

TRAVEL TALES

HELICOPTER RIDES AND GREAT FOOD AWAIT THE VISITOR TO SIN CITY

By MIKE COHEN

Although not always a thrill-seeker by nature, you'd never know it by looking at Bryan Kroten's resume, which includes 180

mile-per-hour spins around the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, helping found a successful Las Vegas sports entertainment business and flying in a helicopter above the Grand Canyon.

Kroten is the vice-president of marketing for Maverick Helicopters (www.maverickavitiogroup.com) and a proud member of the growing Las Vegas Jewish community. Kroten, 39, was born in New York City, grew up in Chicago and moved to Las Vegas after school. He enjoys attending events at the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas and mixes with guests from all over the world, including Israel, where he has family.

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TRAVEL TALES

(Continued from preceding page)

Las Vegas strip to an even more memorable journey to and from the Grand Canyon, are huge attractions in Sin City. For the busiest six months of the year, summer and fall, Maverick literally has to turn customers away. "Most people in the world have not been on a helicopter," says Kroten. "So in Las Vegas people have the chance to take a 15 minute flight on a \$3.3 million helicopter over one of the most exciting cities in the world or a 45 minute trip to the Grand Canyon, one of the seven wonders of the world."

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. The helicopters are equipped with an exterior camera, as well as an audio system that captures the pilot's narra-

tion and the interaction between guests during the flight. This video keepsake is a great way to share your experience with friends and relive your excursion for years to come. Photographs are also taken prior to departure and are available in a custom plaque. Photo and DVD packages are available only on the same day of your trip and can be purchased before or after your flight.

Maverick is presently in expansion mode, about to debut in Maui, Hawaii.

For more information readers can call 1-888-261-4414, 702-261-0007 or log on to www.flymaverick.com.

JEWISH LAS VEGAS:

Would you believe that Las Vegas (www.lasvegastourism.com) is the fastest growing Jewish community in the United States? There are over 70,000 Jews and 19 synagogues and many Jewish organizations in the area, as well as Jewish delis and kosher restaurants. Many larger markets feature kosher fresh meats and kosher food sections. There are also two Las Vegas

(Please turn to page 14)

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HAMAS OUTRAGED

(Continued from page 12)

At the same time, he said, neither Hamas nor Egypt is interested in a military confrontation, and the ruling will have little practical significance.

Ibrahim Abrash, another political analyst in Gaza, told The Media Line that Palestinian parties such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) must intervene.

"If Hamas cannot assign lawyers in Egypt to appeal against the court's ruling, then I think the Palestine Liberation Organization should do that on behalf of Hamas," he told The Media Line. "I believe the ruling might lead some Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE, which are connected closely with Egypt, to start dealing with the Islamist Hamas, quite differently."

TRAVEL TALES

(Continued from page 8)

Jewish newspapers. Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman is Jewish. She succeeded her husband, Oscar. Thousands of Jews reportedly relocate to Las Vegas every year. There are many Jewish activities and social events that bind the Las Vegas Jewish community together. Last January, the 14th annual Las Vegas Jewish Film Festival took place, providing insight into Jewish identity, history, and culture, and promoting solidarity with Israel and the remembrance of the Holocaust.

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). 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

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and a seasonal beach. A number of the co-owners of TAO are Jewish: Richard Wolf, Noah Tepperberg and Jason Strauss, Paul Goldstein.

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 Scamardella showcases a menu incorporating culinary components from China, Japan and Thailand, along with a full sushi bar. 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. 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. It was absolutely delightful. Our group sampled many of the items on the menu such as satay of Chilean sea bass spicy tuna, avocado and soy paper roll; crispy snapper in the sand; giant fortune cookie (white and dark chocolate Mousse) and yuzu sugar dusted doughnuts, with a trio of dipping sauces. For reservations readers can call 702-388-8588; for special events emailsales@taogroup.com. The restaurant, which is wheelchair accessible, 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's email address is info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel and on Twitter @mikecohencl

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