



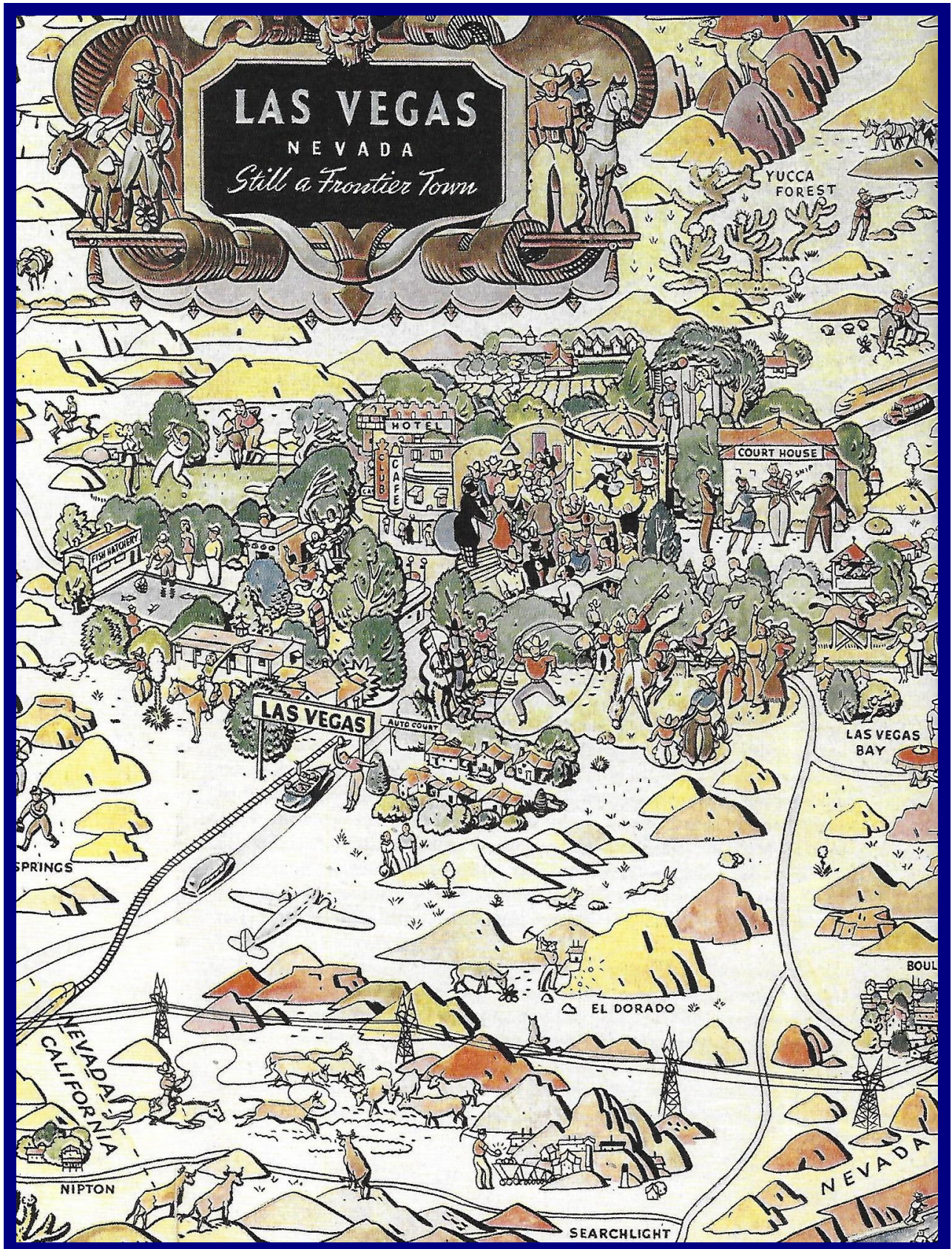
LAS VEGAS HOTELS AND CASINOS

1941-2010

**ARCHITECTURE AND AIR CONDITIONING
THE AMERICAN DREAM**

BRIAN ROBERTS

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA



"Visitors are attracted because we publicize this as "Still a Frontier Town," and are disappointed when they arrive and do not find the cowboys, prospectors and general Western atmosphere."
(Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce).

CONTENTS



HOTELS BY STYLE, DATE WHEN FIRST BUILT, NAME AND PAGE

WILD WEST: 1941 El Rancho 6: 1942 Last Frontier 7

**SUNBELT MODERN: 1946 Flamingo 8: 1948 Thunderbird 9: 1950 Desert Inn 10
1952 Sahara 11: 1952 The Sands 12: 1955 The Riviera 13: The Dunes 14:
1956 The Hacienda 15: 1957 Tropicana 16**

**POP CITY: 1958 Stardust 17: 1966 Caesars Palace 4: 1966 The Aladdin 18:
1968: Circus Circus 19**

CORPORATE MODERN: 1973 Ballys (MGM Grand) 20

**DISNEY LAND: 1989 The Mirage 21: 1990 The Excalibur 22:
1993 Treasure Island 23: 1993 Luxor 24: 1993 MGM Grand 28**

**SUN CITY: 1996 Stratosphere 29: 1996 Monte Carlo 30: 1997 New York New York 31
1998 Bellagio 32: 1999 Mandalay Bay 33: 1999 Paris Las Vegas 34:
1999 Venetian 36: 2000 Planet Hollywood 38**

**STARCHITECTURE: 2005 Wynn 39: 2008 Encore 40: 2009 City Centre 41
2010 The Cosmopolitan 42: 2010 Palazzo 43**

Introduction 4: Fremont Street 5: References and Further Reading 44

CAESARS PALACE 1966



Opened 1966, 3348 rooms. Theme Roman Empire.

INTRODUCTION

I flew from Chicago to Las Vegas in 1982, stayed at the Stardust, saw shows at the Flamingo and Circus Circus, and had dinner at Caesars Palace. But in the 1980s, as recounted in the book by Adrienne Sharp: *It was dirty, run down and trashy.....Sin City was haunted by mobsters... (She drove) to Las Vegas- windows rolled down, heading for the pools and air-conditioned rooms of the garden motels in the Paradise Valley desert...Vegas was in full plummet then, old hotels barely hanging on, not yet imploded or replaced.*

How the Las Vegas of today has changed. Situated in the Mojave Desert in Nevada, the 7th largest State with an area half the size of France. The population of the Metropolitan area is around 2.7 million, but in normal times is visited by 50 million people every year. Summer temperatures can reach around 115 degF. With 150,000 hotel bedrooms and some of the largest casinos in the world it depends on engineering services- air conditioning, plumbing and elevators while the lighting and entertainment uses enormous electrical power. Water consumption is of increasing concern. The architecture of these new hotels (some with over 4000 rooms) is in a style unique to Las Vegas, recreating history and buildings from all over the world: from the Wild West to Ancient Rome and Egypt, from King Arthur to Walt Disney, the canals of Venice, Paris and the Eiffel Tower, to the skyscrapers of New York... with newer hotels and themes being constantly introduced.

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FREMONT STREET

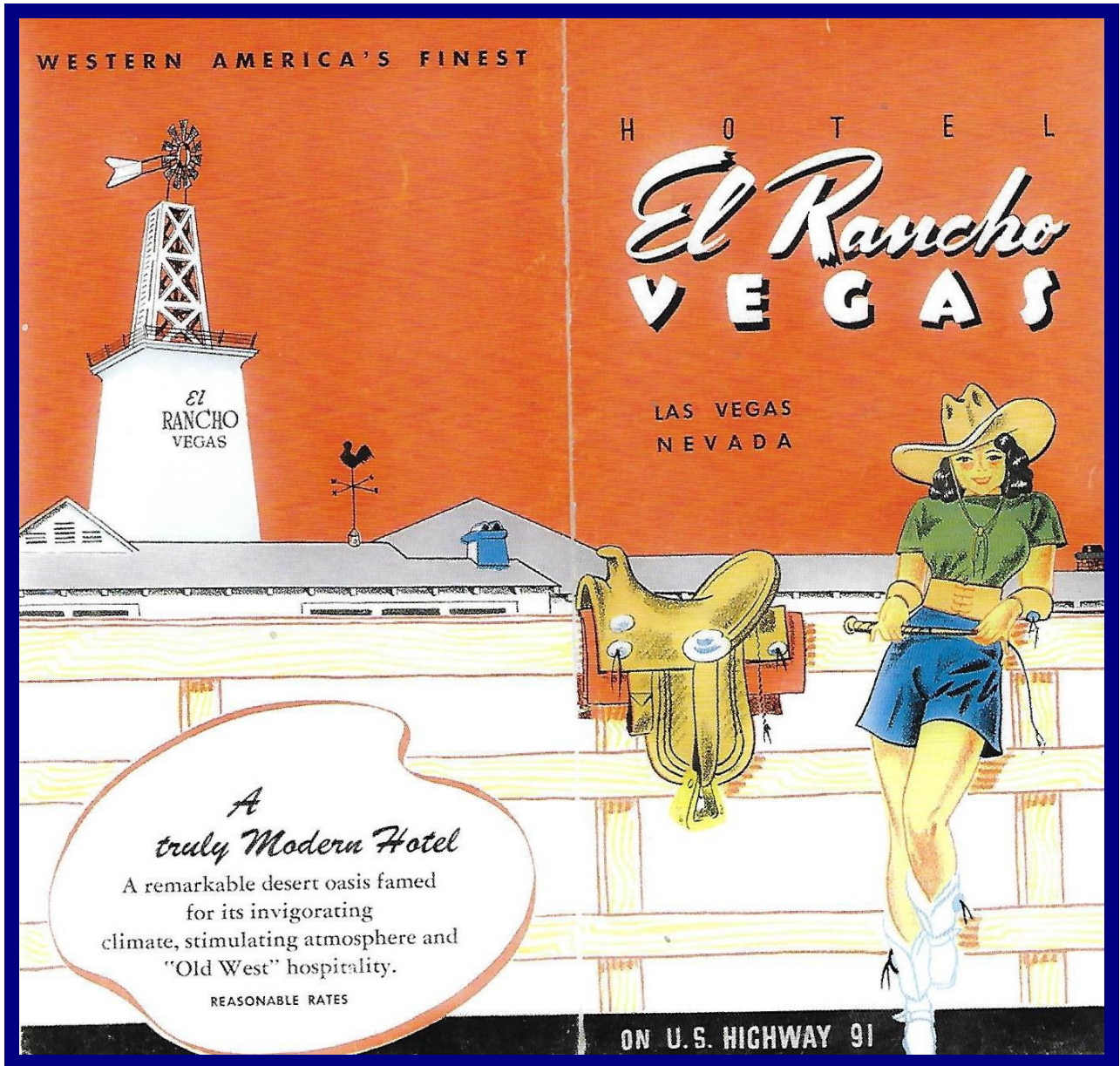


Fremont and Main looking East in the 1940s, "a street that has witnessed the evolution from gas light to neon light to LED."



