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2026

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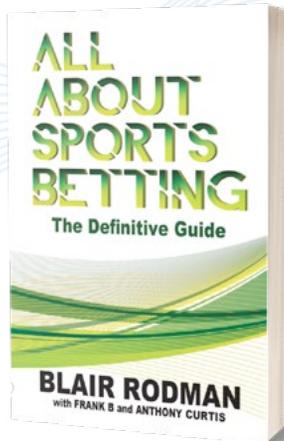
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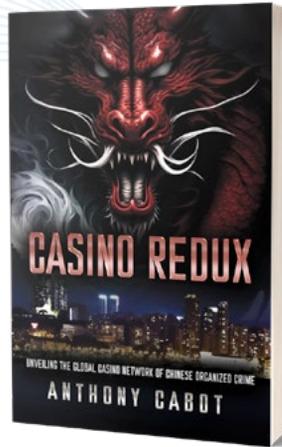


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COUPONOMY

Member Rewards 2026

The Member Rewards Books are in house and available for pick up or immediate mailing. This year's MRB is another good one, with a calculated value that's higher than last year's at well over \$2,500 if you use all the offers.

Always of paramount importance are what we call the "Master Coupons"—single offers that, alone, are worth more than the cost of membership. There are several, but of most value to most users are the waivers of resort fees at Rio and Downtown Grand. Stay one night at the Rio and, in addition to getting 30% off the rate, the waived resort fee saves \$57. Over a typical three-night stay, that's \$171. Other offers that will recoup your membership fee in a single use are 25%-off your entire check in the Top of Binion's Steakhouse (\$100 max saving), two free tickets and 20%-off food at "Jimmy Kimmel's Comedy Club" (\$90-\$110 for two), and discounts on big-ticket activities—e.g., Dream Racing and Machine Gun Vegas—that can save you well over \$100 apiece.

More than 20 discounts on dining include BOGOs at Four Queens, Ellis Island, Eureka, Emerald Island, Rainbow Club, and a new one at Circa's Project BBQ.

The 2026 mix is particularly good for drinking, with deals at Circa's Legacy Lounge, Rio's Lapa Lounge, Ellis Island's The Deck, Plaza's Carousel Bar, Westgate's center bar, and the new Five Guys at Venetian, where you can get a twofer frozen yard cocktail that goes for \$29.99.

Best of all are the gambling offers, where the combination of 29 matchplay, free-play, and bonuses have an EV with optimal play of more than \$700 and \$45 of that is riskless free-play (see GAMBLING).

For those interested in the process, we were surprised by the difficulty in working with potential new partners. Given the criticism of Las Vegas pricing and a few (mostly uninspired) efforts by some casinos to deflect them, we expected more cooperation from the industry in general, which was not forthcoming. We try everyone. If you don't see a casino in Member Rewards, it's because they either declined or simply didn't respond. We're not dwelling on it. Our advice remains the same: Go where they want you. To that point, the all-stars were Rio, Ellis Island, Plaza, Circa Group, Emerald Island, Silver Sevens, and Downtown Grand.

As always, we'll work through the year to add new offers in Member Rewards Online.

Laughlin

For the most part, we don't pay much attention to Laughlin, the third most visited gambling destination in Nevada. The primary reason is simply that it's not Las Vegas and there's plenty for us to keep up with here without worrying about what's going on 90 miles away. Also, it looked for a while like Laughlin might just fade away. For the past 30 years or so, the gambling town on the Colorado River has been in decline. The peak year for visitation was 1997 at around four million; since then, that number has dropped by 50%, hovering around two million visitors annually, a mere 150,000 or so a month, little more than a busy weekend in Las Vegas. But for the past couple of years, Laughlin has been getting a fair amount of coverage as a bargain town, especially compared to Vegas. That put it back on our radar.

Last month, Deke Castleman went on a research trip and came back with a glowing report. As such, we intend to up our Laughlin coverage. This month, we've included a review of the Riverside's Prime Rib Room, along with a note in NEWS, and we're working out exactly how we want to include Laughlin in our routine. In the meantime, you can watch a [YouTube show](#) that we dedicated entirely to a discussion of Laughlin and read the comments from aficionados, which are particularly enlightening.

Canadian Dollars at Par

It's no secret that Canadians are staying away from the U.S., and by extension, Las Vegas. This is due in part to politics, but also to the exchange rate of the Canadian to U.S. dollar, hovering around \$1.40 currently (the record is \$1.62 set in 2002). In an attempt to lure Canadians to downtown Las Vegas, Circa, the D, and Golden Gate are offering an exchange rate of par, one loonie to one greenback, from now until August 31, effectively a 30% discount on a big part of a visit before factoring in savings on currency-conversion fees. Canadian guests staying at any of the three hotel-casinos receive the at-par rate at check-in and at select bars; they can also take advantage of at par for CAD\$500 in slot promotional play (check the details at the players club booth).

