Color TV monitors, bleachers for special events, instructors. Open play from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Tues. and Thurs.-Fri., and after 9 p.m. Sun.-Thurs. League play at the Reno Hilton takes place on Wed. till 9 p.m.

Carson City

Piñon Plaza: 2171 Highway 50 East, Carson City, NV 89701. Call 775-885-9000. 32 lanes. Cost per game $1.80-$2.05, shoe rental 75¢-$1.50. Open 9 a.m.-midnight Sun.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-2 a.m. Fri.-Sat. Snack bar is Pizza Hut Express. Ten Pin cocktail lounge. Fri. special: $1 per game for seniors. Open play daily after 1 p.m. and all day Fri.-Sun. Mornings on Mon.-Thurs. are busy with leagues, but some lanes are open.

Yerington

Casino West: 11 N. Main St., Yerington, NV 89447. Call 775-463-3355. 12 lanes. Cost per game $1.50, juniors and seniors $1, shoe rental $1. Open 1-9 p.m. Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sun. Snack bar and Pizza Factory. Director Marty Howard has open lanes available during non-league hours such as 1-4 p.m. Mon.-Wed. (none Thurs.), 9 a.m.-7 p.m. and after 9:30 p.m. Fri., and all day Sat. and Sun.

Wilma LaRocca is a Nevada Magazine *editorial assistant.*

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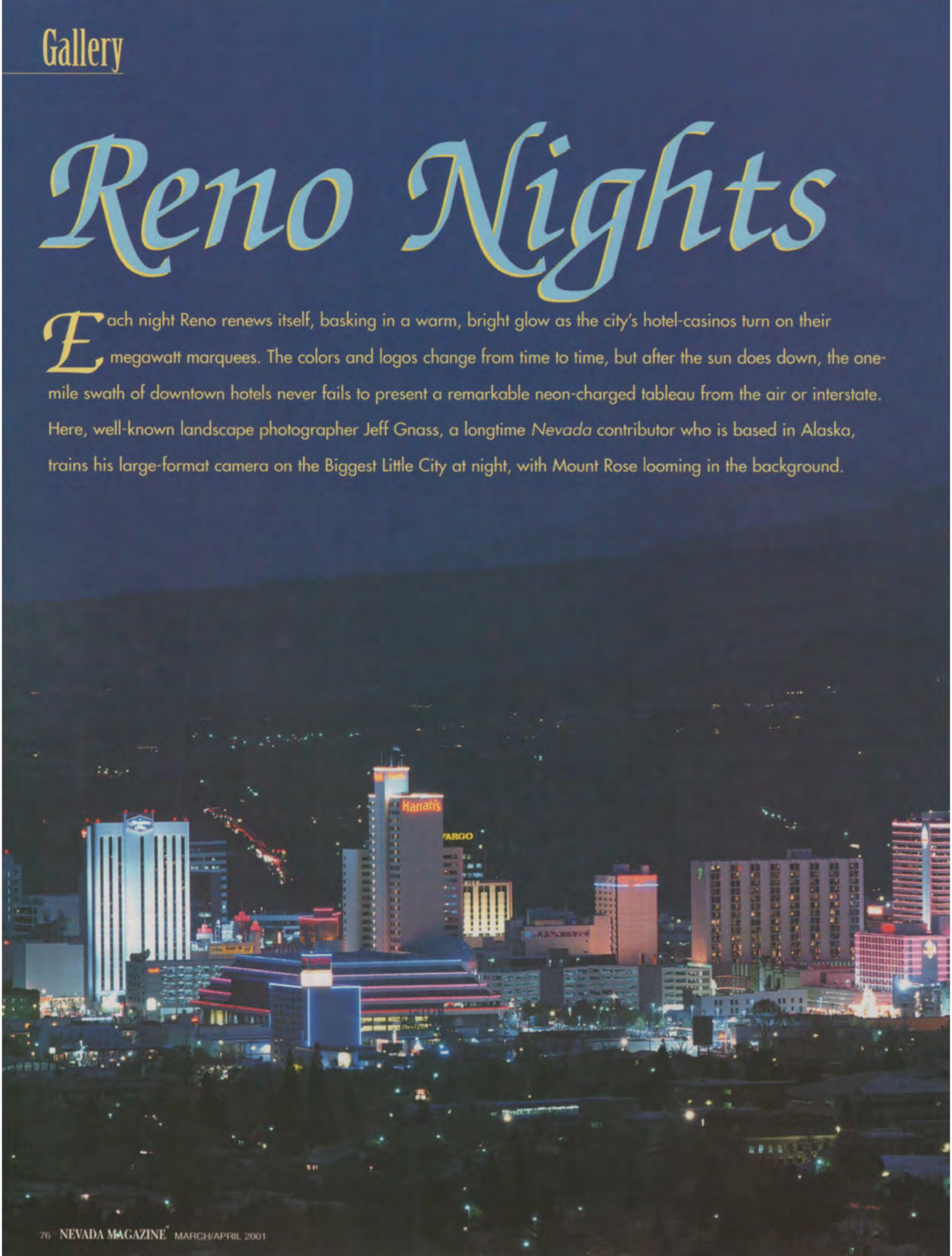
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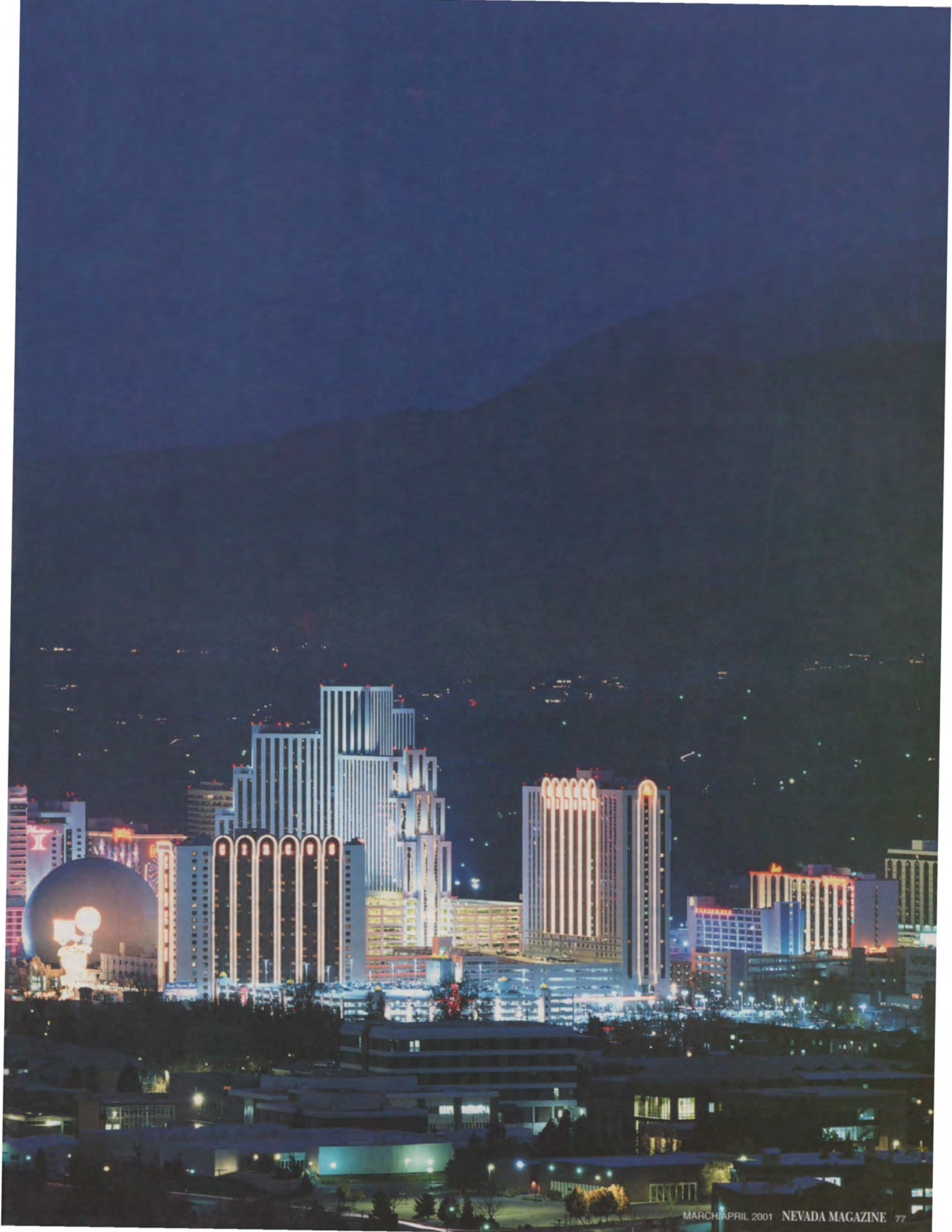
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Photo: Shannon Montana

