

# The Naming of Gaming

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The naming of casinos in Las Vegas, Nevada, is an essential ingredient in the design of the city's entertainment landscape. More than 300 names have been used in the naming of gaming in Las Vegas since 1955. They occur in seven dominant patterns: 1) luck and good fortune, 2) wealth and opulence, 3) action, adventure, excitement and fantasy, 4) geography, 5) a certain moment, era, or season, 6) intimacy and informality, and 7) "power words" commonly used in the naming of businesses. The categories are described and analyzed from the perspective of the evolution of Las Vegas. Regional variations between the Las Vegas Strip, Downtown Las Vegas, and suburban Las Vegas are also discussed. The names provide a powerful means of evoking senses of place, images, and identities for the casinos. They underscore the interpretative subjectivity and plurality of the relationship between people and commercial urban environments.

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## Introduction

We name people, things, and places to distinguish them from one another and to give them character. Often the names are commemorative and draw upon features (usually positive) of individuals and places. Buildings, streets and towns are named after other familiar places, historical events, and distinguished persons who have played a notable role in the shared past. As an example of the latter, over one quarter of the roughly 3,000 counties in the United States are named patriotically, most often commemorating a political figure (Zelinsky 1983, 6). Names of streets and buildings in capital cities and other centers of importance have special prestige. Because names are charged with political, historical, and cultural signifiers of identity and feelings of belonging, naming—and renaming—is sometimes employed for both ideological

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purposes (Cohen and Kliot 1992; Azaryahu 1996; 1997) and manipulation of cultural hegemony (Nuessel 1994; Berg and Kearns 1996). Naming can thereby become a politically contested element of the daily landscape, and unauthorized challenges to official versions of history can be important acts of resistance.

Names with lesser political connotation also carry meaning and emotional value. They may describe features of the local physical geography or evoke shared cultural and historical experiences. A region's namescape may reflect cultural values such as religious beliefs, ethnic or geographical origin such as the duplication of European place names in North America, linguistic composition such as the French place names in Louisiana and elsewhere, or other characteristics of the resident populations. Naming practices vary from one region to another so that specific regional namescapes can be distinguished (Zelinsky 1967; 1980; 1983, 8 and maps; Nuessel 1992). Individual place names thus both inform and form the images that resonate the "personality" or nostalgic character of these places (Tuan 1975, 234-35).

The élan of such famous places as New York, Paris, London, Rome and Los Angeles is maintained and enhanced by contemporary popular culture—music, cinema, literature, the plastic arts, and travel advertisements. A place may become associated with adventure, excitement, wealth, or elegance. Images of partying, accelerated pace and glamor are evoked by Daytona Beach, Hollywood, Acapulco, the Riviera, and Copacabana. And who could ever forget Casablanca?

As a consequence, names are projective as well as reflective. Rather than simply labeling a particular place, they possess powerful imagery that may be projected into other contexts where they are then employed for particular purposes. In short, names evoke memories, identity, character, and personality through which places, people, buildings and other ingredients of landscape may be singled out and distinguished. This is what makes names of particular places, distinguished individuals, and valuable artifacts and landmarks efficacious for commercial purposes. Indeed, "in American popular culture, fetishistic names are all around us" (Wilhelm 1988, 61).

In this article we will examine casino names in the world's leading gaming venue—Las Vegas, Nevada. In American popular culture, Las Vegas, its gamblers, and its entertainment landscape convey powerful metaphoric meanings, frequently used in film and fiction (Kant 1990;

Spanier 1995; Irsfeld 1997). The emergence of gambling as a preferred American pastime in the 1980s and 1990s consolidated the city's role in the national popular imagery as a postmodern monument for opportunity, escapism, and dreamlike unreality (Findlay 1986; 1990; Moehring 1989; Gottdiener 1997; Gottdiener, Collins, and Dickens 1999; Raento and Berry 1999). The role of Las Vegas in shaping the names of properties in the American gaming landscape is particularly significant, since Las Vegas was the source of much of the initial know-how, personnel, and capital needed in the new gaming venues now spread across the country.

Central in the creation of a unique entertainment destination is the attention to detail in the design of the resorts, crucial in constructing a credible, unique sense of place (Hausladen 1995; 2000). Essential ingredients in the design of Las Vegas' entertainment landscape are the names of the gaming enterprises.

### Procedure

We collected and analyzed 305 names that have been used in the naming of the Greater Las Vegas area's casinos. The sample consists of gaming properties (excluding chain retail stores) that have held a gaming license in Downtown Las Vegas (58 properties), the Las Vegas Strip (119), or suburban Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Boulder Strip (128). These properties were subsequent to the founding of the Nevada Gaming Control Board in 1955. To this list we added the earlier properties on the Las Vegas Strip, established in the 1940s (Moehring 1989, 44–49), and some contemporary properties that for some reason were not included in the Gaming Control Board's data (Nevada Gaming Almanac 1995; 1999). These are listed in the appendix. We also considered the internal naming of shops and restaurants at selected properties.

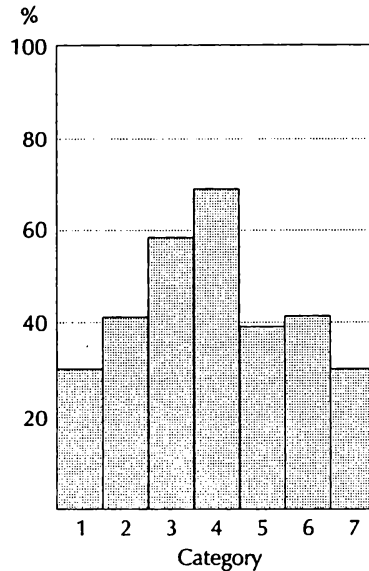
### Results

The seven dominant naming patterns which are evident in the corpus are shown in figure 1; these are names that evoke: 1) luck and good fortune, 2) wealth and opulence, 3) action, adventure, excitement and fantasy, 4) geography, 5) a certain moment, era, or season, and 6) intimacy and informality. The names in the last category (7) include at least one of the 130 trade name "power words" suggested by Adrian

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Room (1982, 4) in his study of the origins of trade names and the ingredients of their success.<sup>1</sup> Each name in the appendix is followed, parenthetically, by one or more of these numerical designations, and often by several since a name may appear in more than one category simultaneously.

Figure 1. The Seven Dominant Naming Patterns



Category 1 (Good Fortune) includes luck, references to mining and precious metals, excluding “casinos,” “gambling halls” and other similar ingredients of the names. Category 2 (Wealth and Opulence) includes royalty, international/world, upscale places, large scale, precious metals and money/fortune, and “resorts” and “country clubs” as indicators of upscale tourism and taste. Category 3 includes references to action, adventure, excitement, exploration, fantasy, journey and movement, including the rowdy “saloons,” “joints,” “speakeasies” and lively meeting points, such as junctions, stations, towns and plazas. Category 4 (Geography) excludes Las Vegas’ self-referentiality to gambling. “Saloons,” however, are considered “Western.” All Spanish-language names are included in this category. Category 5 (Time) includes references to a certain moment, era, or season (eternal summer). “Saloons,” “gambling halls,” and “supper clubs” are understood as references to the nineteenth-century West and “resorts” are considered a seasonal reference. Category 6 (Intimacy and Informality) includes people and their characterizations, “barns,” “clubs,” “inns,” “joints,” “lounges,” “places,” “rooms,” and “taverns.” For Category 7 (Trade Name Power Words), see Note 1.

### Good Fortune

The good fortune category (1) includes such names as *Aladdin* (as in lamp), *Fitzgerald's* (as in "luck of the Irish"), *Four Queens* (a strong poker hand), *Lady Luck*, *Mr. Lucky's Fortune Club*, *The Lucky Star Club*, *Pot O'Gold* (as in "at the end of the Rainbow"), *Stardust* (a lucky substance) and *The Horseshoe* (a lucky charm). There is partial overlapping in the namespace's self-referentiality to gaming (excluding "casinos," "gambling halls," etc.) and its best-known geographical associations (e.g., *Boardwalk*, *Jackpot*, *Las Vegas Club*, *Monte Carlo*, *The Big Game Club*, *The Gambler*). The category can be further expanded to encompass references to mining. This is appropriate since mineral prospecting and exploitation, often viewed as a "gamble," is inherent in the region's actual historical experience as well as in its imagination, rather than simply a part of its contemporary artificial imaginary. About one-third (31%) of all the names (95), including mining-themed names such as *Bonanza*, *Boomtown*, and *Gold Rush*, occur in the luck and good fortune category.

### Wealth and Opulence

This category (2) is reflected in the Las Vegas casino namespace largely by names with royal references (*Casino Royale*, *Four Queens*, *Royal*, *Royal Americana*) and palaces and castles (*Caesars Palace*, *Coin Castle*, *Imperial Palace*, *Nevada Palace*, *Palace Station*). Opulence is further reflected in such "upscale" venues as *Bellagio* (a town on Italy's Lake Como), *Flamingo* (as in South Florida resorts), *Paris* (and one of its upscale restaurants, *Maxim*), as well as the French (*Monte Carlo*) and Italian (*Hotel San Remo*) Rivas. To this list we can add such dominant centers of contemporary world culture as *New York-New York* and *Venice (Venetian)*. Finally, there are allusions to precious metals and treasure, as in the many names which incorporate "gold," "golden" (*Golden*, *Golden Nugget*), "silver" (*Silver City*, *Silver Dollar*), or the booty of *Treasure Island*, *The Treasury*, or *The Vault*. Other names, like *Landmark* and *MGM Grand*, evoke sheer scale. In all, 128 of the names (42%) allude to wealth and opulence.

