

# LINQ complex is a playground for millennials

*Hip and playful with an edge, it's not what many expect from Las Vegas*



ROCHELLE LASH

The opening of the hip and playful LINQ entertainment complex has rocked Las Vegas, the town that has seen everything from naked showgirls to a swim-with-sharks adventure.

The LINQ is Vegas with edge. It embraces three new, young-in-spirit elements, all designed for the millennial generation, and all darlings of Twitter and Instagram: the buzzy, colourful LINQ Hotel & Casino; the High Roller, the world tallest observation wheel; and The LINQ Promenade, an engaging walkway of shops, restaurants and amusements that will please your inner child.

With trees, fountains, sidewalk cafés and cute boutiques, the car-free Promenade is a high-energy marketplace with an entirely new vibe for Vegas. You'll be like a kid in a candy store at Sprinkles Cupcakes, Ghirardelli ice cream parlour and Haute Doggery. There is downtown cool at Club Tattoo and NJOY, a vaping shop, and uptown glam at Bella Scarpa and Kitson. The ultrahip Brooklyn Bowl doubles as a nightclub and concert space with capacity for 2,400.

I want to say that LINQ Promenade is wholesome, but the titillating spirit of Sin City lives on. Among the 20 or so boutiques is sexy Ruby Blue, where you can buy lacy lingerie and rhinestone handcuffs. And one of 40 bars and eateries is the 2015 version of Vegas's epic O'Shea's Casino, which operates round-the-clock for gambling, beer pong and seriously stiff drinks like the Irish margarita.

The LINQ Promenade connects with other Caesars Entertainment hotels via walkways and hotels and restaurants, creating a pedestrian neighbourhood of infinitely varied experiences. There is free Wi-Fi throughout, and the convenience of signing to your hotel room for drinks and food at many places.

The LINQ Hotel & Casino has a crazy, fun colour-block exterior in blue, green and yellow, and

high-tech, minimalist rooms.

Like most Vegas hotels, LINQ is a busy-busy place. The lobby doubles as a sprawling, jangling casino, and there is an incredible choice of food and drink, including celebrity chef Guy Fieri's Vegas Kitchen & Bar, and Hash House a Go-Go, as well as the Catalyst Bar and TAG Sport Bar.

The lounge called 3535 has TVs and private booths and a connoisseur's choice of barrel-aged spirits, beer and crafted cocktails like the Sushi-tini with wasabi-infused gin) and the roasted garlic Bloody Mary.

Guests can either check into The LINQ Hotel at the front desk (there often are lineups) or text to register from their smart phones and head up to one of about 2,400 modern rooms or suites. Privileged patrons (big spenders at the casino or those staying in cabana guest rooms or suites) can check in at a serene VIP reception lounge with refreshments.

All new, The LINQ's rooms are attractive and airy, with platform beds and modular furniture in pale wood and grey, brightened by splashes of candy-cane colour and bright abstract murals. LINQ is a budget-priced hotel — Web specials dip as low as \$60 a night (Canadian dollars), but it has such comforts as pillow-top mattresses and a new, all-natural soap, Zero% by Gilchrist and Soames.

A LINQ room is a high-tech scenario with USB outlets and an interactive TV for programming wake-up calls, in-room dining and reservations for restaurants and Las Vegas' famous shows. There is no printed material in the rooms, so no clutter and no waste.

Suites have living rooms and the two high-rolling penthouses also have dining rooms, entertainment areas, two bathrooms and multiple 47-inch flat-screen TVs. If you love pool life, LINQ has poolside guest rooms that open onto the deck with private sun-lounge patios.

With nearly 300 days of sunshine a year, Vegas hotels need amazing pool scenes. The pool at LINQ — only two months old — is a large two-level party venue, with sun loungers, day-beds and cabanas. Bachelors and bachelorettes lounge on floating bean bags and play beer pong in the



The High Roller Observation Wheel has changed the Las Vegas skyline and gives The LINQ Promenade and the new LINQ Hotel & Casino a playful, young-at-heart air. PHOTOS: CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT



The lobby lounge 3535 at the new LINQ Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas features artisan cocktails and barrel-aged spirits.

pool while DJs spin hits by Kanye West, Beyoncé and Jay-Z.

The servers deliver beach pails filled with beer on ice, and the barmen announce pop-up specials like two-for-one brews or \$5 vodka shots.

The poolside cabanas — fab venues for party groups — are like little living rooms, equipped with refreshments, refrigerators, security safes, TVs, music speakers and USB links.

The High Roller has changed Vegas' skyline — no small feat. It is a thrilling 30-minute ride high in the sky in a cabin with sweeping views of the city and the picturesque Nevada mountains beyond. Each time of day has its

own character — morning glow, afternoon sunshine, evening sparkle — and the High Roller's Happy Half-Hour has a special spellbinding feature — an open bar.

The large glass cabins accommodate 25 up to 40 people, although you can organize a private celebration (what a cocktail party) or a romantic rendezvous for two. The wheel circles slowly upward to a peak height of 167 metres (that's 20 metres shy of the top of Montreal's skyscraper Place Ville Marie, but 30 metres taller than the London Eye). Only in Vegas.

Rochelle@rochellelash.com  
twitter.com/rochellelash

IF YOU GO

**The LINQ Hotel & Casino:** 800-634-6441, 702-731-3311, the.linq.com; 3535 Las Vegas Blvd. S. (The Strip), Las Vegas. Caesars Total Rewards loyalty program applies if you book directly with hotel.

**Price:** Web specials dip to \$55 U.S., depending on availability. Regular rates for rooms and suites start at \$89 U.S. Resort fee, \$25, covers Wi-Fi, fitness centre, local calls, swimming pool for 21 and over. Guests with children can use the pools at the neighbouring Flamingo Las Vegas. Bars have Happy Hours, usually 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and 12 a.m. to closing.

**High Roller:** \$26.95 to \$36.95; Happy Half-Hour (open bar for 21 or older), times vary, \$37-\$52.

**Las Vegas:** 877-VISITLV (877-847-4858), lasvegas.com

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