

Historical Review Las Vegas (Part 6)

(rs) We are writing just the year 1968: Jay Sarno, who let the Caesars Palace being built and whose shares and businesses were handed over at Clifford Perlman for fabulous 60 million Dollars, he had already by that time a new vision: The World of Circus Circus!

At first still without any hotel rooms, hence this casino opened in an authentic Circus tent, initially just with casino-games and some Circus-attractions in the year 1968. The tent, at that time like still today held in classical pink-white, with a carnival-Level for children, different restaurants and other smaller sized shops and attractions, met fully the wishes of the entertainment-oriented weekend-tourists from California. Trapeze-artists, clowns, jugglers,



magicians, everything should have been offered in order to inspire the casino-guests. The concept did match. The success struck like a bombshell. A gambler, who was as a child for the first time at that time to Las Vegas remembers himself: „It was unbelievable. I remember the high-tightrope walker acrobats and of the attraction-level, where I could play at the different stands on a funfair. My parents gave me some quarters that they have won from the slot-machines so that I could have been amusing myself up at the booths on children's level. At one of the shooting booths I won a Pink Panther, who however took a lot of space within the airplane. I saw rows of squeaking and tinkling slot-machines and tables down on the casino's level, on which people were sitting and playing cards. I exactly knew at that time how I would be one fine day

one of these people, who goes there to gamble. I did not know the gambles, of course, but I knew already then, that this should become my mission, why I was on earth. And some years later I then was in Las Vegas and the Circus circus was almost still as it used to be, just much bigger and just a bit signed by age. But the charm of this casino has still remained the same for me.“



As it was significant to the observer some 20 years ago, so the game of chance took place only on the lower levels of the casino as well at that time still as today. Above there is still today a net, that serves for security reasons for the tightrope walker acrobats. The

amount of hotel rooms has been increased from at first 400 to 3.000 nowadays. Circus Circus has meanwhile 2 towers and an additional part with further rooms that are mainly at weekends fully booked. Circus Circus is considered now and then as the best managed casino within the operational businesses. To this company that later should have be renamed to Mandalay Bay Group, are among others as well belonging the small casino, just in front of the Circus Circus, the Slots-a-Fun and of course also the Mandalay Bay, Luxor, Excalibur, and others. Circus Circus followed by the way another enterprise's philosophy as there is e.g. the Caesar's Palace or Las Vegas Hilton. Within the C-C should have been people appealed of the middle class, as a target-group. The wide range of business for the masses, which eventually should have generating more money, as the few High-rollers, who wish to be flown in with private jets and for whose the luxury suites had to be available with a butler for them. Okay, throughout the ages it has to be mentioned of course that the standards had to be raised a little. The Mandalay Bay stands of course today for as one of the first addresses of Las Vegas, it has become

quasi the flagship of Circus Circus Enterprises, hence just also that is why the renaming of the enterprise to Mandalay Bay Group happened. In the Mandalay Bay are also High Limit Players focused, and the hotel prices exceed the average one by far.

A next personality who did impose new measurements to Las Vegas is Kirk Kerkorian. The former Jet pilot of the US Airforce started pretty early, by means of a self founded airline, with the name Trans International Airlines, with a tourists' transfer between California and Las Vegas. The airline was sold at the price of 104 millions in 1968, and with parts of the proceeds Kirk Kerkorian bought himself larger shares of the MGM Studios in Los Angeles, as well as further shares of Western Airlines that exist still today. Furthermore he was acquiring himself one lot in Nevada, where later a new large project should take its beginning'. The lot was situated slightly eastbound of the Las Vegas Boulevard, at the Paradise Road, i.e. exactly 1 Block eastwards on the height between the Sahara and Riviera Hotel and Casino. In the year 1969 Kirk Kerkorian acquired the Flamingo Hotel and run it as a trainings centre for his educational recruitment of his stuff for his new Super Hotel, which still was a construction site.

The International opened finally on 2.nd July in 1969, the construction work costs until its completion should have been over 60 million Dollars, an unimaginable high amount at that time. The hotel consisted of a 24-floors tower and was considered at that time as the largest at all ever built hotel and casino. The casino alone had more than 10.000 Square meters of gambling area, which had never ever existed in this size before. There have been the most distinguished restaurants with German, Italian, Japanese and Mexican dishes. There have been leading politicians invited to the Openings party, and of course also other personalities as Cary Grant, Phyllis Diller, George Raft, Nancy Sinatra, Nataly Wood. For

to entertaining the guests there have Superstars become committed like Elvis Presley or Barbara Streisand.. Elvis Presley did get his own theatre and filled his 2.000 seats show theatre permanently for the 7 years, for what he had his contract signed with the International. The International went over in 1970 together with the Flamingo to the Hilton Group. Out of the International became the Las Vegas Hilton that bears the name also still today. In the assumption that there should the Paradise Road become a kind of „Parallel Strip“ with casinos, that were adorning the Las Vegas Boulevard, K. Kerkorian was announcing that there should arise a new project of the proceeds of the both casino's selling, of which the world should not had happen even to dream of. There was meant with the K. Kerkorian's dream of the MGM Grand.

The MGM Grand, known today under the name Bally's that stands at the corner at the Flamingo, at Las Vegas Boulevard, between the Paradise Road and Vegas Strip – was the next ploy. The construction works began in 1972. The opening took place on the 5.th December, 1973. The



hotel consisted of 2.100 rooms, an unimaginable digit, like it is also still today regarded as a substantial one. The casino has cost up to its completion 106 million Dollars. Dean Martin was invited to the opening festive. Each hotel attracts its Stars. Within the MGM Grand were 4.000 personnel employed, 7 Cuisines were responsible for pleasures of the Gourmet's approval. The casino was now considered as the largest of the world with 10 of oversize Craps' tables and over 70 Black Jack tables, 6 Roulette tables. That shows how the Americans were never really interested in the game with the little white ball in particular, but were more like fond of cards. There was also a Poker Room besides with 16 tables and other games.

Donn Arden's Show „Jubilee“ should position over decades to the Super-show and is still shown today. With the completion of the MGM Grand the Corner Flamingo/ Las Vegas Boulevard was considered as „The Dynamic Corner“ of Las Vegas. Still today this is the most visited place in city. Small casinos as the Barberrry Coast or Burbon Street were profiting of this fact and they did not sell their property to over mighty competitors as the Park Palace Entertainment Group, who had wished to be doing a takeover. But the locality is the real goldmine so that not any investor in world would sell here. The Barberrry Coast Casino runs quasi fully automatic and it does not even need to offer anything extraordinary, besides the fact just that one could gamble there. The tables are every evening full and the slot-machines' rattling takes place. In the 80ies the Bally's Corporation bought the MGM Grand of Kirk Kerkorian who wanted to commit himself to new projects and plans.

So while there it had to be queuing up one hotel after the other at the Las Vegas Strip and the competition should be faced in permanently amounting competitors, there in Downtown, Las Vegas, where once everything began, another American Dream: The World Series of Poker, as that is still today known under protected rights for the most prestigious Poker Tournament in the world, its beginning took place within Binion's Horseshoe Hotel and Casino. Something more about like about the local founder of the Downtown and about how the further development of the city in the 80ies, you could be reading in our following report.

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