Reno Nights

Each night Reno renews itself, basking in a warm, bright glow as the city's hotel-casinos turn on their megawatt marquees. The colors and logos change from time to time, but after the sun does down, the one-mile swath of downtown hotels never fails to present a remarkable neon-charged tableau from the air or interstate. Here, well-known landscape photographer Jeff Gnass, a longtime *Nevada* contributor who is based in Alaska, trains his large-format camera on the Biggest Little City at night, with Mount Rose looming in the background.





Casino Hideaways

(Continued from Page 19)

York supper club Lotus, while Brad Johnson was a partner in Hollywood's Sunset Room, a throwback to Tinsel Town's heyday. They hope V Bar will similarly suggest a stylized version of classic Vegas, with its 50-foot glass wall lined by a long banquette and chaise lounges. The idea is that you will sit and chat instead of dancing the night away. But if dance you must, the tables are reinforced to support whatever groove the state-of-the-art sound system moves you to.

For those who don't like dealing with fashion police or waiting in line at clubs, Harrah's Las Vegas (800-392-9002) took the ultimate come-as-you-are approach with its **Carnaval Court**. This hangout became one of the first outdoor bars to capture the sidewalk's midway appeal. Misters or outdoor torches make adjustments for the weather, and you'll even find outdoor blackjack tables during busy times of the year.

But the Carnaval didn't stop with a cool location. Harrah's auditioned "flair," or performing, bartenders to do the type of juggling and fire-breathing stunts seen in the Tom Cruise movie *Cocktail*. The star bartender is Mig Gradeckas, who has won contests with his ability to balance nine layers of bottles and glasses while walking around the bar with them. The only person who could possibly upstage that act is Cook E. Jarr, the quintessential lounge singer who performs late sets on weekends.

At the Fireside Lounge at the Peppermill, you'll find a mix of casino workers, business people, and ski bums and bunnies gathered around the huge center fireplace pit.

A bit west of the Strip, the Rio (800-PLAY-RIO) also uses its real estate to maximum impact: The **Voodoo Lounge and Cafe**, on the 50th and 51st floors of the Rio's Masquerade Village addition, is always packed with people catching the jazzy lounge bands inside or the romantic patio views outside.

Romantic may not be the best word to describe **Quark's Bar and Restaurant** (702-697-8725) inside the Las Vegas Hilton's Star Trek: The Experience, but the devotees of *Star Trek* will find no better place to quaff a Vulcan Nerve Pinch or Klingon Warnog Ale. Klingons frequently hang out in the chrome-trimmed eatery, where neon lines the building supports and "lightning" crackles behind glass over the bar. Fans who brave an Alien Secretion or Plutonium Punch ("You'll definitely see stars!" the menu proclaims) can keep the souvenir glass bearing the Spacequest logo.

If you really want to cool out away from the tourist zone, you can hoist a Guinness at **J.C. Wooloughan**, the only place that might be prone to a jig breaking out inside the upscale Regent Las Vegas (877-869-8777) in suburban Summerlin. The Irish pub's furniture was built in Ireland for added authenticity. The place usually is crowded with locals who fulfill the pub's goal of a cozy social environment free of gaming and big-screen TVs.

Mike Weatherford is an entertainment writer for the Las Vegas Review-Journal. *He also wrote about afternoon revues in this issue's Nevada Calendar feature, "Shows That Don't Wait Until Dark."*



The dancing and mingling are fast-paced at Club Z, a nightclub inside the Lake Tahoe Horizon at Stateline.

Reno-Tahoe Area

By D. Brian Burghart

The **Atlantis Nightclub** inside the Atlantis Resort (800-723-6500) in Reno is a nautical place to hang if you're in the mood for loud music, flashing lights, and a youthful crowd. An octopus oversees the dance floor, and sharks and ocean waves hang from the ceiling. This party-oriented nightclub features theme nights, like Babe Watch Wednesdays and La Vida Loca Thursdays.

A more subdued option is the **Fireside Lounge** inside the Peppermill (800-648-6992). At the Fireside you'll find a mix of casino workers, business people, and ski bums and bunnies gathered around the huge center fireplace pit. The unintentionally retro Fireside Lounge boasts one of Reno's best happy hours, serving free hors d'oeuvres from 4 to 8 p.m.

Downtown, you'll find a cluster of three good hangouts in one hotel, the Eldorado (800-648-5966). For food and a variety of fresh-brewed beers, you can tap into **Brew Brothers**, a microbrewery, restaurant, and dance club. This room, with concrete floors and huge copper fixtures and brewing vats, features live blues and rock 'n'

Photo: Candice Towell

roll. The bar usually offers eight microbrews, and the selection of agave tequilas and single-malt Scotches will make you wish you'd reserved a room in the hotel.

