

# Town & Country TRAVEL

SUMMER 2005

## THE LURE OF LAS VEGAS

Plus  
PROVENCE  
IBIZA  
VENICE  
SANTA FE

MENA SUVARI  
at the Bellagio

SUMMER 2005  
U.S. \$4.95 CANADA \$5.95  
FOREIGN \$6.95





## tee time in Las Vegas

On the outskirts of town, a few exceptional golf courses created by the game's leading designers offer a sporting alternative to the Strip's frenzy. Southeast of the neon is **REFLECTION BAY**, at the Lake Las Vegas Resort, a Jack Nicklaus layout on sloping terrain creased by arroyos. The course ranks among his most versatile and appealing designs. The signature holes are a pair of thrilling par threes, 8 and 17, close to Nevada's largest man-made lake. Daily guests are welcome. *Greens fee from \$150 to \$270. 702-740-4653; 877-698-4653; lakelasvegas.com.*

North of the Strip is the **LAS VEGAS PAIUTE GOLF RESORT**, with three Pete Dye courses. The leader of the pack is the Wolf, the longest golf course in Nevada (tournament tees measure 7,604 yards). Vast and wild, the Wolf's undulating fairways are delineated by cone-shaped mounds strewn with rocks and wildflowers. Deep pot bunkers and steep drop-offs defend the tabletop greens. Paiute is open to the public. *Greens fee for Wolf from \$100 to \$195. 888-966-2833; lvpaiutegolf.com.*

If you're a high roller for whom the golf experience is more than the sum of eighteen holes, there's **CASCATA**, an enclave of privilege near Boulder City. Designed by Rees Jones, it offers breathtaking views across El Dorado Valley from its topmost tees. Putting surfaces are as smooth as polished marble. The layout's cascading waterfalls are matched by a river that rushes through the center of the clubhouse. Cascata is accessible only to guests of Caesars Entertainment properties. *Greens fee from \$350 to \$500. 877-222-2455; parkplace.com/cascata.*

A second option for high rollers is **SHADOW CREEK**, an intimate, oasislike stage set in north Las Vegas and designed by Tom Fazio and Steve Wynn. Mature trees grace rolling fairways flanked by brooks and sparkling lakes. No Vegas illusionist can match this feat of late-'80s legerdemain. Limited weekday access is available to guests of the five MGM Mirage properties. *Greens fee \$500. 866-260-0069; shadowcreek.com.* —BRIAN MCCALLEN

have four-poster beds, walk-in closets and dining rooms with full pantries. Those who don't need so much space may opt for a smaller 810- to 2,170-square-foot suite (from \$435 to \$765). Every room meets the Four Seasons' high standards, with amenities ranging from down pillows to high-speed Internet access.

**WHAT'S COMING** After completing the \$2 million redesign of its Verandah restaurant, the hotel embarked on a \$7 million room renovation, which should be finished by the end of this year. *3960 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 702-632-5000; fourseasons.com.*

## MANDALAY BAY RESORT & CASINO

**OPENED** March 1999.

**COST** \$1.5 billion.

**THEME** An idyllic tropical locale.

**OWNED BY** Mandalay Resort Group.

**ROOM COUNT** 3,644 rooms and suites in Mandalay Bay and 1,120 suites in THEhotel. **CLAIM TO FAME** Mixing mass appeal with exclusivity. With one of the largest venues in the city (it's the third largest resort on the Strip), the Mandalay Bay hosts the major boxing matches and megastar shows.

**THE DRAW** The heavyweight fights and concerts; an eleven-acre tropical lagoon with a wave pool; the 1.6 million-gallon Shark Reef aquarium, which holds 2,000 sea creatures; the new Mandalay Place shopping area, which connects to the Luxor Resort & Casino; and restaurants from Wolfgang Puck, Charlie Palmer, Hubert Keller and Alain Ducasse. Also here are the Four Seasons (see separate listing)

and THEhotel, which houses the sleek new lounge and restaurant Mix, reached by a glass elevator that skims along the outside of the sixty-four-story building.

**SUITE KNOWLEDGE** Unlike other hotel-casinos, Mandalay Bay still reserves its best suites for high rollers. Instead of booking one of the unexceptional suites available to the public, stay at its luxury boutique hotel, THEhotel. This all-suite tower has its own lobby (with separate check-in), lounges and café and no gaming. The 750-square-foot suites (from \$179 to \$399) are beautifully appointed, with plasma TVs, textured wallpaper, chenille-covered sofas, plush chairs and dark-wood armoires. All suites are basically the same, except for the slightly larger V-shaped ones farthest from the elevators. Tip: Business travelers and techies love the suites' wireless capability, rare in Vegas. The epitome of cool, THEhotel's Bathhouse is a contemporary-style spa with suede walls in the entryway, minimalist decor and water everywhere.

**WHAT'S NEW** With their purchase by MGM Mirage pending, Mandalay Bay and THEhotel—which currently offer no concierge services besides booking their own restaurants and shows—may get a much-needed boost in the service department. *3950 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 702-632-7777; 877-632-7800; mandalaybay.com.*

## THE MGM GRAND

**OPENED** December 1993.

**COST** \$1 billion.

**THEME** More is more.

**OWNED BY** MGM Mirage.

**ROOM COUNT** 5,034 rooms and suites.

**CLAIM TO FAME** The largest hotel in the States and the biggest casino in the world. **THE DRAW** The country's largest brass lion outside and real lions inside; CBS Television City, a research center for TV pilots and a digital home theater of the future; and a salon created by famed Beverly Hills hair stylist Cristophe.

**SUITE KNOWLEDGE** Fifty-one new Skylofts on the top two floors provide a sleek boutique-hotel experience high above the fray of the casino. The two-story lofts have a residential feeling and a contemporary aesthetic, with *(continued on page 162)*