### Action and Adventure

Some of the names in this category (3) assume the form of the big-top entertainment of the *Circus Circus* and the contemporary action of

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the *Hard Rock* (as in café), the adventures of *Aladdin*, the piracy of the *Barbary Coast* and *Treasure Island*, and the explorations of the unknown *Frontier* and its settlements (*Boomtown*, *New Town*) by *El Cortez* and *Fremont*. Other American iconic entertainment and tourism destinations are invoked, such as Atlantic City (*Boardwalk*), Hollywood (*Debbie Reynolds*, *Hollywood*, *MGM Grand*, *20<sup>th</sup> Century*), New Orleans (*Bourbon Street*, *Mardi Gras*), *New York–New York*, San Francisco (*Golden Gate*, *Jolly Trolley*, *Nob Hill*), and Florida (*Key Largo*, *Flamingo*), not to mention Las Vegas itself (*Harrahs Las Vegas*, *Las Vegas Club*, *Las Vegas Hilton*, *Old Vegas*). Exotic foreign ports of call include *Mandalay Bay* (Mandalay is actually an inland city in Myanmar/Burma), *Sans Souci*, and *Rio*, as well as the previously-mentioned French and Italian Rivieras. We are also levitated into the *Stratosphere* and beyond (*Stardust*), as well as invited to time travel to such excitement-charged icons of the ancient and medieval worlds as Egypt (*Luxor*), Rome (*Caesars Palace*) and Arthurian England (*Excalibur*). One hundred seventy-three of the names (58%) invoke “action,” some combination of entertainment and excitement, exploration, fantasy, journey, or movement.

### Geography

The positive and proactive potentials of geography (category 4) are particularly appropriate for the naming of gaming. Clearly evident is the extensive use of names that evoke a famous place or edifice, its history and culture. Geography defined narrowly to include only direct references to real places (*Luxor*, *Paris*, *Rio*, *San Remo*) and famous buildings or commercial establishments (*Casino Royale*, *Imperial Palace*, *Maxim*, *Moulin Rouge*, *The Golden Gate*, *The Opera House*, *Rose Bowl*, *Tropicana*) (excluding indicators of branch locations), is found in 35% of the names in the corpus.

Many of these names are repeated throughout the world, as the naming of places in general draws from the physical characteristics of each setting, the particular events or the personal life experiences of those who named it. Here, we have interpreted each geographic name according to what we understand to be its primary reference. The architectonic design of *Paris* obviously imitates the capital of France and not Paris, Texas, the small town made famous by the 1984 movie, or any of the seven other North American towns called Paris.

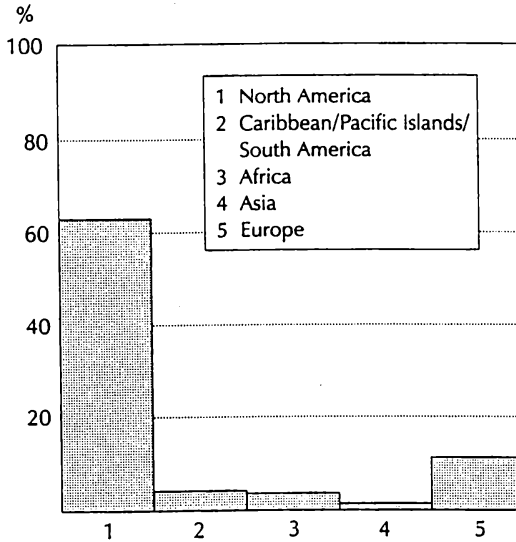
The geographic purview includes generic locations such as plazas (*Jackie Gaughan's Plaza, Union Plaza*), streets and stations (*Main Street Station*), villages (*Vacation Village, Vegas Village*), towns (*Sam's Town, Terrible's Town, Ultra New Town*) and other urban references (*Skyline, Suburban*), coasts, lake shores and beaches (*Charlie's Lakeside Bar & Grill, Terrible's Lakeside Casino, The Beach*), climatic zones (*Desert Inn, Tropicana*) and countries, continents, and even worlds (*Continental, Danny's Slot Country, Sports World, Vegas World*). Inclusion of generic regions (*Western*), or their symbology (*Aztec Inn, Caesars Palace, El Cortez, Flamingo, Frontier, Fremont, La Bayou, Longhorn, Luxor, Roadrunner, Thunderbird*), produces an even more expansive geographic purview. In its maximal expression, geography is found in 211 names, 69% of the corpus.

It is generally true in the naming of businesses that the most common geographical references are made to local and regional contexts (Zelinsky 1980). There is evident self-referentiality in the namespace of Las Vegas. The *Boulder Station, Main Street Station, Palace Station, Sunset Station, Railroad Pass* and *The Whistle Stop* all invoke Las Vegas' founding in 1905 as a service node in the evolving Union Pacific Railroad network. An additional layer is the West(ern) frontier theme, as in the *Frontier*. The *Northern*, one of Las Vegas' earliest saloons, received the city's first license when gambling was legalized in Nevada in 1931. By then the name was historical (even anachronistic), since its original intent was to appeal to southern Nevada's turn-of-the-century miners in towns like Tonopah, Goldfield, Bullfrog, and Rhyolite, many of whom were veterans of the Klondike and Alaskan gold rushes of the 1890s.

The southwestern theme was particularly prominent in the first wave of the naming of gaming, with *California, El Cortez, El Rancho, and Thunderbird*. Closely-related southwestern and south-of-the-border Hispanic theming include *Aztec Inn, El Cortez, Eldorado, El Rancho, Fiesta, Hacienda, and Santa Fe*. Other regional Old West invocations include *Barbary Coast* (San Francisco's), *Fremont* (a prominent explorer of the region), *49er, Gold Rush, Longhorn, Silver City, Silver Spur, Silverton, Texas Station, The Golden Gate, Westward Ho, and Wild Wild West*. Sixty-three per cent of the names with geographic references carry local or regional (Western) connotations (figure 2).

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Figure 2. The Geographical References Found in the Sample



Another geographic pattern, particularly during the first two decades of Las Vegas' resort phase initiated in the immediate aftermath of World War II, is the desert theme. At times it is generic, as in *Desert Inn*, *Dunes* and *Sands*, at others more specific, as in *Aladdin* and *Sahara*. All five of these properties sought to combine local xeriscape reality with a transcending exotic imagery of the southwestern United States and/or Arabian deserts. Combining the fantastic with what was undeniably evident in the city's setting was Las Vegas' earliest concerted effort to market what Umberto Eco (1986) has called travel in hyper reality—the camel caravan without the flies and dung. It also marks the emergence of a pronounced “stand-alone” mentality of each Las Vegas property as its own destination resort, reflected in the Sahara's marketing slogan “The Jewel in the Desert” and the Sands' “The Place in the Sun.” More recently, this idea of an island-like desert oasis is reflected in the naming of the Strip mega-properties as “resorts” instead of mere “casinos” or “hotels.” In the contemporary context, the self-sufficiency of the oasis is further underscored by the references to world cities that offer anything and everything a visitor might want or need. Some of the largest properties have added the term “city” to their marketing; the MGM Grand promotes itself as “The City of Entertainment.” Thus,



despite the disappearance of many explicit desert references, the boundary between the hostile physical environment and the wonders of its artificial oases is still highlighted.

When Las Vegas casts its geographic naming net further afield, there is evident spatial clustering. While there are the generic *Holiday International* and *The Colony Club*, Europe is much favored and within it there is a Mediterranean bias—*Barcelona, Bellagio, Granada, Paris, Rome, Venice*—and both the French and Italian Riviéras. There is a nod to Asia by the Strip's *Imperial Palace* (a curious mixture of references to historic Japan and China), *Lotus Inn*, and *Mandalay Bay*. Latin America is represented by its acknowledged party town *Rio* (de Janeiro) in Brazil, and there are a few references to the Caribbean (*Caribbean Cabana, Flamingo, Sans Souci, Tropicana*). Contemporary Africa is notably absent; *Luxor, El Morocco* and *Sahara* emphasize their Mediterranean rather than sub-Saharan character, and *Gold Coast* evokes images of wealth and exoticism beyond locational specificity.

The predominant pattern in this world geography of gambling is a strong emphasis on single urban centers, coastal areas, or both—usually sited in mild to tropical climes. The city references draw heavily upon elite contemporary urban areas of instant, global recognition. New York, San Francisco, and Paris all have a distinct personality and are among the world's principal centers of wealth, power, and prestige. Several coastal references are made to specific places or regions of long-standing fame as tourist destinations, usually with a party atmosphere (*Boardwalk, Bourbon Street, Hotel San Remo, Key Largo, Malibu, and Riviera*). There is also the "oasis" message of verdant (as in palm trees and golf courses) and watered (swimming pools and fountains) transcendent relief from the Las Vegas Valley's otherwise desiccated environment. Thus, visitors are invited to the *Barbary Coast* and *Gold Coast, Caribbean Cabana, Mandalay Bay, Marina, Showboat* and *Treasure Island*, without forgetting nearby Lake Mead (*Lake Mead Lounge*).

It is equally interesting to observe what is *not* represented in this geography. A considerable part of the world—northern and eastern Europe, most of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Australia and the (Ant)Arctic areas have yet to make their way into the naming of gaming. All the places invoked in the casino namescape are located between the northern 49th and the southern 23rd parallels, Paris being the northernmost and Rio de Janeiro the southernmost geographical referent. The

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mean temperatures of the coldest month in the represented locations rarely drop below freezing. This fact is, of course, entirely consistent with the generous, even blasé, use of (largely female) nudity in casino imagery (scantly clad showgirls and cocktail waitresses), not to mention the implicit prospect of illicit sex in Las Vegas itself and the nearby legal prostitution in the famous bordellos of rural Nevada. The cultural significance of the places represented on the gaming map seems to increase as one moves northward. The connotations of unpleasant human existence evoked by place names such as Calcutta, Mexico City, or Nairobi, or the gray imagery of the former socialist countries in Europe or present ones, such as Beijing, Hanoi and even Havana<sup>2</sup> (the fame of the *Tropicana* predates the Cuban revolution of 1959), simply do not sell well to affluent, pleasure-seeking casino consumers, despite the richness of their culture, history and quotidian life. Some regions not found among the casino names are nevertheless present in the city's themed food- and drinkscape (Zagat Survey 1999). In sum, there is a considerable degree of what we might call "environmental determinism" in the selection of place-related names for casinos. The most suitable place is either a warm, exotic and party-oriented beach town or a culturally and historically significant major city at a temperate latitude.

