

An Old Friend Returns

by John Yee

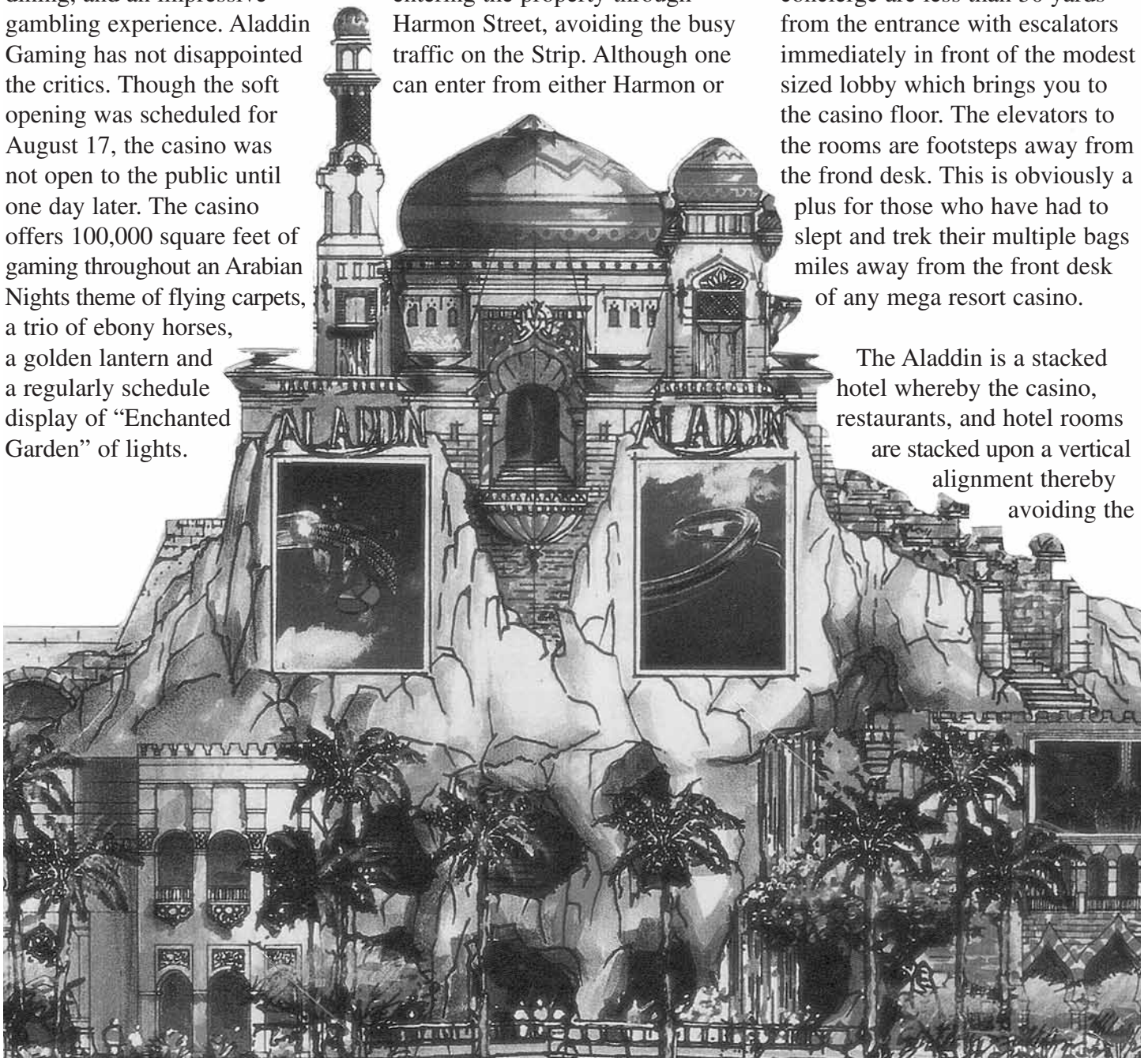


On April 27, 1998, the Aladdin was imploded to make way for a \$1.4 billion mega casino which promised elegant shopping, dining, and an impressive gambling experience. Aladdin Gaming has not disappointed the critics. Though the soft opening was scheduled for August 17, the casino was not open to the public until one day later. The casino offers 100,000 square feet of gaming throughout an Arabian Nights theme of flying carpets, a trio of ebony horses, a golden lantern and a regularly schedule display of "Enchanted Garden" of lights.

