

Las Vegas venues provide ultimate concert experience

BY KRISTINE MCKENZIE
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Las Vegas has been dubbed "The Entertainment Capital of the World" for good reason – just about all of the top acts in music wind their way through the city at some point on their tour schedules.

Not only does Las Vegas lead the way in booking the biggest names in the music business, the city is also home to several of the most innovative, technologically-advanced music venues available.

In Las Vegas you don't always have to sit in the nosebleed seats of an arena trying to identify that speck on the stage as your favorite performer. The city offers several intimate venues that give music fans the chance to see their favorite bands in a much more personal way.

The Joint

The Joint, a new concert facility set to open in April at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, shares the name of the original venue that opened at the property in 1995, but will be double the size, with a total capacity of 4,000.

The new three-level venue will include 700 fixed balcony seats, as well as general admission standing room on the floor and a second level VIP area with table seating and luxury boxes. The boxes will be furnished and will include plasma TVs, wet bars, food and bottle service.

The \$60 million project, designed by Montreal-based architectural design firm Sceno Plus, is part of the Hard Rock's \$750 million expansion, which broke ground in 2007.

Paul Davis, vice president of entertainment at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, said the Joint was due for a makeover.

"The old Joint was built in 1995 so it was starting to get a little bit dated in terms of the way the market and the concert industry has evolved over the past 14 years," he said. "The market's changed and the touring industry has changed. And the property is growing... We're adding two new hotel towers and growing the size of the property, so when you factor in all those things, it would certainly mandate that we would need a larger and nicer concert venue. We're a concert-driven property, we're a music-themed property and we need to make sure we have a cutting-edge, top-of-the-market concert venue to present our artists."

Although the new venue will maintain the same atmosphere as the original, it will offer some new touches including seven VIP suites and an innovative sound and lighting system.

"The design has the same look, feel and smell as the original Joint. We were very careful that we maintained the heritage," said Davis. "We even carried over some of the same design elements, from the door handles to the brass railings and wood flooring in certain places, so if you have been



The new Joint concert facility at Hard Rock Hotel will be double the size of the original facility that shares its name, with a total capacity of 4,000. Rendering courtesy Hard Rock

Upcoming Concerts

Alliant Station
Robert Cray Band, April 11

House of Blues at Mandalay Bay
Keith Anderson & Luke Bryan, April 3
Yanis, April 12
Kottonmouth Kings, April 18

Green Valley Ranch Resort & Spa
3 Doors Down, April 3

The Pearl at the Palms
Fall Out Boy, April 5
The Cure, April 17

The Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel
The Killers, April 17
Avenge Sevenfold, April 18
Paul McCartney, April 19
Bon Jovi, April 24
Kenny Chesney, April 25

Silverton Casino Lodge
Bell Biv Devoe, April 4
Everclear, April 11
Darius Rucker, April 24

to a concert at the old Joint you will feel very comfortable walking into the new one."

The Joint will allow fans a chance to be close to their favorite bands – the farthest seat in the house is a mere 155 feet from the stage. There will also be a nine-foot by 16-foot motorized screen on each side of the stage, an 18 by 24-foot center screen for rear and front projection and 38 flat screens throughout the venue so that you won't miss a minute of the action on stage.

"It's an incredibly fan-friendly venue," said Davis. "It's a concert venue – it was not built for rodeos, it was not built for hockey – first and foremost it's built for concerts. We will be doing MMA, we will be doing boxing – it'll be a great venue for those things, but we have first and foremost the concert experience in mind for both the guests and for the artists."

Davis said the other big change in the venue is the enhanced production capabilities. "We now have a huge stage and full-on arena level production

capabilities, so instead of being a rock club like the old Joint was, we can do full-size arena shows in an intimate environment," he said.

Many of the biggest names in music have rocked The Joint over the years including The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Coldplay, The Killers, Duran Duran, Motley Crue and David Bowie. The new Joint will continue to bring in the best in the business. The opening month of the venue features a stellar lineup comprised of Paul McCartney, The Killers, Kenny Chesney and Bon Jovi.

The Pearl

The Pearl at the Palms Casino Resort opened in the spring of 2007 and has hosted concerts by some of today's most popular artists like Fall Out Boy, Gwen Stefani and Maroon 5.

George Maloof, owner of Palms Casino Resort, said his love of live music prompted him to add the concert venue to his resort.

"I'm a big music fan and I just wanted to create a venue that really was designed for live music and there was nothing in town that I felt really represented something that a fan like myself, or a music fan, could really appreciate – something that was top notch and unlike anything else. I felt there was a need in town for a venue that just focused on live music."

