



by Allan Anderson

Just north of the University of Nevada in Reno on North Virginia Street sits one of Reno's best kept secrets, The Bonanza Casino.

In 1973 the Bonanza Casino was licensed for 30 slots. Lou Benetti Jr. and Don Baldwin owned 50 percent of the casino which opened in September 1973. In 1974 Robert McDonald and Robert Douglass each bought a third of the casino. In 1975 Russ Sheltra obtained 25 percent of the property and in 1977 the Bonanza Casino was approved for blackjack with an initial 6 tables. There are currently 8 table games. In 1980 Pat Brady obtained 2 percent of the casino from Russ Sheltar and Robert McDonald.

The Bonanza Casino has gone through two major expansions. One in 1989 and another one which was completed in 1996.

The Bonanza Casino has approximately 450 slot machines on the casino floor, ranging in denomination from 1¢ to \$5 including over 65

Penny slot machines with all of the newest and most popular themes. The casino also offers \$100,000 dollar Keno, Million Dollar Ticket and a Cal-Neva Sportbook. The Bonanza Casino is one of only three Northern Nevada casinos to offer Nevada Numbers. Catch five of five numbers with a \$2 bet and you'll win a \$5 million progressive jackpot! The numbers are drawn nightly at 6 p.m. The Bonanza Casino remains the *only* casino that offers \$1 single deck blackjack, 25¢ roulette and 25¢ craps.

The Bonanza Restaurants offer a variety of food for everyone's tastes. The Branding Iron is open 24 hours and offers a variety of menu specialties including American, Italian, Mexican and Seafood favorites as well as daily specials. A popular part of the Branding Iron is the daily buffet.

Cactus Creek offers a large selection of Southwestern specialties as well as seafood, steak and ribs. All of the dishes are prepared daily with only the freshest ingredients. Top the evening off with one of their deca-





dent desserts made by award winning pastry chefs. The wine selections rivals any restaurant in the area with the lowest prices of any casino in the Reno area.

The casino has recently unveiled its new guest loyalty rewards program.

Dubbed “Fort Cavalry”, the program takes a different spin on levels of play. Rather than the traditional “silver, gold, diamond” plateaus, Fort Reno Cavalry rankings are taken from military characters from the old west. All new enlistees will hold the rank of Private, with promotions to Captain, Colonel and General awarded based on play. The higher the rank, the greater the rewards.

The Bonanza Casino’s guest loyalty program is unique to Northern Nevada as it is the only casino to offer rewards wherever money is spent within the casino, not just gaming. Guests who frequent the Cactus Creek Southwestern Steakhouse, Branding Iron Cafe, casino bars or the property’s gift shop will earn merit points for purchases. Slots, keno, craps, roulette and black jack players will also earn merit points, which in turn can be used for discounts for



Craps Table



purchases. The rewards will also include invitations to local events, concerts, athletic events and much more.

Photos courtesy Bonanza Casino  
Chip scans courtesy Larry Hollibaugh



The Pit

