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**Whether you're a local, a Strip entertainer or an NBA owner,  
Cosmopolitan is hot**



Steve Marcus

John Unwin, CEO of The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, speaks during an opening ceremony for the \$3.9 billion resort on Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2010. Ronald Wackrow, executive vice president of development for Related Companies, is at right.

**By John Katsilometes**

A couple of weeks ago, I walked into the lobby of The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, along the video-splashed pillars designed by Digital Kitchen and David Rockwell Studio and past Vesper Bar, and ran into a couple of friends I rarely see on the Strip exiting the hotel.

What are the chances, right?

At Cosmopolitan, pretty good, actually.

I then ducked into Book & Stage and happened upon another friend, then a co-worker who had earlier texted me that he was in the hotel.

What are the chances of running into yet two more people you know at Cosmopolitan?

Not bad, really.

Then I went off to Chandelier bar, for my appointed event, which was no more than just an arranged meeting with friends in town from Montana.

They hadn't seen Cosmopolitan yet, so their selecting the city's newest resort for their visit to Vegas was not that unlikely. They found the place quite smashing, which is one reason they got so very ... smashed.

And while chatting at the bar, I met Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban.

What are the odds?

Pretty good, to be honest.

All of these chance meetings, which really aren't so chance, are a reflection of Cosmopolitan's seemingly boundless appeal. Visitors are swarming to this new jewel the same way gamblers descend on a hot table on the casino floor.

Follow the energy, and you'll find Cosmopolitan.

I say this almost grudgingly, because as a Las Vegas local, I have become proudly callous to the allure of new resorts. I'm hardly alone, either. Talk to any local who has attended the debuts of the massive hotel casinos over the years, and they try to find ways to pick them apart.

Longtime Las Vegans will claim, often fairly, you're lost to find a way out of many Vegas resorts, on or off the Strip. In many instances, the parking garages are a headache. Some of our most famous hotels are criticized by those who live here as being derivative, dated, confusing, sprawling, imposing, impersonal and -- worst of all -- expensive.

But so far, Cosmopolitan has managed to catch the city's fancy, and it is not just the tourists who have been wowed. I've seen residents who spend ample time downtown, people who I've never spotted at a Strip resort, walking through Cosmopolitan. The word of mouth about this place is as strong as any resort I've encountered in the time I've lived here.

And I can't quite sort out why, specifically. It's not because Cosmopolitan is the most beautiful hotel on the Strip, a designation that is largely subjective anyway. Is it prettier than CityCenter? Impossible to make that claim. I can tell you that I attended the opening of Mandarin Oriental more than a year ago and have been several times since, and the place is simply breathtaking. The ambiance at Lobby Bar is as warm and welcoming as anywhere in the city. Is Cosmopolitan more spectacular in its offerings and execution than Vdara, Aria, Encore-Wynn Las Vegas, Bellagio, Venetian-Palazzo, Mandalay Bay, Paris, Monte Carlo, New York-New York, MGM Grand, Planet Hollywood and Luxor? All of those?

Tough call.

## Cosmopolitan Opens



What I can say is Cosmopolitan, a month and a half after opening, is still on a torrid streak. I put it to the general but vital ideal of accessibility: It is not hard to drive into or out of Cosmopolitan from Harmon Avenue, and its vertical design makes it relatively simple to find your way around the hotel.

That is true for me, anyway, as I have managed to get lost even recently at Treasure Island.

The subtleties of the amenities (doo-dah) make a big difference for those who live here. The Pizzeria ensures a cheap meal. You can usually find a place to set up at any of the hotel's bars, especially the multi-leveled Chandelier, another Rockwell-designed gem. Book & Stage has reliably strong entertainment, at no cost. Best Coast, the indie act from L.A., I found the night I ran into Cuban, was really enjoyable. Look out Thursday through Sunday for Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears, a band I caught (thanks to a flier issued by the great Craig Nyman) in December 2009 at Wasted Space at the Hard Rock Hotel.

Wasted Space, which is now just space, awaiting a new sports book at HRH.

Over the past week, I've hit Cosmopolitan twice more. Today, I had lunch at the Henry. Last week, I attended a birthday party for my buddy, Las Vegas entertainment manager, nightlife developer and former part owner of Cathouse, Seth Yudof, at Chandelier. It was quite a crowd. Carrot Top showed up, as did Flamingo comic magician Nathan Burton and Holly Madison's entourage captain (and glow stick fan) Laura Croft. Brian Thomas, who has for years portrayed the leprechaun at O'Shea's and also is the voice-over actor for Caesars Entertainment properties, was there. Also: Longtime Vegas stand-up and "Sin City Comedy" co-manager John Padon; Tony Felicetta, who drums for "Beatles the Show" at V Theater; Wranglers President Billy Johnson and his inherently patient fiance, Erica Vanlee; "Sin City Comedy" dancer and shoe designer Dorimar Bonilla; photographer Denise Truscello; photographer Erik Kabik; Vegas Tenor and photographer Bobby Black; Melinda Fator; master snake handler Steven Lee August; Amazing Johnathan's sidekick, Penny Wiggins; and soon-to-be radio co-host Tricia McCrone.

(I know I'm missing someone, so, please, bug me about that.)

Given all the options, this crew convened at Cosmopolitan. Maybe the table will turn cold, but not today, not at the only hotel in town where you run into a co-worker in the lounge, and the owner of the Dallas Mavericks just a 3-pointer away.

Cosmopolitan photos, taken on the fly



Steve Marcus

The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas is shown at sunset from the roof of Planet Hollywood on Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2010.



Leila Navidi

The Chandelier Bar at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas on Friday, Dec. 10, 2010.



The Cosmopolitan  
Marquee at The Cosmopolitan.