For obvious reasons, there is an avoidance of names that invoke controversy. Since the purpose of the names is to attract the attention and custom of the largest possible audience, political statements are avoided. The sensitivity in this regard is indeed global. Thus, there is neither a *Casino Israel*<sup>3</sup> nor a *Casino Islam*, since they would access a contemporary political conflict, although the temporally remote or fabulous aspects of Arabic traditions are regularly employed (*Aladdin*, *Barbary Coast*, *Luxor*). In such guise they are apparently universal, i.e., benign parts of the world's cultural patrimony as well as evocative of the desert theme which, as we have noted, is a vital dimension of the Nevada imaginary. However, there can also be an overt appeal to a non-establishmentarian group, as was the case of the *Mau Mau Room*, founded in the 1970s as a property catering to Blacks in the turbulent aftermath of the early civil rights movement.

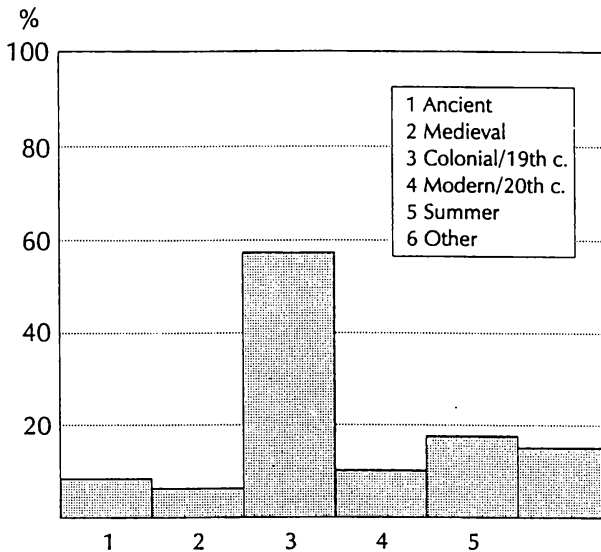
The intent is not only to avoid negative associations in the naming of gaming but to avoid neutral ones as well. If a name accesses a too-familiar theme it risks incurring boredom. The dearth of southern California imagery is likely to be directly related to the importance of that region's custom to Las Vegas. In the past, a large majority of the

city's visitors were drawn from Southern California, and southern Californians still constitute about a third of the market (Las Vegas Visitor Profile Study 1998, 82). However, despite the global fame of Disneyland and Hollywood, there is a pronounced dearth of such theming in the naming of gaming. Exceptions are the *Debbie Reynolds*, *Hollywood*, *Little Caesar's* and *20<sup>th</sup> Century* (all closed), and perhaps the more generic *Stage Door* as well, whereas the *MGM Grand* is arguably more about cinema than Los Angeles. Conversely, San Francisco is sufficiently removed both physically and culturally from southern Californian reality to provide a significant source for theming (*Barbary Coast*, *Nob Hill*, *The Golden Gate*), and a new San Francisco-themed property *City by the Bay* may be Las Vegas' next mega-resort ("San Francisco' Resort" 2000, 33-34). The *California Hotel* in Downtown Las Vegas is an illustrative exception in that most of its customers are Hawaiians for whom "California" holds considerable appeal; in servicing this niche market care is taken to provide such menu items as hamburgers topped with a fried egg and pineapple, and spam.

#### Time

The geographical references are closely tied to time-specific connotations (category 5); these often overlap and reinforce one another. In fact, most of the references to a certain moment, era, or season make sense only in their geographical context. Not surprisingly, the majority of time-specific references evoke the nineteenth-century American West (figure 3), its exploration (*El Cortez*, *Fremont*), settlement (*Boomtown*, *New Town*, *Westward Ho*, and all references to the railroad era), mythical persons and professions (*Cattle Baron*, *Cheyenne*, *Cowboy Gene's*, *Sassy Sally's*, *The Gambler*), and the discovery of mineral wealth (*Eureka*, *49er*, *Gold Rush*, *Klondike*). There are saloons and gambling halls (*Golden Spur Gambling Hall & Saloon*, *JJ's Sierra Saloon*, *Long Branch Saloon*, *Miss Lucy's Gambling Hall & Saloon*, etc.), as well as the "supperclubs" (*Renata's Supperclub*, *The Greens Supperclub*) that connote the Victorian era in America. When the references to world history and ancient civilizations (*Caesars Palace*, *Excalibur*, *Luxor*), eternal summer (all tropical environments) and other time-specific (*Fat's 50s*, *Mardi Gras*, *The Colony Club*) or generalized time connotations (*New Town*, *Ultra New Town*, *Old Vegas*) are added, references to time include 119 names (39%).

Figure 3. The Temporal Connotations Found in the Sample



### Informality and Intimacy

The casino namespace also suggests intimacy, informality and friendliness (category 6), which are evoked by a frequent use of personal names, sometimes plain and at other times embellished (*Big Red's*, *Friendly Fergie's*, *Honest John's*). These names (68) represent 22% of the sample. (See Clark [1986] for the related use of names used by gamblers and names used in the games themselves). Personal names tend to be used when they can access an established brand name of ubiquitous national or international recognition, such as the *Flamingo Hilton*, *Las Vegas Hilton*, or *Harrah's Las Vegas*, or one which is legendary within casino lore, such as *Bally's*. Another example of the latter is *Binion's Horseshoe Club* (also called *The Horseshoe Club*), which was founded by a high-stakes operator notorious for accepting almost any wager and for establishing a "world series of poker" with \$12,000,000 in prize money and promoting it into a major media event (Hopkins 1997, 61–62). Another dimension to personalizing is evident in such names as *Sam's Town* and *Jackie Gaughan's Plaza*. Both Sam Boyd and Jackie Gaughan pioneered the locals' market, the former by building a major "neighborhood" casino (Sheehan 1997); the latter by acquiring many of the older, smaller downtown Las Vegas operations (Moody and Hopkins 1997). Both became highly respected icons known

to virtually every resident of the Las Vegas Valley. In lending their personal identities to their operations, the owners clearly signaled familiarity, friendship, and informality to the insider residents of one of the world's most important tourist destinations, a ploy that has proven quite successful. *Barley's*, *Danny's Slot Country*, *Terrible's Lakeside Casino*, and *Tom's Sunset* are examples of more modest, contemporary attempts to achieve the same marketing dynamic.

Intimacy may also be evoked spatially. Instead of "casinos" and "hotels," many of the properties are called "barns" (*Bingo Barn*, *Draft House Barn & Casino*), "inns" (*Aztec Inn*, *Desert Inn*, *Lotus Inn*, *Royal Inn*, *The Orbit Inn*), "joints" (*The Sneak Joint*), "lounges" (*Bonanza Lounge*, *Hanks Poo Bear Lounge*, *Lake Mead Lounge*, *Nite Twain Lounge*, *Ukulele Lounge*), "places" (*Art's Place*, *Leroy's Horse and Sports Place*), "rooms" (*Coach Room*, *Mau Mau Room*), and "taverns" (*New Town Tavern*, *Ultra New Town Tavern*). The most important spatial reference to intimacy is "club," since clubs are voluntary organizations whose members usually know one another and share similar interests. The word also carries a connotation of exclusivity, since a club's members are "special people." Among these names there are 29 clubs (e.g., *El Rio Club*, *Las Vegas Club*, *Pioneer Club*). The category of informality and intimacy includes 130 names (43% of the sample).

### Power Words

Finally, we examined the Las Vegas casino namescape from the perspective of commercial "power words" (category 7) that are particularly efficient in fulfilling the advertising goals of the property's name—its power to persuade a potential customer to choose this particular venue rather than another. In his study of the origins of trade names, Adrian Room (1982, 4) suggests a list of 130 words and prefixes that are particularly powerful in creating positive "free associations" of "quality, class, power, modernity, exclusivity, versatility, popularity, wholesomeness" and other desirable attributes of commercial products or enterprises. (See note 1). Many of these words, and the connotations they evoke, have been discussed above. We have noted the repeated references to royalty and precious metals. In addition, Room's list includes references to speed and efficiency, exemplified in our discussion by category 3. "A special 'prestige' word" is the definite article, which is "used to suggest uniqueness" (Room 1982, 5) in both English and Spanish. Foreign languages are often used for stylistic effect.

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“A clear ‘prestige’ association” (Room 1982, 4), or some other aspect considered useful for marketing purposes, is also achieved through details of name design. For example, the use of the letter *x*, regardless of its sound value, is commonly linked to excellence, luxury and excess, as in *Excalibur*, *Foxy’s Firehouse*, *Luxor*, and *Maxim*). *X* carries “great status value” internationally; among other things, it indicates a location where something valuable or intriguing can be found, it marks unknown quantity and it also stands for anonymity. The aesthetic symmetry of the letter *x* makes it pleasing to the eye, thus adding to the visual power of a name containing *x* (Room 1982, 15–16, 194–95). Similar eye-targeting qualities have been attributed to the letter *o*, evident in the Strip’s casino namescape (*Bellagio*, *El Morocco*, *El Rancho*, *Flamingo*, *Hotel San Remo*, *Monte Carlo*, *New York–New York*, *Rio*). Arguably, the significance of *o* is enhanced by its appearance in the word *casino*. A foreign, exotic look is further emphasized by a suffixed *a* that is both classical and feminine (Room 1982, 196–97). Examples include *Fiesta*, *Granada*, *Hacienda*, *Sahara* and *Tropicana*.

