



Las Vegas Advisor

COUPONOMY

Plaza Opens

by Anthony Curtis

Mark this one down as one of the stranger openings in a while. Not that there was anything bad about it; it was really more like it never happened. While there was plenty of hype leading up to the opening, the event itself was very quiet. OK, technically it was a "reopening," but it came after a fairly long closing (nearly a year) and encompassed a lot of changes ... kinda.

In reality, the place isn't looking *that* much different than it used to. Almost nothing has been done to the outside or the parking garage, both of which look as weathered as they always have. You have to walk through the doors to see the changes, the most comprehensive of which is in the registration area. There's also been some sprucing up here and there on the casino floor and the place looks clean. The main changes are in the restaurant roster (which is delineated in **DINING**) and, apparently, the rooms, which have been famously outfitted with furniture that had been earmarked for the Strip's Fontainebleau. I haven't stuck my head into a room yet so I can't tell definitively, but from photographs I've seen, that part of the upgrade looks impressive. Parking in the garage is free.

Big changes or not, this is still a significant event, given the problems that Las Vegas has faced. In fact, while most of the city has been frozen by the economy, the formerly down-at-heels downtown area has been bucking the trend. The announcement of the Golden Gate expansion

detailed in **News** brings the number of downtown casinos implementing significant upgrades since the start of the economic downturn to five (big projects were also completed at the Golden Nugget, El Cortez, and Gold Spike). Come to think of it, most of those opened relatively quietly, too. No matter, what's important is that they're getting things done down there and it looks like there's more to come.

Bathrooms

Of course, with the new comes a loss of at least some of the old, and such is the case with the Plaza's bathrooms. We've written about several of the city's interesting restrooms in the past and the Plaza's were definitely among them. On my first visit post-remodel, I walked through the door of the men's room, wondering if I'd see that strange mirrorless center island of wash basins that always made me wonder, "who the hell came up with this design?" Alas, I did not. Now the Plaza bathroom is just ... a bathroom.

That's not all of it. The announcement of the upgrade project at the Golden Gate specifically stated that one of the casualties would be the casino's rustic restrooms, which will all be modernized. As with the Plaza's, I'd have left them alone.

\$15 Rooms!

It happened again. Just when we were about to finally pull room rates down from the **TOP TEN**, an amazing

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NEWS

Casinos

Flamingo—The new Margaritaville Casino at the Flamingo is scheduled to open in the first week of October. Accessible directly from the Strip, the casino-within-a-casino will have 22 tables, 220 slot machines, and the centerpiece Five O'Clock Somewhere Bar. This will be the first Margaritaville-branded casino. Another one is under construction in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Caesars Palace—Construction is set to recommence on the Octavius Tower at Caesars Palace. The nearly completed \$1 billion 668-room tower was put in mothballs nearly two years ago and the resumption of building is being heralded as one of the strongest signs yet that the economic climate has significantly improved. Caesars says the tower will open on January 2 and room reservations are now being accepted. Octavius will be Caesars' sixth tower and mark the completion of its \$860 million expansion which began in 2008.

Golden Gate—The Golden Gate has announced a \$12 million expansion and renovation that will feature a new five-story structure housing 16 suites, including two 1,600-square-foot master suites on the top floor, along with a major upgrade for the casino's deli and additional casino floor space. Work on the casino is expected to be completed by March 2012, with the suites opening in May.

Sahara—The owners of the

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group of room deals surfaced. How about \$15 rooms at the Rio? That's nothing short of ridiculous, but it continues to be the reality in Las Vegas. Once again, this and similar deals are tied to our room-rate-codes program at LasVegasAdvisor.com, where we continue to find and post amazing offers week after week.

I've written about this before, but there's only so much I can say about our own program. Now, however, someone else is saying something about it. The 2012 edition of *The Unofficial Guide to Las Vegas* calls our program "the silver bullet" for booking rooms online. Author Bob Sehlinger writes:

"Assessing the needs of its readership and the needs of hotels, the *Advisor* developed an elegant win-win solution that would secure its readers the best room rates and at the same time provide hoteliers a powerful incentive to offer the best possible rates."

It really is the best way we know of to get a deal, outside of being comped. Those \$15 rooms at the all-suite Rio are available from now until the new year (you'd better hurry on this one).

ELV 2012

The 2012 edition of *Eating Las Vegas* is at the printer and we're offering a good pre-publication discount that I'll explain in a moment. We had no idea how this project would turn out when we brought together the city's top three food critics and their diverse personalities—an attorney, a punk rocker, and a professorial-esque highbrow—to author last-year's inaugural edition. It was a hit!

So, we're back again with a new edition and some really strong improvements. One thing you'll notice immediately is that the book is bigger—not so much in its dimensions (though we increased those slightly), but in the page count. There are more pages because there's more information. The biggest negative criticism of the first edition was that too many of the

recommendations were for expensive restaurants; readers wanted more off-the-beaten-track-type suggestions. While the proverbial hole-in-the-wall is a minority in the "Essential 50," many more such recommendations show up in back-of-the-book sections. While these were something of an afterthought last year, we spent a lot of time on beefing them up with new lists (downtown, steakhouses, and Sunday brunches among them), and added entries and comments in the existing categories—about 40 pages worth, to be specific. And, of course, there's been a significant shuffling in both the "Essential 50" and the "Top Ten." Despite the additions and upgrades, the price is still \$12.95, but that's the cover price.

Last year we made one of our better pre-pub offers on this title and we're doing the exact same thing again—\$6.50 for the book and we'll ship it the minute it's delivered for \$8.50 complete. That's a 50% discount and \$2 shipping, the lowest price we'll ever offer and the book will be in your hands well before the holidays (see DINING for the review of Forte excerpted from the book). ■

News

 continued

Sahara, which only last month completed its liquidation sale of all fixtures and fittings, say they have hired architects to redesign the casino. No other details regarding a potential reopening have been divulged.

Linq—According to announced timetables, Caesars Entertainment's Linq will take close to two years to complete. The projected opening

date is June 2013.

Silverton—The Silverton is partnering with Black Bear Development to operate a casino in Oxford, Maine when it opens next spring.

Revenues—Nevada's statewide gambling win was up 3.7% in July, compared to the same month last year. It marked a third consecutive month of increases, although the pace was well below the 16% gains of the previous two months. The Strip's win was up a modest 1.6% and the downtown win was up 10.2%. Results were also strong in the Balance of County (+4.9%), North Las Vegas (+10.1%), and on the Boulder Strip (+13.2%). Year-to-date as of July, the win is up 4.3% statewide and 7.5% on the Strip.

Visitor volume continued to roll in July, rising by 4.3% for its 17th consecutive monthly increase. The long winning streak has put Las Vegas on a pace to match its all-time high of 39.2 million visitors in 2007.