A more upscale option is **Bistro Roxy**, tucked near the Eldorado's ornate fountain. Next to the restaurant is the place to hang: You'll find a lounge with a piano bar and overstuffed chairs. The Roxy bar offers 102 versions of the martini, employing every flavor from chocolate to cranberry. A piano player and torch singer keep the atmosphere lively.

The Eldorado's **BuBinga Lounge** is a nightclub for people who want to dance or relax to the soothing tones of hip-hop, house, and trance music. The casino spent $4 million on the room, which includes a 25,000-watt sound system. Men should wear slacks.

If you want thatched huts, tiki glasses, and a bar that incorporates freeway infrastructure into its décor, **Trader Dick's**, inside John Ascuaga's Nugget (800-648-1177) in Sparks, is a tropical hideaway. If you want to hang out, go to the noncasino side of the 6,000-gallon, 30-ton aquarium. With the right combination of libation and Polynesian appetizers, you'll feel as if you're at Duke's Canoe Club on Waikiki Beach. Here's a suggestion: Order one of the souvenir Scorpions for $14.

Whether it's ski or mountain-bike season, Lake Tahoe's south shore draws a youthful crowd that plays hard during the day and even harder at night. A gathering place for this energetic group is **Club Z** (775-588-6211), a nightclub inside the Lake Tahoe Horizon at Stateline. The club, which aims to be South Shore's most woman-friendly room, has a black ceiling and black walls punctuated with wall lights and art. A mirrored ball over the dance floor enhances the club's retro feel. Club Z plays traditional nightclub music like hip hop, '70s and '80s dance hits, and Top 40 tunes with some international club mixes stirred in. It's open from 9 p.m. till the crowd gives up Wednesday through Saturday.

Club Nero, inside Caesars Tahoe (888-829-7630), is South Shore's edgiest dance club. It has a modern, techno flavor. The energy level is high, which suits the 20-something clientele. The predominant color is black, but spot lighting, neon tubing, and a state-of-the-art laser system brighten the room. The caged go-go dancers make you wonder which decade it is.

The **Circle Bar** at the Cal-Neva Resort (800-CAL-NEVA) in Crystal Bay is a casino bar that also is a good place to hang out. You'll be reminded of former owner Frank Sinatra and famous guests like Marilyn Monroe as you sip an Old Blue Eyes—a mixture of tequila, triple sec, and lime juice that is the bar's specialty. Swing-shift bartender Alexa Cadman says the drink has instigated more than one marriage. With the Lake Tahoe views outside, the stained-glass dome over the bar, and the woodsy décor all around, the Circle Bar is a cozy, attractive place to kick back and enjoy some history.

One of the lake's nightlife secrets is **Cutthroat's Saloon** inside the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe (775-832-1234) in Incline Village. This hideaway lounge lacks only public awareness to make it the most popular watering hole on the north shore; the only drawback is the casino lounge music. If you didn't know you were in a casino, you'd swear you were in a mountain lodge with walls dotted with antiques and Western memorabilia—a place where you can truly lounge.





The Eldorado is a haven of hipster hangouts with its BuBinga Lounge (top), Bistro Roxy, and Brew Brothers, all of which feature live music. From left, Wally Jones and Michele Marie perform at Roxy's Lounge in Bistro Roxy, while Darcy and Gil entertain at BuBinga. Bands often play at BuBinga and Brew Brothers.

D. Brian Burghart is a Sparks freelance writer and Reno-Tahoe explorer.

The Games Begin

(Continued from Page 22)

Probably the epitome of the Nevada roadhouse was the Willows, another Graham and McKay property located just west of Reno on the Truckee River. In 1931, about a year before the club burned to the ground, Laura Vitray described the Willows as a "charming place to spend the evening":

"A comfortable old mansion, it sets back from the main road, surrounded by trees that mask it from the vulgar gaze. Its door opens only to the proper guests—those who are certain to have bulging pocketbooks and no prohibition taint—and to them it is highly cordial.

"The walls of the Willows are elegantly draped in silver-tipped material that is hardened into festoons on the walls and ceilings in modernistic effects. There is food for the hungry there, and a dance floor for the lightfooted. There's a barroom for the thirsty [where drinks were a dollar, rather than the quarter they cost downtown] and, last but not least, there's the gambling salon.

"When you reach the gambling salon of the Willows, after wining and dining and dancing with your latest flame, you feel reckless—as who wouldn't? With a scorn of things material you fling your bank roll around, or toss your yellowbacks to the dealer.

"People don't lose dimes and quarters and dollars in such places. They lose real money—thousands, that pile up and up and up."

While painting the town, Reno's *haut monde* might visit another kind of carpet joint—downtown nightclubs whose primary attractions were atmosphere and entertainment. These included the Inferno, a popular hangout, and the Ship and Bottle, a club that catered to high rollers and whose distinctive front resembled the prow of a ship. The Dog House was one of the rowdiest spots on the street and "sort of a hustling place," musician and bandleader Lou LeVitt recalled in an interview, with bar girls hustling customers who came to drink, gamble, or watch the lively floor shows.

Nevada casinos of the 1930s featured many of the games seen in today's casinos. Blackjack, or 21, was very popular, as were roulette, poker, and craps. Some clubs offered bingo and keno games. A number of casinos, such as the Bank Club in Reno and the Boulder, Northern, and Las Vegas clubs in Las Vegas, had racebooks, or "horsebooks." (The possibility that local governments had no authority under existing state law to license racebooks appears to have been overlooked or ignored throughout the decade.)



Members of the divorce colony gathered at the Willows, a plush place on Reno's western outskirts.

Various games that were popular then have disappeared from Nevada casinos. Faro, for example, was thought to be susceptible to cheating and didn't appeal much to women. Klondike, hazard, Big Six, panguingue (pan), chemin de fer, and rouge et noir were common games. The original form of keno, played in some clubs in the early 1930s, resembled modern bingo. During the second half of the decade it was replaced by "racehorse" keno, which evolved into the game seen in casinos today. Warren Nelson, later one of the operators of Reno's Club Cal-Neva, and other gamblers from Montana helped establish racehorse keno in Nevada.

