



## Adapted Travel by Mike Cohen



**LAS VEGAS** – *There is no question that Las Vegas (www.lasvegasgastourism.com) ranks as one of the most exciting and entertaining cities in the world.*

**WHERE TO STAY:** Looking for a place to stay? We took the advice of Montrealer Mitch Garber and chose Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino ([www.planethollywoodresort.com](http://www.planethollywoodresort.com) to make reservations). Garber is the President and CEO of Caesars Acquisition Company (CAC). He oversees the entire operation, which includes their group of hotels and casinos. Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino is one of the newest additions to the Caesars Entertainment family in Las Vegas and is a full partner in Total Rewards™. It has 2,500 beautifully designed guest rooms and suites showcasing some of the best views in town and encompasses more than 100,000 square-feet of gaming, several lounges, 10 restaurants, including Gordon Ramsay BurGR, KOI, Strip House, the award-winning Spice Market Buffet and LA's Pink's Hot Dogs, and the Planet Hollywood Spa by Mandara. The resort is also home to one of pop music's biggest superstars Britney Spears and her show, Britney: Piece of Me. The property is encircled by Miracle Mile Shops with more than 170 specialty stores and restaurants.

Accommodations here are fit for the celebrity A-List, and perfect for Hollywood buffs. Every one of its rooms and suites features one-of-a-kind movie memorabilia set against a backdrop of stylish, modern luxury. If you're a hardcore Hollywood

fan, the Panorama Suites will truly feel like heaven on earth. Measuring 1,255 square feet and offering a 180-degree view of the Strip, each Las Vegas room features its own Hollywood theme. Ours featured actress Demi Moore. The floor plan includes a master bedroom with a 36-inch plasma television and a separate living area, a master bathroom with an oversized soaking tub, a separate dining area with refrigerator and wet bar, and a 52-inch plasma television in the living area. An additional bedroom and bathroom with 500 square-feet can be added to any Panorama Suite – something we opted for. Our party of three really appreciated the individual privacy this arrangement facilitated. In fact we could have fit more than double the amount of people comfortably. There were three, count them "three," bathrooms. You can connect two WiFi devices at no charge. There is a fee if you go over that.

Planet Hollywood is fully wheelchair accessible. Stop by the Bell Desk when you arrive at the hotel and they will be happy to set you up with a scooter or wheelchair. The daily rental fee for non-motorized wheelchairs is \$20 per day. Motorized scooters are available for \$45 per day. Multi-day discounts are available.

Hats off to the hotel for its commitment to special needs. Last October they hosted an impressive fundraiser for Special Olympics Nevada, offering individuals the opportunity to rappel more than 300 feet from the hotel's rooftop in an event called Over the Edge. To participate, individuals had to raise or personally donate a minimum of \$1,000 to Special Olympics Nevada.



*Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino is the ideal place to stay.*

Las Vegas has more accessible guest rooms than any other city in the United States. Hotels have rooms with roll-in showers, transfer showers, tubs with built-in seats and tubs with portable seats. It is recommended you talk to the reservation operator about your specific requirements. If you need additional details, ask for the hotel's ADA coordinator. For an overview of room availability, call the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Reservations Center: Voice/TTY - 1-800-884-2592.

Most hotels have assistive listening devices for hearing-impaired persons available at the showroom or lounge entrance. Wheelchair seating is also available in most restaurants, lounges and showrooms. Call ahead for details.

All hotels have accessible slot machines and many have sit-down table games. Many hotels also have accommodations for wheelchair users to play craps. Gaming personnel are well-trained in assisting vision and hearing-impaired persons to play table games. If you need a sign language interpreter for the gaming schools offered at many of the casinos, just ask in advance. Most bingo rooms have Braille cards and large-print cards. A few larger rooms have electronic bingo, enabling visually impaired players or persons with hand-dexterity problems to play up to 100 cards at once!

All taxi companies in Las Vegas have lift-equipped vans accommodating one wheelchair. Call from your room, use any dedicated taxi phone or ask the doorman at your hotel for an accessible taxi van.

