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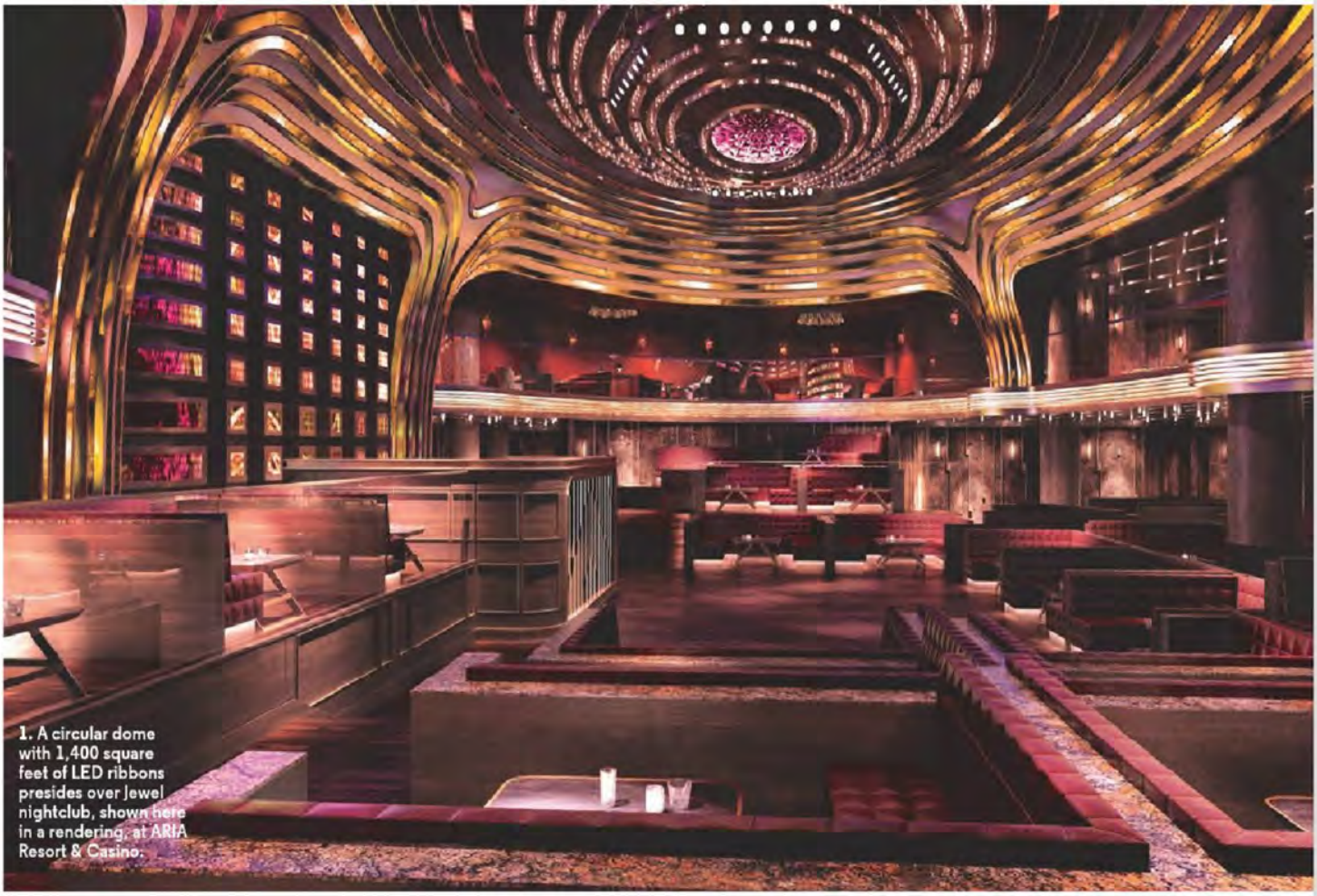
By Alia Akkam



1. A circular dome with 1,400 square feet of LED ribbons presides over Jewel nightclub, shown here in a rendering, at ARIA Resort & Casino.

HIGH ROLLING

Sin City development doubles down

Las Vegas is always in flux, with an abundance of restaurant, nightlife, and hotel developments sprouting and rearranging the constantly enthralling hospitality landscape. From redos of older classics, to the debut of a diverse array of nightclubs and dining outlets, here's a look at some recent highlights on and off the Strip.

Anniversary Updates

In the midst of Sin City's myriad changes—like Starwood Hotels & Resorts' conversion of the SLS Las Vegas Hotel & Casino's Lux Tower into a W Hotel—Caesars Palace is currently reveling in its golden anniversary. Fifty years later, the Roman history-inspired hotel and casino continues to thrive on the Strip. Naturally, to commemorate this milestone, it now sports a contemporary new look.

After a $75 million overhaul, the property's iconic Roman Tower has transformed into the Julius Tower, a task handled by Los Angeles-based KNA Design. Creative director Michael Medeiros envisioned the revamp as a separate boutique hotel, "a more subtle, monochromatic space with a pop of color to create a respite from the otherwise high energy of the casino floor."

The 587 guestrooms are muted, punctuated by hues of freesia yellow and Aegean blue. Bespoke chaise lounges reference ancient Greek klismos chairs, while "artwork pays homage to draped Roman statues, but is given a fresh twist by dressing the black and white photos with hand-drawn Jubilee! showgirl-like costumes," says Medeiros. Upholstered headboards flaunting bronzed framed mirror panels help make the rooms feel larger, he explains. "Because this was an existing tower, the room size is smaller than those built more recently. A key factor inherent in the design process was coming up with ways to maximize the space or create the illusion of such," he says, adding that the entry's stone floor, for example, creates a sense of luxury and openness, extending the feel of the bathroom.