All else being equal, a casino name must be proactive and positive. It must be electric in that it is capable of stimulating instant curiosity and interest. There is no *Plymouth Rock* or *Jamestown Casino*. Events and personages, even if otherwise weighted positively, are similarly avoided. There is no *Washington Casino* or *The Lincoln*. In part, it might be argued that such naming of a socially ambiguous activity such as gambling might be deemed unseemly, even sacrilegious. In our view, however, recourse to events and personages introduces the further liability of unnecessary constraint. It is too explicit and one-dimensional. *Boston* accesses a far greater range of associations and theming possibilities than do the *Boston Tea Party* or *Paul Revere*.

### Putting a Smile on the Poker Face

Because the name sets the initial tone of a property’s primary identity, naming a casino is serious business, and there is little room for humor or whimsy in the process. Puns and other forms of wordplay are rare; we found fewer than a dozen in our corpus (*Reel Deal*, *Pair-O-Dice*, *Ellis Island*). *Ellis Island* moves from ostensibly unromantic, even problematic, imagery to personal intimacy when we learn that the property’s owner is Gary Ellis. When, in 1939, Guy McAfee first named his *Pair-O-Dice* casino, located on that stretch of Las Vegas to Los Angeles highway now known as “The Strip,” it was a play on

“Paradise,” the name of the unincorporated area in which the casino was located. Arguably, at that time it had a jocular affect on residents, but it was probably too esoteric for tourists, who were unlikely to get beyond the name’s evident gambling association. There is also punning in *Sassy Sally’s* (an invocation of the area’s bordello heritage), *Sports World* and *Sport of Kings* (*sport* is a synonym for “gambler”), *Holy Cow!*, *R-Bar*, and *Slots-A-Fun*. However, these are minor establishments employing “cute” identities to attract attention within the world’s most competitive casino market. The major properties take themselves far more seriously, at least with regard to primary name recognition.

The name of a casino is only a part of the property’s overall ambiance and once inside the portals of a casino, the naming of gaming can become quite ludic. The details of the naming of *Caesars Palace*, opened in 1966 and still among the largest of the Strip casinos, exemplify the comprehensive approach of the casino’s designers to the creation of an entertaining sensescape that invokes ancient Rome in both serious and playful fashion. Worthy of consideration is the name’s orthography. Spelled without an apostrophe, it ceases to be the property of a particular Caesar (*Caesar’s*) or even the historical line (*Caesars’*). Rather, there is the impression of a democracy where at *Caesars Palace* everyone is a Caesar.

Customers are constantly reminded of this theme, particularly of their status as lavishly-living, privileged Caesars. The namescape, architectonic and decorative details, as well as interior design of *Caesars Palace* all reproduce the theme. The *Guide to the Empire* map directory to the property’s interior geography lists the *Colosseum* and *Circus Maximus* ballrooms, the *Neptune, Temple* and *Venus* swimming pools, the *Centurion* and *Roman* towers, and the *Appian Way* shops of the *Forum*. The casino’s slot machines bear names such as *Fountains of Fortune*, *Nero’s Nickels*, *Rapid Romans*, and *Roman Rewards*. This thematic consistency is extended to the dining services, where among the names of the casino’s 19 restaurants are the *Bacchanal*, *La Piazza*, *Nero’s Palace Court*, *Terrazza* and *Palatium Buffet*. Present are Roman history, mythology and architectonic elegance with the particular promise of fine Italian cuisine (although the menus offer a considerable variety). Visual and culinary images are further enhanced with an appropriate choice of Italianate music (cf. Porteous 1985; 1990; Smith 1994; Kong 1995).

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The *Excalibur* is a brightly-colored castle themed along the lines of the magical fantasy of King Arthur's England. In its namescape, architecture and attractions, it reflects a world of heroes and villains where royalty and knights meet fire-breathing dragons, mesmerizing wizards, and frog-cooking witches. The observant "knights" and "damsels" (as the customers are called on the restroom doors) are regaled with legends and mythical heroes and frequent use of putative Old-English spelling on the interior namescape. The evident purpose is to evoke the magical olden days (*Fantasy Faire, Olde English*), at times with entertaining puns (*Lance-A-Lotta Pasta*). Most interesting is the reproduction of "Middle Ages" stereotypy. As repeated by story-tellers and Hollywood film-makers alike, the typical crowd in a medieval market place consisted of *Boys in Tights, Hairy Vikings, Handsome Knights, Merry Maidens* and *Ugly Old Ladies*—names of the games in the children's arcade.

Naming a casino's shopping areas, while respecting the property's overall theme, may also encompass contextually appropriate, funny, or cute-sounding names for the shops. For example, the *Luxor* hosts a *Nile Newsstand*, an *Oasis Shop*, *Pharao's Photos*, *Secrets of Luxor*, *Karnak Kiosk*, *Pyramid Shop*, *Tiny Tuts* and a *Treasure Chamber*, some of which sell Luxor- or Egyptian-themed merchandise. The property also touts (tongue firmly in cheek) its nightclub restaurant *Oyster and Sushi Bar in the Ra*.

Not all properties, however, resort to such word play. The *Bellagio*, *Paris* and *Venetian*, for example, all seek to project (deadpanned) "authenticity" regarding their geographic invocations. Thus, there is the *Via Bellagio* shopping and dining arcade at the upscale Italian-themed casino resort. The arcade hosts world-famous designer boutiques that range from *Hermès* of Paris to *Prada* of Milan. The namescape is original and carefully chosen to add credibility to the overall theme. Adding to this impression are the architectonic and decorative details, as well as the manipulation of the property's (h)ear-, taste- and smellscape (cf. Porteous 1985; 1990; Smith 1994; Kong 1995). Classical music with Italian lyrics is played quietly in the background, courtyards and other public areas are carefully landscaped with plants from the *Bellagio's* enormous nursery, the air is slightly perfumed, and the majority of the arcade's restaurants specialize in different Mediterranean cuisines. The result is a harmonious, elegant, and timeless atmosphere in which the hectic and congested sense of place in any



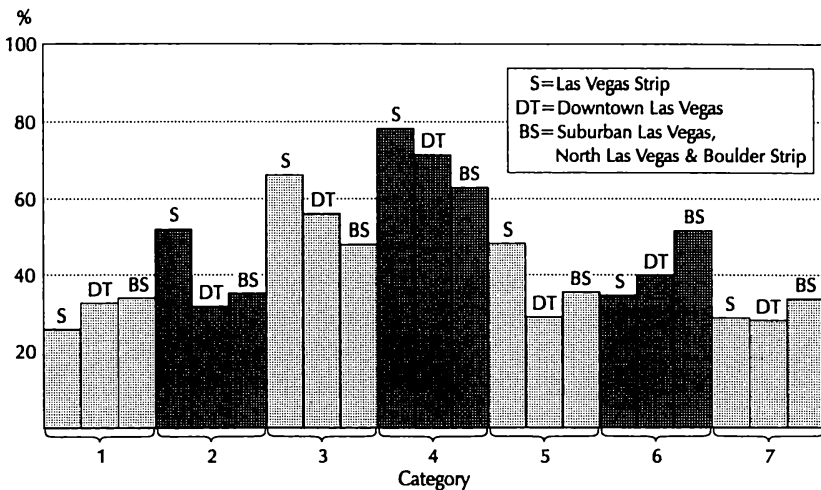
casino fades away. This is but one reflection of the most recent mega-property phase in the striving of Las Vegas to continually reinvent itself (Gottdiener, Collins, and Dickens 1999; Raento and Berry 1999), one which aspires to attract the world's most affluent jet-setters and high rollers prepared to spend routinely \$400 per night on a room and \$100 per ticket for celebrity entertainment.

The Evolving Gaming Namescape

The gaming namescape in Las Vegas is particularly inviting to analysis since it is a recent invention (the city was not founded until 1905), reflects obvious intentionality (the marketing ploys of the inventors), and is quite accessible because it is well documented in the popular press and scholarly literature.

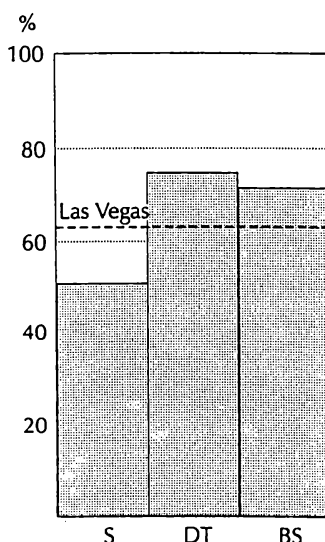
From the very beginning of the casino industry, there were at least three distinct naming complexes in the greater Las Vegas area, each with patterning designed to appeal to a particular customer base. Accordingly, we divided the corpus of names into three groups, those in the Las Vegas Strip, those in Downtown Las Vegas, and those in the Las Vegas suburban neighborhoods, North Las Vegas and the Boulder Strip. We then compared the characteristics and evolution of the names in the three areas. The only evenly-dispersed category was that of the trade name "power words" of category 7; all others showed regional differences. These are shown in figure 4.

Figure 4. Regional Variation of Naming Categories in the Greater Las Vegas Area.