This promotion isn't new; for many years the Cal-Neva in Reno did the same and from time to time it surfaced for a little while in Vegas. But this is the first time in many years and it's a good play on the part of Circa.

An interesting aside. As soon as the promo was announced, a ripple went through the advantage player world with inquiries about the best way to acquire Canadian money, particularly to take advantage of the premium on the exchange for gambling. Circa wisely put in safeguards to keep interloping to a minimum, primarily by limiting the gambling exchange to \$500, but also requiring that Canadian citizenship be verified with a valid passport or government-issued ID, which requires too much effort for too little value for potential abusers.

Most Luxurious?

This is just too good. In the past, we've warned that best-of lists issued by Yelp and others that are based solely on the volume and ratings of customer reviews should be taken with a grain of salt, at the least. The best example of that comes in a recent list we were sent from casinos.com that analyzed "tens of thousands of TripAdvisor reviews" to determine the most luxurious Las Vegas casinos. Can you guess? Bellagio? Caesars? Wynn? Nope. According to the study, the most luxurious casino in Las Vegas is ... South Point. Whoa! Now there's a revelation. And number two is better yet. Tuscany. Wait, did they say Tuscany? Maybe the reviewers have a thing for hot dog carts. They got it right with Encore coming in at number 3. No hot dog carts there.

AASB Pre-Pub

Our new book, *All About Sports Betting*, isn't quite in the door as we post this issue, but it's on the truck en route. We're expecting delivery any day now and we'll continue the pre-publication discount for about 10 days after it's received, somewhere around February 15. See the wrap for the 25%-off and free shipping offer.

NEWS

Baseball Stadium/Casino—While the prospects of it ever being built continue to be debated, budget and scheduling details of the proposed massive casino and mixed-use development surrounding the (also still speculative) baseball stadium on the Strip at Tropicana have surfaced. Bally's Corporation puts the total budget at \$1.19 billion with a final completion date expected in December 2030. The construction plan calls for four phases, with the hotel and casino being the last structures to be built in 2029 and 2030. As for the stadium, more strangeness surfaced with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rejecting the MLB's application to trademark the names "Las Vegas Athletics" and "Vegas Athletics." It's the second time the Patent Office has disbelieved, so to speak, the team's eligibility to claim the name. Apparently, there's not enough evidence for the Office's purposes that this team actually exists and it seems to follow that if the team doesn't exist, there'll be

no stadium. That said, peeking through the cracks of the walled off construction site reveals that work is indeed being done. And so we wait.

Vanderpump Hotel—Information is scant about the transformation of the Cromwell to the Vanderpump Hotel, with the only announced time frame being “early 2026.” However, Caesars’ booking engine lists February 15 as the last day to stay at the Cromwell and April 13 as the first day to stay there after the closure, presumably at the renamed and rebranded property.

Caesars Palace—Two new Presidential Villas, located on the top 24th floor of the Colosseum Tower, have been unveiled. The two villas can be combined into one palatial 19,000 square-foot suite, by far the largest in Las Vegas. You can see some [photos at TravelandLeisure](#).

Atari Hotel—Add the Atari Hotel to the long list of “what didn’t happen in Las Vegas.” It’s been announced that the non-casino hotel project that was first floated in 2020 but never even finalized a potential location has been scrapped.

Convention Center—The \$600 million upgrade of the Las Vegas Convention Center was completed just in time for last month’s huge CES tradeshow. The improvement project started in 2023, following the opening of the new West Hall, which fronts the Strip, in 2021; the original North, South, and Central halls were refurbished in order to match the standard set by the West Hall. The entire project was paid for primarily by a dedicated 0.5% room tax increase, passed by the Nevada Legislature in 2017.

Airport Loop—A tweet on X last month announced that the Las Vegas Loop tunnel down Paradise toward the airport is being tested now for a probable opening by March. The trip from Resorts World, at the other end of the current Loop, will take about 12 minutes, using the tunnel and some surface roads, until the Loop is completed all the way to the airport. Various follow-up media reports cite a \$12 fare and a mere six minutes when the tunnel reaches Reid. The Vegas Loop system continues to grow, recently adding Fontainebleau with a station on level V-1 in the south valet.

High-Speed Train—Long predicted to be ready in time for the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, completion of the Brightline West high-speed rail system between L.A. and Las Vegas is now being quoted as “late 2029.” Construction activity continues along the route that follows I-15.

Virginia—Live Casino Virginia has opened in Petersburg. The temporary casino has 900 slots and 30 table games. The permanent casino is scheduled to open in 2027.

