



# Cities of entertainment

*Upward Curve* visits Las Vegas, Macau, Monaco and Melbourne – the casino capitals of the world

**W**hen Howard Hughes checked into the Desert Inn penthouse in 1966 – and never left – mob interests were displaced by corporate conglomerates in Nevada. But Monaco had been at since 1863 when Princess Consort of Monaco, Caroline, saved the monarchy from bankruptcy. Whether slot machines or table games are choice of the evening, these four spots simply have to be visited.

## THE VENETIAN MACAO

A little over ten years ago, Las Vegas Sands opened the biggest casino in the world – with 51,000m<sup>2</sup> of gaming space. It was the autonomous territory's first integrated resort, quadrupling Macau's casino revenue from HK\$55bn in 2006

to HK\$217bn last year – nearly five times the intake of the Vegas Strip. In that decade, Macau visitor arrivals have expanded from 22 million to a projected 32 million.

In 2017, The Venetian was voted World's Leading Hotel Dining & Entertainment Experience at the 24th Annual World Travel Awards Grand Final Gala Ceremony.

"The Venetian Macao with its newly refurbished rooms and suites is a wonderful place to stay," said Mark McWhinnie, Senior Vice President of Resort Operations and Development, Sands China Ltd.

"These prestigious awards are a testament to the consistently high level of quality and service we offer and our excellence in the hospitality industry."

Modelled on sister resort The Venetian Las Vegas, the hotel offers the Paiza Club for premium guests with individual private gaming rooms and the exclusive Paiza Club Dining and Lounge. The Presidente Paiza suite – a 12-berth suite with four bedrooms – provides

**Top: Macau's iconic casino has a major impact on the city's skyline Below: Casino square, Place du Casino de Monte-Carlo**

the most luxurious accommodation available. [venetianmacao.com](http://venetianmacao.com) ➤





**Left: The electricity is palpable inside MGM Grand Below: Venice in Macau where themes dominate real estate and rituals**

### MGM GRAND LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas is the ultimate pilgrimage for casino-goers and entertainment-seekers across the world. With almost 16,000m<sup>2</sup> of gaming space, the godfather of casinos pulls in tens of thousands of patrons every week.

The sparkling jewel in the desert metropolis dates back to the late 1960s when eighth-grade dropout Kirk Kerkorian announced himself as an early pioneer of Sin City. After opening the International Hotel with Barbra Streisand and Elvis Presley, he built the MGM Grand Hotel larger than the Empire State Building.

Today, the complex features five outdoor pools, rivers and waterfalls – as well as the David Copperfield Theatre, Grand Spa and Garden Arena. Skyboxes at The Race and Sports Book offer private entertainment for large groups while the Skylofts – a AAA Five Diamond, Forbes Five-Star Hotel – take the top two floors.

And when the MGM Grand has given its all – which is a quite extraordinary offering – The Tropicana, Tropicana Avenue and New York-New York are a short stroll over the linked pedestrian bridges.

Away from the casinos, The Rio Wine Cellar and Tasting Room is home to a \$10m treasure trove that includes a vertical collection of Chateau d'Yquem and a bottle of Madeira from Thomas Jefferson's personal stash. [mgmgrand.com](http://mgmgrand.com)

### CROWN MELBOURNE

First opened in 1997 Crown Melbourne is licensed to operate 2,628 electronic gaming machines and 540 table games. Located on the attractive Yarra River, it remains one of the central features of the Southbank precinct of the Melbourne central business district.

Crown provides the six main casino games of blackjack, craps, pai gow, poker, baccarat and roulette but it was also the first to introduce an electronic version of roulette known as Rapid Roulette. There is also Bigwheel, the electronic Vegas Star Roulette and Rapid Baccarat. The Crown is one of the major centres for competitive poker in the Asia-Pacific region. It annually hosts the Aussie Millions, currently the Southern Hemisphere's richest poker event. Starting in 2013, it became home to the World Series of Poker Asia-Pacific, the latest expansion of the World Series of Poker.

With Dinner by Heston Blumenthal and Nobu Melbourne, and luxury brand stores including Harrods, Prada, Burberry, and Louis Vuitton and Bulgari, this makes a great base when visiting Melbourne.

Its VIP program is driven by an extensive international clientele, particularly from Asia, while its main gaming floor attracts tourists and locals alike. [crownmelbourne.com.au](http://crownmelbourne.com.au)

### CASINO DE MONTE-CARLO

Perhaps the grandest of all casinos, the Casino de Monte-Carlo offers its prestigious customers a quite unique experience in a truly historical setting with classic European décor. This illustrious playground has, however, entered a new era, and is now known to host surrealist dinners and boxing events. It may be the second

smallest independent state on earth, but Monaco benefits from its international reputation, and the casino is well placed at the heart of the Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer resort, which offers a multitude of world class entertainment and gastronomy.

But while the red carpeted steps may be lined with fine-tuned Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Bentleys, and Rolls Royce's to welcome the rich and famous, the casino is also in tune with local life and its neighbours. With European Roulette, Trente et Quarante, Black Jack, English Roulette and Ultimate Texas Hold'em Poker tables, it has managed to stay relevant while retaining that magic charm.

Panoramic views can be enjoyed across the Riviera from tables on the Salle Blanche & Terrasse or the veranda of the Salons Super Privés and world-renowned restaurants Le Train Bleu and Le Salon Rose.

Perhaps the smoothest entrance to Casino de Monte-Carlo was witnessed in Goldeneye when Pierce Brosnan arrived from Monaco's winding, cliff-side roads, handed in the keys to his DB5 and glided into the casino for a bout of Baccarat. [casinomontecarlo.com](http://casinomontecarlo.com) ■