Of these three settings, the Strip stands out as more glamorous and international than either Downtown Las Vegas or the suburban neighborhoods. From the outset, the naming of gaming on the Strip, itself a name co-opted about 1940 from the popular designation of Los Angeles' Sunset Strip (Moehring 1989, 42), was intended to convey cosmopolitan and glamorous imagery, in contrast to the much more narrowly self-referential identity of the then more successful properties in Downtown Las Vegas (see Moehring 1989, 43).<sup>4</sup>

Figure 5. Regional Variation of Self-referential Names of Casinos in the Greater Las Vegas Area.



The takeoff, if not the genesis, of the Strip is usually dated from the opening of Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel's *Flamingo* in 1946, a property that in its lavishness represented an entirely new concept in gaming enterprises. In the words of Tom Wolfe, writing two decades later:

Siegel put up a hotel-casino such as Las Vegas had never seen and called it the Flamingo—all Miami Modern, and the hell with piano players with garters and whatever that was all about. Everybody drove out Route 91 just to gape. Such shapes! Boomerang Modern supports, Palette Curvilinear bars, Hot Shoppe Cantilever roofs and a scalloped swimming pool. Such Colors! All the new electrochemical pastels of the Florida littoral: tangerine, broiling magenta, livid pink, incarnadine, fuchsia, demure,

Congo ruby, methyl green, vividine, aquamarine, phenosafranine, incandescent orange, scarlet-fever purple, cyanic blue, tessellated bronze, hospital-fruit-basket orange. And such signs! Two cylinders rose at either end of the Flamingo—eight stories high and covered from top to bottom with neon rings in the shape of bubbles that fizzed all eight stories up into the desert sky all night long like an illuminated whisky-soda tumbler filled to the brim with pink champagne. (1965, 10–11; see Venturi, Brown, and Izenour 1972)

If in the 1960s and 1970s desert themes predominated in the naming of the newest and largest properties, over time the naming patterns inevitably shifted. In 1989, Steve Wynn's *The Mirage*, itself both reflective and transcendent of the desert theme, ushered in the era of the mega-property, inviting visitors to explore emblematic world landmarks and travel in time and space. The new properties, now called "resorts," brought the Strip's wealth and opulence syndrome to its full bloom, emphasizing fantasy, excitement, adventure, world geography, classical civilizations, and the conveniences of upscale tourism.

In contrast, properties in the Downtown employed primarily western themes such as the *California*, *El Cortez*, *49er*, *Fremont*, *Pioneer Club*, and *Western*, highlighting the region's nineteenth-century mining legacy, or themes of self-reference, especially to the local geography (*Glitter Gulch*, *Jackie Gaughan's Plaza*, *Las Vegas Club*, *Main Street Station*, *Vegas World*) (figures 6 and 7). While on the Strip the always relatively weak intimacy has given way to cosmopolitanism, people and intimate spaces are still very prominent in the Downtown. This locally-oriented "neighborhood syndrome" is particularly developed in suburban Las Vegas as well, where it postdates both the pretentious Strip and the more staid Downtown since the development of gaming outside of the two principal entertainment areas did not start until the 1960s but has grown very rapidly ever since. Arguably, the naming of neighborhood gaming is the most eclectic of all, at times borrowing from the Downtown's western theming (*Arizona Charlie's*, *Bighorn*, *Boomtown*, *Gold Rush*, *Longhorn*, *Santa Fe*) and self-referentiality (*Boulder Station*, *Lake Mead Lounge*, *Nevada Palace*, *Railroad Pass*, *Sam's Town*), while at others invoking *Eldorado*, a *Fiesta*, a *Pot-O-Gold*, a *Silver Slipper*, and a *Winner's Circle*.

Figure 6. Regional Variation in Geographical References in the Sample

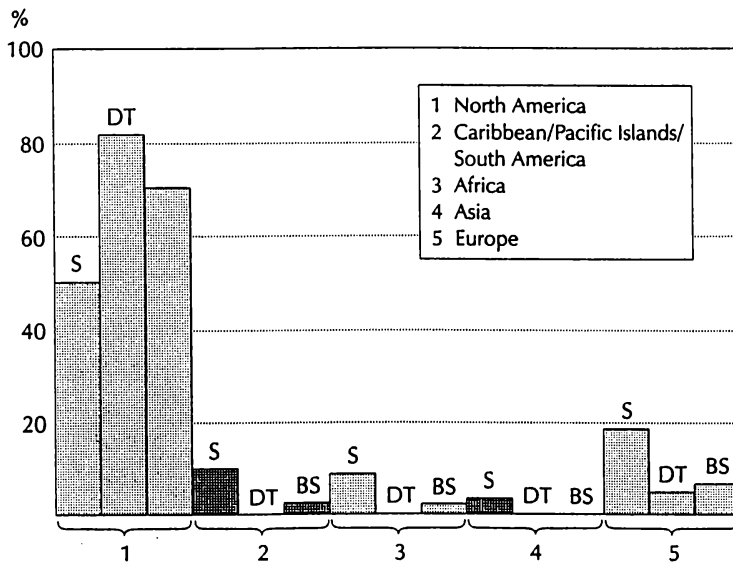
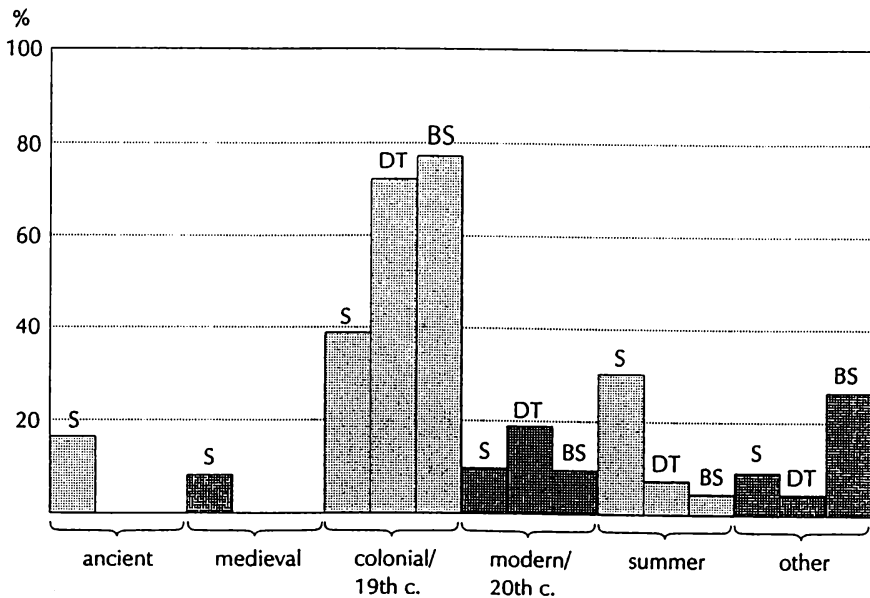


Figure 7. Regional Variation in Temporal References in the Sample.



The strong orientation toward a local clientele outside of the Strip is reflected in a number of the names, especially the name generics. While the Strip promotes its resorts to an increasingly international clientele, properties in the Downtown and in suburbia stress intimacy and personal contact; it is here that the “clubs,” “lounges,” “taverns,” and “saloons” are located. Furthermore, in these areas, “gambling,” as in *Texas Station Gambling Hall* and *Wild West Gambling Hall*, signals recognition to the sophisticated locals (i.e., the employees of the industry) that “gaming” is an insipid marketing term designed to round the edges of an activity where the odds are stronger in favor of the house. As home to the world’s largest concentration of legalized gambling, Nevada likely has the world’s highest proportion of problem gamblers; indeed, the state is a magnet for such individuals (“Problem Gamblers” 1999, 36–37). A appreciable number of casino employees are also players, who, as participants, clearly understand the distinction between “gaming” and “gambling.” Arguably, “gambling” refers as well to the rowdiness of the American West, thus further highlighting the already strong emphasis on local and regional (Western) themes in the casino namespapes outside of the Strip.

The regional differences and their evolution within the Greater Las Vegas casino namescape also reflect the impact of changing times and settings of gaming. It is clear that the gaming namescape has always been illusory. The differences in naming that we find result from the fact that the referential framework in the initial period was simply closer to home. Previous to the genesis of Las Vegas as a company (railroad) town in the early twentieth century, the Las Vegas Valley was not only marginal physically, but marginal as well to the region’s ranching and mining complexes. Despite its name, it was equally insulated from southwestern Hispanic cultural heritage. The area had but a handful of ranchers and no mines of any significance. With the exception of the wholly self-referential names, then, from the outset the naming of Las Vegas gaming entailed importation of available (and logical) themes rather than “authentic” commemoration of local legacy. The *El Rancho*, one of the earliest properties on the Strip (1941), is a case in point. Although at first it seems to celebrate both a local ranching and Hispanic legacy, it was but one of a chain of like-named properties established in the California Central Valley by hotelman Thomas Hull (Moehring 1989, 43).

The development of gaming in Las Vegas is in fact an almost entirely exogenous phenomenon, whether driven by transplanted Middle

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Western and East Coast mobsters or larger-than-life entrepreneurial titans such as Howard Hughes, Kirk Kerkorian, Steve Wynn, and Sheldon Adelson. None were Nevada natives. Consequently, the naming of gaming in Las Vegas has always been driven more by the presentations and deliberations around a boardroom table than by a glance out of a boardroom window. Therefore, we must be cautious in concluding that naming a casino property is a relatively straightforward, independent decision by a gaming entrepreneur or ownership entity. In a sense this is true, but this is only part of the story, since the naming of gaming is never an isolated, stand-alone process. Rather, it transpires within a constantly evolving setting. Arguably, no two names ever enter the same namescape, for each new addition changes the content and chemistry that must be evaluated in the naming of future entries.

