



NEW YORK-NEW YORK

The Newest Megaresort On The Las Vegas Strip Clones The Big Apple



by Melissa Martino

wow...Wow...WOW. Spread the news and leave today for New York! No, not *that* New York, the new New York-New York megaresort in Las Vegas. The magnificent \$460 million project had it's unveiling and lavish Grand Opening recently with rave reviews from the 3,000 invited guests, including media, Hollywood personalities, and even rival casino owners. For weeks until the opening there was a lot of speculation (amid much secrecy) about how they would be able to pull off recreating the city of N.Y. Well, they did it, and did it with excellence. The "they" I refer to are the creators of New York-New York — MGM Grand, Inc. and Primadonna Resorts, Inc. Native New Yorkers such as myself (or, as we prefer to say, "Noo Yawkuhs") were delighted with the intricate details that were incorporated into the look and feel of both the interiors and exteriors.

The architecture is truly astounding. In

one square block, the architect, Neal Gaskin, has been able to recreate the important landmarks of N.Y. (excluding the twin towers) using scale and perspective to its greatest advantage. The new resort has virtually changed the skyline of Vegas. As you approach the strip when driving from the airport, you swear you see a "city" as you draw nearer to its location at the Tropicana and Las Vegas Boulevard intersection. The

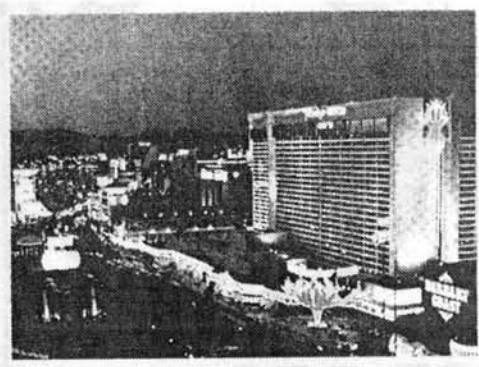
resorts' marketing slogan of New York-New York being "The Greatest City in Las Vegas" really rings true.

Incorporated in the 12 exterior interconnected buildings are the Empire State Building (the tallest at 529 feet, 47 stories,) the Century Building, the Seagram's Building, and the Chrysler Building, to name a few. At the street level you will find the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Soldiers & Sailors Monument, Grand Central Station terminal, and the Ellis Island Immigrant Receiving Station. These structures are approximately one-third the actual size of the N.Y. City architecture. All of this is surrounded by the "Manhattan Express," a Coney Island-styled roller coaster.

Inside, the 84,000 square foot casino is themed with: Central Park's gaming tables; Park Avenue's retail shops; the Financial District's cashier's cages and — I love this — the "New York \$lot Exchange"; Times Square's neon signs, Little Italy's restaurants, Soho and Greenwich Village's restaurants and shops, and some upscale specialty restaurants.

The attention to detail is amazing. You'll find the restaurants along cobblestone streets, parking meters, fire hydrants, fire escapes, mailboxes covered with graffiti, and the occasional street musician with his instrument case open for tips. New York-New York's limo's are painted like yellow cabs. The front desk area is very art deco, and lamp posts line paths around Central Park. A lighted ball drops every night at midnight outside the Bar at Times Square. However, some aspects of New York are thankfully missing, such as muggers, litter, and garbage strikes.

For the black tie opening night party, all the restaurants had samplings of their cuisines. We found Gallagher's Steak House to be outstanding, as well as the excellent Chinese fare at Chin Chin's, and Italian at Il Fornaio.



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There is also an American-style 24-hour-a-day-eatery, a food court area, and several nightclub and pub venues.

Also celebrating their opening was the Motown Cafe, located inside New York-New York, with both casino and street-front access. Even though one mentally associates Motown with Detoit rather than N.Y., the music is nostalgic to all. The restaurant offers eclectic Southern style food, served amid costumes, memorabilia and pictures of classic Motown artists such as The Four Tops, The Temptations, Gladys Knight, Stevie Wonder, The Jackson 5, and Diana Ross. Every 20 minutes a troupe of men and women perform live in various spots in the restaurant, bringing the sounds of the '60's Motown to life.

A variety of specialty gift shops and boutiques are also available for patrons in New York-New York. Retail shops, such as Hamiltons, the I Love New York-New York Signature Shop, and Houdini's Magic Shop. Hamilton's is owned by the ever-tan George Hamilton, and is an intimate nite club attached to a cigar emporium. Apparently (and unfortunately) cigars are *au currant*.

Recreational areas include a 6,800 square foot health spa and fitness center with state-of-the-art fitness equipment, massage facility, a Jacuzzi and an outdoor pool. Of course, wedding chapel services are also available.

The hotel is also equipped with the Coney

Island Emporium, a family entertainment center that re-creates the aura of the Coney Island amusement park in the early 1900s. The 28,000 square foot facility features the latest high-tech gadgetry and special attractions, such as Midway-style carnival games, bumper cars, shooting galleries, "laser tag," interactive driving simulators, and a fiber-optic fireworks show. A barbershop quartet, jugglers and mimes perform throughout Coney Island's center during peak hours. It wouldn't be complete without a Nathan's Hot Dog Stand, so, of course, there is one.

The Coney Island Emporium is located next to the entrance to the Manhattan Express. The roller coaster twists, loops and dives around the perimeter, and even through the center, of the property. Only the second of its kind in the world, Manhattan Express features a 180-degree "heartline" roll maneuver to provide riders with heart-stopping thrills. I was too "chicken" to try it myself, but the ride got raves from disembarking passengers. More than just being another "neat" feature of N.Y., the resort's executives are looking for the coaster to be a money-maker. At \$5 per ride, with a capacity of 1,000 an hour, revenues of \$60,000 a day or \$21.9 million a year are possible.

Debuting May 1st at the resort, will be Kenneth Feld's production of MADhattan, planned expressly for New York-New York. It will feature the multicultural artistic diver-

sity of N.Y. City's underground talent in dance and music. MADhattan will be a moving, living collage that will take the audience on a journey through a part of Manhattan that most N.Y. visitors never get to see — the talented performers who inhabit the streets, the subways, and Grand Central Station. Some of Feld's other not-too-shabby entities are Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, Siegfried & Roy, and Disney's World on Ice.

On opening night we were able to stroll through New York-New York enjoying all the different aspects of the resort. However, as soon as midnight of rolled around they opened to doors to the public, a throng of people (locals and tourists alike) just kept coming and coming and never stopped until they had to close to doors at 7 a.m. to keep people out. Trying to walk through the crowds was impossible, and truly reminiscent of N.Y.'s Times Square on New Year's eve! I heard that with all the new resorts opening up in recent years, Vegas had never seen such an opening as the new New York-New York.

The resort's "skyscrapers" house 2,034 guest rooms and suites. Standard rooms carry a mid-week rate of \$89, and a weekend rate of \$129, making New York-New York one of the most competitive properties on the Las Vegas Strip.

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