Gambling in the US and Beyond

Atlantic City—Gaming revenues in Atlantic City plummeted by almost 20% in August, due to Hurricane Irene, which forced the closure of the city's casinos for a three-day period. It was only the third time since casinos opened there in 1978 that all the casinos have been forced to close at the same time. Meanwhile, Bally's has created an outdoor replica of the Monopoly game board. It's located at the junction of the Boardwalk and Park Place Ave. (what took them so long?).

Michigan—The Four Winds Casino has opened in Hartford, Mich., located in the southwest corner of the state, near Kalamazoo. The

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LAS VEGAS ADVISOR

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LAS VEGAS' TOP TEN VALUES

The opening of the Plaza is officially a “reopening,” but as you’ll read in COUPONOMY, despite a low-key approach by the operators, there’s still a lot going on over there. As is our tradition, we’re according the Plaza the #1 spot in the TOP TEN this month. Read about all that’s new there throughout this issue.

Room rates remain at the top again (#2), partially on the strength of the incredible promotional deals that continue to be unleashed by the casinos, but also due to rates remaining low overall. Our canvassing for the upcoming three months shows *off-the-rack* rates in the teens and twenties, and we’re just now getting into the ultra-bargain season. Read more about the low-rate bonanza in COUPONOMY.

Station Casinos continues to offer the best price-to-quality buffet deal in town: \$4.99 for breakfast, \$6.99 for lunch, and \$9.99 for dinner and Sunday brunch at Palace, Boulder, Texas, Sunset, Santa Fe, and Aliante Stations, and \$5.99, \$7.99, and \$13.99 at Green Valley Ranch and Red Rock (you must show a Boarding Pass card). This deal takes on an even greater significance with the revamping of the Boarding Pass’ rewards schedule (read about the changes in GAMBLING).

We’ve discovered yet another oyster happy hour (see ENTERTAINMENT), but the best is still the “Oyster Riot” at P.J. Clarke’s (#7), where top-grade raw oysters are just \$1 apiece and drinks are 2-for-1.

The free football contest at the Coast casinos (#10) is as good as last year. You can play at Orleans, Gold Coast, Suncoast, Sam’s Town, California, or Fremont. Swipe your B Connected Card in a kiosk and get at least three entries. Must submit picks before the kick-off of the first Sunday game.

Notes: The Ellis Island steak dinner (#3) is served in the Café. Caesars Entertainment’s All Stage Pass (#6) entitles you to see as many shows as you can in 48 hours for \$99; there are 20 to choose from and if you manage to attend two in the afternoons and two in the evenings, you’ll pay less than \$13 apiece per ticket. Michelobs and frozen margaritas are \$1 and a Coors Light draft is 75¢ at Casino Royale (#8). The lunch special at Cosmopolitan (#9) is a three-course meal in Estiatorio Milos that runs from noon to 2:30 pm.

1. **Plaza** • Downtown • Daily • Free
2. **Room Rates** • Las Vegas Club et al. • \$17 and up
3. **Steak Dinner** • Ellis Island • 24 hours • \$7.95
4. **Shrimp Cocktail** • Golden Gate • 10 am-2 am • \$1.99
5. **Station Buffets** • Station Casinos • Daily • \$4.99-\$13.99
6. **All Stage Pass** • Caesars Entertainment • Daily • \$99
7. **Oyster Riot** • P.J. Clarke’s/Forum Shops • Sun.-Fri. • \$1-\$7
8. **Beer** • Casino Royale • Daily • \$1
9. **Lunch Special** • Cosmo • Mon.-Fri. • \$20.11
10. **Football Contest** • Coast Casinos • Weekly • Free

News continued

52,000-square-foot casino has 500 slots, 9 table games, a restaurant, and a bar.

Florida—The Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Tampa has announced plans for a \$75 million expansion that will make it one of the largest casinos in the nation. The upgrade will boost the casino-floor area to 220,000 square feet and add 750 new slot machines and additional gaming tables, plus a new five-story parking garage. The project is expected to be completed early next year. Also in Florida, plans have been tendered for a massive casino complex in Miami. Genting Malaysia Berhad says it will spend \$3 billion to build a 5,200-room resort with

50 restaurants and nightclubs on the site where the Miami Herald building currently stands. As impressive as it sounds, nothing can happen until laws are amended to allow full-scale gambling in Florida.

Missouri—Pinnacle Entertainment says it will institute an \$83 million expansion at the River City Casino in south St. Louis County. The expansion will add a 200-room hotel tower, plus an events center and parking garage. Completion is scheduled for mid-2013.

Massachusetts—The state appears poised to pass legislation that will legalize casinos. However, despite the swift movement of the legislation, it’s speculated that it would likely take a minimum of five years after legalization to open a full-scale casino there.

Macau—Wynn Resorts has been

given the go-ahead to begin construction of its Cotai development. Wynn has five years to complete the project that will have 1,500 hotel rooms and cost between \$2 and \$3 billion.

Ecuador—Casinos in Ecuador have been given six months to close, following a vote in May that mandates the action. Most Ecuadorian casinos are reportedly run out of the larger hotels by foreign operators.

Ireland—Plans for a giant “Las Vegas-style village” casino project in Ireland, proposed in late 2009, have been scuttled by the Irish government.

Online—FullTilt Poker was accused of running a “global Ponzi scheme” by the U.S. Justice Department after big-name poker pros Howard Lederer and Chris “Jesus”

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Ferguson, two of FullTilt's founders, were added to the list of defendants in the case. Lederer is accused of banking \$42 million and Ferguson as much as \$112.5 million, while customers are still owed an estimated \$390 million in money they'd put on deposit to play online poker.

Gambling in the Media

An article titled "Poker Exiles" in the Sept. 19 issue of *Bloomberg Businessweek* discusses a service called "Poker Refugees" that helps players relocate to places outside of the U.S. where online poker is legal. The service charges \$1,000 to "help find apartments, set up bank accounts, and, crucially, a reliable Internet connection" in places like Canada, Panama, and Costa Rica. The article also provides a good overview of the current online situation.

An article titled "What Daddy Does" in the September issue of *Forbes Life* describes New York City's underground-poker scene. The author says "there are a dozen or so underground poker clubs in the city" operating 365 days a year.

Annie Duke appeared on the "Late Late Show" with Craig Ferguson, discussing the Epic Poker League and our new book, *Decide to Play Great Poker*. ■

Painted Over

Aria no longer limits parking to every second spot in the garage. We noted last year that this was one of the most inefficient uses of space we'd ever seen and someone there apparently felt the same. All of the prohibiting lines have been painted over.

Plaza Dining

There's been a complete revamping of the restaurants at the Plaza. Hash House A Go Go has replaced the diner and functions, more or less, as the coffee shop, though it's closed late-night (hours 7 am-11 pm daily). Another new restaurant is Island Sushi & Hawaiian Grill and there's a small food court that includes Zaba's Mexican Grill. Gigi's Cupcakes is due to open on the casino floor this month, Oscar's Steakhouse (which has some kind of involvement with former mayor Oscar Goodman) is slated to open in November in the dome overlooking the Fremont Street Experience, and Radio City Pizza is expected to open by the end of the year. There's no buffet and the iconic snack bar is gone.