Fremont Street now, with shops, gambling joints and a roof with changing light displays. And people moving machines hanging from the roof, travelling the length of the street.

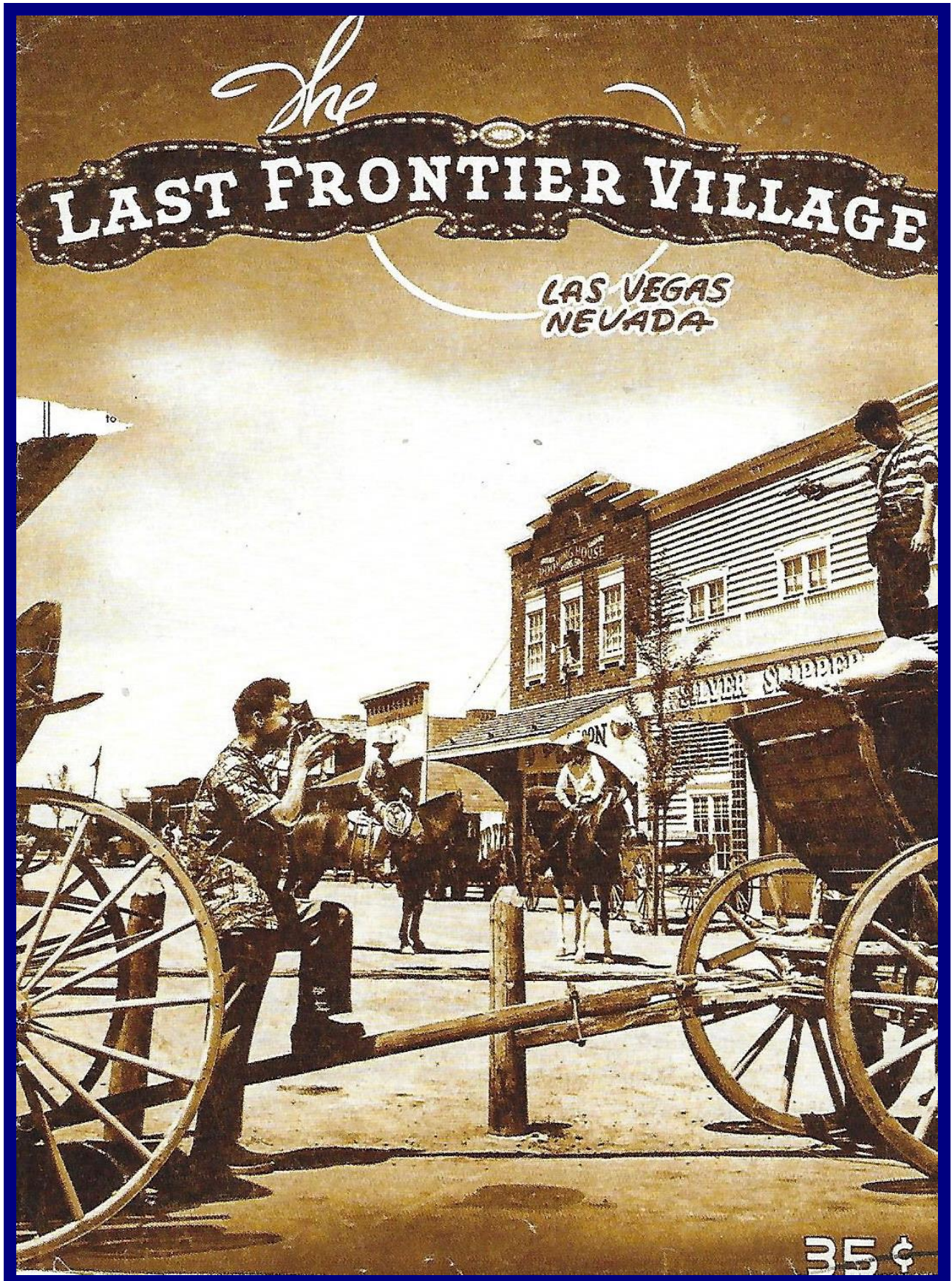
EL RANCHO 1941



"In the early 1940s, scantily clad cowgirls drove a stagecoach stuffed with guests to a (cowboy) ranch.....There were more glaring incongruities in this frontier construction: glittering pools, manicured lawns, and a gas station. Even the Western windmill rising on the skyline was far from a sign of frontier deprivation: its neon blades swirling to attract the motorists. It was merely a cover for ice machine air-conditioning." (Stefan Al).

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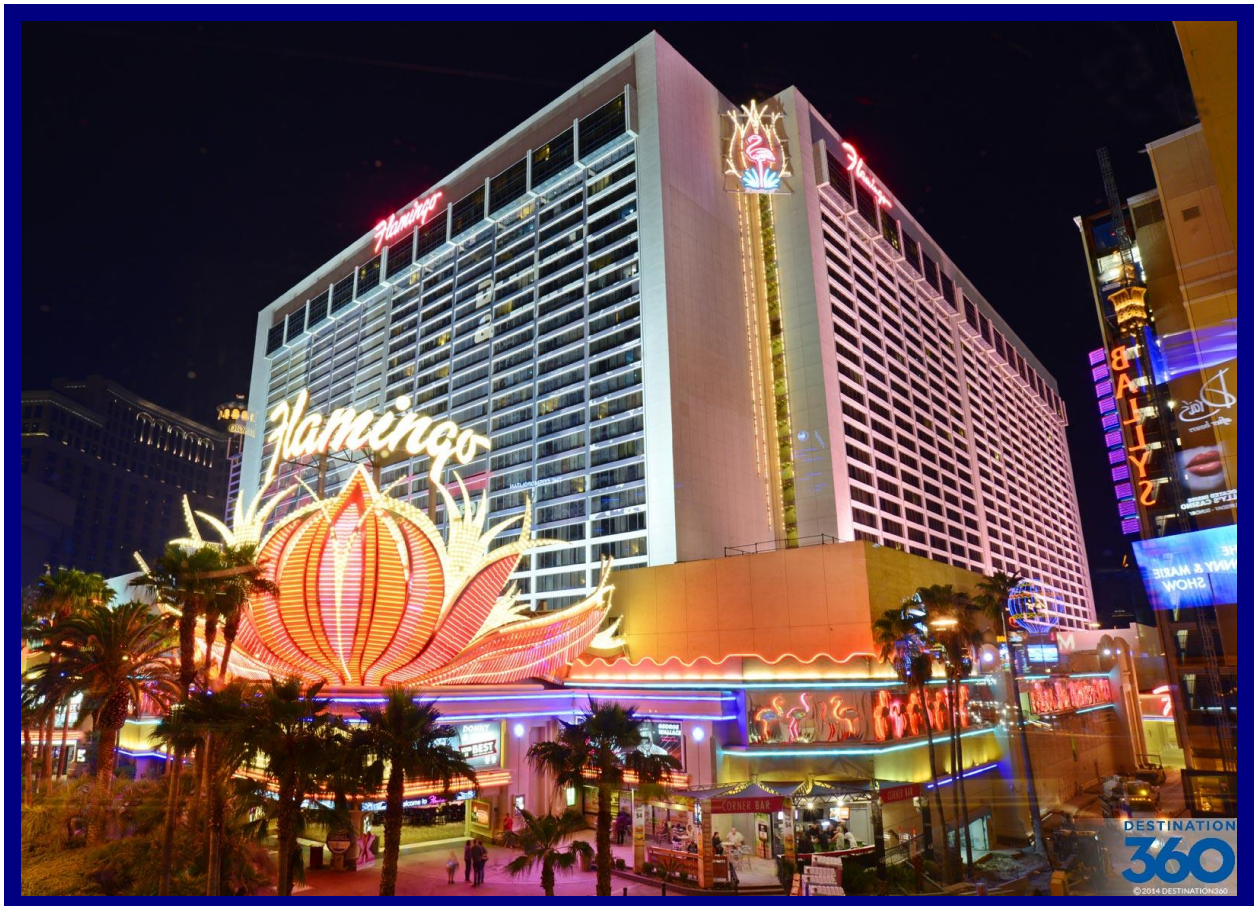
LAST FRONTIER 1942



A self-contained casino resort, themed to attract visitors and encourage gambling.

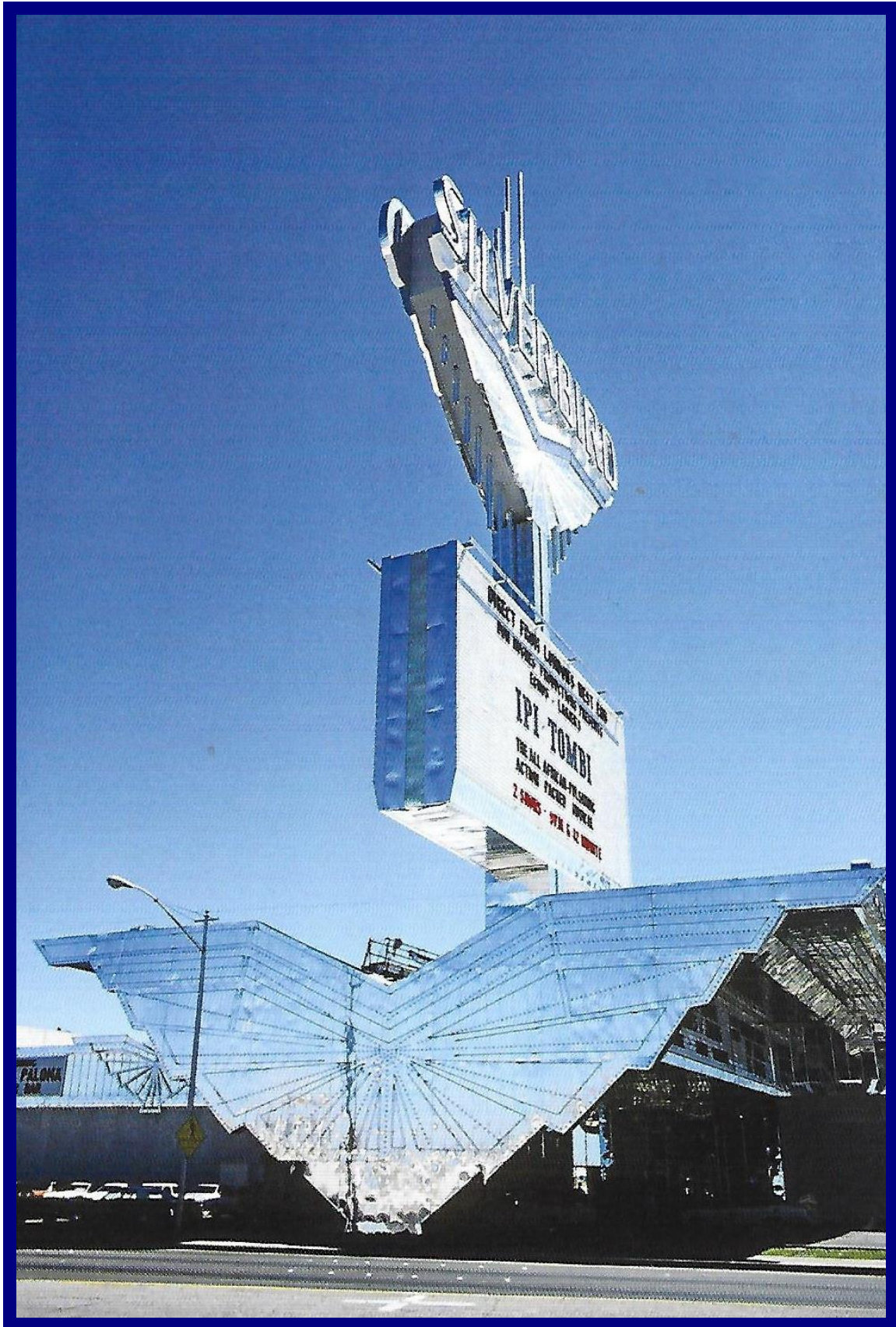
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FLAMINGO 1946



Opened 1926, 3642 rooms. The last of the original buildings was destroyed in 1993. The remaining hotel buildings date from 1967 and after. Theme Art Deco, Miami.

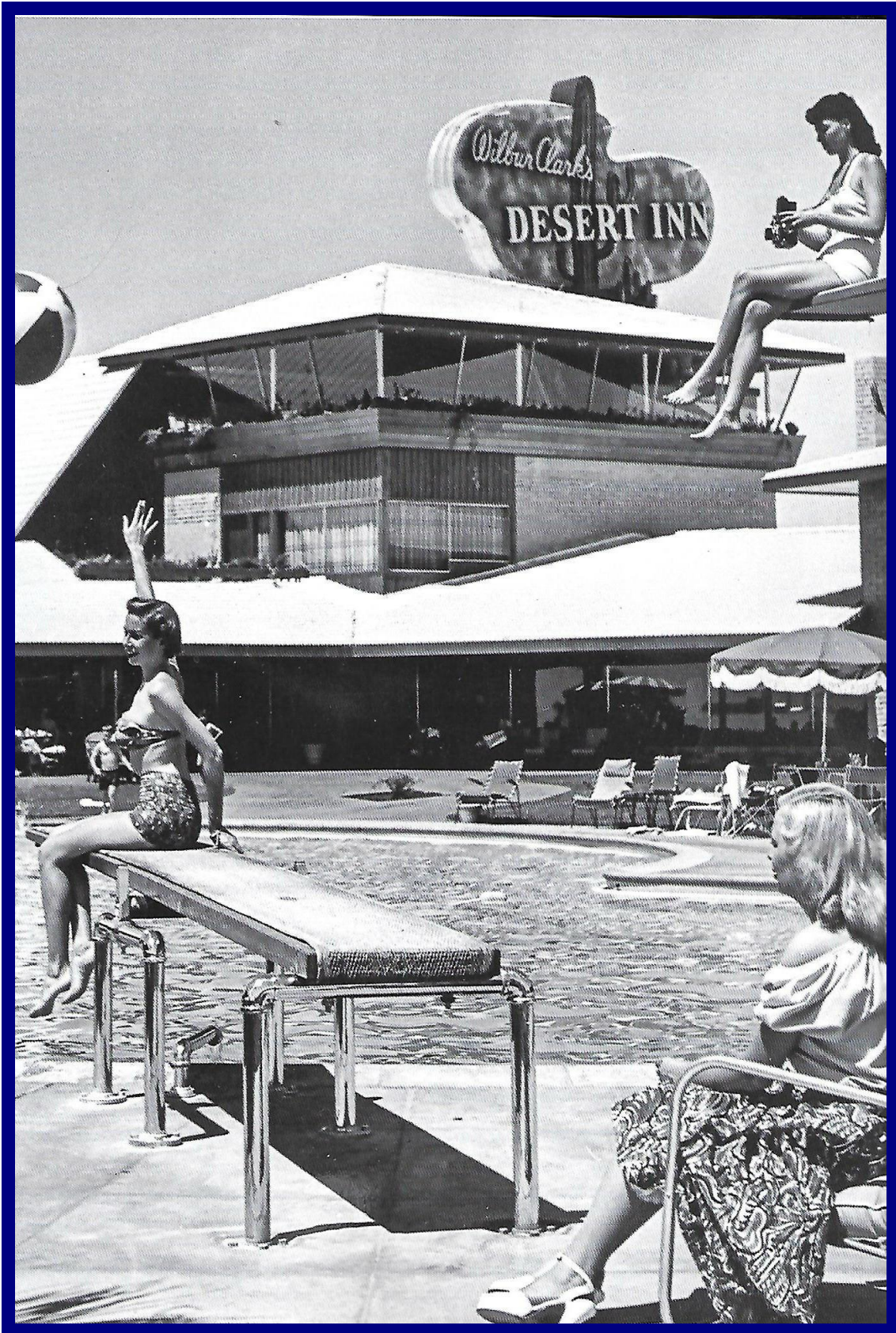
THUNDERBIRD 1948



Located outside the city limits, in the newly created township of Paradise City, the Thunderbird, Flamingo and future hotels were granted permanent status in 1949 as a tax shelter, leaving the City of Las Vegas unable to collect any taxes or regulate the Strip in any way.

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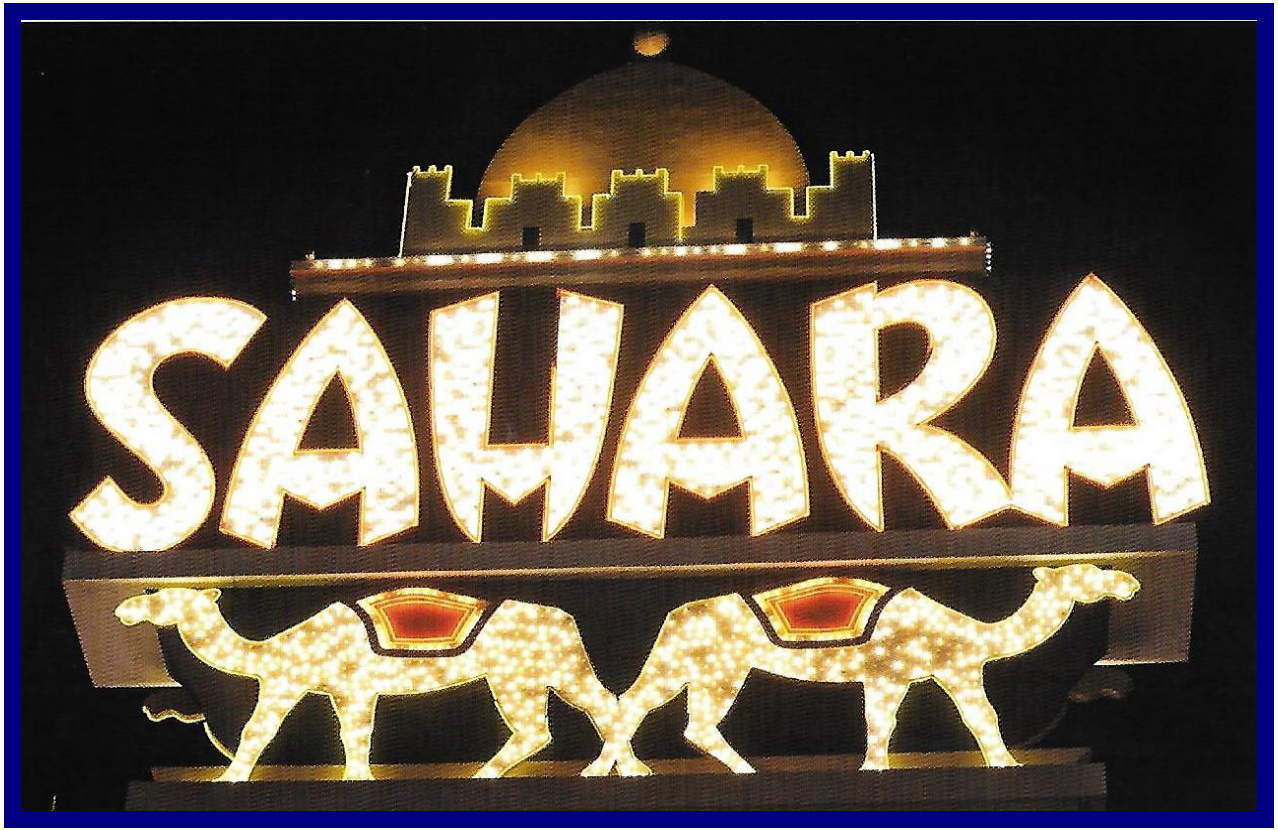
DESERT INN 1950



A kidney-shape pool, a thermostat in every room and the first Las Vegas appearance of Frank Sinatra.