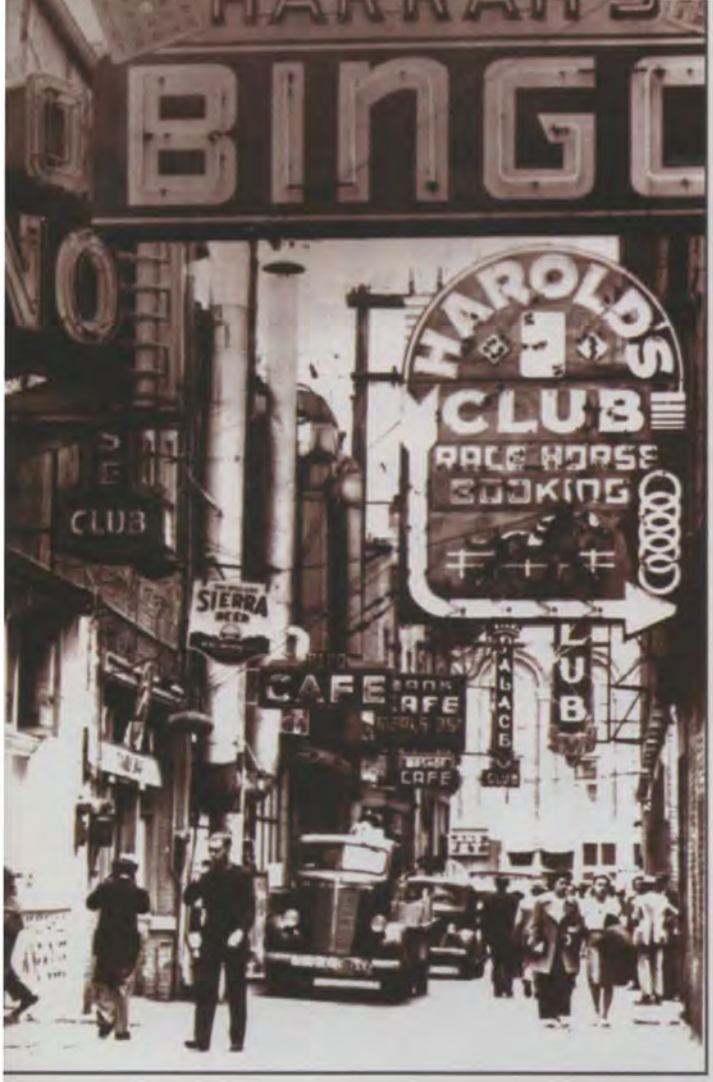
Bingo remained popular throughout the decade. Often called tango, the game was found in larger clubs and sometimes in bingo establishments such as the Tango Parlor in Las Vegas and Club Tango, operated by young William Harrah, in Reno.

The gambling houses of that time didn't bear much resemblance to today's casinos. As a rule, they were much smaller, less colorful, and short on amenities. Games of chance and a well-stocked bar were about all that the sawdust joints offered their customers. However, the nightclub and dinner-house gambling establishments had elaborate restaurants and entertainment that ranged from a piano player to vocalists, dancers, or even a floor show with several acts. Dance bands were often featured, and nightclubs like the Dog House presented fan dancers and other exotic adult entertainment. Virtually none of the individuals or groups who appeared in Nevada's clubs in the 1930s were big-name entertainers. Performers included such luminaries as the Troubadours From the Islands, the "dance artists" Sorel and Denova, and Helene, the Girl With the Radio Mind. Once in a while patrons would catch a glimpse of someone destined for later fame, as when Judy Garland appeared as one of the three singing Garland Sisters at the Cal-Neva Lodge in 1935.

If the entertainers were obscure, the clubs' owners and operators usually weren't. Most were professional gamblers or proprietors who had run games before 1931 in Nevada or in other states, legally or illegally. If they operated within the law, they usually became accepted members of the community. For every shady operator, like William Graham and James McKay, the racketeering gamblers and bootleggers who owned the Bank Club, and the Cornero brothers, the California gamblers who opened the Meadows in Las Vegas, there were numerous others like William Harrah, Mayme Stocker and her sons of the Northern in Las Vegas, and J. Kell Houssels of the Las Vegas Club, who had reputations for honesty.

The honest approach worked for Raymond I. ("Pappy") Smith and his sons, Harold and Raymond A., of Reno's pioneering Harolds Club. Harolds was, arguably, the most important casino of the 1930s due to its innovative business practices. Harolds employed women dealers, advertised extensively, admonished patrons to wager no more than they could afford, and created successful publicity gimmicks like "mouse roulette." The colorful Smiths, who had carnival and bingo-game backgrounds,

Photo: Nevada Historical Society





The Smiths of Harolds Club were great innovators. Above (from left) are Raymond A., Harold Sr., and their father, Raymond I. "Pappy" Smith. At left: Douglas Alley in Reno.

helped transform Nevada gaming from a socially questionable activity into a successful, legitimate business that appealed to locals as well as visitors, women as well as men, and vacationers as well as inveterate gamblers.

Despite the clean games offered by the Smiths and other operators, cheating was commonplace in the early casinos. Clubs cheated customers, customers cheated the clubs, dishonest employees cheated customers and the clubs, and crooked operators skimmed profits from their own businesses. Some operators, among them the Smith family, Houssels, and, paradoxically, Graham and McKay at their Bank Club, developed reputations for honest dealing, but cheating seemed to be the rule rather than the exception in small establishments and in those clubs located in the less-reputable sections of town. Typically, the marked cards and loaded dice were employed so efficiently that customers rarely even knew they had been victimized.

The cheating of customers by clubs "was just sort of accepted back then," gaming veteran Warren Nelson stated in his 1994 book, *Always Bet on the Butcher*, "and no one really thought any the worse of anyone who was in that type of operation." Nelson remarked that most of the clubs at Lake Tahoe's South Shore were "flat joints"—a derogatory term for places that cheated their customers. In a 1992 oral history, Las Vegas attorney Ralph Denton offered his opinion that Nevada's early clubs generally were "flat" and recalled his uncle, Lloyd Denton, who helped run the family bar in Caliente, telling him, "Your dad and I had so many wires on our roulette table, if they'd have ever shorted out [it would have] burned the whole goddamn town down!"

The clubs, of course, always operated at their own risk, whether they were trying to fleece customers or protect themselves. Itinerant professional cheaters, known as "crossroaders," made life miserable for casino owners.

Pappy Smith, remembering the first years of Harolds Club, once recalled that "we were the most innocent operators in the land, and every crossroading son-of-a-bitch in Nevada wanted to work for us. We hired most of them, too." Cheaters manipulated slot machines and even tapped into telegraph lines at wire-service offices to get horse-race results before they could be relayed to racebooks by telephone. Casino operators, unlike most customers, usually did figure out when they were being cheated. Their standard first response was to break knuckles or jaws belonging to the offending parties.

Just as they did not tolerate cheats, casino operators took no chances with unruly or violent patrons. Owners in those days sometimes carried handguns, and dealers often worked with pistols or shotguns within easy reach.

Most of the criminal activity going on in Nevada gaming during the 1930s involved unorganized local efforts, since national organized crime did not significantly infiltrate the business until the 1940s. Only after Bugsy Siegel and other underworld personalities bought into casinos did Nevada officials seriously consider tightening the state's rather lax controls on gaming.