Reviews

Johnny Smalls (Hard Rock)—We've reviewed Johnny Smalls before, but we've never emphasized how far you can push this deal (which is why it's been in the TOP TEN a few times). This small-plates restaurant has an

all-you-can-eat special for \$19.95 (and as low as \$15.95 during lunch hours and late-night on weekends). Here's the list of what three of us ate during our feast: seared ahi, tuna sashimi, tuna roll, California roll, rock shrimp, battered shrimp, jerk chicken flat bread, caprese salad, guacamole, fried green bean, sea bass skewers, short ribs, salmon tater tots, and asada tacos. That may look like 14 items, but several were ordered more than once for a total count of 30, or close to \$300 worth of food for \$60. Needless to say, this is one of the all-time pig-out plays if you want to make it that. If you'd rather just stick with the best (and maybe enjoy it more), the short ribs, sea bass, and tuna sashimi were the ones getting the most re-order action. The deal runs Thursday-Sunday and you have to show a players card (or it costs \$23.99). Attack!

rm seafood Brunch (Mandalay Place)—Rick Moonen's rm seafood is running the "Bottomless Brunch" from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm on Saturdays and

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LOCAL CORNER

Forte—European Tapas Bar & Bistro

4180 S. Rainbow Blvd., 702/220-3876

Almost everything you need to know about Forte is conveyed in the excerpt from *Eating Las Vegas*. But we'll add a couple of our own observations based on several good experiences there.

One thing not emphasized in the *ELV* reviews is this restaurant's affordability. Almost nothing is priced above \$10 and nearly 50% of the items are \$6 and below. Needless to say, it's tough to run up a big tab. We've had sausages, cheeses, three kinds of soups (cucumber, lentil, and matza ball), stuffed dates, squid, and salads of all sorts and we've barely scratched the surface of the diverse menu. The owner is almost always on property and she loves to talk about the intricacies of the cuisine. For example, she explained to Anthony Curtis that if he wanted something akin to the Polish-style *pierogi* that he'd eaten while growing up in Detroit, then he should opt for the Russian *vareniki* rather than the *pirojki* that he ordered because of its name.

Finally, Forte is just plain interesting, and a recent move to push back hours to a 3 am closing every day should make it even more so. Go during normal dining hours for a relaxed atmosphere or catch the eclectic after-shift Vegas crowd late-night.

Sundays during the football season. For \$30 you get unlimited orders of six entrees and a selection of cocktails for \$4 each, including the famous rm Bloody Mary. The food comes in full

portions, as opposed to taster-type small plates, so you won't be able to try everything unless you share. But considering that the hamburger is \$22 on the regular menu, you'll get a little bit the best of it if you eat two orders and be well ahead if you can eat three. We had the rm eggs Benedict,

Moon 'N Doggies (a funky mix of fish and shrimp that looks like a hot dog), chicken panini, and the hamburger. These are all good, but the burger is the powerhouse. Topped with onions and cabbage, we'd rate it among the best in town. Topping things off, the Bloody Marys completely live up to their reputation and at just \$4 per they're a bargain, too. It's not a raucous scene, but the football games are on the TVs and the bartenders are fun and chatty. All in all a pretty cool call for a football brunch.

Eating Las Vegas

As discussed in *COUPONOMY*, the new edition of *Eating Las Vegas—The 50 Essential Restaurants* has many new recommendations, including several local gems. Since Forte was scheduled to be our Local Corner this issue, we figured it was a good pick to preview the new edition.

Curtas

Forte isn't just a Bulgarian restaurant, nor is it Eastern European exclusively. But it definitely has a certain Slavic flair, and a certain louche down-at-the-heels vibe that would be right at home in Portland or New York's East Village. That flair is obvious from your first bite of deeply satisfying stroganoff, thick-but-not-heavy pelmeni, and all sorts of rolled and stuffed meats, sausages, and dumplings. All of it is remarkably light and digestible, and not nearly as filling as you would think a table loaded with khinkali (large, handmade meat dumplings), adjarski khachapurri (Georgian cheese-filled bread boat), and a great peppery goulash would be. But load it up you should, and tuck yourself into their fresh sudjuk (spicy sausage) and Spanish shrimp (gambas al ajillo) with garlic, wine, and olive oil—both of which will have you dropping your fork in appreciation. Wash it all down with a fine assortment of Bulgarian, Czech, and Bosnian beers (or a shot or three from the house-made infused vodkas), and you'll be singing along with the non-stop, Eastern-bloc videos and toasting "nazdrave" with every sip.

FAVORITEDISH: Khinkali; pelmeni; beef stroganoff; house-made flavored vodkas.

Jacobson

Nina Manchev's eccentric lounge, done up in funky décor and thrift-store art, offers libations like Gypsy Juice, a creation based on vodka, Cassis, and secret ingredients.

Food is Bulgarian-Spanish, with touches of the former Soviet Union, making it one of the oddest cultural fusions on the planet. I never eat here without ordering adjarski khachapuri, a boat-shaped bread from the Republic of Georgia, served piping hot from the oven. I'm also fond of their Hungarian goulash, Bulgarian sausages, and Spanish tapas, in particular Serrano ham, Manchego cheese, and patatas bravas (hand-cut potatoes with aioli). Just for sport, Manchev uses the services of a few mysterious Eastern European women, who make her empanadas, pirojki, and banitza—flaky turnovers popular with churchgoing Orthodox priests in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital. Make sure to try the Shopska salad, a Greek salad with roasted red peppers. If you have a sturdy constitution, try the Georgian sweet red wine, Stalin's favorite.

FAVORITE DISH: Adjarski khachapuri; mixed Bulgarian sausages.

Mancini

Max, our resident explorer of obscure ethnic cuisine, discovered this place. And I fell in love with it for its tastes of Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, and Georgia, and its cool city vibe that you just can't find anywhere else in Vegas. The fact that John cringes at the thrift-store supplied antique furniture and cool artwork on the walls was an added bonus, but even Mr. Pompous can't deny that this is one of the most pleasantly unusual restaurants in Las Vegas. While I'm not terribly impressed with some of the Spanish cuisine, dishes like chicken kholodez (a brightly-colored aspic of chicken, dill, and carrots), savory profiteroles, and "Food of the Gods" are amazing. And Max is right—dining here without trying the adjarski khachapuri would be a crime.

FAVORITE DISH: Adjarski Khachapurri; Food of the Gods.

Hot Dog Condiment Bar (Binion's)—How many things can you put on a hot dog? More than 30 if you're at Benny's Bullpen at Binion's. The condiments include cheese, pickles, beans, tomatoes, peppers, and just about anything else you could even consider putting on a dog. Heap 'em up as high as you can and you'll have the best-garnished hot dog in town (and what amounts to a side salad). The stand is open from 9 am to 1 am daily. A hot dog is \$3.95, or \$4.95 with chips and a draft beer.