Statistics—Nevada’s statewide gambling win was up 2.4% in November compared to the same month last year, taking in \$1.34 billion. The Strip win was down .6% while the downtown win was up 10.3%. In a second consecutive flip-flop from the previous month, the Strip baccarat win was down 5.7% while the slot win was up 5.5%. The Laughlin win was up 11.6% at \$38.0 million.

Visitation was down 5.2% with 3.1 million coming to town. It was the 11th consecutive monthly decline. Hotel occupancy was down compared to October at 79.4%, with 88.3% weekends and 75.0% weekdays.

Airline traffic was down 9.6%, with 4.3 million travelers. Much of the decline was due to a 21% drop in international travel, with Canada specifically down nearly 35%. Southwest Airlines has implemented its new assigned-seating policy. Allegiant Air will merge with Sun Country Airlines pending shareholder approval.

SPORTS BETTING SCORECARD

Maine will become the eighth state with online sports betting when its Native American tribes are allowed to take bets later this year. Sports betting proponents are renewing attempts for legalization in Oklahoma and online wagering in Mississippi. Alberta is preparing to become Canada’s second province, joining Ontario, to have mobile sports betting; the launch date has not been announced.

Follow the progress of sports betting legalization across the country and track developments as they occur via our map at LasVegasAdvisor.com.

TOP 10

1	Steak Dinner - Ellis Island Daily - \$9.99	6	Breakfast - Emerald Island Daily - \$5.99
2	Cheeseburger & Fries - Station Casinos Daily - \$5.99	7	Dine & Drink - Rio Daily - \$9.99
3	Shrimp Cocktail - Slots A Fun Daily - \$2	8	Jen Kramer - Westgate Fri-Sun - \$56.80 (for 2)
4	Hot Dog/Beer - Downtown Grand Daily - \$3	9	\$1 Blackjack - Downtown Grand Daily - \$1.20
5	Prime Rib - Ellis Island Daily - \$17.50	10	Souvenir Photo - Binion's Daily - Free

The Ellis Island complete steak dinner remains in the #1 spot. Served 24/7 in the Café, get the \$9.99 price by playing at least \$5 in any machine with your club card inserted, then downloading the required discount coupon from an EI kiosk. If you don't want to play, you can get it for \$12.99 (\$3 off the listed price) just by downloading a coupon from the kiosk that's available to everyone with a club card. A cheeseburger & fries is \$5.99 all day at several Station Casinos locations (#2). It's available in the Brass Forks at Palace, Sunset, and Santa Fe Stations, the Lucky Pennys at Green Valley Ranch and Red Rock, and Game On at Boulder Station when you show a Boarding Pass players card. Las Vegas' best-deal shrimp cocktail is at Slots A Fun (#3). It's available 24/7 at the bar, along with \$2 hot dogs, popcorn, and beer (park at Circus Circus and walk over). The \$3 hot dog and beer at Downtown Grand comes in at #4. The dog comes with kraut (there's also an excellent taco alternative) and the beer is PBR; it's served from the Lucky's snack bar daily from 11 am till about 10 pm, or later. Ellis Island continues to serve the best prime rib dinner in town (#5). It's available from 11 am to 11 pm daily in the Café (listed price reflects LVA discount). The \$5.99 breakfast at Emerald Island (#6) is served in the Emerald Island Grille, daily from 11 pm to 3 pm and comes with two eggs; bacon, sausage, or hot link; hash browns or home fries; a slice of fruit; choice of toast, English muffin, or biscuits & gravy; add coffee for \$2.49. New to the list this month are the Dine & Drink specials at the Rio (#7). There are multiple choices with different restaurants participating; see DINING for details. Westgate's *The Magic of Jen Kramer* checks all the boxes as the best show value (#8). Get two tickets for this excellent magic revue for \$57 with your Member Rewards discount. Downtown Grand's \$1-minimum blackjack game (#9) is dealt daily starting at 11 am until the pit closes at 2 am on weekdays and 5 am on Saturday and Sunday mornings; the \$1.20 listed cost is your expected loss for one hour of play at these stakes. The souvenir photo at Binion's (#10) is the best free souvenir in Sin City. Accessible 24/7, simply pose and press the button; the photo will be sent to your phone.

Buffet Update

There were no significant changes in pricing or availability in the casino buffets this month. The “Mediterranean Buffet coming soon” sign at Rainbow and Sahara that we referenced in December turned out to be a second Chickpeas Mediterranean Café and we’ve added it to the Spot Buffets list.

The Gospel Brunch at House of Blues runs February 8 and 22.

We update our casino buffet listing with a call-around every month and input the changes. Check the listing for [current prices](#) and see all of this month’s changes [here](#).

Following is the list of the 11 operating buffets in order of overall pricing, from lowest to highest: South Point, Circus Circus, Main Street Station, Rampart, MGM Grand, Excalibur, Cosmopolitan, Palms, Bellagio, Wynn, Caesars Palace.

