



Las Vegas Advisor

COUPONOMY

Sports Betting Rising!?

by Anthony Curtis

Football season begins this month and a heap of excitement is accompanying it—more, in fact, than at any time that I can remember. What's up?

Delaware, for one thing. Heading into this issue's deadline, it looked for all the world like Delaware was about to pick Nevada's lock on legal wagering on sports, which would have been a monster catalyst for growth. But the professional sports leagues fought it and a high court disallowed it. So sports betting in Delaware will be limited to parlay cards (non-single-game bets). For now. Despite the beat back in DE, it seems as though a barrier has been breached. And though powerful special interests continue to strive to keep the lid on sports wagering, that just might not be possible in the long run.

Sports betting is another gamelike poker, where there's an absolute and undeniable path to winning through skill. This is one of the main elements that drove poker's popularity. Those in government, the media, and the professional sports leagues who argue against this can be only one of two things: disingenuous or uninformed (this may surprise you, but I'm convinced it's overwhelmingly the latter).

Betting sports is also easier than playing poker and there are a lot of potential players. An article in *USA Today* discussing the Delaware initiative reported that sports bettors in the populous NE region of the country are 90% males in their mid-30s. Does that demographic sound familiar (poker players)?

In addition, sports betting has its own superstars, which was another important element in the rise of poker. Math-mongering super-thinkers like Fezzik come from the financial world and are engaging and interesting to listen to. You say sports betting and its stars won't translate to television? Of course they will: The experts take on the oddsmakers, the bettors make their choices, and the results unfold over three-hour contests that everyone watches (it's happening already, only radio is used in place of TV). The pieces are there, now we just need some rational thinking to prevail (see "Will on Poker," pg. 2).

I'm not saying it's just around the corner, but it's getting closer.

LVASports.com

And we're not just whistling Dixie. We're putting our money where our mouth is regarding our belief that sports wagering is on its way into the spotlight with this month's opening of LVASports.com. Last issue I wrote about the LVASports fee-based message board that features none other than the aforementioned Fezzik. We hoped for 50 participants by the start of the season. We had 200 after just two weeks. Hence, we're redoubling our efforts in building out that space.

And if you don't bet, no sweat. LVASports.com will also cover the Monday Night Football parties and the plethora of promotions that are a cinch to materialize this season.

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NEWS

Casinos

Station Casinos—After nearly a year of negotiations, Station Casinos failed to reach an agreement with its creditors on a pre-packaged bankruptcy and has filed for Chapter 11 protection. Station will now attempt to restructure roughly \$6 billion in debt, most of which stems from financing the company's buyout less than two years ago. At the casinos, it's business as usual, but there could be a related consequence involving the Culinary Union, which has been a bitter rival of Station for a decade. The union can now use the court's often-delayed approval of expenditures to its advantage, as management can't respond quickly to union organizing. Adding to the bad news, Station's founder, Frank Fertitta, Jr., passed away in late August at age 70.

Greek Isles—The primary lender for the bankrupt 202-room Greek Isles Hotel-Casino has successfully foreclosed on, and assumed control of, the property. The new owners, Canpartners Realty, a holding company for Los Angeles- and New York-based developers, have announced that the casino will remain open, while they "assess its future."

Fontainebleau—An article in the *Las Vegas Sun* called Fontainebleau the "largest and most expensive building to enter bankruptcy reorganization as an unfinished project" in Las Vegas history. According to court papers, two unidentified financial

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Will on Poker

Speaking of the government and gambling legalization, anyone with a stake or interest in this subject should read the tremendous editorial on legalizing online poker written last month by syndicated columnist George Will. Except for including a goofy statement by poker pro Howard Lederer that video poker is not a game of skill (which it definitely is) Will's stance on why the government is wrong is right on the money.

New Shopping

September also marks the debut of our new shopping environment at ShopLVA.com. We'll continue to offer our own products and the best gambling products from others — many at discounts. But we'll also be incorporating valuable tutorial expertise, possibly in the form of an ongoing blog that I write and/or oversee. The first new product featured will be the print version of *Topless Vegas* by Arnold Snyder, which has just come back from the printer and is available now (see the wrap). ■

"sponsors" are actively participating in court-ordered mediation between the developers and the lenders. The sponsors of the reorganization plan, though they haven't been publicly identified, are believed to be Apollo Management LP, one of the two private-equity firms that control Harrah's, and cash-rich Penn National, which has long sought a Strip presence. Failing an agreement with lenders and new investment capital, F'bleau will probably be sold at a foreclosure auction in the next few months, where a bargain hunter like Carl Icahn could pick it up for pennies on the dollar.

Golden Nugget—The Golden Nugget's new \$150 million 500-room Rush Tower will open in November; GN began accepting reservations for

Fiscal 2009 Numbers

The Nevada casino industry's revenues for fiscal 2009 are in. Statewide, the gaming win registered a decline of 13.7% between July 2008 and June 2009, down to \$10.7 billion; it's the largest percentage decline in Nevada history and it comes on top of a 1.9% drop in fiscal 2008. In Las Vegas, the Strip win was down 15.2% to \$5.6 billion in fiscal 2009, coming off a 1.5% drop in 2008, the lowest win in the past four years. The smallest drop was in North Las Vegas (-2.9%) the highest in Mesquite (-18.9%). Blackjack was off just under 15%, craps 17.9%, baccarat 14.8%, and the sports books a whopping 34.6%.

the rooms (which are 20% larger than the GN standard) in early August. The expansion will also add a new pool, more casino square footage and retail space, and a restaurant featuring a 50,000-gallon tropical-fish aquarium.

Tropicana—The Tropicana has begun its ambitious \$100 million renovation project. The first phase addresses employee and back-of-the-house facilities; the second phase, to be completed by next spring, will refurbish the hotel rooms and convention area. The third phase will upgrade the buffet and all the restaurants. The Trop's new owner, Onyx Corp., is currently embroiled in a court case with the old owners over the use of the Tropicana name.

Cosmopolitan—With all the financial darkness swirling around Las Vegas these days, the project that was first to falter is quietly proceeding toward completion. Scheduled to open in 13 months, the Cosmopolitan has named a CEO, John Unwin, a former executive at Caesars Palace, Fairmont, Marriott, and Westin hotels. It was the first public announcement of any development at Cosmo since last September.

Big Sign—The Las Vegas City Council has approved an earlier-announced plan for a tiny casino and

an imposing 98-foot-tall sign at the corner of the Strip and Sahara Avenue (former site of the Holy Cow!). Plans call for a 9,000-square-foot casino with restaurants and retail space, but no hotel. The height of the sign has been scaled down from its originally proposed 500 feet. The expected completion date of the so-far-unnamed casino is late 2010.

Revenues—After a May result that seemed to point to the possibility of a turnaround, Nevada's statewide win tumbled 13.8% in June, compared to the same month last year. The win was also down big on the Strip (-14.8%), but off only 5.7% downtown. Declines were registered in every sector of the state, including North Las Vegas (-10.7%), Boulder Strip (-16.9%), and the Balance of County (-18.9%). It was the 18th consecutive monthly decline for the state, and the \$818.2 million take was the lowest since July 2004.