Dean's Place (breakfast)—The Sunday breakfast buffet at Dean's Place bar (see *GAMBLING*) includes scrambled eggs, bacon, biscuits & gravy, pancakes, potatoes, and a few other items. It's not worth the \$10 list price, but it's a steal for \$2.50! That's the price you'll pay per sitting if you enter the Dean's Place football contest for \$30 and eat the free buffet that comes with it 12 times before the end of the football season. Heck, even if you eat just six times you'll get the best of it.

Dining Notes

Central has opened at Caesars Palace. The high-end 24/7 coffee shop operated by James Beard Award-winning chef and founder of the original Central in Washington D.C., Michel Richard, is located in the space formerly occupied by the Augustus Cafe.

A new restaurant called The Barymore has opened at the Royal Resort on Convention Center Dr. It's run by local restaurateur Anthony Meidenbauer, the former sous chef at Wynn who's

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ADVANCE PLANNER

HEADLINERS AND EVENTS

OCTOBER

10/4	• Bring Me The Horizon MBay • \$22/\$25	10/21	• Big Head Todd & The Monsters Aliante Station • \$21-\$43	11/5-11/6	• Sinbad • Orleans • \$49.95
10/4	• Furthur • Hard Rock • \$49.50	10/21	• Bob Levy • Sunset Station • \$20	11/9-11/20	• Village People Riviera • \$39.95/\$59.95
10/6	• Misfits • MBay • \$26/\$30	10/21-10/22	• Ron White Mirage • \$59.99-\$194	11/10	• Mac Miller • MBay • \$22.50/\$26
10/7	• Don Henley • Hard Rock • \$50	10/21-10/23	• Kingston Trio South Point • \$20-\$30	11/11	• Tammy Pescatelli Sunset Station • \$20
10/7	• Blink-182 and My Chemical Romance • Red Rock • \$20-\$75	10/22-10/23	• Leon Russell • Orleans • \$29.95	11/11-11/12	• David Spade • Venetian • \$65
10/7	• Kyuss Lives! with The Sword MBay • \$25/\$29	10/22	• Hiroshima Santa Fe Station • \$26-\$46	11/11-11/12	• Romano and James Mirage • \$99.99-\$119.99
10/7-10/8	• Liza Minnelli LV Hilton • \$89-\$200	10/22	• k.d. lang • Palms • \$39-\$69	11/11-11/13	• Vicki Lawrence South Point • \$45-\$55
10/7-10/8	• Ray Romano and Kevin James Mirage • \$99.99-\$119.99	10/22	• Pat Green Boulder Station • \$22-\$39	11/12	• Average White Band GVR • \$19.95-\$32.50
10/7-10/9	• Dennis Miller • Orleans • \$49.95	10/22	• Roger Daltrey • Hard Rock • \$56	11/12	• Felix Cavaliere Cannery • \$23.95
10/7-10/9	• Tony Orlando South Point • \$45-\$55	10/22	• Stephen Bishop Sunset Station • \$17.50-\$27.50	11/12	• Pacquiao vs. Marquez III MGM Grand • \$200-\$1,200
10/8	• Blondie • MBay • \$37.50	10/23	• Calle 13 • MBay • \$39.50-\$65	11/12-11/13	• Don Rickles • Orleans • \$74.95
10/8	• Chris Botti • GVR • \$29-\$52.50	10/23	• Judas Priest Hard Rock • \$55.50	11/16	• Yellowcard Hard Rock Café • \$20/\$23
10/8	• Dennis DeYoung Cannery • \$19.95-\$74.95	10/24	• Paul Simon Caesars Palace • \$59.50-\$145	11/17-11/19	• Joan Rivers • Venetian • \$56
10/8	• Enrique Iglesias Red Rock • \$49-\$159	10/24-10/25	• Tony Pace • Clarion • \$49.95	11/18	• Blue Oyster Cult Boulder Station • \$24-\$45
10/8	• Incubus • Hard Rock • \$64.50	10/25-10/30	• Rodney Carrington MGM Grand • \$79.99	11/18	• Dirty Heads & Gym Class Heroes • MBay • \$25/\$29
10/8	• Journey MGM Grand • \$39.50-\$149	10/28	• Bayside & Saves the Day MBay • \$19.50/\$23	11/18	• Lady Antebellum Hard Rock • \$45
10/9	• Chris Tucker Live Hard Rock • \$35-\$71	10/28	• Bill Engvall • TI • \$49	11/18-11/19	• Jay Leno Mirage • \$79.99-\$99.99
10/9	• Lupe Fiasco • Palms • \$39-\$89	10/28	• Elvis Crespo E. Cannery • \$44.95-\$64.95	11/18-11/20	• Gatlin Brothers South Point • \$45-\$55
10/13	• Steely Dan • Palms • \$75-\$150	10/28	• Martina McBride GVR • \$42.50-\$75	11/19	• Eagles MGM Grand • \$68.25-\$210
10/14	• Candy Dulfer Santa Fe Station • \$21-\$46	10/28-10/29	• George Lopez Mirage • \$69.99-\$89.99	11/19	• Katy Perry • MBay • \$45/\$75
10/14	• Dropkick Murphys Hard Rock • \$30.50	10/28-10/30	• The Osmonds • Orleans • \$34.95	11/19	• New Found Glory Hard Rock Café • \$22/\$25
10/14	• Lindsey Buckingham Aliante Station • \$43-\$69.25	10/28-10/30	• The Lettermen South Point • \$25-\$35	11/19	• Rick Springfield E. Cannery • \$29.95-\$49.95
10/14	• Lord of the Rings In Concert Orleans • \$35-\$125	10/29	• Fetish & Fantasy Halloween Ball South Point • \$72	11/23	• Saints & Sinners MBay • \$20-\$35
10/14	• Vince Neal E. Cannery • \$14.95-\$34.95	10/29	• Tiësto In Concert Hard Rock • \$46	11/25	• Bill Cosby • TI • \$79
10/14	• Whoopi Goldberg • TI • \$79	10/30	• Minus the Bear • MBay • \$22/\$25	11/25	• David Foster • MBay • \$50-\$250
10/14-10/15	• Jay Leno Mirage • \$79.99-\$99.99	NOVEMBER		11/25-11/26	• Charlie Wilson LV Hilton • \$65-\$79
10/14-10/15	• Maze w/Frankie Beverly LV Hilton • \$65-\$79	11/4	• Gordon Lightfoot Aliante Station • \$32-\$54	11/25-11/26	• Jim Gaffigan Mirage • \$59.99/\$69.99
10/14-10/16	• Mitzi Gaynor • Orleans • \$49.95	11/4	• Noise Tour • MBay • \$20/\$24	11/25-11/27	• Kathleen Madigan South Point • \$15-\$25
10/15	• Jason Bonham Aliante Station • \$32-\$54	11/4-11/6	• Debbie Reynolds South Point • \$25-\$35	11/26	• Janet Jackson Caesars Palace • \$95-\$949
10/15	• Jimmy Buffett MGM Grand • \$69.25-\$211	11/5	• Eagles MGM Grand • \$68.25-\$210	11/26	• Vicente Fernandez MBay • \$61.80-\$207.75
10/15	• Stevie Nicks Hard Rock • \$49.50	11/5	• Hollywood Babble-On Hard Rock Café • \$37.50/\$42.50	11/27	• Yo Gabba Gabba Orleans • \$28-\$128
10/20	• Foster the People Cosmopolitan • \$28	11/5	• Judy Collins Sunset Station • \$24.9-\$44.95		
10/20-10/22	• Joan Rivers • Venetian • \$56	11/5	• Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo E. Cannery • \$29.95-\$49.95		