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SAHARA 1952



"An oversized bungalow with an air-conditioned casino, two plaster camels, and Miss (Marlene) Dietrich wearing a 'peek-a-boo' dress.

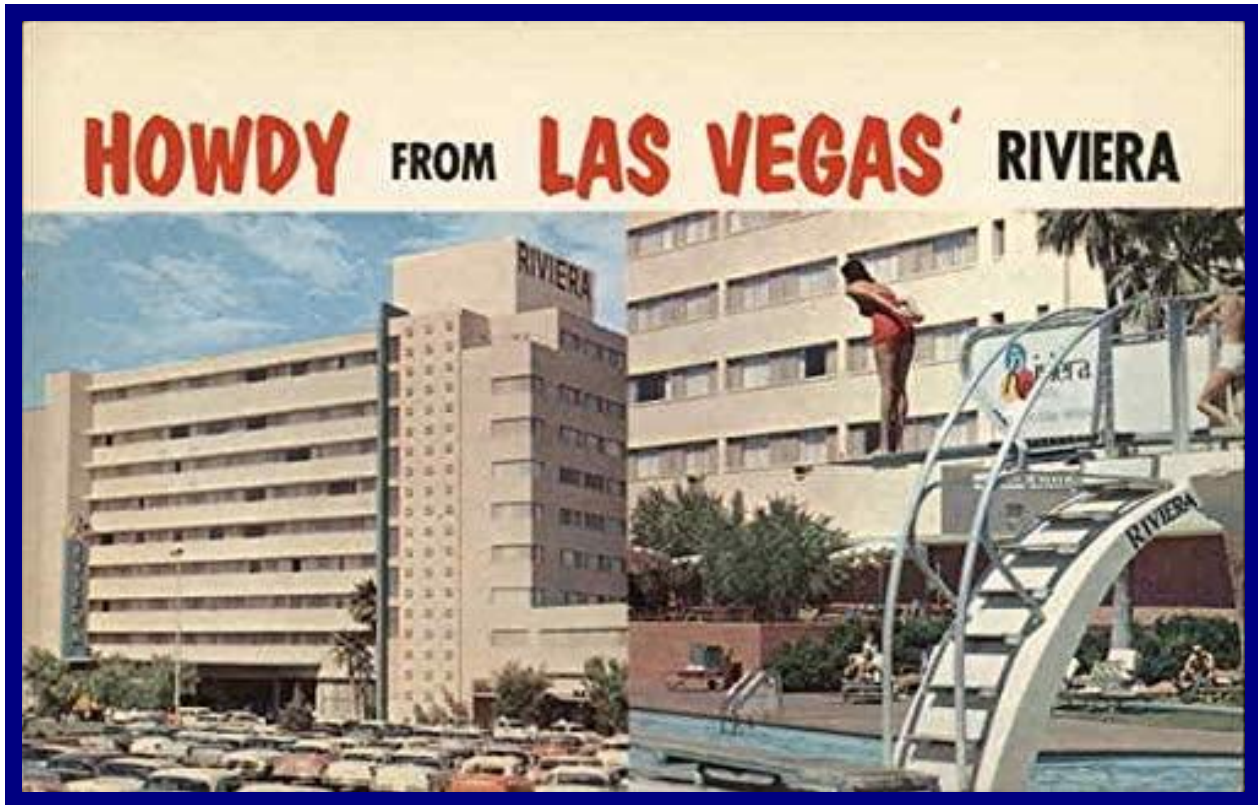
SANDS 1952



In addition to sunshine, good entertainment and swimming, the Sands even built poolside slot machines and a floating craps table. It was demolished in 1996.

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THE RIVIERA 1955



The nine-storey, 250 room hotel was the first high-rise on the Strip and one of the first with elevators. It closed in 2015.

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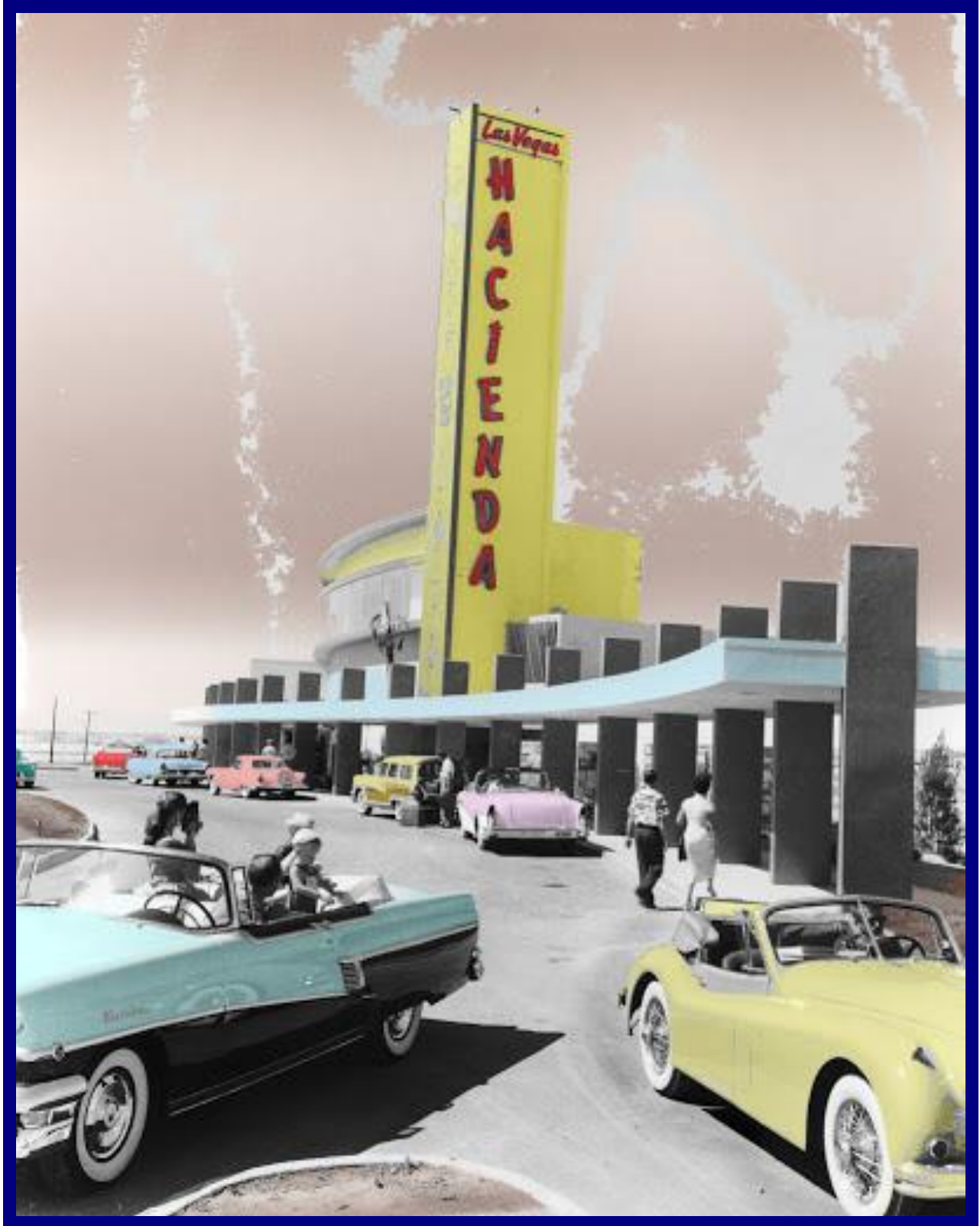
THE DUNES 1955



The roof of the original casino featured a thirty-foot fibreglass Sultan. The later Casino de Paris and the complete hotel was "imploded in a torrent of dust and debris" in 1993.

<15>

THE HACIENDA 1955



With 266 rooms in six hotel wings linked by enclosed promenade gardens "patrons had to pass the slots on their way to the toilets." The hotel also had a private Constellation airliner with one package, where for \$188 customers "got a return flight to Chicago, five hotel nights, four meals, a lifetime membership of the hotel's miniature golf club and a free flow of Californian bubbly." By 1961, the Hacienda had brought 140,000 visitors to McCarran airport, more than all the commercial airlines combined. But in 1962 the fleet, now with thirty aircraft, was closed down for operating without a proper licence. The hotel was closed in 1996, imploded in 1999.

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TROPICANA 1957



Opened 1957, 1467 rooms. Most expensive Las Vegas hotel ever built when opened.
Theme Tropical.

