



Senior Travel Correspondent LLMcN, Sacramento CA: There have been two MGMs on the Las Vegas Strip. The first opened in 1973, and after a disastrous fire in 1980 that killed 85 people and injured more than 600, it was gutted. The rebuilt hotel now on the site opened as Bally's in 1986. In 1992, a brand new hotel complex was erected about a mile south on The Strip (Las Vegas Boulevard), and today is known as the MGM Grand Resort.

When the new resort opened, exterior all emerald green glass panels with a big golden MGM lion outside, the entire inside entrance area was a big fake forest maze. Among the plastic trees were life-sized images of Dorothy and her pals on the Yellow Brick Road to Oz.

Hotel owners tore that down several years later and put in more slot machines. The MGM casino area, including hundreds of machines and table games, now one of the largest in Las Vegas, occupies nearly 200,000 square feet. After nearly a decade since my first visit, I went to MGM Grand recently. It's a beautiful, luxurious and impressive resort, actually a city within a city, with more than 5,000 rooms for people who just want to pay \$100 and more a night to sleep, swim, eat and gamble.

There are the Signature towers with 600 super-luxury condo suites. For people with tons of money and want to stay in Vegas permanently or can afford an extra home, there are also the Skylofts and Mansion condos. If you have to ask the cost, you can't afford them.

There's a magnificent pool area with two-story waterfalls and scads of tropical plants. Many shops featuring pricey designer goods, a dozen gourmet restaurants, and two food courts for ordinary folks who just want quick, cheap eats.

A Vegas tradition is the buffet, and the MGM boasts a very attractive one, with many ethnic food stations and all the trimmings. Like the rest of Sin City, prices keep going higher and higher. The buffets we visited in the early 90s featured \$4 breakfasts, \$5 lunches and \$6 dinners. Buffet lunch at MGM is now \$35.

The MGM Grand offers Broadway-type extravaganzas. You could see a circus acrobatics show. From France, complete with nudies, you may experience Crazy Horse Paris. There's also the Hollywood Theatre, where major comedy, band and singers perform. When we wandered by, Jerry Seinfeld was there at \$250 a ticket.

If you're planning a Vegas vacation, and you want to experience the very best all within one property, consider the MGM Grand.