ADVANCE PLANNER

SHOW NOTES

- Ticket prices for *Amazing Johnathan* at the Harmon Theater have been reduced from \$72.50/\$105.50 to \$56.50/\$66.50.
- Ticket prices for *Name That Tune Live!* at Imperial Palace have been reduced from \$62.04 to \$29.09.
- Ticket prices for Chippendales at the Rio have been raised from \$50.09/\$61.09 to \$61.09/\$72.09.
- Ticket prices for Crown Comedy Jam at the Rio have been reduced from \$54.40/\$76.40/\$98.40 to \$11.68/\$20.77.

WEATHER

OCTOBER

Mean 67° Avg. Max. 81° Avg. Min. 53° Pools: Open
Balmy days, cool evenings toward the end of the month.

Attire: Short sleeves during the day, light jacket for evenings.

NOVEMBER

Mean 53° Avg. Max. 65° Avg. Min. 40° Pools: Closed
Temperatures drop dramatically this month. Crisp days, cold nights.

Attire: Bring something warm, especially for evenings.

DECEMBER

Mean 46° Avg. Max. 58° Avg. Min. 33° Pools: Closed
Evening temperatures dip into the 30s and even into the 20s. The sun makes an occasional showing.

Attire: Desert or not, it's wintertime and it's cold. Dress warmly.

KEY DATES

NOVEMBER

1-4 Automotive Aftermarket Products—120,000
3-5 AdultCon—10,000

DECEMBER

1-10 National Finals Rodeo—60,000
13-15 Power-Gen Int'l Conference—20,000

JANUARY

2-6 Promotional Products Assn. Int'l—18,500
10-13 International CES—140,000
10-13 Photo Marketing Assn.—27,000
17-20 Shooting, Hunting & Outdoor Trade Show—45,000
18-20 Adult Entertainment Expo—30,000
23-26 World of Concrete—50,000
24-26 Surfaces—25,000
30-2/2 World Market Center—50,000

ROOM RATES

NOVEMBER

WEEKDAY

Vegas Club • \$17
El Cortez • \$27
Fitzgeralds • \$29

Imperial Palace • \$26
Hooters • \$32
Riviera • \$32

Paris • \$80
Palms • \$80
Hard Rock • \$84

WEEKEND

Wild Wild West • \$38
AZ C. Decatur • \$44
Fitzgeralds • \$58

Hooters • \$52
Riviera • \$53
Imperial Palace • \$55

Palms • \$120
Hard Rock • \$124
Green Valley Ranch • \$150

DECEMBER

WEEKDAY

Vegas Club • \$17
Wild Wild West • \$20
El Cortez • \$27

Imperial Palace • \$29
Riviera • \$32
Flamingo • \$35

Hard Rock • \$74
Paris \$80
Palms • \$80

WEEKEND

Wild Wild West • \$31
Vegas Club • \$35
Fitzgeralds • \$39

Imperial Palace • \$39
Harrah's • \$45
Hooters • \$47

Paris • \$80
Hard Rock • \$104
Mirage • \$109

JANUARY

WEEKDAY

Fitzgeralds • \$29
El Cortez • \$32
Gold Coast • \$32

Riviera • \$32
Imperial Palace • \$34
Sam's Town • \$35

Hard Rock • \$84
Mirage • \$89
Palms • \$90

WEEKEND

Fitzgeralds • \$49
California • \$50
Fremont • \$50

Orleans • \$60
Sam's Town • \$65
South Point • \$72

Hard Rock • \$144
Palms • \$150
Caesars Palace • \$159

Best rates at press time from sample of 52 Las Vegas casinos. Rates NOT guaranteed, subject to change without notice, and do not include tax. Lower prices may be available online.

behind LBS: A Burger Joint at Red Rock and Holstein's at the Cosmo. The new restaurant features an extensive wine list and is open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Celebrity chef Alex Stratta's relationship with Steve Wynn has reportedly ended. After his five-star French restaurant Alex was closed at the Wynn in January, he stayed to run the more casual Italian Stratta. While the chef has now left Wynn's employ completely, his namesake (for now, at least) restaurant remains in operation.

After months of speculation, it's been confirmed that the award-winning Bradley Ogden restaurant at Caesars Palace will close on January 2. It's believed that the space will become a Gordon Ramsay "gastropub."

Wolfgang Puck is no longer operating the café at Springs Preserve, which

has been taken over by the Culinary Academy of Las Vegas. A five-year contract was approved by the Clark County Commission this week with the aim of saving money (Puck's group was controversially paid a management fee of almost \$350,000 per year).

Former "Local Corner" selection Thai Spice (4433 W. Flamingo) has reopened after a remodeling with prices raised from \$3- to \$4-per for most items.

Caesars Entertainment's "Buffet of Buffets" 24-hour pass (\$44.99/\$49.99) has been purchased by 1 million customers. ■

Reader Leader

The Spice Market at Planet Hollywood used to be Las Vegas' best buffet. Recent cutbacks as stated by our waitress, means no more king crab and no more lamb on the skewer in the Middle Eastern bar. If you like snow crab, they have those both steamed and chilled. Everything else was still very good.

LVA: That's bad news. The crab and the lamb were the top two draws at Spice Market.

Truckfest

The Vegas StrEATS food-truck festival, featuring gourmet food to go, live music, street vendors, and more, runs on the second Saturday of every month from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. outside of the El Cortez.

ENTERTAINMENT

Plaza Entertainment

We're not certain where things stand in the entertainment department at the Plaza. The old showroom is still there, but no announcement about its future has been made. Prior to its closing, there was a vibrant music scene in the Aqua Lounge, but it looks like the casino is now placing its bets on the Swingers Lounge—the strange hybrid combining dueling pianos, miniature golf, and bottle service. The lingerie hairstyling salon probably qualifies as "entertainment," and we hear there will be a new showroom upstairs managed by theater company Insurgo Theater Movement.

