



**BONUS PULLOUT: CELEBRITY CHEF RECIPES**

Create the dishes served in our city's award-winning restaurants!

# LAS VEGAS LIFE

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# City

  

# guide

  

## \*FOR LOCALS ONLY!

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BY LOUIE  
ANDERSON

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PARTY ADVICE**  
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GOODMAN

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STRIP BY RITA  
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TIPS FROM  
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JOHNATHAN**

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BUSCH



**PLUS:** you know you're a Las Vegan when...

**SPORTS: PRO GOLF TIPS** ■ **CRITIC'S CHOICE: RAO'S**

## ICONS



### A SAFE BET

Las Vegas has made packaging its gambling an art form.  
BY DAVID G. SCHWARTZ

The growth of gambling in Las Vegas since its legalization 76 years ago has been matched only by the creativity of the city's founding fathers in getting people to gamble here in the first place. The earliest casinos on Fremont Street in the heart of Downtown were hardly the stuff of legend — take a bar, add blackjack tables, mix in a few slot machines, slap a sign out front and call it a day. Sure, they made their fair share of coin, but there was still a missing ingredient. That turned out to be a little thing called neon.

By the time the Golden Nugget debuted its famous sign in 1946, it was not unusual that even the smallest Vegas club sported enough wattage out front to power a small city.

Even the first full-service casinos in 1941, such as the El Rancho Vegas, were nothing more than plain motels spliced onto a nightclub or casino building on a dry stretch of the Los Angeles Highway. But casino owners plumbed the depths of a uniquely Vegas ingenuity to turn wide-open spaces and sunlight into their two biggest assets. Who cares about your room? Come swim at our mega-sized pool. You don't even have to get out of the water. We'll bring the gambling to you!

Even demolitions took on a life of their own. Few longtime residents will forget the red-carpet spectacle of Steve Wynn's dramatic cannon shot that felled the Dunes, and director Tim Burton incorporated the Landmark's demise into his film *Mars Attacks!*

It's all in the presentation, and no city is better at presenting itself than Las Vegas. ■

LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU