

HOT LIST

10 new attractions in Las Vegas



The High Roller, a 550-foot-high observation wheel (the world's largest), opened in Las Vegas by Caesars Entertainment. Denise Truscillo

By Greg Morago

Las Vegas casinos always are working hard to snag the biggest whales. But the city just landed its biggest high roller, forever changing the face of the Strip. The High Roller, a 550-foot observation wheel, recently started turning, providing the city with a shiny new plaything and dynamic visual stamp on the gleaming skyline.

The High Roller only is one of the new attractions Sin City is planning. The new 1,622-room SLS Las Vegas casino resort seeks to bring a luxe Hollywood vibe to town with three major nightlife spots, the Bazaar restaurant by José Andrés and retail from Fred Segal. It is set to debut Labor Day weekend. Meanwhile, the Cromwell, a luxury boutique hotel with Giada De Laurentiis' first restaurant and a magnificent nightlife concept from Drafi's, promises to open late May.

So much to see, do, eat, drink in Vegas these days. Here are 10 highlights:

1 Rose.Rabbit.Lie at the Cosmopolitan: One of the coolest, quirkier show/restaurant experiences in a city full of cool and quirky is the multifaceted Rose.Rabbit.Lie. Part restaurant, part bar and part performance, the space features a ticketed show called Vegas Nocturne that plays three times a night. The venue's personality changes throughout the evening as impromptu performers wander through the dining room. Comedy, magic, music, vaudeville, dining and drinking converge under one busy, boisterous umbrella. **Vitals:** 3708 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 877-667-0585; roserabbitlie.com

2 The Cromwell: An old eyesore on the Strip (Biltmore Hotel & Saloon) has gotten a \$185 million makeover as the Cromwell, a casino and boutique hotel that will begin accepting guests May 21. The property sports 188 rooms and will be the new home to Food Network star Giada De Laurentiis' first restaurant, called Giada, set to open Memorial Day weekend. Party people will flock to the Cromwell thanks to Drafi's, a nightclub, beach club and after hours playground with a rooftop pool all set to start dancing Memorial Day weekend, too. **Vitals:** 3595 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 702-777-3777; thecromwell.com

3 Yusho at Monte Carlo: The Monte Carlo has long needed a smashing restaurant venue, and it's finally getting one with this month's arrival of Yusho, a Japanese-inspired grill and noodle house from Chicago chef Matthias Merges. Although considered casual dining, Yusho is part of a major transformation of the resort's facade that will include a variety of bars and restaurants. The 250-seat space will feature a menu broken into five categories: pickles and relish, noodles, grilled and fried foods, steamed buns and sweets. A take on Japanese street food, Yusho also will tout a craft cocktail program. **Vitals:** 3770 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 888-529-4828; montecarlo.com

4 Buddy Y's Ristorante: Buddy Valastro is a busy man, having built his "Cake Boss" empire from a family bakery in Hoboken, N.J. But veteran restaurateurs Elizabeth Blau and Kim Canteenwalla lured Valastro to partner in his first restaurant venture, tucked in the Venetian resort. The collaboration is charming, with a cleverly designed space and a menu of Italian classic comfort foods: meatballs, eggplant parm, rigatoni in vodka sauce, shrimp scampi, lasagna and pasta with marinara. Clearly, Buddy Y's is showing them who's the boss in Vegas. **Vitals:** 3327 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 702-607-2355; buddyvasvegas.com



A scene from Rose.Rabbit.Lie, a theatrical new social club at the Cosmopolitan in Las Vegas. The Cosmopolitan

5 Palms Beverage Butler: Long lines at Vegas resort check-in are as common as a losing hand at the blackjack table. But at Palms Casino Resort, you can relax with a cold cocktail during the check-in process. The hotel's new Beverage Butler will serve vodka, rum and whiskey cocktails from a stylish cart in the hotel lobby. Drinks are \$5. But if your wait to check in is longer than five minutes, the drink is on the house. Couple this with the hotel's new 24-hour check-out program, and the Palms looks very sweet indeed. The program (for those who book at palms.com) is simple: If you check-in at 8 p.m., can keep your room until 8 p.m. on your day of departure. **Vitals:** 4321 W. Flamingo, 702-942-7777; palms.com

6 Tom Collicchio's Heritage Steak: The arrival of another steakhouse on the Strip is about as novel as the opening of another burger restaurant. But this new steakhouse is noteworthy because it comes from "Top Chef" host Tom Collicchio. No stranger to Vegas protein (he owns Craftsteak at MGM Grand), Collicchio has made meat eating fun again with this new restaurant where meats are prepared entirely over live open flames — wood-burning ovens and charcoal grills. The dining room and inviting bar take up prime space under the sky dome at the Mirage. From the grilled octopus to ash-roasted bone marrow to spice-roasted lobster to a variety of heritage steaks, Collicchio's new place impresses. **Vitals:** 3400 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 702-791-7111; mirage.com