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STARDUST 1958

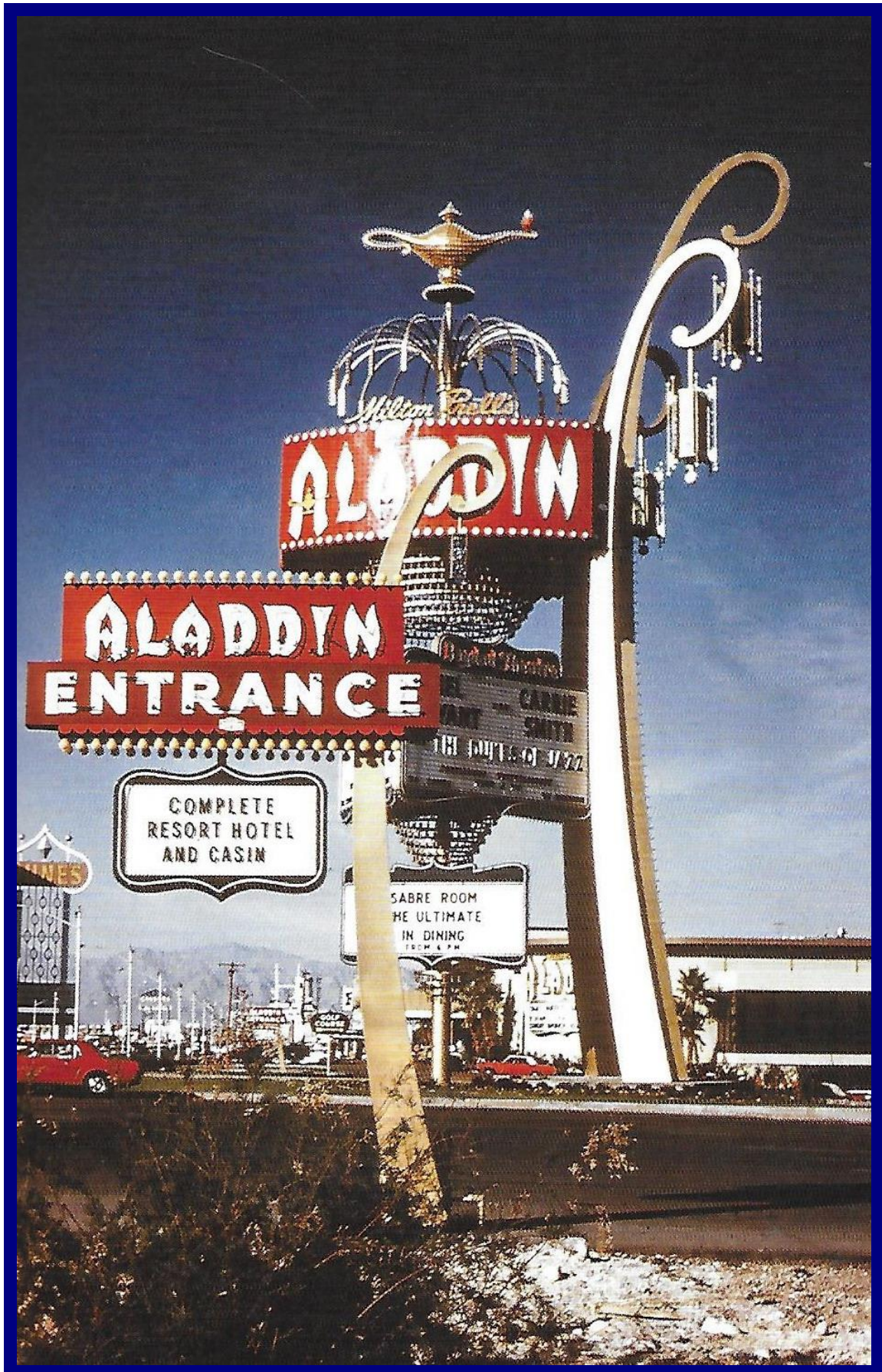


In 1968, the hotel replaced the 27 ft high original sign which stretched 217 ft across its front. The replacement, pictured here, was mounted on a 188 ft pylon topped with multicoloured stars.



In 1991, the convention space was greatly expanded and a thirty-two-storey tower added. The hotel "was destroyed in a ritual-like implosion" in 2007 and the famous sign taken to the Neon Boneyard.

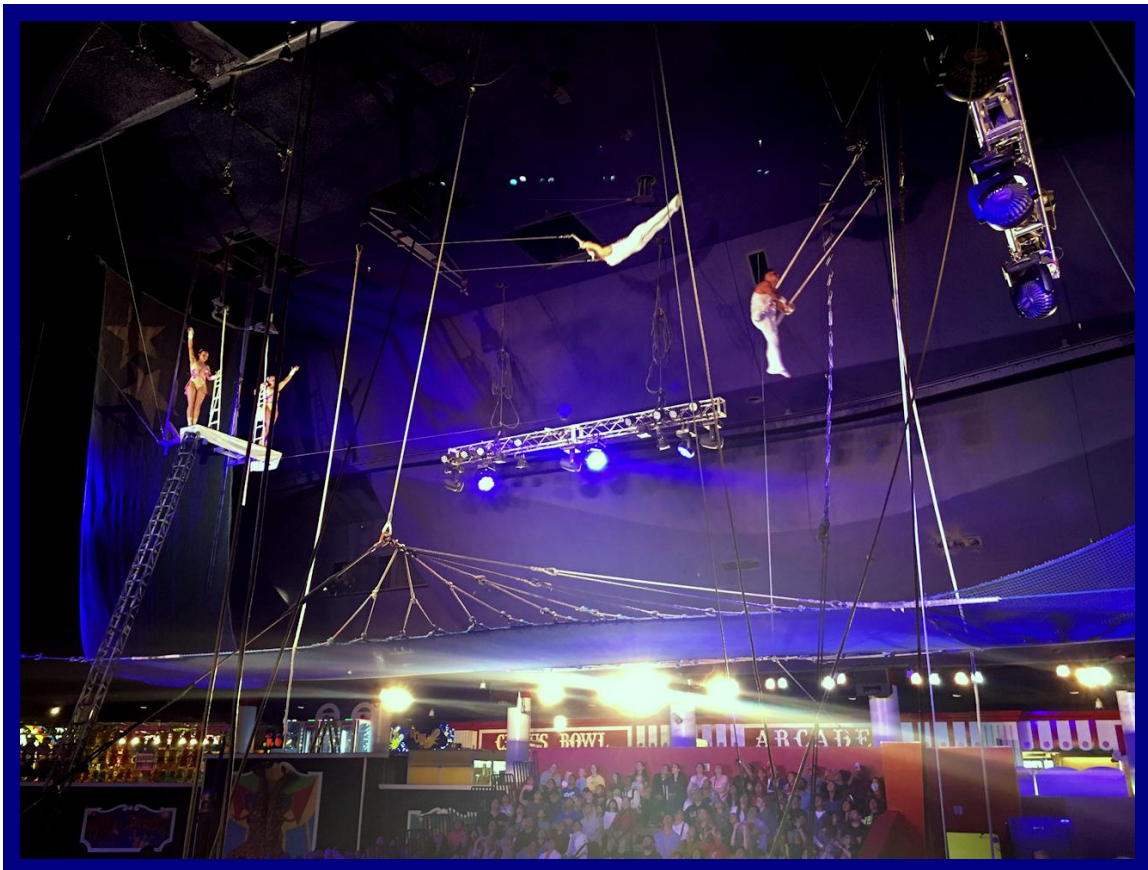
THE ALADDIN 1966



The 184 ft tall Aladdin sign made out of a string of beer cans with a fountain spraying gold, beneath a light-bulb-covered oil lamp, supported by three giant pylons, cost \$750,000 dollars.

<19>

CIRCUS CIRCUS 1968



Opened 1968, 3770 rooms. Theme Circus Acts with trapeze performers in lobby.

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BALLY'S 1973



Opened 1973 as MGM Grand, 2814 rooms. Became Bally's in 1986.
Casino 66,187 square feet.

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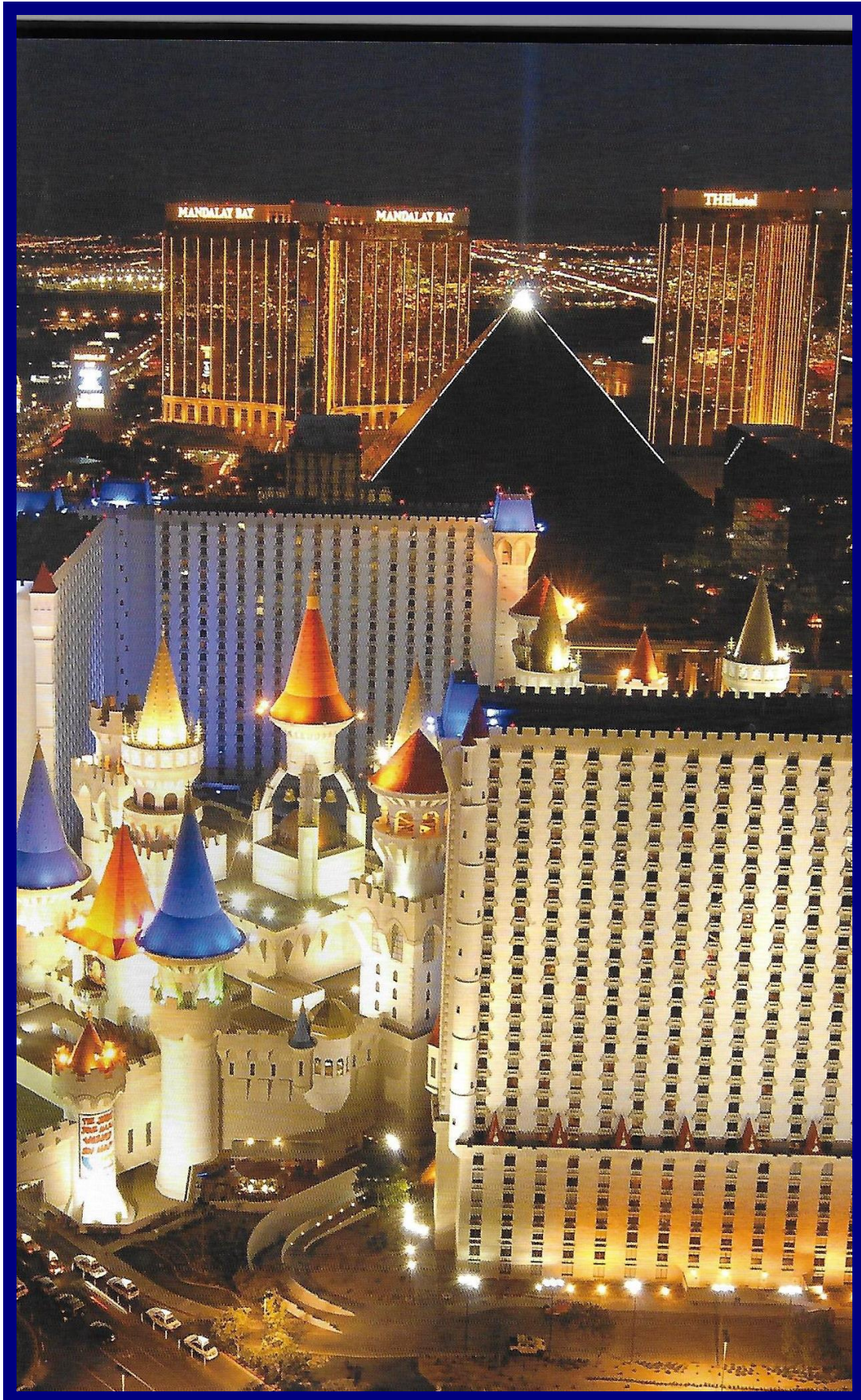
MIRAGE 1989



Opened 1989, 3044 rooms. Theme Polynesia. Casino 97,750 square feet.