Rio Top Ten

With the demise of dollar beers at Stage Door (see ENTERTAINMENT), we had a space to fill in the TOP TEN and we did so with the \$9.99 Dine & Drink specials at the Rio. We wrote about one in December, not realizing that the double smashburger with cheese, curly fries, and a beer at Atta-boy Burger was just part of the program. It turns out that there are multiple such offers at Rio restaurants, including a chicken sandwich, fries, and a beer at The Kitchen Table and shrimp tacos and a margarita at Burro Borracho, also \$9.99. Given that Attaboy alone bordered on TOP TEN territory, adding in the other options made this an easy selection for the list. There may be even more to this deal. We’ll find out.

Naughty Patty’s (Cosmopolitan)

The naughtiest thing about Patty’s, the new smashburger eatery in Block 16 at Cosmopolitan, are the prices—and that’s without paying for parking.

Continue Reading

Riverside Prime Rib Room (Laughlin)

For this meal, we took a trip in our handy-dandy time machine back to Las Vegas in 1990—only it wasn’t Las Vegas, it was Laughlin, and it was only a few weeks ago.

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Six Great Las Vegas Smashburgers

Not so long ago a rarity, smashburgers are now ubiquitous. Al Mancini directs you to a half-dozen of the best in this month’s Neon Feast review.

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Quick-Reviews Blog

This month Quick Reviews checks out new shrimp cocktail and hot dog specials and a weekend breakfast option with food plated almost too beautifully to eat.

Continue Reading

Dining Notes

Skyline Shrimp—They’re a bit indecisive at Skyline. In our review of the shrimp cocktail [last month](#), we wrote, “Over the years the price has fluctuated—\$1.99, \$2.25, \$2.95, \$2.25, \$1.50, \$2.50, \$3.45, and back to \$2.50.” One month later, the price is now \$2.75. It’s good, but not worth the drive out to Boulder Hwy. without another reason.

Beards—This year’s semi-finalists for the James Beard Foundation Awards have been announced and Las Vegas garnered a total of 14 nominations, an unexpected count given there were just five last year. While the only casino-based nominated chef is from Casa Playa at Encore, there are several from non-casino restaurants, including Calabash African Kitchen, Sparrow + Wolf, Partage,

Black Sheep, Bar Boheme, and Main St. Provisions, all for “Best Chef Southwest.” The nominee from Main St. Provisions is Ellie Parker, who also won the latest “Hell’s Kitchen” TV competition. Ellie is profiled [here](#) and you can read our review of Main St. Provisions [here](#). Finalists will be announced March 31.

AREA 15—Talk about a big move. AREA 15 has announced that it will add nine eateries to its roster of a dozen or so, all in the second quarter of this year. The new places will be Alien Pizza Party, The Bowl (with high-tech robots preparing the food), Chilangos Tacos, Cosmic Pretzel, Fuku (from Momofuku’s David Chang), Good Company Burgers, Museum of Ice Cream, Nacho Daddy, and Saint Honoré Doughnuts & Beignets.

Wing Bowl—The Wing Bowl was launched in 1993 in Philadelphia. The annual eating contest was held the Friday before the Super Bowl through 2018, when it was discontinued after the Philadelphia Eagles won the championship. This year, it’s returning and will be hosted outside Philadelphia for the first time ever when it takes place downtown at the Plaza February 7. The event has \$5,000 in cash prizes at stake that 20 competitive eaters will vie for, including Molly Schuyer, defending Wing Bowl champion (2018), who holds the record of 501 wings. It will also feature the event’s traditional cheerleaders, the Wingettes. There’ll be dancers from Peppermint Hippo, the official after-party location. Tickets for spectators are free, but [must be reserved online](#); Wing Bowl will also be streamed live on the Plaza’s YouTube channel.

Yelp’s Best U.S. Restaurants—The red herring in COUPONOMY notwithstanding, here’s another crowd-sourced survey. Las Vegas holds four spots in Yelp’s 13th annual list of the “Top 100 U.S. Restaurants.” Rock N’ Potato in the Showcase Mall on the Strip came in at #23, Lucky Noodle (Taiwanese) #26, Ton Shou Katsu & Izakaya #31, and Rutba Indian Kitchen #34.

Openings/Closings

Hearthstone Kitchen & Cellar has reopened at Red Rock Resort. It closed in 2023 and was replaced by Leoncito, but is now back in its same location. Returning with the restaurant is its \$1-oyster special on Wednesdays.

The Kitchen Table has opened at the Rio, serving breakfast and lunch.

Charter 75 Modern Kitchen opens this month at Gold Coast. Steak ‘n Shake and Tacos El Pastor are opening there in the next couple of months.

Amador Cocina Fina has opened at 3400 S. Jones. It’s the same location and the same owner/chef of the recently closed EDO Tapas & Wine, which should be exciting news for EDO fans who were upset by its closing.