7 The High Roller: Vegas now boasts the world's largest observation wheel, the 550-foot High Roller that is tops out higher than the Singapore Flyer and the London Eye. Able to accommodate 1,120 passengers in 28 spherical cabins, the wheel is part of the Linq project, a \$550 million shopping, dining and entertainment district developed by Caesars Entertainment. It takes 30 minutes to make one High Roller revolution; tickets start at \$24.95. **Vitals:** 3545 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 800-223-7277; thelinq.com

8 Back Burger Room: The only pool-side burger restaurant in Vegas just opened at Palms Casino Resort. Back Burger Room, a concept from the chefs at Palms and WINE Steakhouse, occupies prime real estate overlooking the Palms Pool. The burger menu is augmented by hearty sides and custard shakes; the restaurant, which also includes indoor seating, is a perfect place to watch a sporting event or to just get an eyeful of the golfs-on at the pool. It's open for lunch, dinner and late-night snacking. **Vitals:** 4321 W. Flamingo, 702-942-7101; palms.com



Soft-serve ice cream at Yusho, which debuts this month at the Monte Carlo. Monte Carlo

9 Crush at MGM Grand: The former Nobhill Tavern space at the MGM Grand is now home to a new restaurant and bar concept from the Morton Group. Crush is a 7,000-square-foot restaurant that offers a menu of salads, small plates — think octopus ceviche, tuna tartare, ricotta gnocchi, shrimp risotto and mini angus burgers — and wood-fired pizza, all ideally washed down with something from the bar's craft cocktail and beer menu. **Vitals:** 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 702-891-3222; mgmgrand.com

10 Guy Fieri's Vegas Kitchen & Bar: If you thought the era of celebrity chefs setting up shop in Vegas was over, think again. Food Network's best bro, Guy Fieri, is opening his first Las Vegas restaurant at the Quad Resort & Casino (formerly the Imperial Palace), which Caesars Entertainment is fully renovating as its gateway to the new Linq retail and entertainment district. It's a natural fit for Fieri, who graduated from University of Nevada Las Vegas in 1990. His restaurant, due to open later this month, will be the main culinary attraction at the Quad. **Vitals:** 3535 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 702-731-3311; thequadv.com

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TWO MORE SIN CITY TO-DO'S



Etienne Miller

The Grand Tasting at Caesars Palace at Vegas Uncork'd

FOODIE FESTIVAL

Las Vegas knows how to uncork a good time when it wants to party. And Vegas Uncork'd by Bon Appetit pops the best corks during its annual four-day festival considered one of the country's leading culinary events.

This year's Vegas Uncork'd rounds up a collection of stars for its May 8-11 celebration, including Bobby Flay, Buddy Valastro, Daniel Boulud, Giada De Laurentiis, Joel Robuchon, Julian Serrano, Guy Savoy, Mario Batali, Pierre Gagnaire, Masa Takayama, Michael Mina, Thomas Keller, Nobu Matsuhisa and Shawn McClean.

About 70 of the world's best chefs are joined by 20 master sommeliers for dozens of events taking place at resorts up and down the Strip, including Aria, Bellagio, Caesars Palace, MGM Grand and the Venetian.



Chefs Gordon Ramsay and Guy Savoy at Vegas Uncork'd

Vegas Uncork'd puts together a variety of food and wine extravaganzas during the event, such as a Krug dinner with Guy Savoy; a pool-side pig roast with Michael Mina; a sushi and sake tasting with Nobu Matsuhisa; dinner with Gordon Ramsay; a cooking demonstration and wine tasting with Joel Robuchon; a burger, beer and shakes party with Mario Batali; a progressive party at Hakkasan restaurant and nightclub at MGM Grand; a pastry demonstration and tasting with Francois Payard; and food and wine grand tastings.

Prices vary depending on event, from \$65 to \$350. For more information and ticketing, go to vegasuncorked.com.



The Mirage

The Villas at the Mirage are now open to the public for booking.

VIP DIGS AT MIRAGE

If you have the scratch to attend an event like Vegas Uncork'd you might as well spring for ultra-luxury accommodations such as the Villas at the Mirage. Once available only for VIP guests, the Villas are now open to the public for reservation.

Sophisticated travelers can expect high-roller perks at the Villas, including a concealed entrance, 24-hour butler, chef and concierge services, private patios and suites customized to guest preferences, from vanity amenities to beverage selections to bedding and robes.

The Villas start at \$2,500 per night during the week and \$3,500 per night on the weekend. A two-bedroom villa can go as high as \$7,500 per night and \$10,000 per night for a three-bedroom option. To book, call 801-637-0295; mirage.com/thevillas.

G.M.