

# Aaron Auxier's VIVA VEGAS!

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## Beverly Hills on the Strip

Last month, I attended the E! Entertainment 20th Anniversary bash at the Sofitel Hotel in Los Angeles. (Jealous yet?) Before hitting the red carpet, I visited a spa in Beverly Hills and had an epiphany: the north section of the Strip will soon become the most exclusive section of Las Vegas Boulevard. Oh, and exfoliating isn't that bad — I scored an actress' phone number as I waited in the lobby!

At \$10 billion, MGM MIRAGE CityCenter and The Cosmopolitan Resort Casino are currently transforming the south section of the "Resort Corridor" into a hip, chic destination. Projects like The Harmon Hotel, Veer Towers and The Cosmo Beach Club will be great places to party it up and hang with the cool kids. Sure, the Mandarin Oriental will be high-end, but what if I was to tell you the true focus for luxury was the *north* section of the Resort Corridor?

"The current trend of the ultra rich is towards luxury boutique, specialized luxury hotels and services," says Bruce Hiatt, broker/owner of Luxury Realty Group. "The unique luxury experience that's unfolding on the north section of the Strip is echoing that demand,"

The section of the Strip Hiatt's talking about begins at the Venetian Palazzo and runs north (duh) to Sahara Avenue. Land in that stretch has rocketed to an eight-fold increase in valuation over the past four years. Want an example? The developers of Sky Las Vegas, the only luxury condominium tower with a Strip address, paid \$4 million an acre for their land just four years ago. The New Frontier Hotel recently sold for \$34 million an acre, less than a mile away.

With \$20 billion of construction happening over the next five years, projects like Fontainebleau, The Plaza Hotel Las Vegas, Encore at Wynn Las Vegas, Shangri-La, Mondrian, Delano and MGM's future projects will transform the north section of the Resort Corridor into the Beverly Hills of the Strip. If the south section is a Ferrari, the north section is a Rolls Royce.

Attention, budding real estate moguls, here are my suggestions for the places to go to network: The not-just-for-old-money-anymore Stirling Club, and Blush at Wynn Las Vegas. The former, at Turnberry Place, is getting a face-lift and going after younger movers and shakers than it's attracted in the past. Wanna be a member? Give Kathleen Gustafson a buzz (702.784.4603), and tell her you know me. For more of a New York-type lounge-y feel, head to Blush. Your fellow locals pack the place on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Call or text V.I.P. host Robert Montero (702.612.2789) for guest list or table reservations.

## Top Three Most Exciting Announcements for the North Section of the Strip

— The Plaza Hotel out of New York: This \$5 billion-plus mega-project is expected to deliver a level of opulence never before seen in Sin City. The New Frontier Hotel is rumored to be scheduled for an implosion on November 13 at 2 a.m., and groundbreaking for The Plaza Hotel Las Vegas will be in 2008, aiming for a 2011 debut.

— Echelon by Boyd Gaming: This \$5 billion undertaking, which is under construction, sits directly next door to The Plaza and will feature high-end retail, boutique hotels and entertainment. Its unveiling is expected in 2011.

— MGM Mirage projects: MGM Mirage has assembled 108 acres that start at Las Vegas Boulevard and Sahara Avenue. With the success of CityCenter and partnership with Dubai World and Kerzner, you can expect something major to happen. Announcements should start surfacing in 2008.

## VIVA! Latest Happenings

- The Fontainebleau sales center is under construction next door to Sky Las Vegas.
- Residents of Allure begin moving in this month.
- Encore at Wynn Las Vegas has hit the 54th floor and will top out by the end of the month.
- A stunning rendering of The Plaza Hotel Las Vegas has leaked. Look for it on VegasTodayAndTomorrow.com

**They don't call me "Hollywood's Connection to Vegas" for nothing. Wanna talk? Google me.**