Nevada's casino business managed to survive the growing pains of its first decade, and it became stronger. By the time the United States entered World War II, gaming had emerged as a major element of the state's economy, rivaling mining and agriculture. In the early 1950s, it permanently eclipsed those other two elements of the economy, becoming, in effect, Nevada's lifeblood.

When we look today at the Silver State's tremendously successful gaming industry, we should recall how 70 years ago Nevada endured its reputation as an "outlaw state." Recognizing legal gambling's humble origins and rough-and-tumble early years can only add to our appreciation of how far it has come and the transformation it has achieved in the eyes of most Americans.

Eric N. Moody is curator of manuscripts at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno. He has written on a variety of Nevada history topics, among them early gaming, the state's brewing industry, legal prostitution, Governor Vail Pittman, and the railroad ghost town of Flanigan. He is coauthor of a soon-to-be-published annotated bibliography of Nevada history.

Photo: Nevada Historical Society (left)

The Intersection

Four giant hotel-casinos stand sentinel where Tropicana Avenue meets the Las Vegas Strip. The story of the intersection—possibly the busiest in the world—recalls the forces that created Las Vegas from the desert.

By Craig Tepper



Day and night, like some riddle of the Sphinx, two frozen rivers shimmer in the desert. Winter and summer, these two languid canals converge north of a black pyramid. Their wide, broken floes of gleaming, late-model cars slowly press together.

It's a crossroads worthy of a giant metropolis—London, Jakarta, Tokyo, or New York. Perched at the intersection are four hotels, including two of the world's three largest. The four resorts hold nearly 13,000 rooms, more than twice the number in downtown Cleveland. The two city streets that cross here each have more than a dozen lanes in places and accommodate a staggering 170,000 vehicles on average a day.

Yet these streets, with traffic volumes comparable to the most heavily traveled stretches of urban superhighway, have only recently emerged from desert. Within sight of hundred-mile vistas of creosote and caliche, the confluence of Tropicana Avenue and Las Vegas Boulevard, better known as the Strip, is the busiest intersection in the world. Or, as Clark County traffic technician John Penuelas puts it, "If it's not the busiest, it's gotta be pretty darn close."





The two city streets handle a staggering 170,000 vehicles on average a day.

The place is a rare spectacle. Las Vegas Boulevard is 14 lanes wide north of the intersection and 13 to the south, each with triple left-turn lanes that spill onto Tropicana Avenue, which runs 12 lanes wide to the east and 13 to the west. "Trop," as it's known to residents, may be less famous than Las Vegas Boulevard, but it is an equally important thoroughfare. As Penuelas explains, "To be honest, nobody local uses the Strip to get around, but Tropicana is our major east-west artery."

As the streams of vehicles converge on the pavement, colossal hotels gaze down upon them. On the northwest corner of the intersection, a 150-foot-high replica of the Statue of Liberty greets visitors as a roller-coaster giddily circles New York-New York's Manhattan skyline. The emerald-glass MGM Grand, the world's largest resort hotel, with 5,034 rooms, gleams out at the northeast corner. To the southwest another theme world rises, the Excalibur's pink-and-blue turreted cartoon castle Camelot.



The intersection's eldest resident, the Tropicana, on the southeast corner, was the only hotel here prior to 1990. The Strip's latest boom, a dozen years of nonstop development, in part began here, and, while fabulous projects sprang up all along Las Vegas Boulevard during the '90s, nowhere was activity more concentrated than at the corner of Tropicana and the Strip.

All this eye-catching construction produced an intersection that is literally meant to stop traffic. Overpasses had to be built to handle the droves of pedestrian sightseers and hotel guests. Shirt-sleeved, they glide unobtrusively by: At all hours, old and young, men, women, and children stream across four gently-sloping bridges unimpeded by traffic lights.

But how these various currents came together and were



Pedestrians use the overpasses while cars cruise the intersection of Tropicana Avenue and Las Vegas Boulevard. The latter, better known as the Strip, runs left to right (opposite page). The intersection's four resorts (from top): the Tropicana, Excalibur, MGM Grand, and New York-New York.

Photos: Gail Bandini (right, top to bottom)

New York-New York, Monte Carlo, and Bellagio all sit within the widow Logan's original claim.

quickly settled into orderly channels is a tale that reflects present-day Las Vegas itself. Like Las Vegas, the intersection is a sudden desert bloom that has become an international landmark. Although places can't talk, they do hold stories. Lives and history meet where these streets cross. There may be no better starting point for examining Las Vegas' fabled growth, its intersections of land and water, public and private interests, than this place.

Like the intersection, the city of Las Vegas stands at a crossroads. Two deserts, the Mojave and the Great Basin, converge in Southern Nevada. Las Vegas is bounded on all sides by arid expanses. No surprise, then, that much of the city's history is centered on water. General John Fremont on May 3, 1844, a year into his second mapping expedition for the U.S. Government, stopped at a camping ground the Spanish had already named Las Vegas, "the meadows." Two deep artesian wells bubbled up at Big Springs, a mile west of what later became the town site. The wells poured into creeks, watering stands of cottonwood and thorny mesquite, whose beans were a staple of the native Paiutes. In 1855, a tiny Mormon outpost of under 100 souls set up in the valley, farmed successfully for a season, but gave out by 1858.

The townsite was officially established by a property auction. When the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad began regular through-service in 1905, it auctioned off 40 blocks of lots near the trains' water stop. But the sands that today sit under thousands of hotel rooms would long go undisturbed.

From downtown, unpaved Fifth Street continued southwest into the desert. That path, now known as Las Vegas Boulevard, was part of an early auto route that generally followed the railroad south of town. The road's earliest track is hard to fix precisely. Maps of the period show it shifting as befits windblown desert, and since that time the road has been called more names than a blind umpire.

In 1919 the road was designated Route 6 when state legislators amended their new highway system to include it. Seven years later, in 1926, the state graveled Route 6 for 13 miles, as far as a railroad siding with 18 residents called Bard, after D.C. Bard, a local mining engineer and geologist. A traffic count that same year found an av-

The glamorous Tropicana Hotel, known as the "Tiffany of the Strip," was an orphan.

Touring the Intersection

The best way to view this world-class attraction is on foot. Be aware that a driving tour of the intersection can take much time and patience, considering that Tropicana is the major thoroughfare to and from McCarran International Airport. Expect a sea of cars at the intersection. Generally it's wise to avoid driving on the Strip during rush hours, and be sure to watch for pedestrians who bolt into the street. For all the traffic, the flow of vehicles at the intersection rarely comes to a stop, but if you're headed to the airport, it's better to take another route such as Paradise Road.