Visitor volume also fell in June, with the Las Vegas tourist count down 6.3%. This makes 13 consecutive months of declines and brings the year-to-date drop to 6.8%.

When will it end? A leading indicator directly tied to the city's prosperity says not soon. Airport-traffic statistics are released a month before win and

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LAS VEGAS' TOP TEN VALUES

Mirroring the consecutive monthly declines in key tourism indicators, low room rates enter their 10th consecutive month in the number-one spot in the Top Ten. Dedicated shoppers will do best, but almost no one can go wrong with rates remaining way down across the board.

Station Casinos has extended its 2-for-1 entrée deal (#2) at more than 30 restaurants throughout the Station and Fiesta chains. One of the best meal-deal loss leaders we've ever seen, the offer was supposed to end in August, but will remain valid at least through October 1. It's good Sundays through Thursdays and no coupon is necessary; just show your Boarding Pass or Amigo Card to score great twofers in dozens of fine eateries. But we've learned that there are a few more restrictions than first thought; read about them in [DINING](#).

A tiny tweak in the Golden Gate's deal for getting the 99¢ price for the shrimp cocktail incurs a drop in placement to #6. Previously, you got the dollar discount simply by showing a GG players card. But now you must earn a minimum of one point on the card to get the deal. What does that mean? Not much. It's a one-time requirement and \$1 earns 1 point, so all you have to do is play a dollar in any machine with your card inserted and you're good for life (or until the deal changes again). It's a mathematical change akin to a \$1.95 special being raised to \$1.99, as you'll see in the analysis in [GAMBLING](#).

The Cirque du Soleil ticket deal (#9), in which you get a second ticket for \$25 when you buy one at full price for any of the Cirque shows in Las Vegas, runs through September, which means you have one more month to see a Cirque show as inexpensively as is possible in this town (without a comp). Go to cirquedusoleil.com for details, but here's a hint: When you're ready to book, call the box office at 866/998-4830 and mention promo code SUMMER for best results.

Finally, last year at this time, we called around in an attempt to confirm who would have Monday Night Football parties with free hot dogs and beer (as has been available for the past several years). But when party time came, not everyone who said they would, did. So to avoid getting burned again, we'll wait to see what happens next month and hold down the 10th spot with the free football contests (#10) at Coast Casinos, Lucky's, and Poker Palace. You'll find all the details in [GAMBLING](#).

Notes: #5 consists of hot dogs, bottled beer, and \$1 blackjack near the NASCAR cafe; #7 is available in the coffee shop; #8 is available 11 am–3 pm.

1. **Room Rates** • *Vegas Club et al.* • **\$19 and up**
2. **2-for-1 Entrée** • *Station Casinos* • Sun–Thurs • **\$6 and up**
3. **Steak Dinner** • *Ellis Island* • 24 hours • **\$6.95**
4. **Buffet** • *M Resort* • Daily • **\$8.95–\$25.95**
5. **Dollar Days** • *Sahara* • Daily • **\$1**
6. **Shrimp Cocktail** • *Golden Gate* • 11 am–2 am • **99¢**
7. **Prime Rib** • *South Point* • 24 hours • **\$12.95**
8. **Lunch Comp** • *Crown & Anchor* • Daily • **\$20 Buy-in**
9. **Show Discounts** • *Cirque du Soleil* • Daily • **Five shows**
10. **Football Contests** • *Coast Casinos, et al.* • Weekly • **Free**

News continued

visitor numbers and that July tabulation was down 9.3%, making it 17 consecutive declines for fly-in traffic.

Gambling in the U.S. and Beyond

Northern Nevada—The Silver Dollar, a Carson City casino that added a new third floor with a restaurant only last year, has closed abruptly. The property is owned by Northern Nevada Comstock Investments, which also owns the Comstock and Cactus Jack's in Carson City, and casinos in Silver Springs, Fernley, and Fallon.

Pennsylvania—The \$780 million Rivers Casino, owned by Chicago billionaire Neil Bluhm, opened in Pittsburgh in mid-August to huge crowds and rave reviews. The casino has 3,000 slot, video poker, blackjack, roulette, and 3 Card Poker machines, four restaurants, four bars and lounges, a 3,800-space parking garage, amphitheater, boat dock, riverfront paths along the north shore of the Allegheny River, and more than 1,000 employees. The Rivers Casino took three years to open and came close to bankruptcy last summer, but it generated \$1.29 million in gross revenues in its first 18 hours of operation.

Michigan—The FireKeepers Ca-

sino near Battle Creek also opened last month. The 107,000-square-foot casino, which features 2,680 slot machines, 78 table games, a 120-seat poker room, and a bingo hall, is owned by the Potawatomi tribe.

Oklahoma—The Hard Rock Tulsa was the third of three casinos to open in August. Owned by the Cherokee Nation, the Tulsa debut brings the total count to seven Hard Rock casinos globally. The new resort comprises a 350-room hotel, a 125,000-square-foot casino, five restaurants, and five nightclubs (there must be a big party culture in the OK); a 2,500-seat event center is scheduled to open in 2010.

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West Virginia—A casino described as “something out of the James Bond movies” will open next April at the legendary 100-year-old Greenbrier resort-hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. A temporary casino, with slots, blackjack, and roulette, will open this month.

Gambling in the Media

The big news this month was an Aug. 24 *Time* magazine cover story titled “Less Vegas.” A far cry from

the glowing coverage of 2004’s “It’s Vegas, Baby,” the story concentrated on the many economic problems that have plagued the city over the past two years.

It seems *USA Today* can’t conceive a “10 Great” list anymore without Las Vegas being on it. Sin City made the Aug. 11 list of “10 Great Places to Master Art of French Eating (Joël Robuchon), the Aug. 24 list of “10 Great Places to Eye Tigers” (Mirage), and the Aug. 24 list of “10 Great Places to Find True Americana” (Miss America pageant). *USA Today* also covered the Delaware sports betting saga at

length, led by a cover story on sports gambling in the July 28 edition.

The new poker TV show “Face the Ace” has debuted; it runs on NBC, Saturdays at 9 pm, but it looks like it will switch to a daytime schedule this month.

For the first time in many years, *Cigar Aficionado* (Sept./Oct.) was published without a gambling story.

And if anyone still doubts Annie Duke’s media ascendancy, here’s proof that she’s arrived. In a Tribune Media Services Sunday crossword, the clue for 35 Down was “Poker whiz _____ Duke.” ■

DINING

Station Deal Extended

The company-wide twofer in Station Casinos restaurants is being extended through October 1. This is a tremendous offer, but now that we’ve had a month to vet it, here are a couple of things you need to know. Although the deal is touted as good in every restaurant outside of buffets and coffee shops, it’s really not. Snack bars, oyster bars, etc. aren’t (necessarily) included, nor are non-Station-owned outlets. We found this out while testing it at Palace Station. We wanted to go to the oyster bar, but it’s not included. Ditto for Jacks, the Irish pub. And the same for the new Food Express (which we presume is outside owned), as well as Starbucks and Subway.