MNF Parties

The MNF scene ain't what it used to be. For the past few years, we've noted a general downsizing of Monday Night Football parties, and this year it's more pronounced than ever. There seems

to be as many events (if not more), they just aren't as popular. It's as if the customers, casinos, or both have simply tired of them. Even the parties supported by radio remotes and other forms of advertising aren't drawing crowds. That said, some options are definitely better than others. Keep in mind that this year's calendar allowed only two Mondays of research. We'll continue looking around for the next several weeks and report new findings at LVASports.com.

Dogs-and-Beer: This year again, both Sam's Town and Suncoast give you one free hot dog and a draft beer for showing up at their MNF parties (at Sam's Town you can opt for a hamburger, which is the better play). Good deal? Yes! Good party? Not really. Hence, for the first time since this traditional deal's debut, we haven't put it in the TOP TEN. Both places now require you to swipe a players card,

which is easy enough to do (though the machine malfunctioned at Sam's Town and no one seemed to care much that one free-beer ticket was not dispensed). The two casinos are in opposite corners of the valley, but it's easy to pull off a two-dog-and-beer parlay using Summerlin Parkway and US 93/95 to get from one to the other during the game.

Other Outliers: There used to be a lot of good parties at the locals casinos, but the lack of energy alluded to above is the norm at most of them now. This includes Rampart, Boulder Station, Eastside Cannery, M Resort, Palms, and Orleans. The Gold Coast party is decent, with dollar hot dogs and beers and eight chicken wings for \$3 (a fairly low 37.5¢ apiece), though the cash drawings after every quarter have been cut by 2/3 to \$400 total. The one party that remains

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strong is South Point (see below).

The Strip: A prime example of the cutbacks is CityCenter, where there were several options last year but almost none now. Aside from a lame-looking party in Aria's The Deuce and a Todd English P.U.B happy hour running concurrent to the game (see "Bars and Happy Hours"), we couldn't find a single thing going on in all of CityCenter. Another disappointment was the Cosmopolitan, where it wasn't even obvious the game was on. NY-NY's Sporting House (formerly ESPNZone) has a crowd and it's a good viewing venue, but a pedestrian buffet is \$25 and beers start at \$6—not too impressive. Granted, there are several places on the Strip we have yet to check, but so far it's the most lackluster MNF scene in memory.

Best Party: Top-party honors, at least so far, have to go to South Point. This one is jammed and the crowd is lively. Beers are \$12 for five (\$2.40 each) or all-you-can-drink for \$15, plus \$1 hot dogs and \$2 pizza. The former \$1,250 in cash giveaways is now \$1,000—but that's still the most in town.

Best Deal: We found one really innovative deal in LBS: A Burger Joint at Red Rock. Buy any entrée and get unlimited Lonestar drafts for 10¢ per glass. Any of LBS' good burgers qualifies as an entrée—they start at \$9.75, then you're all but drinking for free. LBS also serves 25¢ chicken wings, a price we've seen recently only at The Lift bar (during football games).

Strip Clubs: We're guessing this will be the salvation for Monday Nights. As always, we're seeing interesting promos in conjunction with places like Sapphire, Crazy Horse III, OG, and Hustler. We'll check them all out for a report next month.

Sundays: This year again, Lagasse's Stadium at Palazzo and the Las Vegas Hilton are the top spots for watching the Sunday games. It's tough to choose between them, except beers are \$5.50 at Palazzo and just

\$2 at the Hilton (in the showroom). Another option for all the games is the sports books themselves. The heck with manufactured parties; just go where the customers are cheering for their money and it won't be boring. The Station, Fiesta, and Wildfire sports books are doing \$1 dogs and beers again and they're good.

Hilton Parking Play

One of the toughest places for parking is the LV Hilton. But on Saturdays and Sundays, you can park in Employee Parking on the second floor of the parking garage. That solves that.

Bars and Happy Hours

(Note: These types of deals can change quickly. Call to verify.)

Todd English P.U.B. in Crystals at CityCenter has a happy hour Mon.-Fri. from 3 to 6 pm, with \$2 raw oysters and half-price beer and wine.

Dean's Place has a daily happy hour from 3 to 6 pm with half-price appetizers and \$2 beers.

Ravella's "Sip & Spa" Thursdays runs from 6 to 8 pm. It's a ladies-night combining a cocktail, hors d'oeuvres, a spa treatment, and a spa gift for \$25 ("Absinthe & Aromatherapy" on Oct. 20 sounds good).

Here's a good locals deal. Now through December 30 (excluding Nov. 24 and Dec. 25), from Sunday to Thursday, locals get 50%-off wine on bottles priced up to \$500 at all Aria restaurants.

In Johnny Smalls at the Hard Rock, a bottle of Heineken is \$7. At Casa Di Amore, a greyhound is \$6.75. In the sports book bar at Aria, a bottle of Bud is \$6.49. At Platinum gentlemen's club, a bottle of Bud is \$5. At King's Row (3111 S. Valley View) a bottle of Peroni is \$4. In the sports book bar at the Plaza, a draft Bud is \$3.50. In the Lounge bar at South Point, draft Blue Moon is \$3.50 and a Bud Light is \$2. At the Rusty Spur (8025 Dean Martin) a bottle of PBR is \$3.25. At the Riviera's main bar, a Bud Light Lime is \$3. ■

Notes

- Announcements have been made that the Palazzo's *Jersey Boys*, Venetian's *Blue Man Group*, and Paris' *Barry Manilow* are all leaving their current casinos. *Jersey Boys* will replace *Manilow* at Paris, *Blue Man* will go to the Monte Carlo, and it's believed Manilow will wind up at Harrah's. The jostling will begin near the end of this year.
- After closing last month, *Absinthe* will return to Caesars Palace on October 21.
- Circus Circus opens the Chuck Jones Experience this month. It's a 10,000-square-foot attraction featuring the life and work of legendary animator Chuck Jones, the man behind iconic Looney Tunes characters, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig, and Wile E. Coyote. Ticket prices have not been announced.
- D'Amore Nightclub on the La Contessa Yacht in the Lake Las Vegas Marina has opened. The club, which features two bars and a dance floor, will be open every Thursday through Saturday night from 9 pm to 2 am.
- Drai's at Bill's Gambling Hall & Saloon is no longer open Mondays; it now operates Thursdays through Sundays.
- Angel Management Group has lost its gig managing the Rehab pool party, Vanity Nightclub, and Beach Club at Hard Rock. It's separately rumored that the company will re-open the long-shuttered rumjungle at Mandalay Bay, hopefully in time for New Year's Eve.
- Jet at the Mirage has closed. The club will reopen on New Year's Eve as 1OAK ("One of a Kind").
- Blush at the Wynn has closed. No word on what is planned for that space.
- The Riviera hosts its first boxing card in many years on Oct. 15.

See the [ADVANCE PLANNER](#) for dates, prices, and additional show updates.

GAMBLING

Plaza Gambling

The biggest surprise at the Plaza might be the games on the casino floor. We expected them to open very loose, but that didn't happen.

Video poker is disappointing overall, especially compared to other casinos downtown (details in "VPL&F"). An ad for \$5 in free-play for new club members says, "It's the least we can do," and it kinda is. But that's just the lowest tier of a pretty good rewards program that you should look into if you play a lot (we need to check it out before providing details).