The Pearl is all about giving concertgoers a comfortable experience with amazing views. The three-level venue's capacity can adjust to accommodate from 1,100 to 2,400 guests. The Pearl also boasts 18 private skyboxes.

"It's the perfect atmosphere," said Maloof. The sound quality is phenomenal, sight lines are perfect, it's very intimate – you can connect right with the artist and it's just a spectacular experience – there's nothing like it. I've been to concerts around the world and it's just great. The great thing about it is that people feel the same way about it. I can sit and brag about it, but the venue really speaks for itself."

With no seating obstructions, the farthest seat from the stage is only 120 feet away, allowing bands to personally connect with the entire audience. There are two 14 by 16-foot video screens on either side of the stage and plasma screens located throughout the concourse so those who are grabbing a drink at one of the bars outside won't miss any of the show.

The Pearl features state-of-the-art lighting, video and sound systems. The sound systems, designed by SIA Acoustics, create amazing quality sound with 60 JBL Vertec series loudspeakers pumping throughout the venue.

The behind-the-scenes aspects of The Pearl are one of a kind as well. One of the most unique touches is that the concert hall is hardwired to Studio at the Palms so that bands can easily record live albums.

For fans who want to take a bit of the experience home with them, the Palms is introducing the ultimate souvenir, which will be available at some concerts. Aderra's Live in a Flash USB technology can offer immediate live recordings of concerts, DJ sets and other happenings throughout the resort. The Palms is the first property in the world to offer the new technology, which allows patrons to leave an event with a USB flash drive loaded with their live experience.

Studio at the Palms can record concerts at The Pearl and the content is instantly uploaded to a USB flash drive available in a wristband, key fob and other custom styles.

"We didn't spare a dime to create what we feel is the best experience in Las Vegas and probably the country to see a live performance," Maloof said.

House of Blues

The House of Blues has always been dedicated to bringing live music to audiences in its concert halls across the country and the Las Vegas location inside Mandalay Bay is no exception.

The venue hosts a wide variety of musical acts including alternative rock, punk, hip hop, R&B, classic

rock, country and everything in between. Upcoming shows include such diverse artists as Travis, Kevin Rudolf, Reverend Horton Heat, Queensryche and Kottonmouth Kings.

The House of Blues at Mandalay Bay opened in 1999 and is another venue where fans can see bands up close and personally. The concert hall features a rounded balcony with 500 fixed seats in 11 rows, placed only 35 feet from the stage, so the audience is basically looking right down on the performers. The lower level of the venue offers standing room to the rest of the 1,850-capacity audience and features two bars.

The Colosseum at Caesars

The Colosseum at Caesars Palace is one of the technological wonders of the Las Vegas concert scene. The three-tier, 4,300-seat theater was created for Celine Dion and is currently home to Cher and Bette Midler. Comedians like Jerry Seinfeld and musical acts like Stevie Nicks, Luciano Pavarotti and Gloria Estefan have also graced the stage at the Colosseum.

The \$95 million Colosseum was completed in 2003 and features a half-acre stage. Even though the stage is massive, the farthest seat in the house is only 120 feet away. If that's not close enough, the venue boasts the largest indoor video display in North America, an on-stage high definition LED screen, which measures 110 feet wide by 34 feet tall.

Not only is a show at the Colosseum a visual experience, it's an audio one as well, with 125,000 watts of amplification from 115 speakers and 200 acoustical panels.

Silverton Casino Lodge

The Silverton Casino Lodge is building a 13,000-square-foot entertainment pavilion that will offer a variety of concerts at reasonable prices. Over the next few months, scheduled acts, playing in a temporary venue on the site, include Everclear, Darius Rucker and Bell Biv Devoe.

Station Casinos

The Station Casinos family of resorts offers musical entertainment galore in all of its locations.

One of the stand-outs is Ovation lounge at Green Valley Ranch, which has a traditional Vegas lounge feel with a 500-person capacity and VIP booths. Even though it's small, big name acts like Kenny Loggins and Eric Burdon play there. The hotel also hosts concerts at its extensive pool area. This season, 3 Doors Down and Tears for Fears will heat up the pool concert series.

The Access Showroom at the new Alliant Station can entertain up to 650 guests and features a diverse lineup of entertainment including the Robert Cray Band, Jewel, Grand Funk Railroad and Chris Botti.

Whatever you're looking for in live music, Las Vegas has it, so don't miss the chance to see your favorite band in one of the city's intimate concert venues.