Is it just an elaborate bait & switch? Not at all. Palace Station does have three eligible restaurants: Pasta Palace, Cabo, and the Broiler. It was lunch time and further investigation turned up that only the Broiler was open for lunch, but as you’ll see in the review that follows, we definitely got what we wanted.

So how do you play this? The best way is to spec it out yourself on the Web. Go to stationcasinos.com and click on the link to a list of the participating restaurants at every Station and Fiesta casino. It’s that easy. Once we

scoped out the Broiler, everything was smooth. Show a Boarding Pass card and you get the deal.

Buffet Bonanza

The Station dining deal discussed above doesn’t include buffets, but it doesn’t have to, as you can eat at any Station or Fiesta buffet every day of the week on a 2-for-1 deal. The easiest way is to use the coupons in our Member Rewards Book. But if you’ve already used yours, simply spring for a copy of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (75¢ weekdays, \$2.50 weekends), which has twofer coupons for every buffet in the system on every day of the week. These coupons have been appearing like clockwork for several months, so you’ll have no problem redeeming them for super bargains, such as the Green Valley Ranch dinner buffet, which we’re told has good cold crab legs every night (and you can ask for them to be warmed up). With the coupon, it’s just \$10 per person.

In other buffet news, it looks like the all-day craze may be waning. The one-day-price offers at Orleans and MBay have been discontinued and Palace Station has raised its price by \$4 to \$23.99. Also, the Brett Favre of buffets at the Riviera (dinner) has been discontinued ... again.

Reviews

Broiler (Palace Station)—The Broiler is the only restaurant at Palace Station that qualifies for the twofer for lunch, so we gave it a go. If you want to beat ’em up here, you can, with fish and steaks priced in the \$20s and lobster for \$46. But you can also make a super-bargain play out of it with the Broiler’s “20-Minute Guarantee” lunch menu. Available 11 am to 4 pm Mon.-Fri., there are 10 choices for \$10, including the soup and salad bar. A “Reader Leader” in May was down on the bar, but that was at its standard price of \$16. With this deal, two of us ate (lots of veggies, fruit, and two soups, including the good PS clam chowder) and the bill after tax was \$10.81.

BBQ (Ellis Island)—Ellis Island loves that we constantly tout its Café offerings, but they’ve also been begging us to try the barbecue. We did and now we know why. Served seven days a week from 4 to 10 pm in the separate dining area near the bar, there are only four choices and you need to show an EI players card to get the lower (\$3-off) prices: full rack of ribs \$11.99/\$14.99, half-rack of ribs \$7.99/\$10.99, half-chicken \$6.99/\$9.99, and combo \$8.99/\$11.99. All come with corn on

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the cob, cole slaw, baked beans, and toast. Unless you're a ribs or chicken maniac, the combo is the way to go. It's a huge amount of food for \$8.99 and it's excellent (we've had confirmation from several readers that this is among their favorite barbecue plays in town). Must be 21. Note that several barbecue restaurants have closed recently, including Salt Lick at Santa Fe, BBQ Shak, Adam's Ribs, and both locations of one of our favorites, Barbeque Masters.

Noodle Exchange (Gold Coast)—

As expected from this top noodle house, the \$6.95 lunch special that comes with a cup of egg flower soup, egg roll, and fried rice is a winner. From the choice of several entrées, we opted for chicken lo mein and there were leftovers for lunch the next day. You can order these specials to go, making it one of the best and most convenient lunch choices in town. And don't forget that this is the place for one of our best-in-Vegas appetizers, the wickedly wonderful red wontons for just \$5.25. Gotta try it!

Breakfast specials (Arizona

Charlie's Boulder)—We continue to get arguments about the price of the steak or ham & eggs at Arizona Charlie's Boulder, so we went in person to confirm. As reported, both are \$3.29, but you have to show a players card (otherwise they're \$9.89 and \$7.49, respectively). Both are still tops and ordering one of each came to a very

Las Vegas-like \$7.11 (these breakfasts are \$3.99 each at Arizona Charlie's Decatur).

Prime rib (Hooters)—A decent 24-hour prime rib dinner is served for \$9.95 in Dan Marino's at Hooters. It comes with garlic mashed potatoes, vegetable, and jalapeño corn bread. We continue to be pleasantly surprised with the offerings in Marino's.

Prime rib (Gold Spike)—The latest coffee shop deal at the Gold Spike is a \$4.99 prime rib dinner, served 4 to 11 pm daily. Maybe! We showed up on a Thursday night at 9:35 and were told they "ran out twenty minutes ago." That's almost two hours before the cut-off—not good. We'll try again next month.

Lobster

Despite reports that lobster prices are at a several-year low, we haven't seen evidence of it (Legends at Trop raised its lobster-tail dinner price by \$5 to \$24.99), except for one place. The non-casino Coachman's Inn (that we wrote about for oysters last month and featured in *LVA* 10/07) is running a "Lobster Extravaganza." Offerings range from a 20-ounce live-Maine lobster with baked potato and garlic bread for \$25.95 to lobster quesadillas for \$12.95. Many deals are 24/7.

Steak & Dom!

That's all it says on the marquee of Bill's Gamblin' Hall & Saloon, along with the price: \$49. We figured you'd want to know the details, so we called. The special is served in the Steakhouse and

consists of a six-ounce filet (no sides) and one glass of Dom Perignon. OK, that's pretty weak. But the offer on the other side of the marquee sounds better. It's all-you-can eat from the Chinese menu in the Victorian Room coffee shop from 11 am to 11 pm daily.

Dining Notes

Esquire magazine surveyed celebrity chefs, asking them to pick their favorite fast-food joint. In-N-Out Burger was the easy winner and the choice of several of Las Vegas' chefs, including Thomas Keller, Paul Bartolotta, and Charlie Palmer. Kerry Simon picked the "Bobby" sandwich at Capriotti's (turkey, cranberry sauce, and stuffing), while David Burke chose Wendy's.

The good tapas bar and restaurant Firefly joins the ranks of new eating options at the Plaza downtown. It's opening initially for dinner only, with lunch hours soon to follow.

Khotan, an Asian Fusion restaurant, has opened at TI in the space where Social House used to be.

Sahara has reopened the House of Lords with the promise of wallet-friendly menu items.

Pink's Hot Dogs has opened at Planet Hollywood.

The Bagel Café opens this month at Red Rock, replacing the sports book deli.

The Tillerman (*LVA* 9/07) is again serving lunch.

The Golden Greek on the west side of town (*LVA* 12/08) is now the Mad Greek, taking the name of the original restaurant in Baker, Calif., on I-15.

Capo's Italian restaurant has moved from its Tropicana location to W. Sahara in the building that used to be Hooters. There's a 2-for-1 entrée deal on Fridays.

Maggiano's Little Italy in the Fashion Show Mall has a unique deal: Buy any house pasta dish and get a free second pasta entrée to go, which will be prepared while you eat your dinner.

Chinois has closed in the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace.