Indeed, the same or similar name may itself evolve to reflect changing times and marketing targets, as the reincarnations of the *Frontier* exemplify. It has been transmogrified from the *Last Frontier* (western) at its inception (1942) to *The New Frontier* (1955–65), emphasizing a remodeling and upgrading to claim a place within the contemporary rather than Old West, to simply the generic *Frontier* (1967–88), which is as much cyberspatial as western North American. In 1998, the property again became *The New Frontier*, but it is now destined for demolition to give way to the construction of the proposed San Francisco-themed mega-property (“San Francisco’ Resort” 2000, 33). Also illustrative is *Cal’s* in North Las Vegas, which first appears in the Nevada Gaming Control Board’s inventory in 1955 as *Cal’s Gin Mill*. In the late 1970s, the property became *Cal’s Food and Cocktails*, and by 1980, it was renamed *Cal’s Jackpot Club*. Seventeen years later, the intimate “club” gave way to the more generic “casino” (*Cal’s Jackpot Casino*). On the Strip, the *Desert Inn*, as it was called since the original property opened in 1950, was defined as a *Hotel & Casino* in 1988. Three years later, it was upscaled to a *Hotel and Country Club*. It became today’s *Desert Inn Resort & Casino* in 1993.

Evident in these examples, as in many others, is the value of polysemy. *Fitzgerald’s*, for instance, in a primordial sense, invokes the name of the founder of a Reno (Nevada) casino, Lincoln Fitzgerald, who built a themeless property, pretty much a personal monument, in that town. Once sold, the new owners retained the name but themed the property in a fashion that was both Irish (leprechaun costuming, green color scheme, etc.) and “lucky” (the pot of gold at the end of the

rainbow). When the Fitzgerald group acquired additional casino properties in Tunica, Mississippi, Black Hawk, Colorado, and Las Vegas, the luck-of-the-Irish theme was implemented across the organization.

Perhaps the prime instance of polysemic theming is found in the use of “gold” and “golden.” Their ambiguity allows them to access all seven considerations in the theming of casinos which we have noted: good fortune (as in “golden opportunity”), wealth (precious metal), adventure and excitement (*Eldorado, Eureka, Gold Rush, Gold Strike*), western Americana (as in its pronounced mining theme), temporal connotations of both an era (from the *49er* to *Klondike*) and eternity, and valued personal characteristics (as in “heart of gold” and “golden boy”). For these reasons, it is a powerful engine for marketing purposes. One could even extend this speculation to the subtle appeal to the (un)conscious concerns of a major part of Las Vegas’ clientele—the elderly—who are particularly evident in the Downtown and suburban areas (see Wolfe 1965, 4, 19–20). Many have chosen to spend their “golden years” in the Sunbelt—including Las Vegas itself.

There are also ways in which the naming of gaming in Las Vegas has repercussions beyond the confines of the city and/or the gaming industry. The selection of a New York theme, complete with Statue of Liberty, Central Park, Empire State Building, and other landmarks, elicited a veiled threat of litigation over infringement by the City of New York. When the mayor of Venice, Italy, was asked on the *60 Minutes* television show (19 March 2000) if he planned to attend the opening of the *Venetian*, his rather sardonic reply was to the effect that he was too busy administering “the *real Venice*” (*Ciao Venezia 2000*, 18; emphasis added).

While Las Vegas co-opts themes, it furnishes them as well. The Las Vegas influence in the naming of gaming during the recent expansion of gambling across America has been enormous. It is scarcely surprising that much of the expertise and capital fueling this spread originated in, and emanated from, its hitherto monopolistic Nevada base. Like *Fitzgerald’s, Harrah’s* originated in Reno where Bill Harrah named his first casino. Now, it is a brand name displayed in such disparate states as Louisiana and North Carolina, Kansas and Indiana. *Caesars Palace* invokes Las Vegas in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Corydon, Indiana. That parochial Las Vegas neighborhood property, *Sam’s Town*, now

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identifies gaming establishments in Kansas City, Missouri, and Tunica, Mississippi. Greenville, Mississippi, has its *Las Vegas Casino*. The *Imperial Palace*, *Lady Luck* and *Station Casino* organizations, all Las Vegas-based, retain their names at out of state properties. "Station," for example, whose original reference was to the railway station in Downtown Las Vegas at the core of the original city, now identifies the *Black Hawk Station* and *Colorado Central Station* properties in Black Hawk, Colorado, as well as the *Station Casino* in St. Charles, Missouri, and the *Station Casino Hotel* in Kansas City, Missouri (1999 Casino Business Directory).

### Conclusion

In recent years, and as a part of postmodernism, there is growing scholarly interest, particularly within human geography and cultural anthropology, in the concepts of multivocality and multilocality. That is, there is heightened awareness of the simplicity of viewing the narrativity of places and their traditions in univocal and unilocal fashion. Rather, there is more likely to be a multiplicity of interpretations, which are not always mutually reconcilable.

In reading Las Vegas, and in reading its namescape in particular, there is a sense in which no two readers contemplate the same text. In fine Gadamerian fashion, not only will each bring a different set of life experiences to the task, and therefore formulate idiosyncratic perceptions, but the same reader at a different stage of life will read the Las Vegas experience differently. Reference is not only to the fact that, as we have seen, the Las Vegas scene evolves rapidly, but rather it speaks differently to different segments of the customer base.

Hence, to experience the city in one's golden years is not the same as to frequent its video arcades while accompanying one's parents to an ostensible "family destination" (a recent advertising ploy in Las Vegas' incessant quest to broaden its customer base). To visit Las Vegas as an unaccompanied male conventioner is not not the same as to experience it with one's spouse. The millionaire high roller from Tokyo, wrapped in the cocoon of a host property's VIP services, experiences an entirely different world from that of the car full of youths who journey across the desert from Los Angeles for an impromptu weekend on a last-minute whim.

It is a part of the art of the naming of gaming to understand how best to theme a property and its offerings in such fashion as to attract



the widest possible slice of the extraordinarily variegated pie of humanity, the more than thirty million annual visitors to Las Vegas. Despite its upstart status as an urban place (less than one hundred years of existence), its “shallow” traditions, and its poor location in a harsh environment in a semi-isolated corner of the Mojave Desert, Las Vegas now has nine of the world’s ten largest hotels and ranks first on the list of the world’s tourist destinations. As gaming has spread across the country, Las Vegas has been the primary source of gaming know-how, personnel, and capital for new enterprises, and Las Vegas properties have branched out from southern Nevada across the nation. Thus, the naming of gaming is nothing if not serious business.

### Appendix

Las Vegas Gaming Properties, 1955–99 (Sources: Nevada Gaming Control Board 2000; *Nevada Gaming Almanac* 1995 and 1999; Moehring 1989, 44–49).

#### Las Vegas Strip

Name of Property	Years of Operation
Airport Inn (4, 6, 7)	1988
Aladdin Hotel & Casino (1, 3, 4, 5)	1972–80, 1980–86, 1987–92, 1992–97
Ambassador Casino (2, 6)	1978–82
Ambassador Inn Casino	1983–85
Anthony’s Club and Casino (6)	1986–93
Art’s Place (4, 6)	1988–94
Aztec Inn Casino (3, 4, 5, 6)	1991–
Bally’s Las Vegas (1, 4, 6)	1973–
Barbary Coast Hotel and Casino (3, 4, 5)	1979–
Bellagio (2, 4)	1998–
Big Red’s (2, 6, 7)	1980–82
Boardwalk Hotel & Casino (1, 3, 4, 6, 7)	1980–94
Holiday Inn Casino Boardwalk	1994–
Bonanza Hotel (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1972–73
Bourbon Street Hotel and Casino (3, 4)	1985–88, 1988, 1988–96
Bourbon Street Hotel	1998–
Caesars Palace (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1966–
Caribbean Cabana (2, 3, 4, 5)	1991–
Casino Royale (1, 2, 3, 4, 7)	1992–
Churchill Downs (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1967–87
Circus Circus (3)	1968–74
Circus Circus Hotel & Casino	1974–
Continental Hotel and Casino (2, 3, 4)	1981–99
Dan’s Royal Flush Casino (1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	1991–96
Debbie Reynolds’ Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 6)	1993–96
Desert Inn (2, 4, 5, 6)	1967–88
Desert Inn Hotel & Casino	1988–91

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Star's Desert Inn Hotel and Country Club	1991-93
Desert Inn Resort & Casino	1993-
(The first Desert Inn was the 5th property on the Strip, opening in 1950).	
Dunes Hotel (2, 4, 6)	1956-88, 1988-89
Dunes Hotel & Country Club	1989-93
El Morocco Casino (2, 3, 4, 7)	1972-83
El Rancho Hotel & Casino (2, 4, 7)	1982-92
(El Rancho first opened in April 1941 as the 1st property on the Strip).	
Eureka Saloon and Gambling Hall (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1989, 1989-90
Eureka Casino	1991-
Eureka Casino Hotel	Since 1997
Excalibur Hotel and Casino (3, 4, 5)	1990-
Fat's 50's (3, 5, 6)	1982-89
Flamingo Hotel (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1960-67, 1967-73
Flamingo Hilton	1973-
(The first Flamingo was the 3rd property on the Strip, opening in 1946 and again in 1947).	
Flamingo Capri (2, 3, 4, 5)	1972-73
Four Kings Casino (1, 2)	1977-80
Foxy Dog # 2 (6)	1969-76
Foxy's Firehouse Casino (3, 6)	1976-88
Friendly Fergie's Casino & Saloon (3, 4, 5, 6)	1963-89, 1989-
Frontier Hotel (3, 4, 5)	1967-88
Frontier Hotel & Gambling Hall	1988-98
Gary Austin's Race & Sports Book (6)	1982-86
Gold Coast Hotel and Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1986-
Granada Casino (2, 4)	1979, 1979-92
Hacienda Resort, Hotel & Casino (2, 4, 5)	1956-95, 1995-96
Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (3)	1995-
Harrah's Casino Hotel Las Vegas (1, 4, 6)	1973-
Holy Cow! Casino, Café & Brewery (3)	1992-
Honest John's Liquor Store (6)	1963-78
Hotel San Remo Casino and Resort (2, 3, 4, 5)	1989-
Hotel San Remo Las Vegas Casino and Resort	Since 1990
Imperial Palace Casino (2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1973-
Jackpot Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1971-77
Jolly Knights Cocktail Lounge (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1975-78
Jolly Trolley Casino (3, 4, 5)	1967-81
Key Largo Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1997-
King 8 Gambling Hall (1, 2, 5)	1979-88
King 8 Hotel & Gambling Hall	1988-98
Landmark (2, 4)	1969-78
Landmark Casino	1978-83
Landmark Hotel & Casino	1983-90, 1990
Last Frontier (3, 4, 5) (2nd property on the Strip)	Opened in October, 1942
Las Vegas Inn & Casino (1, 4, 6)	1981-85
Leroy's Horse and Sports Place (4, 6)	1985-
Las Vegas Hilton (1, 2, 4, 6)	1973-
Little Caesar's (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1968-70, 1970-94
Lotus Inn (3, 4, 6, 7)	1973-78
Lotus Inn and Casino	1984