**BOOKING A SHOW:** My family has become a big fan of Viator ([www.viator.com](http://www.viator.com)). Their team of travel insiders are obsessed with finding the best things to do everywhere folks travel. We discovered Viator last summer while in Europe and took advantage of its amazing list of options, so when it came to booking a trip to Vegas we turned to them again. Viator made our job of selecting a live show so easy. There were simply too many options and going through their website really helped us nar-

row down our choice which was the Cirque de Soleil's incredible Michael Jackson ONE (<http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/en/shows/michael-jackson-one/show/about.aspx>), a sonic, tonic fusion of acrobatics, dance and visuals that takes the audience on an immersive journey through the music and spirit of Michael Jackson. Shows take place at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday at 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., and Sundays at 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dark days are Wednesdays and Thursdays. Driven by the late King of Pop's powerful, multi-layered music – heard like never before in a riveting, state-of-the-art surround-sound environment – ONE takes the audience through a series of seamless visual and musical tableaux, at the heart of a world that is in turn majestic, playful, magical and heart-warming. Jackson's spirit is channelled through the vibrant energy of the cast of 63 dancers and performers, underscored by aerial performance, driving acrobatics, and vivid choreographies that use the urban/hip hop idiom as a springboard for exploration. When the day comes for a return trip, we are eager to experience some of the other live shows they offer, helicopter tours, big bus and city tours, monorail tickets, airport transportation in style, Grand Canyon adventures and much more. Log on to <http://www.viator.com/Las-Vegas/d684-ttd>.

**EIFFEL TOWER EXPERIENCE:** The Paris Hotel, right next to Planet Hollywood, is also a Caesar's property. Two members of our party had been to Paris, France, and went to the top of the real Eiffel Tower. We just had to do the same in Las Vegas. An icon of the city skyline, the high-altitude Paris Hotel Eiffel Tower Experience attraction is located 46 stories up and is a half scale replica of the world-famous Paris landmark. The observation deck features 360 degree city views and knowledgeable ambassadors point out Las Vegas landmarks. A popular spot for weddings, the Eiffel Tower Experience is especially romantic at night. The views of the bright, colourful lights and the lit water show are unmatched. This attraction is wheelchair accessible. Individuals in



*The Cirque de Soleil's Michael Jackson One has lots of action.*



wheelchairs who wish to visit the Tower are escorted to the elevators on the Casino Floor and are either taken to the Bridge for pictures or straight to the top. The Tower is open Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. You can call 1-888-266-5687 for more information or log on to <http://www.parislasvegas.com/things-to-do/eiffel-tower>.

**HELICOPTER JUST MAVERICK:** Here is an experience we strongly recommend. Maverick Helicopters ([www.maverickaviationgroup.com](http://www.maverickaviationgroup.com)) offer an unforgettable 12 to 15 minute ride, departing from the Las Vegas terminal. A complimentary shuttle provides transportation to and from hotels within five miles of the Strip so that was incredibly convenient for our party. Make sure to bring a camera, and photo ID (for anyone 18 years or older). The cost is \$124 per person. Upon arrival you will enjoy a fabulous glass of champagne. Their big draws are trips to the Grand Canyon, something which is at the top of our "to do" list for any future visit.

Guests are treated to the plush interior of Maverick's ECO-Star helicopters, as well as personal narration by highly qualified pilots. The helicopters are equipped with seven leather passenger seats plus one for the pilot. The seating arrangement is determined by the pilot based on the passengers' weights. Maverick's VIP check-in lounges are located on the Strip, only minutes away from the hotels, and at the Henderson Executive Airport, just 15 minutes from the city.

Maverick offers a personalized DVD recording of the flight. Those in wheelchairs can enjoy this experience. To fly and be accommodated, you will need to have a collapsible wheelchair with removable wheels. You must also be accompanied by someone who can assist you with boarding and disembarking the aircraft. Maverick is ADA compliant. Guest in wheelchairs fly with Maverick often. For more information you can call 1-888-261-4414, (702) 261-0007 or log on to [www.flymaverick.com](http://www.flymaverick.com).



Maverick helicopters are wheelchair accessible.

**BODIES AND TITANIC EXHIBITIONS:** We strongly recommend you take the time to visit two spectacular exhibitions at the Luxor in Las Vegas: Bodies and the Titanic. Experienced by more than 15 million people worldwide, this Exhibition offers an intimate and informative view into the human body. Using an innovative preservation process, the Exhibition allows visitors to see the human body's inner beauty in educational and awe-inspiring ways. The Exhibition features over 200 actual human bodies and specimens meticulously dissected and respectfully displayed, offering an unprecedented and wholly unique view into the amazing body. Meanwhile, if you loved the 1997 movie Titanic, then the Titanic exhibit at the Luxor will blow you away. Featuring more than 300 artifacts, as well as breathtaking replicas from the famous ship, the Titanic exhibit truly brings history to life. The exhibit features 20 never-before-seen artifacts including gaming chips, passenger papers and even decorative sections from the Titanic's famous Grand Staircase. In addition, there are many personal pieces within the exhibit. Our party was completely blown away by the fact they could mount such a large exhibition indoors. For anyone who has seen the movie, this is a "must," visit. If you have not seen the film, this will prompt you to do so. Hours of operation for both exhibits are daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at a cost of \$32 per person. The last admission is sold at 9 p.m. This venue is wheelchair accessible, with elevators.