A walking tour, using the overpasses to circumnavigate the intersection, allows you to take in the sights at your leisure. Elevators and escalators lead up from the sidewalks. If you arrive by car, there's ample parking in the multilevel lot at the rear of the MGM Grand, east of Las Vegas Boulevard (the Strip) off Tropicana Avenue. Walking west through the hotel, you will find escalators inside that lead to two of the overpasses.

Continuing west outside, you'll proceed across Las Vegas Boulevard on an overpass toward New York-New York. Besides the red roller coaster circling the hotel, the hotel's Brooklyn Bridge and East River simulacra are best seen from here. Look north, and the entire Strip lies at your feet. To your right stand the four-story Coke Bottle of the Showcase Mall and Paris' half-size replica of the Eiffel Tower. To your left is a tantalizing glimpse of the Bellagio. Once inside New York-New York, head into the hotel-casino or follow the upper concourse to the next overpass. Going south across Tropicana Avenue, you'll face the cheery blue-and-red-topped castle turrets of the Excalibur. Once across, the pathway swings you past the moving sidewalk and walkway that leads into the hotel. Or you can continue east, across Las Vegas Boulevard again, toward the Tropicana. But there waits a seductive (and highly recommended) detour: the monorail to the neighboring Luxor and Mandalay Bay. Two fast, silent silver trains run every 12 minutes on separate rails. There is, however, no return service from the Luxor.



The overpasses allow visitors to tour the intersection's four realms, unimpeded by world-record auto traffic.

Crossing the overpass eastward to the Tropicana Hotel, you are deposited on its grounds by escalator, elevator, or stairs. A short walk past the hotel's entrance brings you to the fourth and last overpass, back to the MGM Grand. But before making the final pedestrian-bridge crossing, you should a peek inside at the old-world elegance of the Tropicana's enormous stain-glass-ceilinged casino.

The circuit, with no exploring or stops, can be completed in under an hour. But the adventurous, the fit, or the just plain leisurely stroller can easily spend half a day wandering the intersection's indoor and outdoor attractions.—*Craig Tepper*

Photo: Gail Bandini

erage of 266 vehicles traveled the road each day. There were 371 on average the next year, and 911 by 1929, when the road was graveled and oiled the entire 30 miles down to the tiny railroad town of Jean.

By then the announcement of Hoover Dam's construction on the Colorado River had started a boomlet in the Las Vegas area. Between 1929 and 1934, four 160-acre parcels at the site that would later become the Tropicana-Strip intersection passed out of the General Land Office (the Bureau of Land Management's predecessor) and were acquired by four private citizens under terms of the 1862 Homestead Act. That is, the parcels were assumed virtually for free.

The names of the folks who claimed these homesteads—Lester Rains, Francis DeVinney, Mrs. Ira Logan, and Carl D. Farrar—had long faded from the land titles before fortunes were made on these properties. Still, it's tempting to contemplate the millions they might have made on their $16 claim entry fees.

The homesteaders' choice of location was likely determined by the presence of water, says Frank Wright, a longtime Las Vegas resident and curator at the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society. "The Tropicana Wash runs nearby and, I believe, the early maps show wells not far from there," Wright says.

A close inspection of the original patents and the newspapers of the period seems, at first, to support this supposition. Lester Rains' application, entered September 6, 1927, is accompanied by an affidavit to "a water hole," and four years later Lester secured his patent. Further evidence that water might have drawn him to this parcel is suggested by two June 1936 *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* articles. They bear front-page accounts of Lester's and his father's arrest by federal officers for "the operation of several alcohol stills," with warrants alleging they and 37 others were involved in manufacturing "hundreds of thousands of gallons of alcohol" from wells at the elder Rains' ranch north of town. Whether this arrest forced Lester to sell his parcel isn't known, but it would pass through several owners before becoming the present site of the MGM Grand Hotel.

The serial page of the patent granted to Mrs. Ira Logan in January 1933 informs us she was "a widow." That may explain why she alone of the four claimants was required to file a supplement swearing to "sufficient cultivation" of her homestead. New York-New York, the Monte Carlo, and Bellagio all now sit within the original boundaries of the widow Logan's claim.





Clark County assessor Frank DeVinney (right), shown with insurance man Harley Harmon (left) and an unidentified man, once owned the corner now occupied by the Excalibur, Luxor, and Mandalay Bay. Top: When the Tropicana opened in 1957, the future colossal crossroads formed a lonely T-intersection.

Carl D. Farrar, claimant to the Tropicana Hotel parcel, was an early civic leader. A March 5, 1931, *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal* photograph shows the pharmacist among a group of benefactors attending a ceremony for the opening of Las Vegas High School.

In May that same year Mr. Francis DeVinney took deed to the parcel that would become the intersection's southwest corner, land where the Excalibur, Luxor, and Mandalay Bay currently reside. But DeVinney's place in local history strongly suggests land speculation was, in part, behind his claims. If DeVinney's interest had been agricultural, he would have needed help. While his application and those of the other homesteaders were pending, Francis "Frank" C. DeVinney was the duly elected assessor for Clark County. Beginning in 1926, DeVinney would win five consecutive terms and serve in office 18 years.

Still, in the early 1930s these four parcels sat undeveloped, clustered side by side opposite each other across Route 91 (the

Photos: Las Vegas News Bureau (top), Florence DeVinney Krolak Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library (bottom)

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The intersection's innovative overpasses have been duplicated at other busy locations on the Strip.

former Route 6), six miles south of town. Route 91, by now also known as the Los Angeles Highway, would be the only road here for years to come.

Not until November 1952, when the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* mentions "Bond Road" as part of a county study, is there official word of another road here. Bond Road, Tropicana Avenue's predecessor, was a dirt road most likely forged in the early 1940s by John Bond, the founder of a lumber company and a major developer of the Paradise Valley area. The road began at the highway and headed east toward the valley's many guest and dude ranches, not the least of which was his own Bond Ranch.

Yet, as late as 1957, when the much ballyhooed Tropicana Hotel opened at the juncture of Bond Road and Las Vegas Boulevard, the location was a T-intersection. Pictures of the big, brand-new resort show it surrounded by desert save for the tiny Lone Palm Motel set back from the road on the northwest lot. It took until 1960, when the state highway department extended Bond west toward the anticipated Interstate-15 project, 55 years after the city's founding, for an actual intersection to make its appearance here. At that point Clark County renamed Bond "Tropicana Avenue," and a year later the hotel built the Tropicana Golf Course and Country Club Motel on the northeast corner. This flurry of activity was, however, deceptive. It would take nearly 30 more years for another major development to arrive.