Hedary’s Mediterranean has opened at The Gramercy on W. Russell Rd. in the space that was formerly Karved.

One of Las Vegas’ most acclaimed non-casino restaurants, Aroma Latin American Cocina, has closed in Henderson and is moving to the space formerly occupied by Tres Cazuelas, next door to the Sand Dollar Lounge. It’s expected to open this month.

A fourth Zippy’s, out of Hawaii, has opened at 10810 W. Charleston.

A third Mo’ Bettah’s Hawaiian Style Food has opened at 6112 W. Lake Mead.

A second Marufuku Ramen out of San Francisco opens this month in Downtown Summerlin. The first is at The Bend complex on W. Sunset Road.

Blue Ribbon American Grill & Oyster Bar, which opened at the Cosmopolitan in 2010, will close this month. It will be replaced by the Corner Bar out of the SoHo district in NYC.

Pho So 1, operating since 1994 and among the first Vietnamese restaurants in the Chinatown area, has closed.

One of our favorites, Mary’s Hash House, has closed after more than 30 years of operation.

Entertainment

Super Bowl Parties

Super Bowl viewing parties of varying extravagance will be taking place all over town. Parties that figure to have big gatherings with free admission will be held at Westgate, Rio, and South Point. We'll post details of any other good ones we see at LasVegasAdvisor.com, but absent a defined plan, you can't go wrong hanging out in any sports book or sports bar.

M Concerts

M Resort has hosted concerts sporadically over the years, but this year it's presenting a dedicated concert series held by the pool and in the M Pavilion. It looks good, with tickets starting at \$48 for standing room. Here's the line-up thus far: Magaret Cho (2/14), Puddle of Mudd (3/21), T-Pain (5/9), E-40 (6/13), Stone Temple Pilots (7/25), and Blue Oyster Cult (11/14). Additional acts are promised.

Stage Door

The other beer bottle has finally dropped at the Stage Door. After decades of holding the line on its \$1 beer in the bottle, the price has been raised. You kinda knew it was coming when the place closed for several months last year for repairs. But then you kinda thought it wasn't when it reopened with the one-buck beers still in place. The lowest price is now \$3 for a bottle of Corona or Modelo. Testimony to how good the dollar deal was, after a 200% price increase, this is still the best price we know of for beer in the bottle anywhere near the Strip.

Bars and Happy Hours

Toscana Bar at Tuscany has a happy hour daily from 10 pm to 5 am, with \$3 beer and well drinks.

The Peppermill has happy hours daily from 3 to 6 pm and 11 pm to 2 am (midnight to 3 am Fri.-Sun.), with \$6 cocktails and 50%-off appetizers.

Horse Trailer Hideout in the Arts District has a happy hour Mon.-Fri. from 10 pm to midnight (2 to 6 pm Fri.), with \$3 beer and 50%-off cocktails. Sign-up at horsetrailerhideout.com for a free drink on your birthday.

Hammer's Grill & Bar in Henderson has a happy hour Mon.-Sun. from 3 to 6 pm (Sun. 8 to 10 pm), with \$3.50 beer, \$5 well drinks, \$5 green/white tea shots, and appetizers starting at \$5.

Downtown Grand has \$2.99 daily drink specials in Furnace bar, e.g., Mojito Mondays, Margarita Tuesdays, and Pour a Shot Wednesdays.

The Fremont's \$4 beer special for Heineken, Modelo, and other premium brands at all bars is now \$5.

On Tuesdays at the three El Dorado Cantinas, shots of Don Julio 1942 are now \$6, down from the previous \$10.

In its monthly contribution for LVA, Happy Hour Vegas lists five sports bar happy hours,

with the wise admonition that you check them out *after* the Super Bowl.

Tower Freeze has opened at The STRAT, specializing in frozen cocktails.

The new Five Guys burger outlet in the Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian has a walk-up bar offering beer, wine, cocktails, and alcoholic milkshakes. There's a good BOGO in the Member Rewards Book.

Station Casinos' latest Seventy Six Tavern has opened at 1120 Vitality Dr. in Henderson.



Entertainment Notes

Laugh Factory—Closing with the Tropicana demolition after operating there since 2012, the “Laugh Factory” opens this month in its new home at Horseshoe Las Vegas. The former Imagine Showroom has been renamed the Laugh Factory Las Vegas Theater.

Bellagio Display—The Bellagio Conservatory and Botanical Gardens display celebrates the Lunar New Year. This is the Year of the Horse, so the display highlights horses, of course, along with giant pandas, dancing children, jumping koi, and the “King of Fortune.” The display runs through February.



Oz Again—Another month, another milestone. “The Wizard of Oz” at Sphere has surpassed two million tickets sold, grossing more than \$260 million.