Luxor Hotel and Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1993-
Maggie's Jackpot Casino (1, 2, 3, 5, 6)	1982
Malibu Pizza (2, 3, 4, 5)	1994
Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1999-
Mardi Gras Inn (3, 4, 5, 6)	1981-82, 1982-85, 1985-
Marina Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1975-88
Marina Hotel & Casino	1988-90
Marina Hotel and Casino	1990
Maxim Hotel and Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1977-98 (1999)
MGM Grand Hotel/Casino (2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1993-
Michael J. Gaughan's Airport Slots (1, 4, 6, 7)	1985-
Monte Carlo Resort & Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1996-
Mr. Sy's Casino (6)	1962-80
New York-New York Hotel & Casino (2, 3, 4, 7)	1997-
Nite Twain Lounge (4, 5, 7)	1971-78, 1978-95
Nob Hill Casino (2, 4)	1978-83, 1983-90
P. J.'s Parkway Casino (2, 4, 6)	1989-
P. T.'s Pub (6)	1996-98, 1998-
Palace Station Hotel & Casino (2, 3, 4)	1976-
Paradise Hotel & Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1976
Pair-O-Dice	?, contemporary
Paris Las Vegas (1, 2, 3, 4)	1999-
Peppermill Coffee Shop and Lounge (3, 6)	1988-
Quality Inn & Casino (2, 6)	1993-96
Ramada Las Vegas Inn (1, 4, 6)	1989-92
Rio Suite Hotel & Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1990-
Riviera Hotel & Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1993-
Hotel Riviera	1955-73, 1974-86, 1986-93
Roadrunner Casino Sahara (3, 4)	1998-
Rose Bowl Race and Sports Book (3, 4, 5)	1972-82
Royal Casino (1, 2, 4, 7)	1971-77, 1977-88
Royal Casino Las Vegas	1990-91
Royal Hotel Casino	1992-94, 1994-
Royal Americana (2, 4, 7)	1980-81
Royal Inn Hotel & Casino (2, 4, 6)	1977-79
Sahara Hotel & Casino (3, 4)	1982-95
Hotel Sahara	1963-82
Sahara Hotel and Casino	1995-
Sands Hotel (4)	1953-67, 1967-81
Sands Casino	1981-83
Sands Hotel & Casino	1983-88, 1988-89
Sans Souci (3, 4, 5)	1960
Santa Anita Turf & Sports Book (4)	1954-85
Santa Anita Race and Sports Book	1986-87
Silver Bird Hotel & Casino (1, 2, 4, 7)	1977-81
Silver City Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1975-81, contemporary
Silver Saddle Casino (1, 2, 4, 5, 7)	1981-82, 1983
Silver Slipper (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1968-88
Slots A Fun (1, 3)	1971-74, 1975-
Sport of Kings (1, 2, 3)	1992-93
Sports World Casino (1, 2, 3, 4)	1997-

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Stage Door Casino (3)	1983-
Stardust (1, 3, 7)	1958-85
Stardust Hotel and Casino	1985-
The Beach (3, 4, 5, 7)	1995-
The Castaways Casino (3, 4, 7)	1967-87
The Colony Club (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	1979-84
The Mirage (3, 7)	1989-
The New Frontier (3, 4, 5, 7)	1998-
(The Last Frontier became New Frontier in 1955 and ran until 1965).	
The Paddlewheel Casino (1, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1972-91
The Peppermill Casino (3, 7)	1982-89
(The) Sneak Joint (3, 6, 7)	1970-77, 1979-80
The Treasury Hotel & Casino (2, 7)	1979-82
The Whistle Stop (3, 4, 5, 7)	1990-97
Thunderbird Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5)	1972-76
Hotel Thunderbird	1967-72
Thunderbird Hotel	1987-90
(The first Thunderbird was the 4th property on the Strip, opening in 1946).	
Tommy B's Pub & Liquor Shoppe (6)	1971-84
Tommy B's Casino	1984-86
Treasure Island at The Mirage (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1993-
Tropicana (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1957-?
Tropicana Casino	1968-72
Tropicana Hotel & Country Club	1972-79
Tropicana Resort and Casino	1979-
Tropicana Travelodge Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1982-84
20th Century Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5)	1977-78
Vegas World Hotel & Casino (1, 2, 3, 4)	1979-80, 1980-95
Venetian Casino Resort (2, 3, 4, 5)	1999 (1989-)
Westward Ho Slot Arcade (3, 4, 5, 7)	1966-71
Westward Ho Casino	1971-
Wild Wild West Gambling Hall & Hotel (3, 4, 5, 7)	1998-
<b>Las Vegas Downtown</b>	
Best Western Ambassador East (2, 4, 7)	1989-90
Big Al's Speakeasy (2, 3, 6)	1980
California Hotel and Casino (2, 3, 4)	1975-
California Club (2, 3, 4, 6)	1955-70
Club Bingo (1, 6)	1962-83
Coach Room (6)	1960-70
Coach Room Derby Turf Club (6)	1958-82
Coin Castle Casino (1, 2, 7)	1970-77, contemporary
El Cortez (Hotel) (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	1963-
(El Cortez first opened in 1941).	
Famous Pioneer Club (3, 4, 5, 6)	1967-82
Fitzgerald's Casino/Hotel (1, 4, 6)	1973-
Foxy Dog (6)	1964-75
Franklin Bros. (6)	1989-92
Fremont Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5, 6)	1970-85, 1985-
Friendly Club (6)	1982, 1983
49er Saloon & Casino (1, 3, 4, 5)	1971-77

Gamblers Hall of Fame Casino (1, 3, 6)	1968-76
Glitter Gulch Casino (1, 3, 4, 5)	1980-81
Gold Spike Hotel and Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1979-
Golden Goose Casino (1, 2, 4, 7)	1975-78, 1978-91
Golden Hotel (1, 2, 4, 7)	1969-84
Golden Nugget (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1953-
Holiday International Casino (2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1978-80
Hollywood Race Book (2, 3, 4, 5)	1966-81
Hollywood Race & Sports Book	1981-83, 1984-85
Jackie Gaughan's Plaza Hotel (3, 4, 6)	1998 (?)-
Jennie V's (6)	1976-77
La Bayou Casino (3, 4, 7)	1977-?
Lady Luck Casino (1, 2, 6, 7)	1964-
Las Vegas Club (1, 4, 6)	1957-60, 1961-
Leroy's Horse and Sports Place (4, 6)	1978-96
Main Street Bar & Grill (3, 4)	1990-93
Main Street Station (3, 4, 5)	1991-92, 1996-
Mermaids (3)	1980-
Mint Hotel (2, 4)	1963-84, 1984-88
Miss Lucy's Gambling Hall & Saloon (3, 4, 5, 6)	1989-92, 1994-95
Hotel Nevada & Casino (4)	1974-79, 1979-86
Nevada Hotel	1987-92
Nevada Hotel & Casino	1992-94, 1996, 1998-99
Nevada Club (4, 6)	1949-69
Park Hotel and Casino (2, 4)	1987-90
Pioneer Club (3, 4, 5, 6)	1983-92, 1993-95, 1997, 1999
Queen of Hearts Hotel & Casino (1, 2, 3, 7)	1986-
Rainbow Vegas Hotel (1, 4)	1982-98
Reel Deal Casino (1)	1992-93
Rendezvous Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5)	1977-78, 1978-79
Saratoga Race Book (4)	1975-77
Sassy Sally's (3, 4, 5, 6)	?
Showboat Hotel, Casino and Bowling Center (3)	1955-
Silver Star Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1978-79, 1984-85
Stratosphere Tower, Hotel & Casino (3, 4)	1996-
Sundance Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5)	1980-87
Sundance West Casino (3, 4, 5, 7)	1976-80
The Golden Gate (1, 2, 4, 7)	1955-
The Horseshoe Club (1, 4, 6, 7)	1953-
(Often listed as Binion's Horseshoe; opened in 1951).	
The Orbit Inn (3, 4, 6, 7)	1976-77
Orbit Inn Hotel and Casino	1977-87
The Vault (2, 7)	1974-76
Trolley Stop Casino (3, 4)	1990-95
Union Plaza Hotel & Casino (3, 4)	1971-, 1975-81, ?-1998 (?)
Western Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 7)	1971-
<b>Suburban Las Vegas, Boulder Strip</b>	
Al's Liquor (6)	1964-76
Alystra Casino	1995-98
Arizona Charlie's Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 6)	1978-