Another favorite non-casino restaurant, Ruth's Chris West, has closed. Ruth's Chris East remains open. ■

LOCAL CORNER—Huntridge Diner

1122 E. Charleston Blvd., 702/834-3333

The old diner across from the Huntridge Theater has reopened after closing in October. It has a classic diner look and feel, with burgers and sandwiches priced from \$5 to \$6.50. Everything's made fresh, including the soup-of-the-day and milkshakes with real ice cream. There are also daily specials, such as a burger, fries, and soda for \$5.95. Honestly, these aren't the best sandwiches you'll ever eat, but it's solid diner food in a historic setting. (Actually, the place has been spruced up a lot from its former incarnation, when it was known more as a place for Chinese food.) Hours are 8 am–3 pm Monday-Friday and 10 am–2 pm on Saturday.

ADVANCE PLANNER

HEADLINERS AND EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

9/3-9/5	• Joan Rivers Venetian • \$38.25-\$138.25	9/17-9/20	• Temptations • Orleans • \$49.95	10/3	• Guess Who Cannery • \$14.95-\$79.95
9/3-9/6	• Air Supply • Orleans • \$39.95	9/18	• Bravery • Hard Rock • \$22.50	10/3	• Journey M Resort • \$49.25-\$264.50
9/4	• Hal Ketchum Boulder Station • \$19-\$35	9/18	• Bonnie Raitt & Taj Mahal M Bay • \$55.75/\$77.75	10/3	• Kylie Minogue Palms • \$65-\$110
9/4	• Puddle of Mudd Hard Rock • \$29.55	9/18	• Jason Aldean • M Bay • \$35	10/7-10/18	• Chazz Palminteri Venetian • \$46-\$146
9/4-9/5	• Jay Leno • Mirage • \$79-\$99	9/18	• John Legend Red Rock Resort • \$59.95	10/9-10/10	• Mariah Carey Palms • \$129-\$254
9/4-9/6	• Ralphie May South Point • \$25-\$35	9/18	• Peter Dinklage Palms • \$25-\$45	10/9-10/10	• Romano and Garrett Mirage • \$99-\$119
9/4-9/6	• Supernatural Santana Hard Rock • \$75-\$151	9/18-9/19	• Ron White • Mirage • \$59-\$79	10/9-10/11	• Lettermen South Point • \$25-\$35
9/4-9/7	• Divas Las Vegas Imperial Palace • \$69/\$79	9/18-9/19	• Sheena Easton South Point • \$30-\$40	10/10	• Motorhead • M Bay • \$31/\$35
9/5	• Chris Botti Aliante Station • \$54-\$76	9/19	• David Spade Venetian • \$65.75-\$175.75	10/10	• The Rippingtons Boulder Station • \$25-\$42.50
9/5	• Def Leppard MGM Grand • \$57.75-\$141.75	9/19	• B52s • M Bay • \$46/\$51	10/15	• Buju Banton • M Bay • \$21/\$25.50
9/5	• Julianne Hough • M Bay • \$30	9/19	• Jazz Attack Boulder Station • \$25-\$50	10/16	• Moby • M Bay • \$28.50/\$33.50
9/5	• Roger Clyne & The Peacemakers M Bay • \$25/\$27	9/19	• Killers • M Bay • \$39.75-\$81.75	10/16-10/17	• George Lopez LV Hilton • \$65-\$119
9/5	• Super Band • M Bay • \$48-\$148	9/19	• Lynyrd Skynyrd Red Rock Resort • \$59.95	10/16-10/17	• Jay Leno • Mirage • \$79-\$99
9/5-9/6	• Frank Sinatra Jr. Suncoast • \$29.95	9/19	• Phil Vassar • Silverton • \$33	10/16-10/17	• Mark Chesnutt South Point • \$35-\$45
9/6	• Nickelback MGM Grand • \$51.50-\$89.50	9/22	• Psychedelic Furs & Happy Mondays • M Bay • \$21/\$25	10/17	• Billy Dean Santa Fe Station • \$19-\$29
9/11	• Collective Soul Hard Rock • \$31.36	9/24	• Flogging Molly • Palms • \$25-\$35	10/23	• Gordon Lightfoot Aliante Station • \$29
9/11-9/12	• Mariah Carey Palms • \$129-\$254	9/24	• Sugar Ray • M Bay • \$23-\$26	10/23	• Tim McGraw M Resort • \$55-\$250
9/11-9/13	• Frankie Avalon Suncoast • \$29.95	9/25	• Fabulous Thunderbirds Silverton • \$25	10/23-10/24	• Ray Romano • Mirage • \$79-\$99
9/11-9/13	• Tower of Power South Point • \$45-\$55	9/25	• Van Morrison • Hard Rock • \$75	10/24	• Rob Thomas • Palms • \$54-\$89
9/12	• Marco Antonio Solis & Pepe Aguilar • M Bay • \$75-\$125	9/25-9/26	• Jay Leno • Mirage • \$79-\$99	10/24	• UFO Boulder Station • \$19.50-\$35
9/12	• Mary Wilson • Silverton • \$25	9/25-9/27	• Debbie Reynolds South Point • \$45-\$55	10/30	• Tragically Hip • M Bay • \$30-\$40
9/12	• Pointer Sisters Cannery • \$14.95-\$79.95	9/25-9/27	• Vocal Soup • Suncoast • \$29.95	10/30-10/31	• Jay Leno • Mirage • \$79-\$99
9/12-9/13	• Romano and Garrett Mirage • \$99-\$119	9/25-9/27	• Wynonna • Orleans • \$74.95	10/30-11/1	• Vicki Lawrence South Point • \$45-\$55
9/12-9/15	• Luis Miguel Caesars Palace • \$95-\$220	9/26	• Crosby, Stills, and Nash M Resort • \$94.50/\$199.50	10/30-11/8	• PBR World Finals T&M • \$30-\$250
9/13	• Hot Tamales • Palms • \$25-\$35	9/26	• Herman's Hermits Cannery • \$14.95-\$79.95	NOVEMBER	
9/13	• Polo Polo • M Bay • \$45/\$55	9/26	• James Otto Sunset Station • \$19.95-\$37.50	11/6	• Kelly Clarkson Hard Rock • \$49.50
9/13-9/15	• Cheap Trick LV Hilton • \$71.50-\$104.50	9/26	• Pet Shop Boys • Hard Rock • \$45	11/6-11/7	• Jay Leno • Mirage • \$79-\$99
9/14	• Lupillo Rivera M Bay • \$37.50-\$50.50	9/26	• Creed • Hard Rock • \$95	11/7	• Eric Burdon & The Animals Green Valley Ranch • TBA
9/14-9/15	• Toros Las Vegas South Point • \$60-\$550	9/26-9/27	• Gino Vannelli LV Hilton • \$29-\$99	11/9	• Jo Dee Messina M Bay • \$23.50/\$26.50
9/15	• Alejandro Fernandez M Bay • \$75-\$200	9/27	• Britney Spears M Bay • \$55-\$578	11/12	• Jaguares • M Bay • \$42-\$65
9/17	• Kid Rock • Palms • \$49-\$89	9/27	• Liza Minnelli MGM Grand • \$75.35/\$113.85	11/12	• Leonard Cohen Caesars Palace • \$68-\$250
9/17	• Placebo • M Bay • \$25-\$29	OCTOBER		11/14	• Pacquiao vs. Cotto MGM Grand • \$150-\$1,000
9/17-9/19	• AVP Crocs Tour M Bay • \$10-\$100	10/2	• Randy Travis Texas Station • \$27-\$49	11/18-11/19	• Ron White • Mirage • \$59-\$79
9/17-9/19	• Cheap Trick LV Hilton • \$71.50-\$104.50	10/2-10/3	• Jay Leno • Mirage • \$79-\$99	11/20-11/21	• Lewis Black • Mirage • \$69-\$89
		10/2-10/4	• Disney Live! • Orleans • \$18-\$66	11/21	• Hiroshima • Santa Fe Station \$27.95-\$39.95
		10/2-10/4	• Tony Orlando South Point • \$40-\$50	11/23-11/25	• WAC Volleyball • Orleans • \$45
		10/2-10/14	• Howie Mandel MGM Grand • \$75	11/29	• Black Crowes M Bay • \$35.50/\$40.50
		10/3	• AC/DC • MGM Grand • \$89.75		

ADVANCE PLANNER

SHOW NOTES

- *Rich Natole's Voices of a Generation* has opened at the Tropicana; tickets are \$36.95.
- *Chinaman: A Rock & Roll Comedy Experience* has opened at Greek Isles; tickets are \$23.33.
- *Naughty Boys* opens at the Harmon Theater Sept. 1; tickets are \$52.77/ \$74.77.
- *Matt Goss* opens at the Palms on Sept. 4; tickets are \$34.25.
- *Rockstar The Tribute* has closed at the Wyrick Theater and is due to open at the Harmon Theater on Sept. 1. Ticket prices have not been announced.
- Ticket prices for *Tony 'n Tina's Wedding* at Planet Hollywood have been reduced from \$89.99-\$164.10 to \$62.99-\$142.99.
- The *Haunted Vegas Tour* at Royal Resort has added a séance act and is now the *Haunted Vegas Tour & Séance Show*; ticket prices have been increased by \$10 to \$66.25.
- *An Evening with Dean and Friends* at the Riviera has closed (but look for it at South Point for one-off performances).

WEATHER

SEPTEMBER

Mean 80° Avg. Max. 95° Avg. Min. 65° Pools: Open
Warm sunny days, mild evenings. It doesn't get any better than this.

Attire: No need for jackets or sweaters.

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.

KEY DATES

OCTOBER

- 1-3 Int'l Vision Expo—14,500
- 5-7 Pack Expo Las Vegas—23,000
- 21-23 Nat'l Assoc. of Convenience Stores—27,000
- 22-24 AARP Nat'l Event & Expo—25,000

NOVEMBER

- 3-6 Automotive Aftermarket Industry Week—110,000
- 4-7 Int'l Autobody Congress & Expo—22,000
- 16-18 Int'l Pool and Spa Expo—12,000
- 17-19 G2E: Global Gaming Expo—27,000
- 17-20 Int'l Assoc. of Amusement Parks & Attractions Expo—30,000

DECEMBER

- 3-12 NFR Cowboy Christmas Gift Show—60,000
- 6-10 American Society of Health System Pharmacists—23,000
- 8-10 Power-Gen Int'l Conference—20,000

ROOM RATES

OCTOBER

WEEKDAY

Vegas Club • \$23
Plaza • \$25
Wild Wild West • \$28

Golden Gate • \$19
Hooter's • \$20
Fiesta Henderson • \$25

Paris • \$90
Palms • \$99
Mirage • \$115

WEEKEND

El Cortez • \$44
Vegas Club • \$49
Wild Wild West • \$50

Golden Gate • \$43
AZ C's Boulder • \$45
Fiesta Rancho • \$45

Paris • \$170
Hard Rock • \$179
Palazzo • \$199

NOVEMBER

WEEKDAY

Vegas Club • \$22
Plaza • \$23
Wild Wild West • \$28

Golden Gate • \$19
Fiesta Henderson • \$25
Fiesta Rancho • \$25

Green Valley Ranch • \$75
Paris • \$80
Hard Rock • \$89

WEEKEND

Wild Wild West • \$43
Vegas Club • \$44
Fitzgeralds • \$49

Binion's • \$49
Golden Gate • \$49
Stratosphere • \$58

Green Valley Ranch • \$100
Paris • \$120
Mirage • \$135

DECEMBER

WEEKDAY

Plaza • \$22
Vegas Club • \$22
Wild Wild West • \$28

Golden Gate • \$19
Fiesta Henderson • \$25
Fiesta Rancho • \$25

Red Rock Resort • \$75
Green Valley Ranch • \$75
Palms • \$79

WEEKEND

El Cortez • \$31
Vegas Club • \$33
Plaza • \$35

Binion's • \$35
Golden Gate • \$37
Sahara • \$37

Red Rock Resort • \$100
Green Valley Ranch • \$105
Mirage • \$109

Best rates at press time from sample of 70 Las Vegas casinos. Rates NOT guaranteed, subject to change without notice, and do not include tax. Lower prices may be available online.

Putting on the Brakes

How far could it go, really? There've been plenty of recent signs that the nightclubs may have been taking things a bit too far and it looked like the situation might explode a year ago when the IRS raided Pure. It didn't then, but it may have now. Taking the brunt of what may be turning into at least a mini-backlash was Planet Hollywood and its nightclub Privé. The casino was fined \$500,000 for violations, while the nightclub lost its liquor license and was forced to close last month, setting off a small chain reaction that resulted in two more prominent closings.

It all started in spring 2008, when a former employee blew the whistle on Privé, claiming (in a letter to the Gaming Control Board) open drug use, rampant drinking by underage girls, visible prostitution, and club security assaulting intoxicated patrons, with management encouraging all such behaviors. Soon after, security guards at Privé, owned by the Miami-based Opium Group, interfered with state investigators trying to inspect the club. Ultimately, the wrath of the authorities was released on both Planet Hollywood nightclubs, Privé and the Living Room.

Meanwhile, the Poetry nightclub at the Forum Shops at Caesars and the Sapphire topless pool at the Rio also closed. While Poetry's demise was ostensibly tied to the departure of the restaurant with which it shared

space (Chinois), the Sapphire closing appeared to be a pure get-out-of-the-way move, with the scrutiny of the state intensifying.

Privé has since reopened under a 30-day temporary liquor license carrying more than a dozen stipulations about activities at the club, along with a looming September 1 "status check" attended by club executives, representatives of the Metropolitan Police Department, state gaming authorities, and Planet Hollywood officials. Is it the beginning of the end? Probably not. But it's the most severe reality check to date, with more likely to come.

Happy Hours

Everything is half-price at Red Rock's LBS: A Burger Joint, weekdays

from 3 to 6 pm.

Santa Fe has a daily happy hour from 4 to 9 pm daily in 4949 Lounge, with \$4.99 martinis, 4-for-\$9 Bud products, and \$49 Skyy bottle service.

PT's and Sierra Gold bars have extended their daily "Half-Off Happy Hour" by two hours to include dining and drink specials between 4 and 8 pm (also midnight to 4 am). Get 50% off pizzas and drinks, including call brands. PT's will also pick a player before each Monday Night Football game and give a free beer to all patrons whenever that player scores a touchdown.