Grand Prix Plaza—The F1 X racing component at Grand Prix Plaza has reopened after an overhaul that added to and enhanced its multiple interactive Grand Prix driving experiences.

Battle Box—Downtown’s Gold Spike is running Battle Box Game Night from 7:30 to 10 pm on Saturdays. From what we can tell, it’s free to play and participants compete in video games for prizes.

H&H Relocates—As expected, Hogs & Heifers, the biker-themed bar that recently closed downtown, has reopened at the Plaza in the space that was formerly Sand Dollar

Downtown. It’s a temporary pop-up that will operate until a permanent location is renovated across the street. The bar’s NYC original was the inspiration for the movie *Coyote Ugly*.

Durango Nightclub—Part of Durango Casino’s ongoing expansion will be a new nightclub called Moonshine Flats. In addition to a big dance floor and stage for live entertainment, the two-story venue will have five bars, an outdoor patio with lawn games, and a retail component. It’s scheduled to open in mid-2027.



K-popping—The K-pop phenomenon BTS will return to Allegiant Stadium for three shows May 23, 24, and 27. The band sold out four shows at Allegiant in 2022.

DLVEC Exits—Downtown Las Vegas Events Center, the outdoor concert and events area behind the D, will host its final event in April, then will be converted to a paid-parking area.

Never Busts—The creator of the Netflix blockbuster “Squid Game” is bringing another gambling-related show to the platform. “The Dealer” centers on “a gifted casino dealer” who finds herself in the “shadowy underworld of illegal gambling—and is compelled to tap long-suppressed supernatural abilities that give her an unnatural edge at the tables.” We think we may have played against her at the Fremont.

Van Gogh—“The New Immersive Van Gogh” exhibit in The Shops at Crystals at City-Center has closed.

Cool Concerts

Here’s the latest group of announced Cool Concerts:

Billy Ocean at Westgate March 7 • David Byrne at Caesars Palace April 2 • Foghat at Westgate April 16 • Cyndi Lauper at Caesars Palace (five dates) April 24-May 2 • James Taylor at Cosmo May 9 & 10 • Paul Anka at Palms May 16 • Godsmack at Planet Hollywood Sept. 11 • Five Finger Death Punch at MBay Sept. 19

GAMBLING

MRB Gambling

The value of this year's gambling offers exceeds last year's significantly, primarily because of the return of the Silver Sevens' 3-1 payout on blackjack naturals. Combining the value of the 26 gambling coupons in the Member Rewards Book and three from Member Rewards Online creates a total value of \$764. The easy-to-play "AI Value" is up slightly to \$195, \$45 of which is free-play. The AI value alone is nearly four times the cost of membership.

We're obliged to point out that the full \$764 value will be achieved by only a few who properly play the high-variance video poker bonuses. If you don't want to take on the risk that entails, you'll do just fine sticking with the AI offers, mostly table game matchplay and slot free-play. As usual, your time will be most valuably spent downtown, where you can reap a cool \$72 in EV from the matchplay and free-play alone. That doesn't count the \$500 bonus for a royal flush in Carousel Bar at the Plaza as detailed below.

Along with the Plaza's bringing back the royal flush bonus, kudos go to Silver Sevens for again offering its unique 3-1 payoff on your first blackjack. Both of these bonuses add time-on-game entertainment value without requiring a special playing strategy to realize. Note that playing your Silver Sevens blackjack bonus once is worth \$21.50; you have to play it each month (by downloading the MRO vouchers) to get the full \$246 value from this outstanding deal. Or you can play it once-per-quarter when you go in to get your free VIP gift from Silver Sevens to tally \$86 in EV. It's fun. Do it.

	2025	2026
Total Value	\$498	\$764
AI Value*	\$191	\$195
Free-Play Value	\$55	\$45
*AI stands for "any idiot," as achieving at least close to optimal value from an AI offer requires no skill aside from just showing up to play it.		

Plaza VP Shuffle

Just in time for the 2026 Member Rewards Book, the Plaza has made some welcome video poker moves.

Last year, the MRB had a \$500 free-play bonus for hitting a royal flush in the Sand Dollar Downtown bar. That bonus flipped the expected return from negative to positive when played properly. We calculated a value of \$142 with conditional play. One of those conditions was playing perfectly on the best game available, which was 50¢ 9/6 Bonus Poker Deluxe with a 99.64% return. We heard from several members who hit the royal and cleared the bonus, but when the Sand Dollar closed last year, the space was boarded up, rendering the coupon unusable.

This year, the Plaza wanted to renew the offer, switching the eligible machines to the outdoor Carousel Bar. The problem was, the Carousel didn't have any machines with schedules that would be positive to play with the bonus. Since a condition for a gambling coupon being in the MRB is that the deal must render a theoretical positive expectation, we declined to accept it (note "theoretical"; as we've always made clear, some of the MRB gambling bonuses will be positive only when played expertly). Now we had a dilemma. Many members wanted to play with the bonus, even if it yielded a negative return. And it wasn't negative by much, as the bonus raises the return on the Carousel's 7/5 Bonus Poker games from 98.01% to 99.09%. That's a darn good game for a recreational player. As such, we decided to make it an MRO with the proper provisos.