On September 8, a number of us had the pleasure of touring the property with Fred Lewis, manager of public relations. We began by entering the property through Harmon Street, avoiding the busy traffic on the Strip. Although one can enter from either Harmon or

Las Vegas Boulevard, signs were easy to read and much of the touch-up construction is pleasantly hidden. The front desk and the concierge are less than 30 yards from the entrance with escalators immediately in front of the modest sized lobby which brings you to the casino floor. The elevators to the rooms are footsteps away from the front desk. This is obviously a plus for those who have had to slept and trek their multiple bags miles away from the front desk of any mega resort casino.

The Aladdin is a stacked hotel whereby the casino, restaurants, and hotel rooms are stacked upon a vertical alignment thereby avoiding the



need to cross the casino in order to walk from one destination to another. There are very attractive advantage points that allow you to view the casino, restaurants, guestrooms and retail stores at once. The four story high ceiling over the casino floor creates a wonderful sense of space and openness which makes the "eyes in the sky" as unobtrusive as possible. We soon welcomed the stacked configuration when walking through-out parts of the 34-acre property.

The Aladdin features the following amenities:

- Over 130 retail shops in the Desert Passage
- 21 world-class restaurants
- A 7,000 seat Theatre for the Performing Arts
- A 100,000 square foot casino
- The London Club, 35,000 square feet of a European style luxury gaming salon
- 2,567 guest rooms
- Two outdoor pools
- 75,000 square feet of meeting rooms

An interesting fact is that a few of the original Aladdin slot machines were refurbished

and are the only items retained from the original Aladdin. Evidently, they are not using any of the slot card or rated player information either.

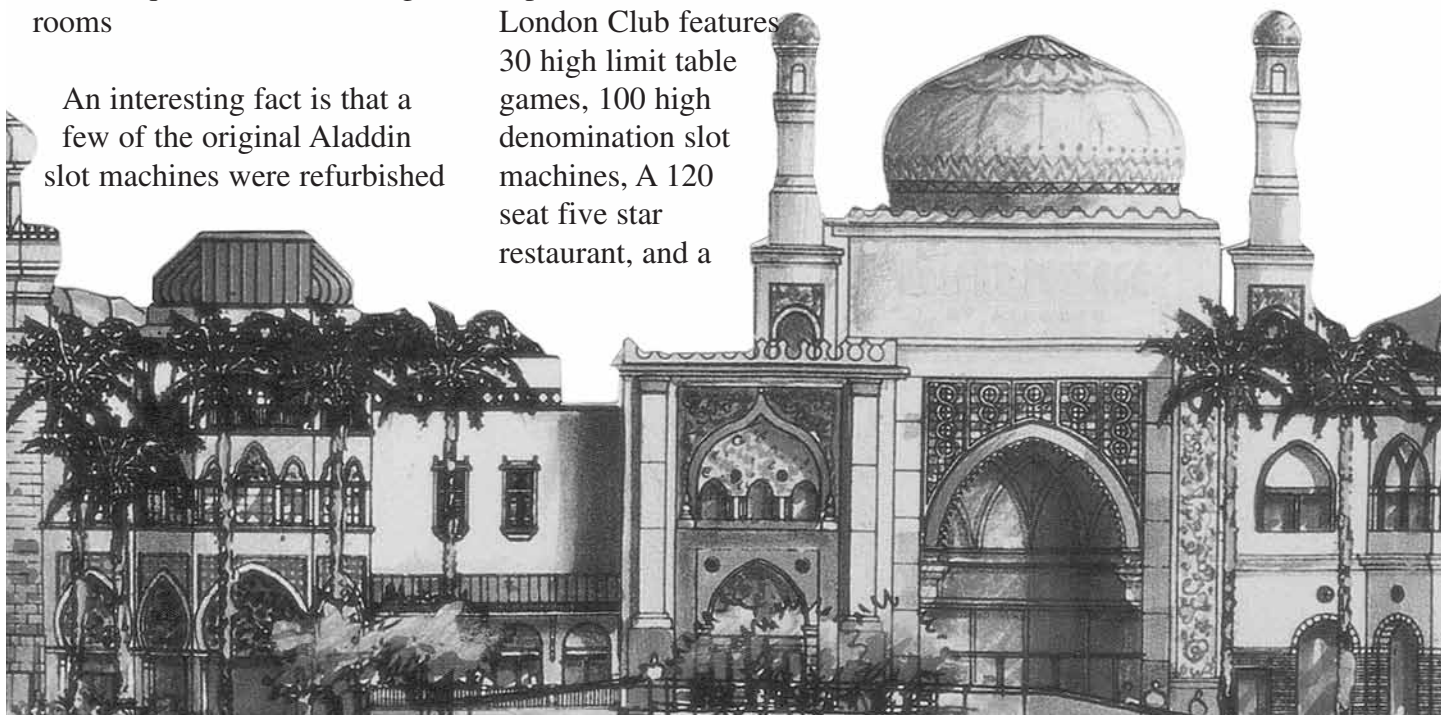
The "Enchanted Garden", the world's largest indoor light board spans 130 feet and displays vibrant blooming flowers every so often was created by Mikohn. In the middle of the casino is a 35-foot magic lamp which is the centerpiece of the casino. Three Ebony Horses towers over the Race & Sports Book, each horse representing three major horse races, Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont.