Known as the "Tiffany of the Strip," the Tropicana Hotel, for all its glamour, was an orphan. It was located a full half-mile south of the Strip's southernmost edge, where a bevy of flashy hotels, including the Flamingo, Dunes, and Caesars Palace, had sprung up at the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Flamingo Road. All through the 1970s and '80s, the Tropicana lay in eclipse, surviving in isolation while larger projects dotted in the empty lots that stretched up the Strip.

The award-winning overpasses, which handle 100,000 crossings daily, eliminated the need for crosswalks.

Only when the Excalibur set its substantial footprint on the intersection's southwest corner did today's crossroads begin to emerge. The 4,024-room Excalibur was the largest hotel in the world the day it opened in 1990. But that claim was short-lived. Almost immediately the MGM Grand announced plans for a 5,005-room hotel behemoth catty-corner opposite.

As groundbreaking commenced, the

Photo: Gail Bandini

county and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), looking at the long-term traffic implications, asked all parties to sit down. Widening Tropicana Avenue would ease traffic problems, with one major drawback—pedestrians would need more time to cross the street. Faced with building either a vehicular underpass or overhead walkways, the casino-hotels saw the choice as obvious. They weren't sinking fortunes into dazzling facades to have their audience diverted underground.

Meanwhile, Clark County, working with the state and contracting giant Carter-Burgess, decided if there were to be overpasses, they had to do away with at-grade pedestrian crossings for safety and traffic reasons. That meant added cost—escalators, elevators, pedestrian barriers at street level.

Public Works Director Marty Manning, a dark-bearded dynamo, currently oversees a score of massive projects hoping to outpace Clark County's rapid growth. The competing concerns at Tropicana and the Strip are long familiar. "We have an expression in the county," Manning says with a smile, referring to the heavy hotel-tourist traffic that runs north-south on the Strip. "The taxpayers travel north-south, the voters east-west." The trick was finding solutions that satisfied both groups.

Complicating matters, the taxpayers with most at stake in the intersection, the hotel-casino owners, were also competitors. Carter-Burgess project director Bill Wilde describes how Manning got them together. "Marty said, 'Hey, listen, if you guys don't come up with a consensus and help pay for this, we'll put up a set of bridges you're going to hate. But they'll be cheap and functional.'"

With that inducement, the casino-hotels finally agreed on a set of criteria. Chief among these were "equity of access" to their properties, pedestrian convenience, and visibility. Sightlines to the hotels were to be unobstructed. Even a special, unobtrusive wire mesh was found to fence the overpasses.

The resultant spans have won awards. The first to marry traditional highway-bridge design with promenade-like architectural features, the overpasses routinely handle 100,000 crossings daily. John Penuelas, Clark County traffic technician, explains, "They basically eliminated the time we had to allow for people to cross." By eliminating the need for crosswalks, the spans help traffic flow.

They also do something else. The overpasses' sleek, uniform design unifies the locale visually. By linking the corners of the intersection they establish an inner frame that connects the wildly varied architectures. The result provides the eye a measure of harmony, an underlying order that lends the location a sense of place.

Amid towering theme hotels, where a monorail and roller coaster compete with the Strip's brightest lights for attention, that sense is special. The rivers of tourists and vehicles drawn to this spot by Las Vegas' ceaseless development find something more permanent, an intersection whose landmark status has been quickly attained.

The intersection of Tropicana and the Strip remains a work in progress. Standing on an overpass, one can watch cars flow by in an endless stream. The desert and mountains stand beyond. It is not hard to imagine flivvers motoring down dusty Route 6 or Lester Rains keeping a step ahead of the revenuers.

Craig Tepper of Santa Monica, California, is a television and film writer whose credits include "Blood," an Edgar Award-nominated episode of Law and Order. *His work has appeared in* Film Quarterly, The Los Angeles Times, *and* Kimera.

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Betting on Luck



Gamblers often prefer to skip the 13th floor and whistle while they're on a hot streak.

By John L. Smith



"All life is 6-to-5 against."
—Damon Runyon

Runyon was right, of course. Life's odds catch up with every gambler. But that doesn't prevent players from seeking an edge.

While the studious read an expert's book on slot play or card counting, others work the otherworldly angle based on superstition and the fleeting fancy of Dame Fortune. Whether it's a charmed hat or preferred position along a bank of slot machines, the rituals are as varied as the players.

Las Vegas Hilton casino host Dan Chandler recalls an experience when he was breaking into the business at Caesars Palace. A Chicago gambler named Hogan was a good customer, but out of superstition he blew a shrill whistle each time he won a bet. Chandler says, "I was new to gambling, and when I first heard the whistle, I thought it was the cops and they were raiding the place."



Although green-felt experts and mathematicians scoff at superstition, it is a major part of the history of cards and dice.

"Superstition is a sort of faith," Leonard R.N. Ashley writes in *Superstition, Prophecy, and Luck.* "In *De divinatione,* Cicero said that superstition is a parody of religion, that it poisons and destroys all peace of mind."

Obviously, Cicero was unlucky at cards.

Superstitions cross cultural boundaries, and casinos are quick to ensure that no gambler ever encounters a sign of bad luck. In Las Vegas, a healthy respect for Asian superstitions is illustrated in the multimillion-dollar redesign of the enormous lion entrance of the MGM Grand. The previous king of beasts appeared to be dozing with his eyes open, and in China such a lion is considered bad luck. It was replaced by a shiny new lion, which is wide awake and roaring to welcome gamblers from around the world.

At the Rio, the astute guest may notice

Illustrations by John Bardwell

that the floors of the hotel tower appear to be misnumbered. The popular Voodoo Lounge is touted as being on the 51st floor, but the guest rooms end abruptly at the 39th floor. Had the resort been padding the number of floors to make itself appear taller?

Not at all. In Asian cultures, the number four, either alone or in combination with other numbers, is considered bad luck. In Cantonese, the sound of the word "four" is nearly identical to the word for "dying." So the Rio skipped the 40s and went straight to the 50th floor.



Of course, Westerners are not without their bad-luck numbers, the most recognized of which is 13. Some historians trace the number's notoriety to Roman times, when Judas Iscariot was considered the 13th Apostle. The double-digit misfortune has such an effect on gamblers that many Nevada hotel-casinos don't offer rooms on a 13th floor. They simply skip from the 12th floor to the 14th. (Caesars Palace once declined to offer a 15th floor because of the notoriety of the Ides of March.)

Next to the four-leaf clover, the horseshoe may be the most powerful symbol of good luck. It certainly has been good luck for the Binion family, which has operated Binion's Horseshoe in downtown Las Vegas for nearly half a century. At Binion's, astute observers will notice that all the horseshoes are positioned with the open end up, all the better to catch and keep the good luck they bring.