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B & J Restaurant & Bar (6)	1990-91
Barcelona Hotel & Casino (2, 4)	1992-
Barley's Casino & Brewing Co. (6)	1996-
Beano's Casino (6)	1990-
Big Dog's Bar & Grill (2, 6)	1991-
Big Dog's Cafe & Casino (2, 6)	1992-
Bighorn Casino (2, 4)	1988-
Bingo Barn (1, 6)	1978-79
Bingo Palace (1, 2)	1977-81
Bob Verchota's Railroad Pass Casino (3, 4, 6)	1975-78, 1978-85
Railroad Pass	1985-
Bonanza Lounge (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1990-
Boomtown Las Vegas (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1994-97
Boulder Station Hotel & Casino (3, 4)	1994-
Brown Derby Club (6)	1973-74
Cal's Gin Mill (1, 2, 3, 5, 6)	1955-77
Cal's Food and Cocktails	1977-79
Cal's Jackpot Club	1980-90, 1990-96
Cal's Jackpot Casino	1997-98
Castaways Casino (3, 4)	1993-
Cattle Baron Casino (2, 4, 5, 6)	1991-92
Charleston Heights Bowl (2, 4)	1975-78
Charlie's Bar Down Under (4, 6)	1990-
Charlie's Lakeside Bar & Grill (4, 6)	1988-
Cheyenne Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5)	1997
Club Fortune Casino (1, 2, 4, 6)	1999-
Club Vertigo (3, 6)	1988-91
Cowboy Gene's Casino (3, 4, 5, 6)	1979-80
Danny's Slot Country (1, 4, 6)	1982-
De Marco's (6)	1982-90
Del Mar Race & Sports Club (2, 4, 6)	1966-88
Draft House Barn & Casino (6)	1990-
El Rio Club (3, 4, 6, 7)	1973-78
Eldorado Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1962-
Ellis Island Casino (3, 4, 5, 6)	1989-90, 1990-
Ernie's Casino (6)	1970-99, 1999-
Fiesta Casino Hotel (3, 4, 5)	1994-
Fizzer's (6)	1993-94
Fort Las Vegas (1, 3, 4, 5)	1998-
49er Saloon & Casino (1, 3, 4, 5)	1977-
Gloria's II (6)	1993-
Gold Rush Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1995-
Gold Strike (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	?
Golden Spur Gambling Hall & Saloon (1, 2, 4, 5, 7)	1989-92
Hacienda Hotel & Casino (2, 4, 5)	1966-
Hanks Poo Bear Lounge (6)	1980-82
Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas (1, 2, 4)	1999-
Jerry's Nugget (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	1964-
JJ's Sierra Saloon (3, 4, 5, 6)	1994-95
Joe's Bar (6)	1962-69, 1970-88
Joe's Longhorn (4, 6, 7)	1990-91

Joker Club (1, 6)	1976-80
Jokers Wild (1, 3, 6)	1993-
Klondike Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1982, 1982-
Klondike Sunset Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1999-
Lake Mead Lounge (4, 6)	1988-
Las Vegas Auto/Truck Plaza (1, 3, 4, 7)	1973-
Ligouri's Bar & Casino (6)	1984-98
Long Branch Saloon (4, 5, 7)	1977-82
Longhorn Casino (4, 7)	1989-
Loose Caboose Saloon (3, 4, 5)	1993-97
Loose Caboose Nellis	1997-
Love's Cocktail Lounge (3, 6)	1970-85
Lucky Strike Mining Co. Casino (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	1993-96
Mad Matty's Bar and Grille (3, 6)	1990-
Magic Star Casino (1, 7)	1999-
Mahoney's Silver Nugget (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	1989-92, 1992-95, 1995-
Mau Mau Room (3, 4, 5, 6)	1973-74
Montana Bar (4)	1974-76
Moulin Rouge Hotel (2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1993-96
Moulin Rouge Hotel & Casino	1998
Mr. Lucky's Fortune Club (1, 2, 6)	1970-80
Mugshots Eatery & Casino (3)	1993-
Nashville Nevada Club (3, 4, 6)	1975-77
Nevada Palace Casino & Motor Inn (2, 4, 6)	1979-80
Nevada Palace Hotel & Casino	1981-
New Town Tavern (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	1974-93
Old Vegas (1, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1978-86
One-Eyed Jacks (1, 6)	1993-96
101 Club (5, 6)	1961-65, 1966-69, 1977-78
Opera House Saloon & Casino (2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1980-86
(The) Opera House Casino	1987-92, 1992-95, 1995-
Orleans Hotel and Casino (2, 3, 4)	1996-
People's Choice (6)	1980-92
P. T.'s Pub (6)	1990-94, 1994-98, 1998-
P. T.'s Slot Casino (1, 6)	1994-97, 1997-98, 1998-
Post Office Casino	1994-95, 1995
Pot O'Gold (1, 2, 7)	1999-
R-Bar	1993-
Rainbow Club and Casino (1, 4, 6)	1967-87, 1987-
Ramada Inn and Speedway Casino (3, 4, 6, 7)	1999-
Regent Las Vegas (1, 2, 4)	1999-
Renata's Supper Club (2, 5, 6)	1990-
Roadhouse Casino (3, 4)	1995-
Roadrunner Casino (3, 4)	1995-
Ruben Bullock's Westside Story (4, 5, 6)	1981-82
Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall (3, 4, 5, 6)	1979-
Santa Fe (3, 4, 5)	1991-
Scarlet Wagon (3, 4, 5)	1973-77
Sierra Gambling Hall and Saloon (3, 4, 5)	1990-94
Silver Dollar Saloon (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1975, 1975-96
Silver Nugget (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1964-81

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Silver Nugget Casino	1982-88
Silver Saddle Saloon (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1996-
Silver Spur Saloon and Gambling Hall (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	1984-88
Silverton Hotel, Casino & RV Park (1, 2, 4, 7)	1997-
Skinny Dugan's Pub (6)	1990-
Skyline Restaurant & Casino (2, 3, 4, 7)	1974-76, 1976-77, 1977-
Smoke Ranch Junction (2, 3, 4)	1995-
Suburban Sports Lounge & Casino (2, 4, 5, 6)	1992-93
Sunset Station Hotel & Casino (3, 4, 5, 7)	1997-
Swanky Casino	1980-85
Terrible's Town (3, 4, 6)	1996-
Texas Station Gambling Hall & Hotel (3, 4, 5)	1995-
The Big Game Club (1, 2, 3, 6, 7)	1994-
The Gambler (1, 3, 6, 7)	1980-
The Greens Supperclub (2, 4, 5, 6, 7)	1992-
The Lift Bar (7)	1982-95, 1995-
The Lucky Star Club (1, 6, 7)	1960-61
(The) Poker Palace (1, 2, 7)	1974-
The Reserve Hotel & Casino (2, 7)	1998-
The Tower Club of Nevada (4, 6, 7)	1971-80
The Triple Play (1, 3, 7)	1990-
Thirstbusters (3)	1993-
Tom's Sunset Casino (4, 5, 6, 7)	1989-98
Town Hall Casino (2, 4)	1985-89, 1989-
Triple J Bingo (1)	1995-99
Ukulele Lounge (4, 5, 6)	1988-
Ultra New Town Tavern (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	1996, 1998-
Vacation Village Hotel and Casino (2, 3, 4, 5)	1990-
Vegas Village South (1, 3, 4, 7)	1969-81
West	1970-81
Village Pub and Casino - Green Valley (3, 4)	1993-
- Summerlin	1998-
West Hill Lanes (4, 7)	1981-93
Winner's Circle Sports Lounge and Casino (1, 2, 3, 6)	1979, 1981
Winner's Circle Casino	1983

### Notes

1. According to Room (1982), the following 130 words and prefixes exemplify particularly powerful ingredients in the marketing of products and services: Ace, Acme, Aero-, Air, All, Auto, Bulldog, Castle, Champion, City, Conquest, Countess, Crown, Crystal, Diamond, Double, Dream, Duo-, Dura-, Eagle, Easi-, Electro, Embassy, Ever, Executive, Express, Fair-, Fairy, Fast-, Flexi, Gay, Globe, Gold(en), Grand, Green, Guard, Handi-, Hi-, Ideal, Imperial, Inter-, Iso-, Jet, Kent, Kleen, Lady, Life, Light, Lion, Long, Lotus, Magi-, Major, Master, May, Meta-, Mini-, Mod-, Monarch, Multi-, Nat-, New, Nova-, Old, Oxi-, Para-, Perma-, Pilot, Plasto-, Poly-, Premier, Presto, Princess, Pure, Queen, Quick, Radi-, Rapid, Ray, Red, Reliance, Robo-, Roll, Rota- (Roto-), Royal, Safari, San-, Select, Servo, Silver, Simplex, Sky, Sol-, Sovereign, Speed, Standard, Star, Stay, Ster-, Sun,



Super-, Sure, Swan, Swift, Tan-, Tech-, Tel-, The, Thermo-, Top, Trans-, Trident, Triumph, Tru-, Tuf, Twin, Ultra, Uni-, Val-, Vari-, Victor, Viking, Vita, Wel-, West, White, Whizard, Wonder, Young, Zodiac.

2. Havana is an obvious candidate given its tropical setting, its Hispanic heritage, and its own history as one of the East Coast's primary vacation destinations through the Batista years. However, the subsequent US boycott of Fidel Castro's Cuba has effectively disqualified the Havana theme, at least for the time being.

3. The lack of Jewish theming is striking, given the prominence of Jews in the development of gaming in southern Nevada.

4. "By 1945, Fremont Street was ablaze in neon with the Boulder, Pioneer, Frontier, Monte Carlo, El Cortez and Las Vegas clubs, supplemented by a variety of smaller enterprises" (Moehring 1989, 43).

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