<22>

EXCALIBUR 1990



Opened 1990, 28 floors, 4032 rooms. Casino 96,656 square feet.
Slogan "Be King Arthur's Guest." A castle with oversize turrets, a moat and a drawbridge.

<23>

TREASURE ISLAND 1993



Opened 1993, 2884 rooms. Theme Pirates and the Caribbean. A battle between the *Hispaniola* and the *Royal Britannia*, which the pirates always win.

<24>

LUXOR 1993



Opened 1993, 4407 rooms. Theme Ancient Egypt. Casino 100,889 square feet.
The sign is a 75 ft high obelisk.

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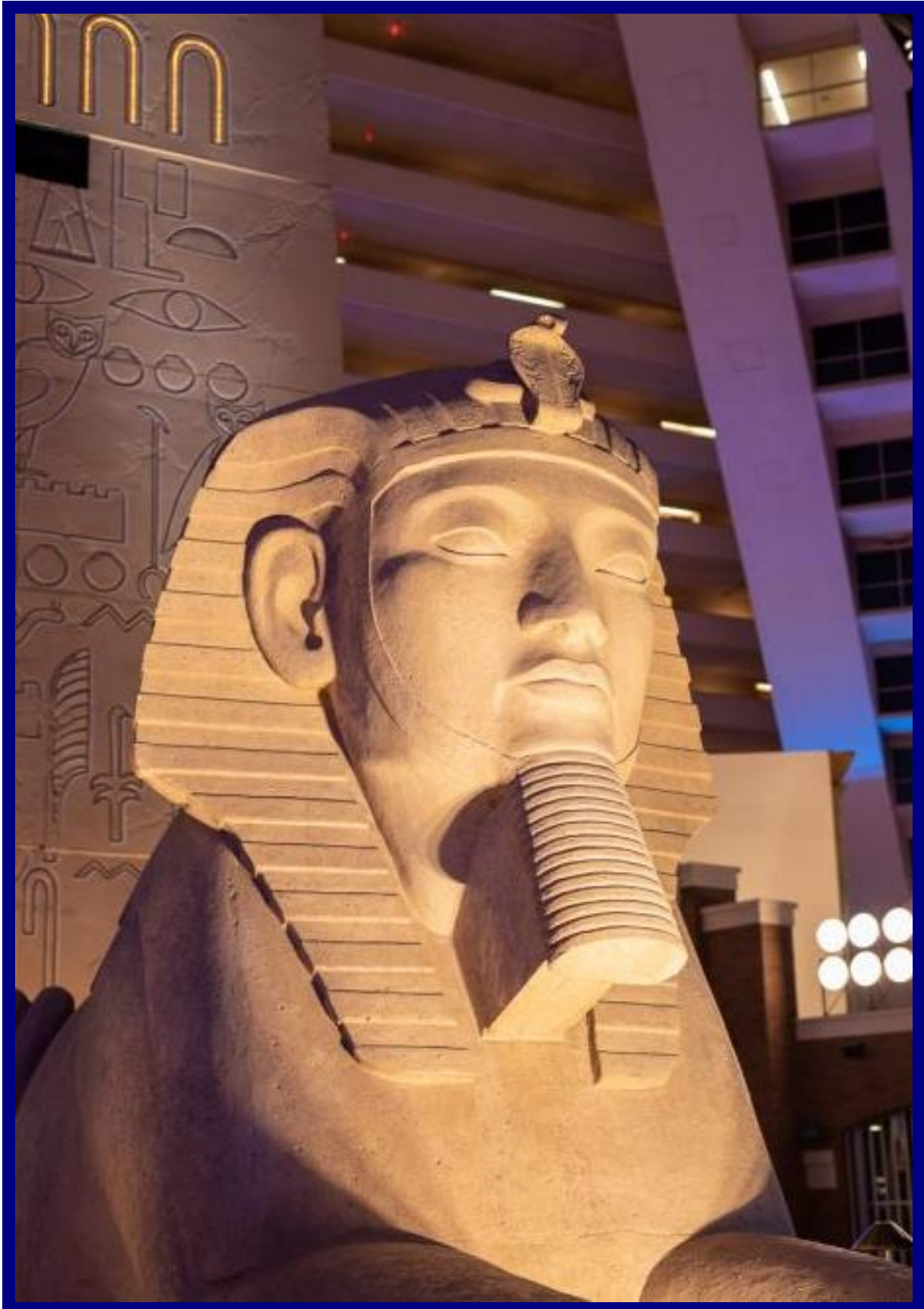
LUXOR 1993



The hotel complex has 4407 rooms. Of these 2526 are in the pyramid, the remainder in the 30 storey hotel. The height of the pyramid is 350 ft, billed as "the world's largest atrium" with upward-slanting rooms on four sides and special elevators operating on the 39 degree slope. The top of the pyramid houses the world's brightest light beam, shining vertically, which can be seen by aircraft 275 miles away. It is said the hotel bedrooms are not air-conditioned.

<26>

LUXOR 1993



This 110 ft tall statue is a replica of the Grand Sphinx of Giza, but 150 percent bigger.

<27>

LUXOR 1993



Inside the giant atrium with one of the features being the ill-fated Titanic.

<28>

MGM GRAND 1993



Opened 1993, 6852 rooms. In 1975 Marina Hotel and Casino, then MGM-Marina in 1989. The Casino is 153,000 square feet, 6th largest in Vegas; 2500 machines, 178 table games. Theme Art Deco, Hollywood.

<29>

STRATOSPHERE 1996



Opened 1996, 2427 rooms. From 2020 called The Strat.
The Tower is the tallest free-standing structure in the United States.
Visitors to the 1147 ft tower can experience machine rides out in space
or even bungee jump to the ground.

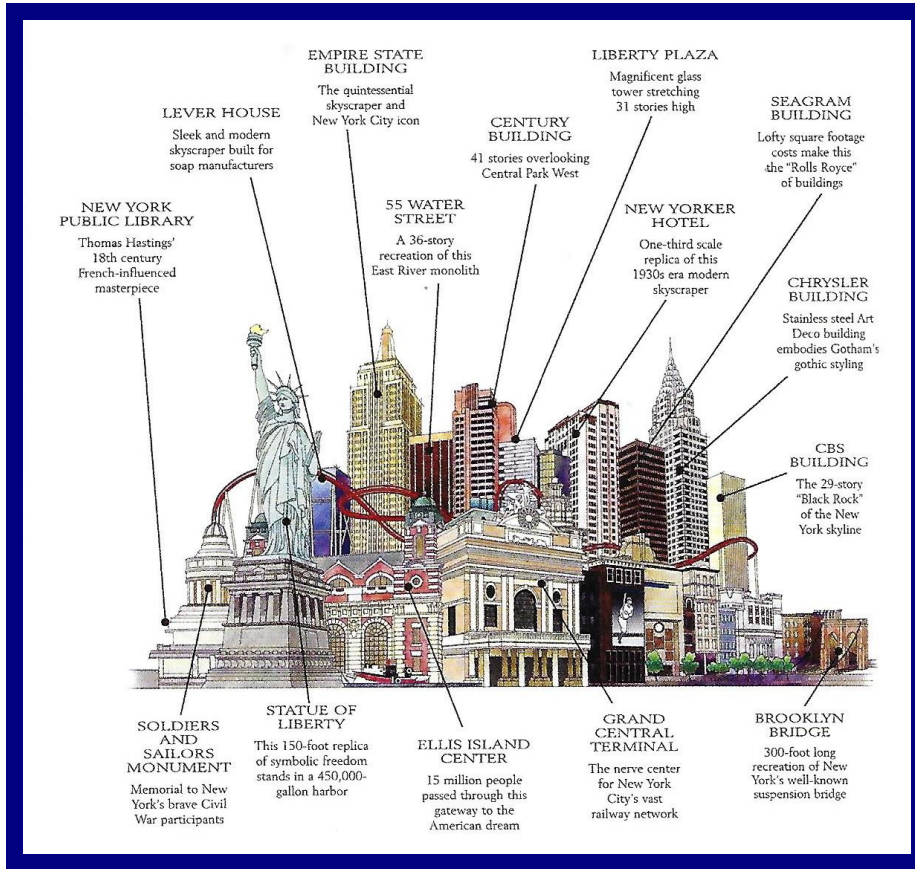
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MONTE CARLO 1996



Opened 1996, 3002 rooms. Renamed Park MGM in 2018. Theme Nature.
Casino 101,493 square feet.

NEW YORK NEW YORK 1997



Opened 1997, 2024 rooms. Theme Buildings and Structures of New York City.

<32>

BELLAGIO 1997



Opened 1998, 3950 rooms. Famous for its fountain displays.
The Casino is 156,000 square feet, 5th largest in Vegas; 2449 slot machines, 207 table games.
Theme Bellagio Tourist Resort, Lake Como, Italy.

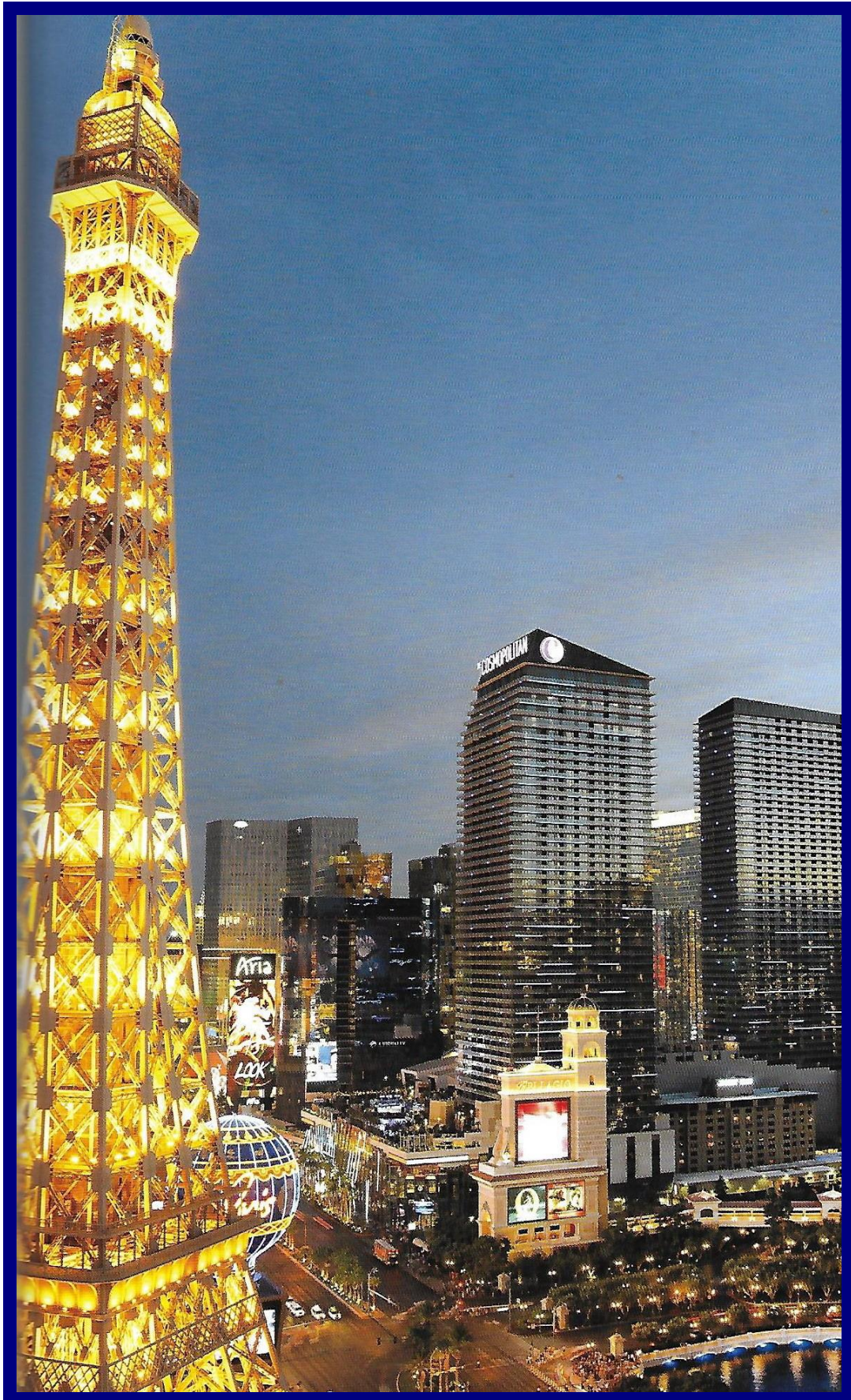
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MANDALAY BAY 1999



Opened 1999, 3309 rooms. Theme Tropical complete with fake beach and wave machine.
The Casino, third largest in Las Vegas, has an area of 160,334 square feet.

PARIS LAS VEGAS 1999



Opened 1999, 2916 rooms. Theme Paris and the Eiffel Tower.

PARIS LAS VEGAS 1999



The half-size replica of the Eiffel Tower is 540 ft tall, its height having to be reduced because of the nearby McCarran Airport.

<36>

VENETIAN 1999



The Tower, 36 floors, 475 ft, opened by Sophia Loren with 1013 rooms.

VENETIAN 1999



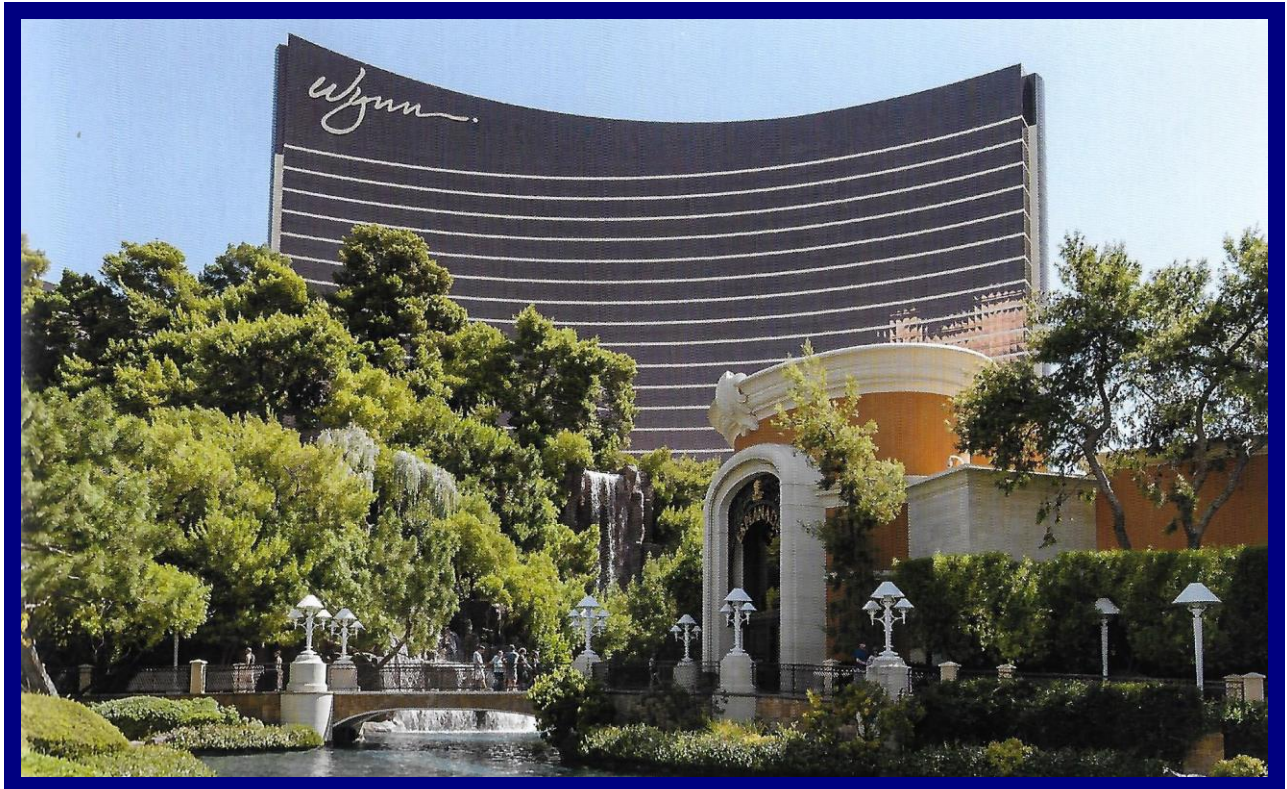
Overall the hotel has 4049 rooms, 3068 suites and a Casino of 120,000 square feet.

PLANET HOLLYWOOD 2000



Opened 2000, 2567 rooms. Originally The Aladdin, then New Aladdin 2000, next Planet Hollywood. Casino 60,835 square feet.