The good Origin India restaurant (LVA 2/08) offers half-price appetizers and 2-for-1 drinks weekdays from 3 to 6 pm. ■

Notes

- *Supernatural Santana* returns to the Hard Rock September 4-15 with discounted ticket prices beginning at \$55.
- *Sgt. Pepper Live*, featuring Cheap Trick, plays at the LV Hilton Sept. 13-15, 17-19, and 21-23; tickets are \$65-\$95.
- *Donny & Marie* have extended their contract at the Flamingo through Oct. 2012. Donny has been signed to the ninth season of ABC's "Dancing With the Stars."
- Reports are swirling that Garth Brooks has signed a 16-week headliner deal with Encore that will begin in October. Encore continues to deny that a deal is set, but it's been rumored for a couple months and appears likely.
- There's real talk of a new Cirque du Soleil show built around the rock band Kiss. *Kiss—Carnival of Souls* would be a \$40 million to \$50 million production according to reports. However, no timetables or other specifics have been revealed.
- The comedian/impressionist Frank Caliendo has signed a 10-year contract with the Monte Carlo (MC likes those long-term deals) and will begin performing Oct. 12th. Ticket prices will start at \$59.
- *Chippendales* at the Rio has instituted Noche Latina Thursdays (10:30 pm). The show features a Spanish-speaking MC, Spanish versions of featured songs, and uptempo Spanish music replacing certain acts.
- The non-casino nightclub Dr. Feelgood's has finally debuted on Sahara and Rainbow. The club is owned by Mötley Crüe frontman Vince Neil. The original Feelgood's is in West Palm Beach, Florida.
- South Point will host bloodless bullfighting Sept. 14-15 and 27-30; tickets start at \$60.

Reader Leader

This report has not been verified by LVA:

"Short of the free shows, [the band] Sin City Heat at the Las Vegas Hilton has to be the best value in Vegas. For the price of one drink, you get to see an incredible lounge act. The lead singer is gorgeous and has a great voice. The dancers are great as well."

GAMBLING

Football Contests

This year we found 17 football contests, ranging from free to a \$3,000 entry fee (for the new contest at M Resort). The Fiestas' "Football Frenzy" has been discontinued and the Frenzy casinos are now part of the other Station contests (you can put your picks in at 16 different Station sports books). The best value is the Station's \$500-entry "Challenge," discussed below.

The listings that follow are broken down into three categories, based on how their rules affect potential players. We've changed the categories from past years to reflect the new free options. A brief analysis follows each group.

Pay—The contests in this category require you to pay an entry fee that can't be recouped unless you win a prize. In most cases, the year-end prizes are dominant, meaning you either have to be a local or arrange for a proxy (where allowed) to get your picks in every week of the season. Early-bird deadlines are stated where known. All return 100% of the entry fees (or better) unless otherwise specified. This group is ordered by the size of the entry fee.

M Resort; entry \$3,000; 30-player limit and \$10,000 added to prize pool; drawing for \$2,000 free parlay if entered by Aug. 29 (5 pm).

South Point "Friendly Frank's Pro Championship Challenge"; entry \$2,500; \$50,000 added to split among players who hit 65%.

Las Vegas Hilton "SuperContest"; entry \$1,500; \$10,000 added to split among players who hit 67%; enter by 9/7 (4 pm) to qualify for a \$10,000 bonus.

Tuscany "Gridiron Gold"; entry \$250; \$3,750 added in free entries for next year.

Leroy's "Pro Challenge"; entry \$250.

Leroy's "College Challenge"; entry \$250.

Leroy's "Three 'n Out"; entry \$25;

winner take all.

Station properties "Last Man Standing NFL"; entry \$25; buy four and get one free; winner-take-all (\$75,000 guaranteed); \$100,000 bonus for winning this and college contest.

Station properties "Last Man Standing College"; entry \$25; buy four and get one free; winner take all (\$25,000 guaranteed); \$100,000 bonus for winning this and NFL contest.

Palms "Pigskin Payoff"; entry \$25; buy three and get three free; \$300,000 guarantee; \$10 slot free-play if you sign up by 9/3.

Tuscany (Cal-Neva contest) "Pro Pick 'em"; entry \$25 (\$40 includes "College Pick 'em"); entry drops to \$20 in Oct., \$15 in Nov., and \$10 in Dec.; free \$5 parlay card with each entry.

Tuscany (Cal-Neva contest) "College Pick 'em"; entry \$20 (\$40 includes "Pro Pick-em").

Analysis—The nature of the pay contests is that you have to play them all the way through to justify their price. Some have weekly prizes and allow year-round entry, but equity is almost always negative if you aren't eligible for the season prizes.

One of the strongest deals among these is the Palms, where if you take advantage of all the discounts, it works out to \$10.83 per entry (six cards). And if you have one of the Palms' mailed offers for six entries for \$50 and \$10 free-play, it's just \$6.67 per entry.

Station's Great Giveaway is also an excellent value, but only if you can

The Groups

In the contest listings, we attach a single casino or sports book name to each. In order to know what that means, you might have to compare against the lists below. The numbers in parentheses are the total of Las Vegas-area locations.

Leroy's (39): Headquarters at Riviera, but sports books and satellites throughout Nevada.

Station properties (16): Palace, Sunset, Boulder, Texas, Santa Fe, and Aliante Stations, Red Rock, Green Valley Ranch, Fiesta Henderson, Fiesta Rancho, Gold Rush, Barley's, Wild Wild West, Wildfire Casino & Lanes, Wildfire Boulder, Wildfire Rancho.

Coast Properties (8): Gold Coast, Suncoast, Orleans, Sam's Town, California, Fremont, Eldorado, Jokers Wild.

Lucky's (3): Plaza, Terrible's, Primm casinos, and other locations throughout Nevada.

Additionally, the Gaming Control Board has approved South Point's management of the books at the Palms, Cannery, Eastside Cannery, and Rampart, in addition those it already runs at El Cortez, and the Casablanca and Virgin River in Mesquite. Unlike the affiliations above, where the contests run across all properties, the South Point contest does not at this time.

play every week and get the rebate. That's easier said than done (see "17 Long Weeks," LVA 9/08). And the play here (as well as at Tuscany) is to go for "losers," as a disproportionate number of players will go with the natural instinct to pick "winners," leaving less competition for you.

Note that the high-entry-fee contests in this category are the ones the pros play. Last year Fezzik dominated them with firsts at Las Vegas Hilton and South Point. If you play the big ones, you'll have stiff competition.

Free with conditions—The contests in this category are free, but only if you play them every week, in which case your paid entry is rebated in slot free-play.

Station properties "Great Giveaway"; entry \$25; buy two and get one free; \$1.4 million guarantee; money back in slot play if you play 17 weeks without winning a prize.

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Station properties “The Challenge”; entry \$500 (\$1,000 last year); fixed prize pool, but money back in slot play if you play 17 weeks; \$10,000 for four-week mini-tournament and \$50,000 for best record of 67% or better; enter by 8/31 to get \$100 in a Station “Sports Connection” betting account.

