

The Suburban

magazine

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Las Vegas Part I

Where to stay, what to see and the exciting helicopter experience

By Mike Cohen
The Suburban

LAS VEGAS - Is Las Vegas (www.lasvegastourism.com) truly the most exciting and entertaining city in the world? Consider the fact it is home to luxurious casino hotels, fine dining, wonderful live entertainment and state-of-the-art convention and trade show facilities and it probably deserves such a ranking.

Recognized all over the world for its famous Las Vegas Strip, visitors can get a glimpse of amazing world famous recreations like erupting volcanoes, the Eiffel Tower and the Sphinx of Egypt in front of the various hotels and casinos. There is top quality entertainment, including headliner shows and concerts, attractions, shopping and world-renowned resorts. Las Vegas nightlife is known to keeping visitors up until dawn.

Planet Hollywood Resort

Looking for a place to stay? We took the advice of Montrealer Mitch Garber and chose Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino (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. It features a three-acre casino floor full of traditional gambling machines like slots, table games and The Playing Field Race and Sports Book. This features 33 plasma screens, two jumbo screens and a section for VIPs. Planet Hollywood is the first Las Vegas resort to offer table games dealt by young ladies in "chic lingerie." The Pleasure Pit is a section of the table games where this happens with go-go dancers entertaining the gamblers at the side.

The Mezzanine can be accessed by taking an escalator in the casino or the elevator. Here, guests can relax on comfy chairs overlooking the casino. The space was designed to be quieter than the main areas of the casino, where guests



come to lounge and smoke. The area is rather spaced out with room to walk and includes a place for shooting basketball hoops. It includes a "Living Room" with sofas to be accessed by the guests.

The Planet Hollywood showroom is located on the mezzanine. It features several different live shows.

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 which vary from James Bond, Marilyn Monroe, Batman, Star Trek, Will Smith, Back to the Future, The Wizard Oz and much more. Ours featured actress Demi Moore. The 1,255-square-foot floor plan includes a master bedroom with a 36-inch plasma television and separate living area, a master bathroom with 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 amount. The connectivity is fast and reliable.

While The Pleasure Pool is closed for the winter season, the Paris Pool next door remains open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weather permitting. Located on the resort's rooftop, Pleasure Pools offers two separate pool decks, two pool bars, live DJs, 15 cabanas with poolside bottle service, daybeds and a pool café.

Right outside the door you can go on an all-out Las Vegas shopping spree at Miracle Mile Shops, featuring the glitz and glam of Hollywood. Located inside Planet Hollywood Las Vegas, the 1.2 mile retail mecca is beyond amazing. Here, you can have your retail therapy and a workout.

Featuring 170 specialty stores, Miracle Mile Shops includes live entertainment at the Saxe Theater and V Theater, plus mouth-watering dining at 15 restaurants ranging from quick and casual to gourmet.

Shops at Planet Hollywood Las Vegas include coveted brands like GUESS, GAP, DC Shoes, Urban Outfitters, Steve

Madden, H&M, White House/Black Market and more. Dining options include Pampas Brazilian Grill, La Salsa Cantina, Todai Sushi Buffet and more great Las Vegas restaurants.

Booking a show

My family has become a big fan of Viator (www.viator.com). Their team of travel insiders are obsessed with finding the best things to do everywhere folks travel. From Paris to Phuket to Perth, from traditional tours to once-in-a-lifetime experiences, they have something for every kind of traveler. They have been around for 17 years now. From their offices around the globe, a team of travel insiders handpick the best local tour and activity providers. Viator officials pre-vet them all to make sure you always have an exceptional experience.

Over three million people have traveled with Viator and they have opinions you'll want to hear. With Viator you can get the royal treatment, including behind-the-scenes access, private viewings, VIP tours – with no lines and no crowds! If you want to pre-book your trips at home from a laptop or do so on the go, with Viator you get insider access.

Viator has evolved from its founding in Sydney in 1995 as a technology company building websites for other travel



companies, to emerge as the leading insider resource for researching and booking destination activities around the world. At the time when other companies were honing in on airline tickets, hotels and rental cars, Viator focused on an untapped niche in the young online travel market—destination activities—or the “things you do when you get there.” Today, Viator is the industry leader in the tours and activities space, with an unprecedented portfolio of thousands of hand-picked tours and activities, and unmatched relationships with a global network of local tour operators.

Viator is not a paid listing or advertising site nor a simple aggregator. Viator’s team of travel experts around the world has built close relationships with local tour operators over the past 10 plus years. Each operator is pre-vetted for quality and service so only the best and most memorable experiences are featured on the site, and the steady stream of verified customer reviews (500,000 and counting) keeps them honest; providers that don’t meet expected service levels are removed. Through a collection of more than 60 consumer-facing websites, mobile apps and mobile sites, Viator reaches more than nine million travelers a month. Its global affiliate network of more than 2,000 active partners expands the company’s reach to even more travelers through affiliate sites like American Airlines, British Airways, Lonely Planet, Trip Advisor and AAA.

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 narrow down our choice, which was the Cirque du 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 Fridays, Saturdays, Mondays and Tuesday sat 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 power-

ful, 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 channeled 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.

This new show captures the essence, soul and inspiration of the King of Pop, celebrating a legacy that continues to transcend generations. You’ll be captivated by an array of aerial acrobatics and special effects during this unforgettable performance, which incorporates Jackson’s most popular songs and iconic dance moves.

Cirque du Soleil strives to make it as easy as possible to purchase accessible seating tickets for venues across the country. Availability and the type of accessible seating will vary based on each venue’s policies and/or the type of event taking place. Go to the Viator website and book your tickets and at the same time check out all of the other Vegas options they offer. \ Log on to <http://www.viator.com/Las-Vegas/d684-ttd>.

The 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, colorful lights and the lit water show are unmatched. Double the

romance with dinner a few stories down at the 11th floor Eiffel Tower Restaurant. This place is known for marriage proposals. You can stop by Kodak’s Total Snap Shot kiosk to purchase a commemorative photo of your “France in Vegas” experience in the sky. Admission prices range from \$10 to \$19 depending on the day and time you visit. This was a surreal experience to be sure. Close your eyes for a moment and you will truly believe you are in Paris, France. The Tower is open Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. – 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>. While on site check out The Arc de Triomphe, The Louvre, The Paris Opera House and Hôtel de Ville

A view of the strip via helicopter

Here is an experience we strongly recommend. The Eiffel Tower is one way to see Las Vegas. Climbing aboard a helicopter is another. Maverick Helicopters (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 a 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. We have high marks for Jonathan, our man in the sky. “Our pilots serve as your concierge/tour guide in the sky,” says Bryan Kroten, Maverick Aviation Group’s vice-president of marketing. “They are there to narrate, answer questions and make sure you have a good time.”

Maverick attracts customers from around the world. For the busiest six months of the year, summer and fall, they literally have to turn customers away. “Most people in the world have not been on a helicopter,” Kroten says. “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 narration 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 in expansion mode, opening a new division in Maui, Hawaii in the spring of 2015.

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

— with files from Ilana Spector