Blackjack games deal 1, 2, 4, and 6 decks, all hitting soft 17. The best game, according to Stanford Wong's *Current Blackjack News*, is the double deck allowing double after splits and resplitting aces, which has a casino edge against basic strategy of .35%. A lone single deck pays 6-5 on naturals. Craps deals 3X, 4X, and 5X odds and triple in the field. Live bingo is played upstairs. There's no live keno or poker.

The race and sports book is cur-

rently run by Lucky's; however, Cantor Gaming has signed an exclusive long-term agreement to operate beginning March 1. Cantor will also introduce its mobile-gaming platform in early 2012.

New Boarding Pass

Station Casinos has made a big move to revamp its players club structure and the news is all good. For starters, you can now get cashback as a rewards option. This is a pretty big deal for Stations, which has not offered cashback in the past.

Of course, the ultimate value of cashback depends on the schedule by which it's awarded and Station has put itself near the top in that category by accelerating the accumulation rate. Whereas \$1 coin-in used to earn one point, a dollar now earns three points on slots, video keno, and most video poker. Since the conversion rate—the amount you need to change points into comps or cash—was also raised from 600 to 1,000 points, the net result is a return of .3% on most games, just

under twice what it was previously.

It's not really important to understand how it works, only that you're getting more for your play. For example, assuming you play about 500 hands of 25¢ video poker over the course of an hour, you'd accrue a little more than \$1 in comps or free-play in the old system. Under the new schedule, the same amount of play earns just under \$1.90, nearly twice as much.

There are other positive changes. All the Stations programs have been consolidated, meaning that your card can now be used across the systems of Station, Fiesta, and Wildfire casinos—18 properties in all. There's also been a relaxing of the criteria to qualify for higher-status cards. And from what we can tell, aside from raising the conversion rate as explained above, there've been almost no compensating negative moves regarding related perks.

What makes it all even better is that the Boarding Pass improvements

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2011 Football Team Meetings

Here's this year's list of local bars that support particular NFL Teams. Every Sunday and on Monday nights during football season, the following drinking establishments fill up with former residents of, or current visitors from, the teams' hometowns. Many offer food and drink deals, often including cuisine from back home. Check LVASports.com for updates throughout the season.

49ers—Timbers (N. Durango); 215 Saloon; **Bears**—Aurelio's Pizza, Bootleg Benny's, Brando's, La Piazza, Mulligan's, MVP's Sports Lounge, Shuck's (N. Durango), Smoke Ranch Junction, Timbers (W. Cheyenne), Tommy Rocker's Southside; E-String; **Bills**—Johnny Mac's, Moon Doggies, Stake Out; **Broncos**—Black

Mountain Grill, Four-Mile Bar, Road-Runner (two locations—Grand Canyon and N. Buffalo); **Browns**—Boulevard Bar & Grill, Giuseppe's, Kopper Keg West, Tap House; **Buccaneers**—Timbers (W. Horizon Ridge); **Cardinals**—Murphy's Law; **Chargers**—Agave, Al's Garage, Brando's Sports Bar, Half Shell (two—Horizon Ridge and Eastern), The Martini, Michael's Pub, Molly Malone's, Shooters, Surf City, Timbers (two—N. Gibson and W. Azure); **Chiefs**—Blue Diamond Saloon; Joey's; **Colts**—Cheyenne Saloon; **Cowboys**—Mr. D's, Shuck's (W. Flamingo); **Dolphins**—Tommy Rocker's; **Eagles**—Madison Ave.; **Giants**—AP's Grill, Johnny Fontane's; **Jets**—McMullan's, Rusty Spur; **Lions**—Meatheads (Decatur); **Packers**—Big Dog's Draft House,

Champagne's Café, Jackson's, Rum Runner (three—Boulder Hwy., Tropicana, and E. Desert Inn), Timbers (E. Lake Mead); **Patriots**—Cavalier, East Coast Eats; **Rams**—Fast Break; **Raiders**—Lucy's Bar & Grill, West-cliff Station, Shifty's; **Saints**—7-11 Bar; Lola's; **Seahawks**—Scooter's; **Steelers**—Bob Taylor's, Doc's Place, Murphy's Law, Island Bar and Grill, Montana Meat Company (Durango), Noreen's, Outside Inn, Timbers (Novat); **Vikings**—Bailey's, Blue Ox Central, Blue Ox East, Blue Ox Tavern.

That's 24 out of 32 teams with mascot bars, leaving eight without a home: Texans, Jaguars, Titans, Ravens, Bengals, Panthers, Falcons, and Redskins.

come in tandem with an across-the-board upgrading of Stations' video poker product. Slowly but surely, Stations casinos have been adding machines with better pay schedules. And while the \$1-earns-3-points ratio doesn't apply to the best of these schedules (it's \$4/3-points on those for a .075% return), it's still one of the best game-and-club combos in town.

Wynn Acquiesces

There must be something in the air, as even Wynn/Encore has softened its stance against players who know enough to play good schedules. Whereas Wynn had previously awarded no club points on 9/6 Jacks or Better games, the Red Card club now awards one point per \$15 played on this schedule. It works out to a paltry .067%, but paltry is better zero. Lower-returning schedules earn at a rate of .22%. What's next? Drink comps at the bar?

New Contests

We found a few smaller football contests around town. M Resort, Silverton, and bars called Gee Bee's (south Las Vegas Blvd.) and Dean's Place (S. Dean Martin Rd.) all run free contests where you can play any time of the year for a chance at small cash prizes.

One of the more interesting we've found in a couple years is the contest at Dean's Place. Even though it's too late to qualify for season prizes and the weekly prize is just \$100, you might still find it worth entering for the perks. The \$30 entry fee includes a free breakfast buffet on Sundays during the morning games and free hot dogs in the afternoon throughout the season. The buffet costs \$10 if you aren't in the contest, so you need to go three times to get the value equivalent (see DINING). Dean's is also promotion-heavy in general, so it's a good bar to get familiar with.

Meanwhile, the Coast's "Pick the Pros" free contest is as fun as ever to play, but tough to win—it took perfect

Video Poker Lost and Found

Most of the machines on the floor at the Plaza offer a mix of 9/5 Jacks or Better (98.45%), 7/5 Bonus Poker (98.01%), 9/6/5 Double Bonus (97.81%) for quarters and dollars. One set of three machines located near the wall to the left of the Swingers Club has 9/6 JoB (99.54%) and 8/5 Bonus Poker for 25¢ and 50¢ only (then oddly devalues at higher denoms). The bars are worse, with 8/5 JoB (97.30%), 6/5 BP (96.87%), and 8/5/4 Double Bonus (94.19%) at 25¢-\$1.

The Palms continues its devaluation, as all quarter 10/7 Double Bonus games have been removed, including the "hidden" ones in the end-machines at several of the bars.