On the casino floor, superstitions are rampant. Pit bosses have been known to wave their arms and squeeze favorite dolls and stuffed animals in an effort to break a player's winning streak. Players, meanwhile, might turn their chairs around thrice, or sit and stand three times, in order to break a run of bad luck. Dan Chandler of the Las Vegas Hilton says he has observed many gamblers take notice of where a pit boss or fellow customer was standing at the time a winning or losing bet was made. Depending on the outcome, the gambler may order pit bosses and complete strangers to stand perfectly still—or leave the premises immediately—in the belief that they brought a positive or negative vibe.

The superstitions surrounding dice are legion. The craps subculture has developed an intricate belief system. One example: When the dice go off the table, superstition has it that a seven will follow. At crap tables lined with experienced players, it's common to see a flurry of action following an errant roll. You'll sometimes hear a player shout, "Dice on the floor, seven at the door." It's also bad luck to hold the dice too long before rolling them. As the saying goes, "Play with dice, and they get like ice."

Such behavior astounds those who believe not in voodoo but in the laws of probability. The mathematical odds are set whether the game is dice or a state lottery.

But that knowledge doesn't prevent players from pulling on their lucky socks, smoking their lucky cigars, shaking their lucky key chains, twisting their lucky pinky rings clockwise three times, or, in some cases, refusing to shave or bathe during a hot streak.

"Good luck is supposedly enhanced by wearing dirty clothes while gambling," Barney Vinson writes in *Las Vegas: Behind the Tables.* "It may not work, but it is guaranteed to win you a little extra room at the table."

It only proves that what brings good luck to one gambler can raise an awful stink with another. Then again, if that malodorous player's stench makes his neighbor sneeze three times, it is considered good luck.

Crossing the legs may be bad for your circulation, but it is said to bring good luck. So is crossing the fingers, although it makes the cards much harder to hold.

And if you thought all money was lucky, think again. Some players believe that $50 bills bring with them not only the bearded face of Ulysses S. Grant but bad fortune as well.

"Death and dice level all distinctions," Samuel Foote once noted. Nick the Greek observed, "You can't beat death, taxes, and percentages."

In other words, let the rabbit keep his foot. A mathematically accurate blackjack book is more valuable than 500 lucky key chains.

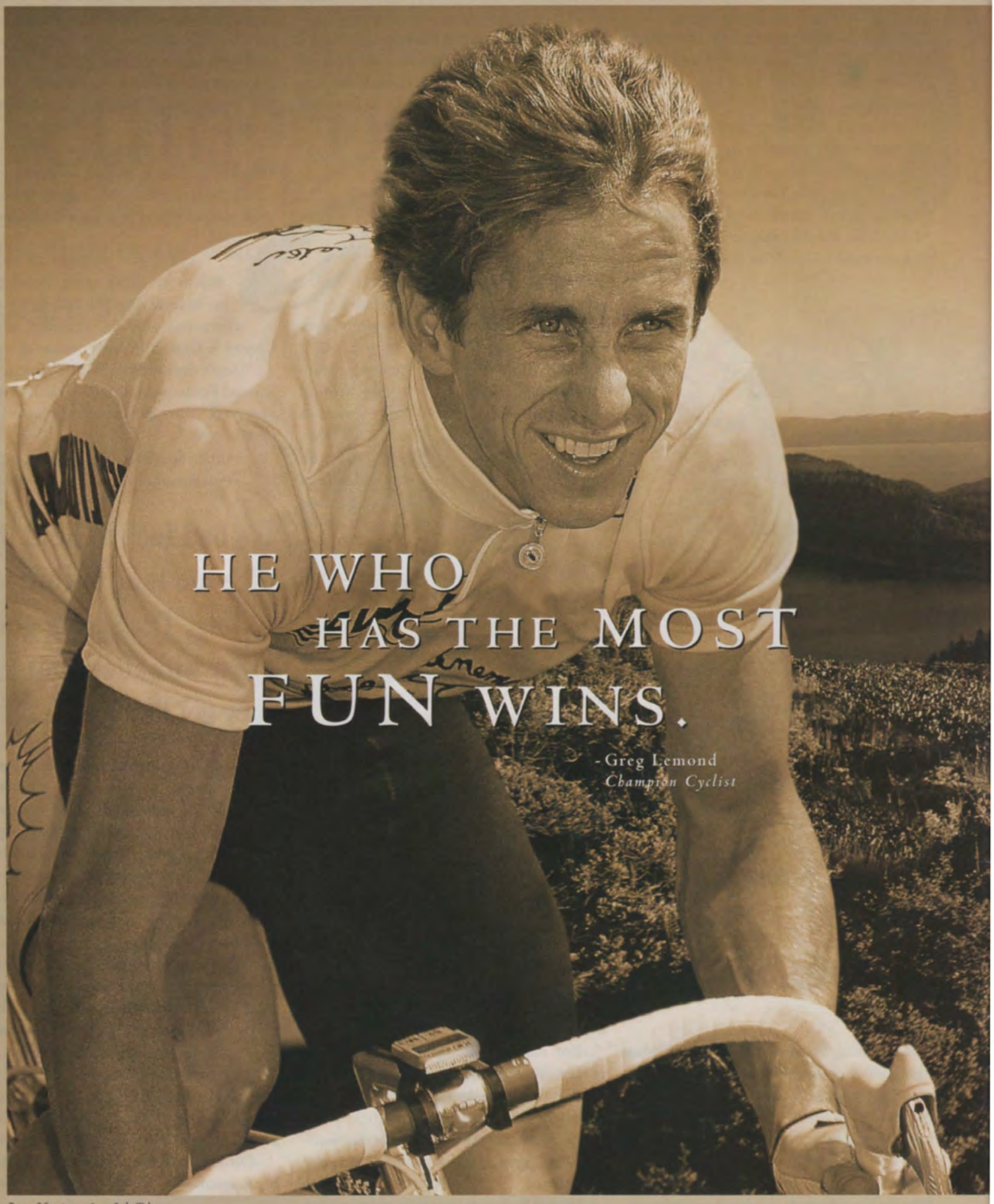
It's bad luck to hold the dice too long before rolling. The saying goes, "Play with dice, and they get like ice."

While it's easy to laugh at overly superstitious players, *Las Vegas Advisor* publisher and high-rolling blackjack player Anthony Curtis notes that even accomplished gamblers are known to believe in lucky streaks. It's a phenomenon they sometimes call being "in the zone."

"It's a time when they literally feel that the math doesn't apply to them," Curtis says. "No one can say what that is. But it reminds me of something a real professional once said after hearing someone talk about being 'in the zone': 'I'll tell you what. Next time you're in the zone, give me a call, and I'll let you lay me 6 to 5 on a coin flip.'"

Obviously that professional had read his Runyon.

John L. Smith, author and Las Vegas Review-Journal *columnist, once had a lucky silver dollar but lost it betting the ponies.*



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