Analysis—These are two great deals for anyone who can play every week and get the refund, but “The Challenge” is a particularly juicy opportunity. The only prizes are \$25,000 for first, \$10,000 for second, and \$5,000 for third, but there are also the bonuses, meaning you have a shot at a big payday for no risk. The problem here might be that organized groups bring in teams that drop a lot of cards and make your chances of cashing remote. But we hear that proxies aren’t allowed here, which should make that more difficult to do. Plus, if you put up a big winning percentage, a team can’t do anything to stop you. Finally, get the early-bird bonus and you’ll make \$100 regardless of the outcome.

Free—These contests have no entry fees, making them suitable to play at any time during the season and the best choice for out-of-towners. All are winner-take-all formats, so it’s unlikely that you’ll cash, but free is free—having an entry means you’re in action and if lightning strikes, it’s a big payday.

Coast properties “Pick the Pros”; three free entries each week; \$30,000 per week.

Lucky’s; one free entry each week; \$6,000 per week; must have perfect record or prize carries over.

Poker Palace “No Point Football Contest”; \$500 per week, \$500 bonus for perfect card.

Analysis—These are so much fun that weekend vacationers should consider putting the Coast and Lucky’s contests on their must-do list. You’ll be surprised how exciting it can be, especially on the rare occasion when you go deep into the day with winning picks. The weekly entry deadlines are

9 am on Sundays at Lucky’s and before the first Sunday game’s kick-off at Coast’s. The most convenient way to play both is to enter Lucky’s at the Plaza and Coast’s at the California or Fremont downtown, or at Terrible’s and Gold Coast off the Strip. Save time by downloading a Lucky’s entry form at betatluckys.com. And if you’re in Northtown, do Poker Palace, too.

God Bless 'Em

The official name of the Poker Palace football contest is the “No Point Football Contest.” Guys, if there’s no point, why bother? (“No-Points” would work). We would have let it slide, till we ran into the sports book snack bar’s turkey “sandwich” and just couldn’t resist.

Best Book

The single question we’re asked most often during football season every year is, “Which sports book is best?” Of course, it depends on so many different things that it’s hard to peg one, or even a few, “bests.” But here are a couple of leads.

Public’s Choice—With highly subjective assessments, it’s often good to look at a large sample of opinions. So we ran an online poll in August asking participants to pick their favorite sports book. The criteria were predominantly entertainment-related, e.g., comfort, viewing, good drink comps, etc. The top three finishers in the poll, which garnered almost 1,000 votes, were the Las Vegas Hilton (18%), Caesars Palace (16%), and Orleans and Mirage (tied with 6% each). Surprisingly low finishes were registered by the Wynn (2%) and Palms (1%).

Pros’ Choice—Given a different set of criteria, a new group of sports books emerges. We’re referring to the “Best-Bet Sports Books” chosen by professional sports bettor Fezzik at LVASports.com. For guys like Fezz, it’s not about comfort and parties, but taking big limits, offering narrow spreads on lines, and treating winning players fairly. In Fezzik’s estimation, the top

three (in alpha order) are the Hilton, M Resort, and South Point.

Consensus—So maybe picking one best book isn’t so hard after all. Only one made both categories: the Las Vegas Hilton’s SuperBook. Conceived by Art Manteris (now at Station) and currently guided by the apt hand of Jay Kornegay, the SuperBook distinguishes itself by taking big action, running half-juice days during football season, hosting big Sunday viewing parties, and being the Las Vegas leader in prop bets for big games. That’s the Hilton book on this issue’s cover.

More Football

Here’s what we know in other wagering-related areas as we go to press.

Reduced juice—It looks like only the tried-and-true LV Hilton will continue the tradition of offering promotional -105 pricing this year. As in the past, -105—bet \$105 to win \$100, as opposed to the standard \$110/\$100—for NFL and college games will be available at the SuperBook on Thursdays from 3 to 11 pm, beginning Sept. 3. Last year Planet Hollywood offered -105 on Monday-night games, but there’s been no confirmation of that for this season.

Parlays—For the sixth year running, *Las Vegas Sun* gambling columnist Jeff Haney has conducted his citywide study of football parlay-card payoffs and wait till you see the result. Of all the sports books in Las Vegas, which would you expect to offer the best odds on parlays. Palms? Hard Rock? Hilton? Nope, it’s North Las Vegas’ little Jerry’s Nugget—in a landslide. According to Jeff’s study, Jerry’s offers the best parlay payouts in every category, from a 2-teamer to an 8-teamer. For 2-teamers, whereas no other sports book in Las Vegas pays better than 13-5, Jerry’s pays 13.5-5—a significant difference. Jerry’s beats the standard 6-1 payoff (and last year’s best) on a 3-teamer, paying 6.5-5. Jerry’s pays 13-1 for 4-teamers (up from last year’s best 12.5-1), 26-1 on 5-teamers (same),

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47-1 on 6-teamers (down from 51-1), 92-1 on 7-teamers (down from 103-1), and 180-1 on 8-teamers (down from 207-1)—all city bests. (Cal-Neva books match them on 6-, 7-, and 8-team parlays.) Note that the overall trend by the books is to lower payouts on parlays that incorporate more teams—more reason than ever to stay away from these expensive long shots.

Teasers—In another comparison published in the *Sun*, Haney identified the few books in town charging -110 juice for two-team 6-point teasers: M Resort, Stratosphere/Arizona Charlie's, and Wynn.

Parties—We'll research the party scene for the October issue. Last year, Sam's Town and Suncoast had Monday Night Football parties with a free hot dog and beer.

Not this year—The free parlay card at Hard Rock that made the Top Ten the past two years will not be offered this year. HR just can't seem to get it right. They come up with good football-season promotions, then cancel them, in recent years trying, then abandoning, good contests, -105 promos, and now the parlay card.

One-Way Lines

After Jamaica's sprinting phenomenon Usain Bolt shattered the world 100-meter record last month with a 9.58 performance, a researcher from the Netherlands put a lower boundary on the limit of human speed at 9.51. Ladbrokes, meanwhile, put out a prop with odds of 3-1 against Bolt running below 9.5 before October 1. The low odds suggest that this was probably a one-way line, meaning that you couldn't bet that Bolt won't succeed. When a bookmaker does this, you figure to be taking much the worst of it when accepting the proposition, and in this case, the science backs it up. Basic strategy is to avoid one-way lines.

Gambling Notes

Bally's's Back—The race and sports book at Bally's, closed since

April 1, reopened in late August. The remodeled book features an exclusive VIP viewing area with hi-def screens, couches, sports memorabilia, and specialty cocktails.

Dollar Blackjack—Poker Palace is dealing \$1 blackjack with games that are better than at the Sahara. When we checked, there were three 6-deck games in action with \$1 minimums and the standard 3-2 payout on naturals.