Photo by ANTHONY MAIR

2. Some of the Still's walls are clad in distressed barn wood, while the sports bar's seating is done in various tones of relaxed leather.

3. The entrance to the Mr Chow outpost at Caesars Palace.

4. A rendering of the residentially inspired salon lounge at Red Rock Resort & Spa, where wood screens divide the spaces.

In these spa-like retreats, the walls are covered with two-tone stone patterns, there are double-sink floating vanities, and custom-lit mirrors reinterpret ionic columns.

As Caesars Palace ushers in another decade, it also celebrates the arrival of Mr Chow, the seventh outpost of the glittery Chinese restaurant. The centerpiece of the white Venetian plaster and Plexiglas-lined dining room, designed by restaurateur Michael Chow, is undoubtedly the "The Moon," a 3,800-pound fiberglass and aluminum sculpture that morphs into different configurations revealing its blue interior during four-minute shows throughout the evening.

F&B Refresh

Another popular dining concept, California chef Brian Malarkey's seafood restaurant Herringbone—operated by Hakkasan Group—has now landed at ARIA Resort & Casino, where the focal point is Toronto-based Studio Munge's greenery-swathed patio. Inside, light wood furnishings meld with rich plaid fabrics that call to mind English manors.

Principal Alessandro Munge has also lent his design savvy to a number of Vegas projects in tandem with Clique Hospitality. At Green Valley Ranch Resort in Henderson, for example, there is newcomer Bottiglia Enoteca, which mixes cement tiles with whitewashed walls and dusty rose-colored velvet. The Still, a craft beer and sports haven at the Mirage, boasts 22 TVs and a refurbished Airstream for a kitchen. "By cladding the walls with distressed barn wood and weathered brick, we instantly gave the space its raw base personality," says Munge. "To add warmth and comfort, sofas, chairs, and stools were upholstered with relaxed leathers in timeless shades of oxblood, natural tan, and mustard."

Nightlife Evolution

Las Vegas has long been fueled by pulsating-into-the-wee-hours experiences but Vegas veteran Andy Masi, Clique's co-founder, says that scene is shifting. "Five years ago Vegas visitors were looking for a huge party—loud, bass-filled music they could dance to in an overfilled nightclub," he says. "Now, the average guest is looking for a more intimate experience. A large room with one DJ doesn't get the job done anymore when it lacks unique cocktails, design, and human interaction. The Vegas visitor is now seeking a story."

Clique Hospitality responded to this desire with Clique Bar & Lounge on the casino floor of the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, in which Studio Munge crafted a paneled partition from amber

5. A rendering of the grandstand area at Hyde Lounge at the Las Vegas T-Mobile Arena.

6. Clique Bar & Lounge's illuminated coved ceiling shines through a suspended screen.

7. Furniture is accented with plaid fabric and blue stitching at Herringbone Las Vegas.

smoked glass and dark wood, complemented by a mocha and gold end-grain pattern carpet tile. An illuminated coved ceiling shining through an ornate, suspended screen lights the room.

Likewise, Wynn Las Vegas shuttered Tryst nightclub to make way for Intrigue, with a glass-enclosed patio and cozier 1,200-square-foot club within the massive space. Nick McCabe, president of Hakkasan Group, "spent the last four years here focusing on filling multi-room mega clubs, and while our success in that regard has been very satisfying, we're all excited about the opportunity for a venue that allows us to delve into a different type of experience," he explains. Enter Jewel, inside ARIA, opening this month. Designed by New York-based Rockwell Group, it features tiered, quilted burgundy leather banquettes and a bar fashioned from granite and wood enclosed in a variegated herringbone pattern. The star attraction: a circular dome ceiling throbbing with 1,400 square feet of LED ribbons. "Jewel will be like the best house party you were never invited to," McCabe adds.

Another coveted late-night destination is Hyde Lounge—a collaboration between sbe, AEG, and MGM International—tucked inside the Las Vegas T-Mobile Arena, a new 20,000-seat indoor entertainment venue designed by Kansas City-based Populous. A moody, masculine, 18,000-square-foot refuge designed by sbe's Dakota Development and Toronto-based DesignAgency, Hyde is outfitted with dramatic lighting, stitched leather, and gold accents. "It's an elevated lounge experience that is sexy, playful, and sophisticated—a new way to experience some of the biggest events Las Vegas will offer," says DesignAgency principal Matt Davis. "Hyde Lounge is the spectacle within the spectacle."

Off-Strip Respite

In contrast to these high-energy settings, the Red Rock Resort & Spa has a refreshed salon and spa courtesy of Sharilyn Olson Rigdon, principal of Portland, Oregon-based designstudio ltd. "We wanted to create an extension of a residence for the guest," she explains. "Our inspiration was the LA garden house, reminiscent of many midcentury houses blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces." For the new look, which stays true to the resort's Palms Springs modernist vision but also considers thoughtful Italian detailing of that era, Rigdon and her team embraced luxe materials like textured limestone, marble, and Venetian plaster. The furnishings hew residential, uniting natural leather, linen, and gold and copper accents. Even the gym matches this graceful aesthetic, with ottomans and pulled leather benches that recall "old-school equipment with boxing glove lacing details on the upholstered pieces," says Rigdon.

Wood screens now divide the rooms in the salon, and a wood trellis overhead is marked by a big floral print that conjures the garden. For this new incarnation of the spa, the emphasis was on bringing a more wellness-focused social aspect to the spaces, she adds. One new feature is a mind and body studio, clad in textured white oak panels and bronze glass, overlooking the pool. The updated pool deck also encourages guests to mingle or, among the shaded seating of the "shower garden," find sanctuary. hd