

places **las vegas**

By JoAnn Greco and Stacy Shoemaker Rauon

### STRIP TEASE

Las Vegas is back, evident in the millions of dollars being spent across multiple properties. Here's an insider's guide to what's new and exciting—whether or not you're traveling to HD Expo.

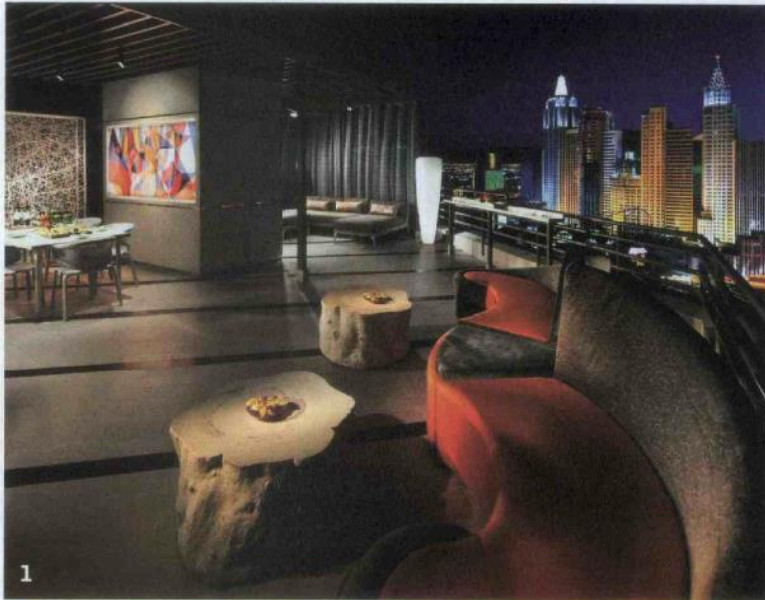


#### MGM Grand

For the \$160 million room and suite remodel of the company's flagship property, it was important for MGM's in-house design team "to create something that was unique in terms of the experience—that uniqueness is a blend of comfort and the bling of Vegas," says Joyen Vakil, vice president of design and development. MGM Resorts International.

That translated into a backdrop of warm earth tones with splashes of color—tangerine and bronze in king rooms; fuchsia, platinum, and charcoal in queen rooms—found on luxe fabrics, artwork, and whimsical carpet patterns. The standouts: two-bedroom Skyline Marquee suites, which come stocked for entertaining with a billiards table and media area in the great room, and the two-story Skyline Terrace suites, which boast a spacious balcony and elegant furnishings.

MGM has also made headlines with its Stay Well collection of 42 rooms and suites designed to do just what the name implies. "We're finding that guests want to take their wellness lifestyle on the road," explains Vakil. The rooms include a variety of features meant to make guests feel better, from jetlag-reversing wake-up light therapy and an air purification system to shower water infused with Vitamin C and aromatherapy. And this is more than just a trend, says Vakil: "Guests have been paying a premium and seeking and asking for them. We are still in the pilot phase right now, but I think this is



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1. Guests enjoy heady views from the balcony of MGM Grand's Skyline Terrace suite.

2. Bold colors and classic patterns mingle in Bellagio's Penthouse suite.





something we might start introducing in other rooms as well."

On the F&B side, the hotel is making a statement with its newest—and largest—offering: Hakkasan restaurant and nightclub. Encompassing 80,000 square feet spread over five floors (two floors of restaurant, three top floors of club, all with distinct environments), the Gilles & Boissier design—a modern interpretation of the classic chinoiserie—is just as dramatic as the space. Bruno Veninga, part of Hakkasan's design and development team, says the most show-stopping elements are the golden shimmering perimeter wall on the third level; and on the fourth and fifth floors, a "spider web" interpretation of a cage enveloping the entire club space brought to life by a large LED display, and an indoor/outdoor pavilion, which channels a classic Chinese garden with its lifelike plantings,

water features, and screens, is another highlight. "The screen element is a language evident throughout the restaurant and club that ties all the spaces together," he says.

#### Bellagio

"Bellagio has a loyal following, and Bellagio customers really know what they want. And they have come to expect a level of comfort and luxury out of that property, both in terms of the service and ambiance. That was our inspiration," explains Vakil of his team's \$40 million refresh of Bellagio's Spa Tower. "Bellagio is classic. We didn't want to necessarily change that, but we did want to refresh it. However, we needed to contemporary classic-ness."

In the 928 rooms and suites, expect to see colors—either a green tea and plum or an amber and butterscotch mix—

3. A rendering of Mandalay Bay's Daylight Beach Club, which the Light Group's Andy Masi says evokes the party atmosphere of Ibiza.

4. The casual dining room of Citizens Kitchen & Bar.

inspiration, so we put images of everyday activity of the walls—art, fashion, and hard-working real families," says Alessandro Munge, the firm's managing partner. Elsewhere in the almost

inspiration, so we put images of everyday activity of the walls—art, fashion, and hard-working real families," says Alessandro Munge, the firm's managing partner. Elsewhere in the almost 7,000-square-foot space (formerly Red, White, and Blue restaurant), Munge dressed the walls in walnut wood done in a warm white-gray wash and beveled hunter green high-gloss tile, detailed banquette-style seating with buttons and stitching, and scattered vintage-style Edison lights and metallic-toned fixtures throughout for a warm glow. "They were designed by us literally on a napkin," Munge says. He's now working on the Light Group's Japanese restaurant Kumi, set to open this summer, which will be outfitted in raw natural woods, hammered steel accents, touches of red lacquer, and a ceiling of gold leaf calligraphy set against a matte black background.

### Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino

The 120-acre resort is undergoing a massive revitalization, most noticeably in its F&B components. Partnering with the Light Group, the hotel now boasts Light Nightclub, Daylight Beach Club, Citizens Kitchen & Bar, and Red Square restaurant.

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