

LAS VEGAS: ALL HAIL CAESARS FOR SUMMER



Las Vegas is buzzing year-round but with Qatar Airways launching direct flights in 2018, now is the time to appeal to Gulf holidaymakers, according to Susan Moore, vice president of leisure for Caesars Entertainment

Would it be fair to say you're looking to attract more GCC travellers to the famous Strip?

When we heard the announcement from Qatar about the new flight starting next year, it was time to double our efforts in the Middle East market. Air lift is definitely a game changer. To have that service is huge for us and I was fortunate enough to be there when the first non-stop flight from London was announced – and now we're up to 22 a week! We're hoping for the same thing for this part of the world.

So what new and interesting things can Gulf and family travellers expect from Caesars Entertainment Las Vegas right now?

We have 10 hotels in Las Vegas – 32 in total across the US – and it's really been about renovations for us in the last couple of years. We've renovated 5,000 rooms across the market in 2016 and we have another 7,000 on the books to be renovated this year, which is a project continuing into 2018 until every single property has been refurbished. As you can imagine with 24,000 rooms that's quite an undertaking – but it was time to do a massive refresh and it's an ongoing project that's been extremely fun and exciting to watch. Customers have whatever room type they want. If you want a non-smoking two-bed room with a view of The Strip, that's what you get. It never used to be that way in Las Vegas but we've moved towards a higher level of customer satisfaction.

What else can we expect from these renovations?

It's been dependent on each property and its needs. Caesars Palace is our flagship property and the public areas have been well maintained, but we've added new restaurants. We also have a restaurant sitting out on The Strip, which is about to switch brands, so there's always something new and exciting to look out for both in terms of entertainment and rooms.

What can you offer your new Gulf guests aside from the gaming element?

We have 2,000 suites in Las Vegas across 10 properties and many of the high-end suites were formerly not available to the public. We recently opened

them for sales and they range from US\$350 at The Linq, our millennial property, and they go all the way to the \$35,000-a-night villas at the Palace. They also come with connecting bedrooms that can be attached to the main suite, so that's really ideal for families. The nice thing about the product is they're all contained on one site (www.caesarssuites.com).

What's happening over the summer in terms of events and activities?

There's never a "not busy" time but the summer heat makes it perfect pool weather. It's just a really fun atmosphere with entertainment and DJs around the pool that's become its own culture in recent years. There's healthy competition among the hotels for who has the best day club; for instance Drai's at The Cromwell – our only boutique on The Strip – is a pool on the rooftop and their day club is one of the most popular and also turns into a nightclub in the evening. Drai's is definitely one of the best along with the seven [Garden of the Gods] pools at Caesars Palace. Every property has its own personality so it really depends on what suits the guest. There are exciting things coming in terms of celebrity chefs, but I'm not sure I can share the details yet. Gordon Ramsay now has four restaurants in Las Vegas but his signature venue is called Steak at Paris and it's one of the most popular, reminiscent of the tube in London – one of my personal favourites – but he also opened a fish-and-chips restaurant in The Linq promenade where the High Roller (Ferris wheel) is, which is fun and doing well.

Can you tell us something exciting about the destination outside of the hotels?

We have a partnership with Papillon Tours and our guests can book a two-for-one trip to the Grand Canyon in a helicopter or plane. They pick you up the hotel, take you to their airport and you can be at the Grand Canyon in an hour, instead of a five-and-half-hour drive. It really should be on everyone's itinerary. There's also headline entertainment at The Coliseum with Celine Dion and other headliners on rotation, including Elton John, Rod Stewart and others – so make sure you check before you book your trip.



A CAP FOR BELMOND'S FEATHERS

WASTING NO TIME IN ITS RECENT COMMITMENT to double the size of its collection by 2020, luxury travel and hotel operator Belmond has announced the acquisition of Cap Juluca in Anguilla. Showcasing chic luxury throughout Greco-Moorish-inspired grounds, the award-winning resort is spread across two crescent-shaped coves, where guests can lounge on a secluded and unspoiled beach amid a laid-back atmosphere. If that all sounds pretty tempting, just wait, because it's

about to get even better. Once the 2017 festive season comes to a close, Belmond will begin an ambitious US\$121-million refurbishment project which will revamp furnishings in the suites and villas, develop new locally inspired dining concepts, see spa enhancements, and create new and renovated public areas. Upping the property's keys to 121, an additional 25 beachfront villas and suites will be unveiled – making this iconic Caribbean getaway one to watch once again.

DON'T MISS

PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS HAS LAUNCHED A NEW MOBILE APP, IPREFER, SIMPLIFYING ITS AWARDS PROGRAMME. THE APP WILL ALSO NOTIFY MEMBERS ABOUT SPECIAL OFFERS AND INCLUDE A CONCIERGE CHAT SERVICE SO YOU CAN BOOK RESTAURANT AND SPA RESERVATIONS ON A WHIM



BETTING ON BAHA

AFTER A SERIES OF DELAYS AND FALSE STARTS, the seemingly beleaguered – but fantastically ambitious – Baha Mar resort complex in Nassau, Bahamas, is finally accepting guests. Grand Hyatt Baha Mar, an 1,800-key luxury resort, is the first of the complex's hotels to open, and although only a portion of the overall destination has launched, Hyatt's guests will still have plenty to keep them busy. Activities include 20 F&B options, a 9,000-sqm casino, a 2,700-sqm ESPA Spa, a golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus, and situated on Cable Beach with cheerful-looking cabanas and a number of pool areas, it looks like the best way to get acquainted with this new destination is to grab a tropical tippie and jump right in.

PERU, ITS PEOPLE AND YOU

ARACARI IS CRACKING OPEN ITS LITTLE BLACK book of fascinating Peruvian contacts – relationships cultivated from the operator's more-than 20 years' experience in the country. The just-launched Private Homes of Peru Collection is a must-do for travellers in Lima, Cusco or the Sacred Valley, allowing unrivalled access to the culture. For insight into Lima's history, Casa Aliaga includes a special tour of the home, which dates back to the 1500s and has seen 17 generations of the same family reside under its roof. Equestrians can get up close and personal with the country's Paso breed of horse with a day trip to Hacienda Santa Rosa, and watch them in action through a dressage demonstration. And no trip to Peru is complete without digging into its Incan history, which can be explored just north of Cusco, at Hacienda Huayoccar, a living museum of Peruvian art and artefacts – an experience exclusively available to Aracari guests.