As it turns out, however, no provisos are necessary. The Plaza has installed the schedules from Sand Dollar in the Carousel Bar (see "VPL&F"), so everything that applied last year applies now. If you're gonna play video poker downtown, be sure to download the MRO voucher and have it with you to get the \$500 FP bonus if you hit the royal flush.

WoF Turns 30

Last month marked the 30th anniversary of the Wheel of Fortune slot machine. Along with video poker, WoF is perhaps the most consequential machine-gambling game ever created. Here's the list of accolades sent out by the developer, IGT.

- Wheel of Fortune slots have minted more than 1,200 millionaires.
- More than \$3.6 billion has been awarded in jackpot prizes.
- IGT has developed more than 300 versions of Wheel of Fortune games.
- The largest WoF jackpot was \$14.4 million, awarded in Biloxi, Mississippi.
- Nevada, California, and Mississippi are the three states that have awarded the largest sum of WoF jackpots.

Gambling Notes

Super Bowl Line—The Super Bowl line opened with the Seattle Seahawks a -4.5 favorite over the New England Patriots. The line quickly moved to -5 and touched -5.5 before settling back at Seahawks -4.5. The total opened at 46 and went to 46.5, then dropped to its current 45.

Projected Handle—The American Gaming Association projects a record \$1.76 billion will be bet legally on this year's Super Bowl. It's a surprising prediction, given that it's 27% more than last year's total, despite the same agency's warnings that prediction markets could take market share from sports books.

Reduced Juice—South Point and Boomer's are both dealing -105 for the Super Bowl; applies to bets on the side only.

Olympics Betting—Betting on most Winter Olympics sports is allowed in Nevada, as well as most states with legal sports betting, and the sports books will be posting lines. Hockey figures to attract the most interest, with NHL players participating for the first time since 2014. Read more about this year's Winter Olympics in this "[Question of the Day](#)".

Poker Room Closes—After closing during the pandemic, then reopening for less than a year, the poker room at Planet Hollywood is closing again, this time likely for good. The combination of an out-of-the-way location on the second floor of the casino and stiff competition from bigger poker rooms at nearby Bellagio, Aria, and MGM Grand is behind the decision to close. No future plans for the space have been revealed.

Sigma Derby—The mechanical horse racing game, Sigma Derby, may be poised for a comeback. A gambling staple in casinos during the '80s, the game slowly disappeared and only a single table survives on the second floor of the D. Despite its demise, the game has somewhat of a cult following and a group of three companies, led by Next Gaming, is attempting to bring Sigma Derby back in its original form, though with current-day technology. While a timeline wasn't divulged, Next says it will initiate the return at Pechanga Resort Casino in California, followed by a field trial at either Four Queens or Binion's.

Sports Betting Show—"Out of Bounds: The Sports Betting Boom" is a new series airing on the "VICE Sports YouTube Channel" that appears to take an informed and analytical look at sports betting. At least that's the impression we got viewing the excerpt [here](#) that includes commentary from highly respected pro Rufus Peabody.

Frank and Fez—Speaking of pros, Parts 1 and 2 of the "LVA YouTube Channel's" second annual Super Bowl show with Frank B. and Steve Fezzik is [posted](#). Check it out for a high-level discussion on how to think and bet the game like a pro.



Video Poker Lost and Found

The games in the Plaza's Carousel Bar have been greatly improved. The best there is now 9/6 Bonus Poker Deluxe (99.64%) from 50¢ to \$5. There's also 9/6 Jacks or Better (99.54%) and 8/5 Bonus Poker (99.17%) in the same denoms. The same games are also available in the Hogs & Heifers pop-up that was formerly Sand Dollar.

According to the online database vpFREE2.com, Klondike Sunset has removed its highest-returning schedules, leaving 8/5 BP as the best game, and only for \$1 and \$2. The best for 25¢ is 7/5 BP (98.01%).

Also according to vpFREE2, Skyline has down-graded its Deuces Wild games again. Once offering lots of Full-Pay Deuces in the "Deuces Corral," the best game now is 20-12-9-5-3-2 returning 98.94%.

Jokers Wild down the street from Skyline has added Loose Deuces Wild paying 12 for 5-of-a-kind and 8 for SF (99.20%) at 25¢ and 50¢ and is now the best Deuces game in the neighborhood.

Earn 600 points (\$4,800 coin-in) at Four Queens or Binion's in February and get \$60 in free-play. You can do it at both casinos for a total bonus of \$120, plus comp dollars.