The Girls of Glitter Gulch gentlemen's club has added video poker, dealing terrible schedules, including 6/5 BP, 6/5 Bonus Poker Deluxe (95.36%), and 8/5/4 Double Bonus. If you want to use the games to get free entry and a drink (still a positive play), you'll have to jump through

a few hoops, as they don't seem to have quite figured out how the drinks-for-play system works.

Club Platinum is another gentlemen's club with video poker. One machine here—the end machine facing into the club—has 9/5 Jacks or Better for quarters. The royal flush is cut back to \$2,500, but it's still a 97.74% return, which is about as good as you'll find in a strip club aside from Play it Again Sam's 7/5 BP at 98.01%.

Bob Dancer's free video poker classes run on Wednesdays at South Point. All classes are at 1 pm in the Grandview Lounge—beginner classes at 1 pm and intermediate at 3 pm. Must be 21. Topics are NSU Deuces Wild (on 10/5); advanced NSU Deuces Wild (10/12, one class only); 25-12 Double Bonus Deuces Wild (10/17); What Video Poker Players Should Know About Slot Clubs (10/25, one class only); and Secrets of a Video Poker Winner (11/2, one class only).

records to get the money the first two weeks.

Parlay Cards

Who has the best parlay-card payouts in Vegas? This year Lucky's is making a big ad push claiming that it's the "best on the Strip." We checked and they're all that and more. We looked at almost every other card in town—including the off-Strip shops—and Lucky's payouts were highest, or tied for highest, in every category from 3-teamers at 6.75-for-1 to 10-teamers at 850-for-1. Running a very close second is Cal Neva, which matches Lucky's in every category except 3-teamers, for which Cal Neva pays only 6.5-for-1.

Does that mean you should be playing them? Maybe. As a rule, parlay cards are a bad bet, but under proper circumstances they can offer positive-expectation opportunities. In a recent

"Fezzik Fridays" edition of our Question of the Day on LasVegasAdvisor.com, Fezzik explained in depth how it works and which cards you should be looking to play. LVA members can access the QoD archives if interested in the details.

Gambling Notes

Slots A Fun—The name Slots A Fun fits a little better now that the casino has removed all of its table games. This used to be one of the best places for low-stakes play on the Strip. Now it's machines only.

Riviera—The Riv is advertising single-zero roulette and single-deck blackjack paying 3-2 on naturals.

Sports Books—A new Lucky's sports book has opened at the Riviera. It's located near one of the entrances and features the Strip's only walk-up betting window; the lines are visible

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from the street and sidewalk outside. After less than a month, the Peppermill sports book at the Rainbow in Henderson has closed.

Sports Betting—New Jersey is tying again to legalize sports betting. There will be a referendum for legalization on the November ballot; however, even if it's passed, there would still have to be a repeal of the federal law against sports betting before it could be installed in the state.

Horseshoe Tourney—South Point

has brought back its Thursday handicapping contest; entry-fee is \$20. Major handicapping tourneys will be held on Oct. 15 at TI (\$400 entry-fee) and Oct. 13-15 at Orleans (\$500 entry-fee).

Lagasse Gambling—The small satellite casino adjacent to Lagasse's Stadium in Palazzo deals blackjack and craps with \$15 minimums.

Pai Gow—Red Rock and Sunset Station now have the first live linked-table-game jackpot in Nevada. The Shuffle Master Pai Gow Poker Progressive is currently over \$150,000. It pays for a 7-card straight flush, which can include the Joker. ■

FAST TRACK

Deals

The Coast casino's **Coast Connection** promotional magazine that's bundled with the *LV Review-Journal* continues to be published on the last Friday of the month. The most recent issue contained \$10 and \$25 matchplays and lots of good information about football parties and promotions at Coast properties.

All twins and anyone born in October drink for free from 10 pm to midnight on Oct. 22 in McFadden's at the **Rio**.

Perhaps Las Vegas' best paycheck-cashing deal at **Eastside Cannery** has been chopped down substantially, but it's still good. With rewards based on the amount of the check cashed, the new schedule is \$100-\$999 gets a spin on the Paycheck Bingo Game (cash, free-play, matchplay), \$1,000-\$1,499 gets a choice of \$20 slot free-play or table-game matchplay, \$1,500-\$1,999 gets \$30 free-play or matchplay, and \$2,000 or more gets \$50 free-play or matchplay (choose free-play over matchplay for highest value).

Miscellaneous

Sheldon Adelson again leads all Las Vegas representatives on the *Forbes* list of "**Richest People in**

America." With an estimated worth of \$21.5 billion, Adelson is eighth overall. Also on the list is Steve Wynn (\$2.8 billion), Phil Ruffin (\$2.4 billion), Elaine Wynn (\$1.7 billion), Frank Fertitta (\$1.25 billion), and Lorenzo Fertitta (\$1.2 billion).

Billionaire UK retailer Sir Philip Green says he plans to open a third US location of his **Top Shop** store in Las Vegas early next year. The other two are in New York and Chicago.

Travel + Leisure magazine has named Las Vegas the **No. 2 city for nightlife in the U.S.** New Orleans was in the top spot.

Las Vegas came in at #138 out of 200 on a new list of the "**nation's safest drivers**" released by insurance provider Allstate. Las Vegas drivers are 22% more likely to get in a car crash than the national average. Surprisingly Reno, which for the past two years has been named the second "most drunken city in the U.S." by *Forbes* magazine, ranked 8th safest for driving.

This year's **Global Gaming Expo** (G2E) runs Oct. 2-6 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Cigar Aficionado's 16th annual "**Big Smoke**" Las Vegas weekend is Oct. 28-30. Get information at bigsmokes.com. ■

LAST SECOND FLASH

Washed Up

Less than six months after landing a deal, the Tropicana has severed all ties with the Miami-inspired pool club, Nikki Beach. The Trop is taking over control of the pool, club, and restaurant that had been operated by Nikki. Word is the concept failed to compete with the likes of Wet Republic and Rehab. The move follows the similar parting of ways between Angel Management Group and the Hard Rock.



Epic Hits the Tube

The first Epic Poker League tournament hits TV this month. The premiere will be on Velocity on Oct. 7 at 10 pm EST. That will be followed by the CBS broadcast on Oct. 8 at 1 pm EST.



In-Room Gambling Greenlit

The Nevada Gaming Commission has voted unanimously to approve a regulation amendment that will allow hotel guests to gamble in their rooms using mobile devices. The change is due to take effect Oct. 1. For *LVA* readers' thoughts on the subject, check out the July 13 survey in the "Poll Archives" at Las VegasAdvisor.com.



Football Late-Breakers

As mentioned in this issue's discussion of football parties, many more good deals are sure to show up during the course of the season, including these. Silverton has dollar beers and 50%-off all food at Shady Grove and Mermaid Bar during Monday Night Football. Casino MonteLago has \$1 beers, \$1 pizza, and 75¢ hot dogs during all games.