The high end slots and gaming tables are located in Sinbad's Palace but I think they will soon find that much of their business will be cannibalized by the London Club, one floor up. The highlight of our tour was walking through the London Club, separate from the main casino. The London Club features 30 high limit table games, 100 high denomination slot machines, A 120 seat five star restaurant, and a

private lounge and reception area. Though there were few players midday, it gave us the chance to talk to the dealers. The female dealers wore a neutral colored flesh colored evening gown and the male dealers were adorned in suits and ties. Having spoken to a few dealers, I found The London Club hired a few dealers with no gaming experience so they could be trained in their own unique English style.

We toured the restaurant and were impressed with the elegance of the crystal glasses, plates, silverware, and wooden floors. The restaurant featured private dining rooms some with views of the strip and another with the view of the kitchen.

Next to the restaurant is the St. James Club, a members only club that has the use of a fabulous bar and private dining area.

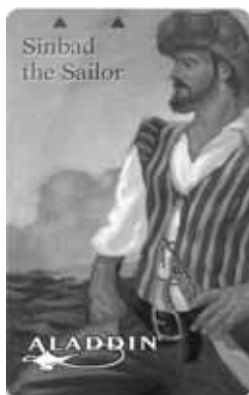


As we returned to The London Club casino, we were introduced to Derek Llambias, Director, assigned from the headquarters in London. The London Club has casinos operating throughout the word, but this casino must still adhere to the guidelines of Nevada Gaming.

Derek passed us the \$10,000,000 plaque, which gave us a chance to be photograph with the largest denomination gambling piece ever produced. The plaque, 151 x 105 mm (about 4 inches by 6 inches) is produced by Bourgoigne et Grasset of which only one is kept in the cage. There is also a \$5,000,000 and a \$1,000,000 plaque in the cage.



The Aladdin currently has four different room keys each depicting a different theme. The registration staff was genuinely kind and respectful of our request for additional keys.



Although The London Club has its own slot card variety, the main casino and The London Club can use the same slot card which is a beautiful metallic blue card with a lantern on the front. In my opinion, the Aladdin is the most beautiful slot card in Las Vegas next to the Venetian.

The house chips are beautifully designed Paulson chips each depicting a different theme but with the same design on both sides. Limited edition chips were produced in the \$5 and \$25 only.

The London Club uses 43-millimeter chips on their baccarat chips and the \$1, \$5, and \$20 are depicted below. They use the same house chips as the Aladdin.

The slot tokens come in a variety of different sizes and colors. All the tokens are metal aligned and have the mintmark "RWM", Robert Williams Mint on the reverse. The \$1 is a 38-millimeter token with a "1" and the trademark Aladdin with the lamp in the center. The reverse has a genie lamp in the center.

The \$5 token measures 44-millimeter and is very similar to

the \$1 token. The reverse depicts the Ebony Horse flapping its wings about to fly away. All the tokens have the year of opening on the obverse.

The \$25 Token is approximately 47-millimeters. It's bi-metal design with the slogan, "Where Wishes Come True" on the obverse. The reverse depicts a genie emerging from lantern holding a banner with the word "Aladdin" on it.

The \$100 token measures 39-millimeters and is the only one of the lot which has reeded edges. The token is two toned and on the reverse is a picture of a Palace.

The Desert Passage, over 100 retail shops is near full occupancy. The layout is in the design of a horseshoe and nearly 1/4 of a mile in circumference. The ceiling painted in sky blue with an occasional cloud is very much like those at Caesar's Forum and at the Venetian.

With the history the club has with the Aladdin, it would be a joy to return to the Aladdin for future conventions. I highly recommend visiting this new casino for its charm and well thought out design. ♦