**WHERE TO DINE:** Having previously experienced TAO Restaurant in New York City, our party had only one dining spot in mind for Las Vegas and that was the 40,000 square foot, \$20 million design-driven dining and entertainment complex TAO at The Venetian-Resort-Hotel Casino ([www.taolasvegas.com](http://www.taolasvegas.com)). TAO opened in New York City in 2000 and has retained its status as a hot spot, attracting celebrities and sports figures and catapulting the restaurant and lounge to iconic status. TAO Las Vegas, which debuted in 2005, is a multi-faceted and multi-story "Asian City" housing a restaurant, banquet facilities, ultra-lounge, nightclub and a seasonal beach.



The sprawling TAO Las Vegas is a culinary dream.

The restaurant features a twenty-foot Buddha that "floats" peacefully above an infinity pool complete with Japanese Koi. It is a frequent hot spot for A-list celebrities and culinary connoisseurs.

Corporate Executive Chef Ralph Scardella showcases a menu incorporating culinary components from China, Japan and Thailand, along with a full sushi bar and perfectly paired cocktails to complement the authentic Asian cuisine. Signature dishes include offerings from sea, sky and land, including Chilean Sea Bass Satay with Wok Roasted Asparagus, a preparation of Peking Duck that consistently receives accolades and Kobe Beef Shabu Shabu along with a full sushi bar. TAO Beach offers an abbreviated version of TAO Asian Bistro's dinner menu throughout the day, as well as a brunch menu that boasts specialties like Sesame Berry Pancakes with tempura banana and mandarin butter, Fortune.

Service starts when the server delivers two china bowls, one empty, and the other filled with chilled edamame. The edamame is tossed with mustard oil, thinly sliced shallots, and black sesame seeds.

Our group considered this to be beyond exceptional, sampling a good portion of items on the menu. We recommend the following: Roasted Shishito Peppers with Yuzu; Edamame; Satay of Chilean Sea Bass, with Edamame Hijiki Salad (shitake mushroom plus seaweed); Spicy Tuna Tartare on Crispy Rice; Chinese Five Spice Short Ribs (beef); Salmon Sashimi, with Avocado and Crispy Onions and Sweet and Spicy Sesame Sauce; Shrimp Tempura; Spicy Tuna; Avocado and Soy Paper Roll; Yellowtail Sashimi, with Jalapeno and Ponzu Sauce; Crispy Snapper in the Sand; Vegetable Fried Brown Rice; Spicy Hoi Yin Eggplant; a Giant Fortune Cookie (white and dark chocolate mousse); and Yuzu Sugar Dusted Doughnuts with a trio of dipping sauces. As for alcohol, consider the TAO-tini, Orchid and Sake flight. Our waiter Yorke convinced us to try the restaurant's

three most popular sakes: DY-50; Drunken Snapper; and Demon Slayer. A big shout out to Assistant General Manager Eli Micahiah and his extraordinary team.

At TAO Beach, they offer a range of frozen cocktails, like the signature Par-Tee with Tito's, iced tea and frozen lemonade, in addition to updated classics like the Citrus Blossom Mimosa with Ketel One Citroen, sparkling yuzu sake and lemongrass.

Guests are transported from the City of Sin to the Pacific Rim with TAO's lush velvets and silks, waterfalls and century-old woods and stones. A Monk Bar is decorated with a wall of almost 300 hand carved monks and candles. TAO Beach's outdoor oasis features luxury cabanas, daybeds and a 30-foot bar within its 18,000 square foot space.

Since its opening, TAO Asian Bistro and Nightclub has garnered worldwide acclaim as the hottest restaurant, lounge and nightclub in Las Vegas. TAO Beach's debut in April 2007 increased capacity to over 60,000 square feet of space to host both indoor and outdoor events. The venue consists of seven full service bars, four fully equipped DJ booths, and multiple areas that can be utilized both separately and collectively for corporate parties, product launches, weddings, birthday celebrations, bachelorette/bachelor parties, CD Release Parties, holiday receptions, movie premieres and more.

There is complete wheelchair access at TAO Las Vegas.

For reservations call (702) 388-8588 for special events email [sales@taogroup.com](mailto:sales@taogroup.com). The restaurant, is open Sunday through Thursday from 5 p.m. to midnight and Fridays and Saturdays from 5 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Mike Cohen is the editor of Inspirations. He can be reached at [mcohen@inspirationsnews.com](mailto:mcohen@inspirationsnews.com). Follow him on Twitter @mikecohencl.