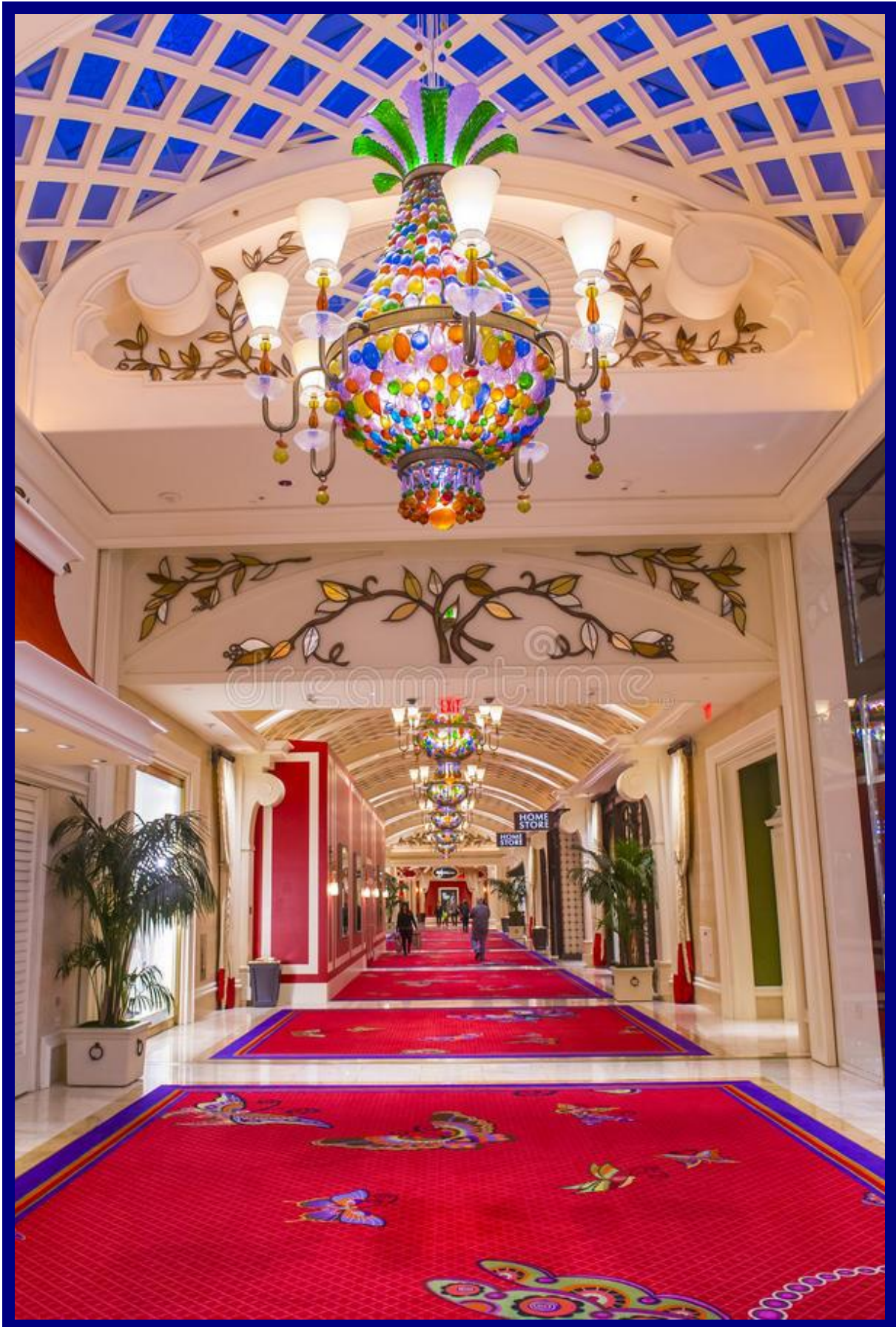
WYNN 2005



Opened 2005, 2716 rooms. Theme Imperfect Dreams, Life Imitating Art.
The combined Casinos of the Wynn & Encore, largest in Las Vegas, total 186,187 square feet.

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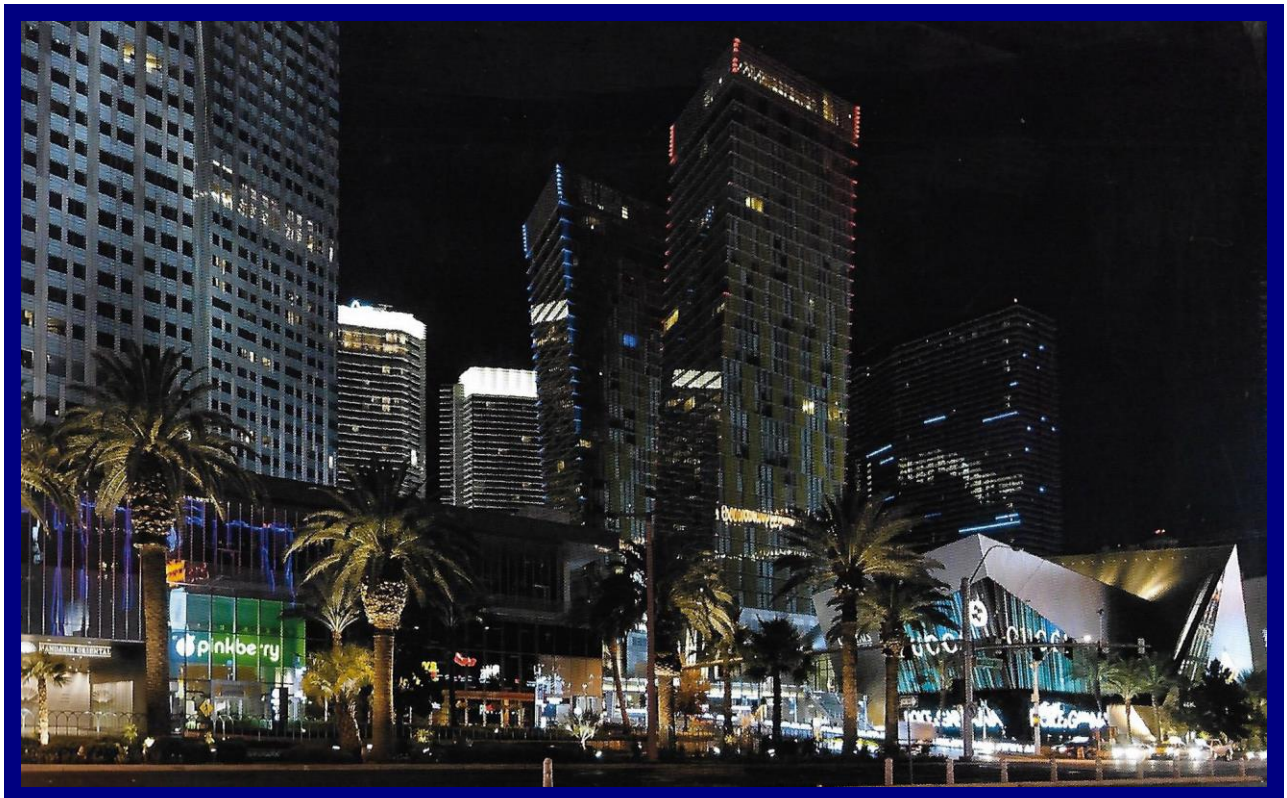
ENCORE 2008



Opened 2008, 2034 rooms, part of the Wynn Hotel.
The Wynn and Encore Casinos contain 1900 gaming machines and 167 table games.

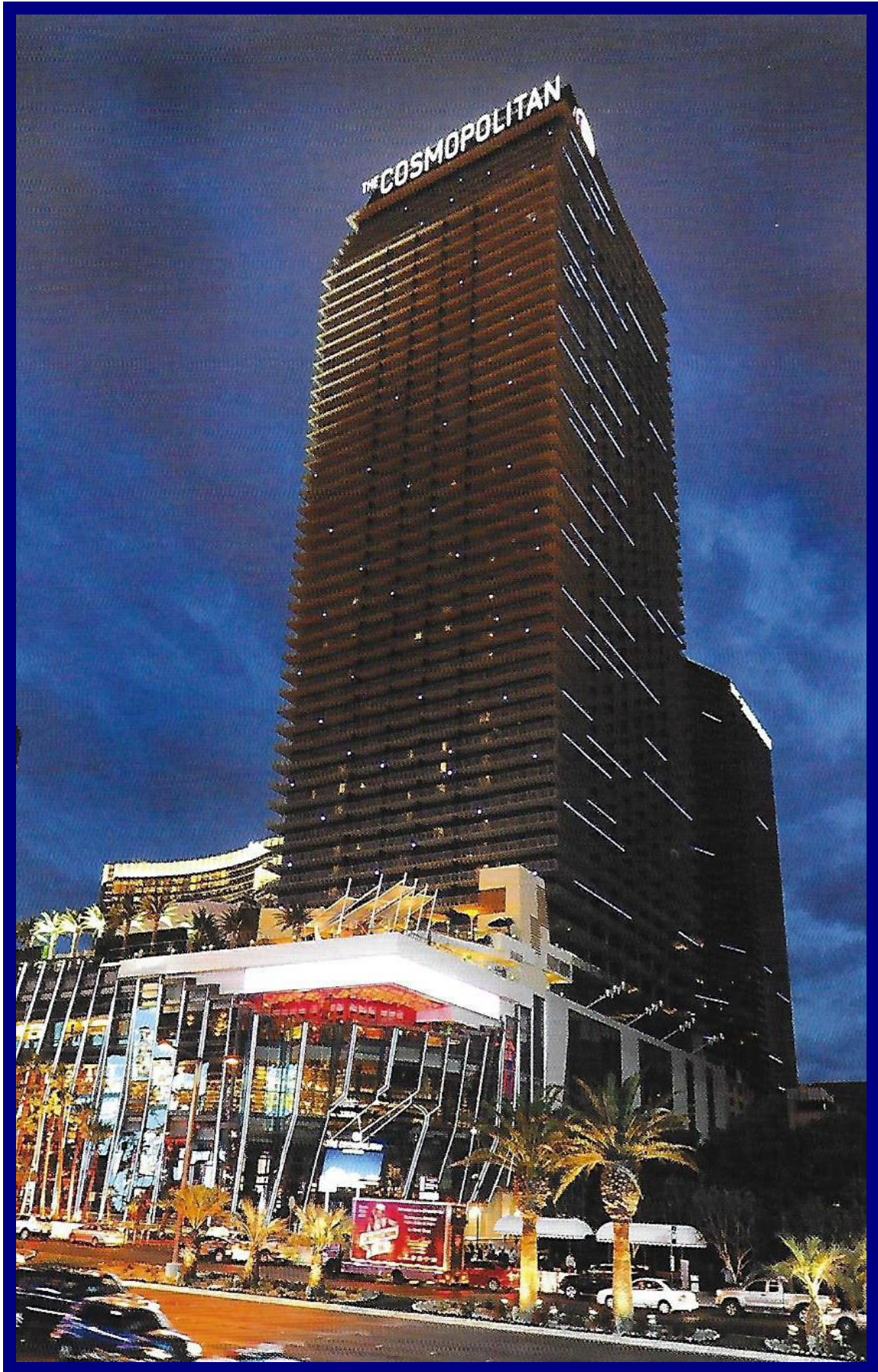
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CITY CENTRE 2009



Opened 2009, 6790 rooms. Consists of several hotels: Aria, Harmon, Vdara & Waldorf Astoria, together with the two leaning 37 storey towers (pictured) of the Veer condominiums.

COSMOPOLITAN 2010



Opened 2010, 3027 rooms. Casino 68,124 square feet.

<43>

PALAZZO 2010



Opened 2010, 3068 rooms. Part of the Venetian. Theme Italian.
Combined with the Venetian, there are 7047 rooms making it (at that time)
the second largest hotel in the world.

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Some hotel dates and statistics vary according to source of data. Others share the site with two, or even three hotels, under common ownership. The size of each Casino is taken from the Nevada Gaming Control Board. Square footage for hotel casinos on the same site may be added together, but in some cases are quoted separately.

Other information from the Heritage Group Archives.