Bingo—Sam's Town will hold a "\$100,000 Bingo Bash" on September

14. Entry fee is \$100.

Online Fine—Gary Kaplan, founder of online bookmaker BetOnSports, has pled guilty in Missouri to violations of RICO (the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) and the Wire Act. He will face between 41 and 51 months behind bars and pay a fine of \$43.65 million. The U.S. Department of Justice contends that in 2004, BetOnSports had 1,700 employees in Costa Rica alone and nearly one million registered customers. ■

Video Poker Lost and Found

The Golden Gate has changed its shrimp cocktail deal to incorporate a gambling condition (see Top Ten). Here's the analysis. If you put exactly \$1 into a video poker machine, you should play it in one of GG's dollar 8/5 Jacks or Better machines, where you'll play one hand at the short-coin return rate of about 95.70%, for an expected loss of 4.3¢. A better way to play is to drop down to quarters and play \$1.25, where the full-coin return is 97.30% for an expected loss of about 2.7¢. As you can see, mathematically the price has been raised only a few pennies to secure the shrimp cocktail discount. In the worst-case scenario, you'll pay the current price (or the current price plus a quarter) this one time only. In the best, you'll pay the 99¢ price and walk away with a \$1,000 royal flush. (Reality: You'll wind up somewhere in the middle.) Don't forget to have your card inserted or you'll have to play another dollar.

Don't get too excited about a sign outside North Las Vegas' Opera House advertising "Double Royals." The promotion is relegated to bar games and it's not a straight double-royals deal. However, Opera House is running a low-level 10X cashback (up to \$50 in CB) for new members only, beginning Sept. 6. Cobbling the two together will result in a strong advantage for a short duration.

In honor of our new title *Topless*

Vegas coming back from the printer, we're releasing some related information that didn't make the book. One of the things we investigated was which clubs offered video poker (you can save money on entrance fees and drinks if you play). It turns out that only five—OG, Foxy's, Larry's Villa, Club Platinum, and Play it Again Sam—do. Of them, the best game we found (for quarters) was 7/5 Bonus Poker (98.01%) at Sam's, while the worst was 8/5/4 Double Bonus (94.19%) at Club Platinum.

Props to Eastside Cannery for being proactive in remedying a bad situation. After punishing certain players who took advantage of an invitation to play in a 10X-points promotion by removing them from future database-generated offers, the ECan GM sent a letter of apology and an invitation to a special event hosted by Bob Dancer. Several VP players we've talked to rate this as an unprecedented move by a casino. ECan continues to work hard to back up its "Best-Gamble on Boulder" advertising.

Bob Dancer's free video poker classes resume this month at ECan. All classes are in Marilyn's Lounge—beginner classes at 1 pm and intermediate at 3 pm. Must be 21. September topics are 9/6 Jacks or Better (on 9/2), 10/7 Double Bonus (9/9), 10/6 Double Double Bonus (9/16), 9/5 Super Double Bonus (9/23), and Full Pay Deuces Wild (9/30).

FAST TRACK

Deals

The **freebie mags** have been full of show discounts lately. The most recent issue of *Today in Las Vegas* had \$10 off *Charo*, plus varying discounts for *Fitz of Laughter*, *Marriage can be Murder*, *Mesmerized*, *Barbra & Frank*, *Superstars of Magic*, and *Todd Paul*. *Vegas 2Go* had discounts for *Men of X*, *Rich Natole*, and *X Burlesque*.

The **Golden Gate** is running a scratch-card promotion that awards one card for every 100 points earned in the same day, with prizes worth up to \$1,000 in free-play. Check it out while earning your 99¢ shrimp (see TOP TEN).

The **Coast Connection** magazine supplement in the *LV Review-Journal* came out again at the end of July; however, the value of the matchplay coupons within had been significantly reduced. Only a \$20 matchplay for Gold Coast and a \$10 matchplay for Orleans remained.

Miscellaneous

Steve and Elaine Wynn have sold two million shares of Wynn Resorts stock. At an average price of \$57 per share, the Wynns cashed out \$114 million, minus costs. It's not *just* a stock sale, though—the shares were reportedly sold to provide liquidity for the Wynn's pending divorce and amount to 10% of their total holdings.

A new list issued by Hotels.com has named Las Vegas' Venetian/Palazzo the "**world's largest hotel.**" The designation is based on the number of rooms: 8,108 combined.

CityCenter's fleet of 26 stretch-limo Lincoln Town Cars will use clean-burning compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuel. According to CityCenter, this will be the world's first fleet of stretch limos powered by CNG, which was selected due to its abundant U.S. reserves and its cost efficiencies compared to gasoline and diesel. In addition, CNG vehicles produce 35%-60% less harmful emissions, 90%-97%

less particulate matter, and 25% less carbon dioxide.

The Las Vegas team in the fledgling United Football League, which also has teams in San Francisco, Orlando, and New York, has been named the **Las Vegas Locomotives**. The Locomotives will play the league's first game on October 8 at Sam Boyd Stadium against the California Redwoods. J.P. Losman, former starting quarterback for the NFL's Buffalo Bills, will reportedly helm the Locomotives.

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit against the Metropolitan Police Department on behalf of two **street entertainers on the Strip** (known as "buskers"), who were arrested for operating businesses without a license. County prosecutors dropped the charges, adding to a long line of successful ACLU First Amendment battles for handbill distributors, union activists, soapbox orators, and the like on the Strip and downtown.

According to SalesTraQ, the **median prices for new and existing Las Vegas homes** rose ever so slightly in July: from \$209,000 in June to \$210,000 (.995%) for new houses, and from \$124,000 in June to \$124,900 (.993%) for resales. It was the first time Las Vegas home prices have gone up since February 2007.

Only six feet now separate massive concrete support arches for the **Hoover Dam Bypass**, the new stretch of US 93 between Nevada and Arizona being built a quarter-mile down river from the dam. When the six feet are finished in the next month or so, the 1,060-foot arch will be the longest concrete-arch bridge in the Western Hemisphere. It'll take another year to erect concrete columns, lay down the steel deck, and pave the 1,900-foot bridge, as well as several miles of roadway and seven smaller bridges leading up to the canyon. The whole bypass is expected to open in fall 2010.

Get an estimate of any Las Vegas **taxi fare** at vegas.taxiwiz.com. ■

LAST SECOND FLASH

50¢ Dogs

While checking out the free football contest at Poker Place, we were amazed by all the bargain food and drink offers in the casino. We'll report in full next month, but we had to tell you now about the good 50¢ hot dogs served from the sports book deli. They're the cheapest in town.



Tatts

Vince Neil Ink (owned by the front man for Mötley Crüe) has opened at the Rio. Club Tattoo (partly owned by Linkin Park's Chester Bennington) has opened in the Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood. And 3 Lions Tattoo has opened at the Sahara.



Party Buys WPT

Online gambling company PartyGaming has entered into an agreement to acquire "substantially all of the assets" of the World Poker Tour for \$12.3 million in cash. It's yet another significant incursion from the world of online gambling.



Idol Gossip

Is former "American Idol" mainstay Paula Abdul bringing her act to Vegas? That's the scuttlebutt following recent sightings of Abdul, who's been soft-pedaling a revue for a few years now.



And Elvis

Not *the* Elvis, of course, but several principals from the impending Elvis-themed Cirque show have reportedly shown up for rehearsals. The show is scheduled to open at CityCenter in December.