Jackson's is running its Super Bowl Squares promotion up until the day of the game. Hit a 4-of-a-kind with a minimum \$1.25 bet and get a SB square. The value of a square is \$40, so the return on its 6/5 BP games rises from 96.87% to 98.76%, which is better than you'll find in 90% of bar video poker games.

Foothills Tavern has discontinued its Wednesday 100/20 promotion.

Miller's Tavern has discontinued its Wednesday 100/20 promotion.

Check out Bob Dancer's Tuesday blog at LasVegasAdvisor.com.

These promotions change frequently, check for updated information here.

We're Open

Plaza

HOGS & HEIFERS

OUTPOST

★★ is NOW OPEN DAILY ★★

FROM 2pm UNTIL 4am

COME IN FOR SHOTS, SLOTS AND
BOOTS ON THE BAR TOP

NO COVER CHARGE, 21+ w/ID.

CASH ONLY ATM Inside #HogsLife

We are not able to validate parking tickets at this time

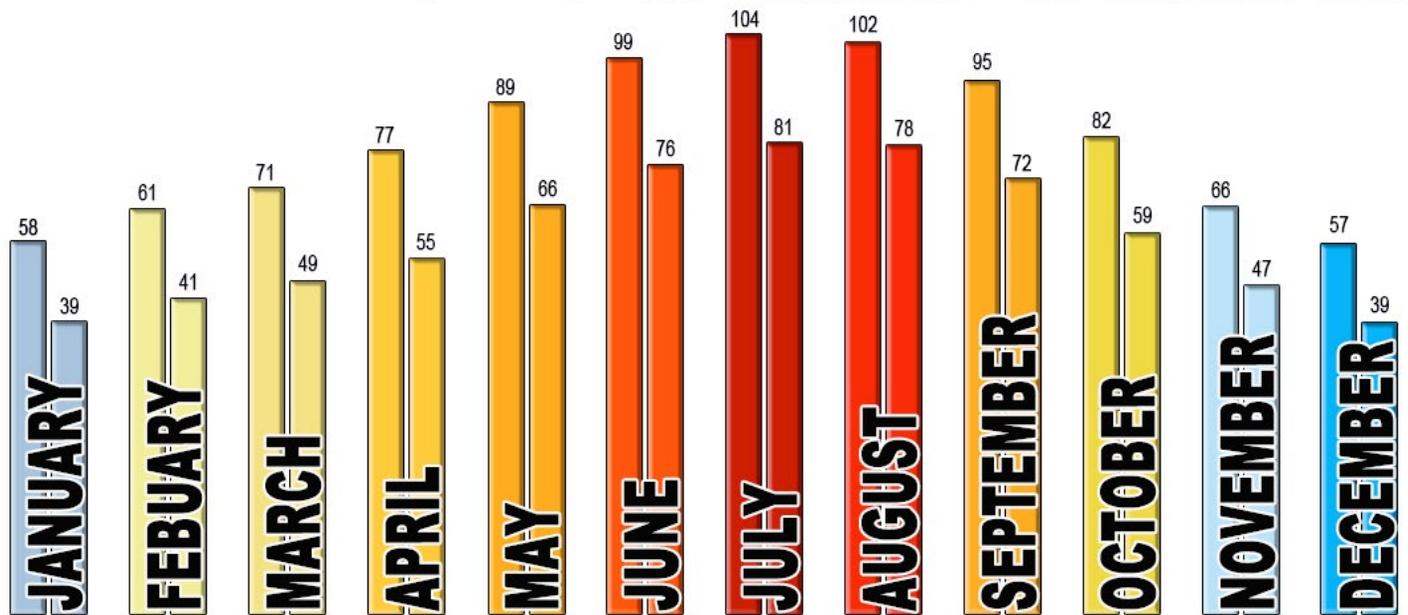
Question of the Day

If you had to pick a top ten for the most iconic restaurants in Las Vegas, what would they be?

This QOD ran on January 19, 2025. [Read the answer here.](#)

AVERAGE

HIGH & LOW TEMPERATURES IN LAS VEGAS



FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<p>Mean 50° Avg. Max. 61° Avg. Min. 41°</p> <p>Days begin to warm, evenings still cool.</p> <p>Pools: Closed</p> <p>Attire: Light jacket for day, something warm for evenings.</p>	<p>Mean 56° Avg. Max. 71° Avg. Min. 49°</p> <p>A fickle month for weather. Occasional rain and high winds, warm days.</p> <p>Pools: Closed</p> <p>Attire: Light jacket or sweater for evenings.</p>	<p>Mean 63° Avg. Max. 81° Avg. Min. 45°</p> <p>Daily highs reach into the 80s with regularity. Winds subside.</p> <p>Pools: Open</p> <p>Attire: Spring wardrobe for days. Bring a warm jacket just in case.</p>