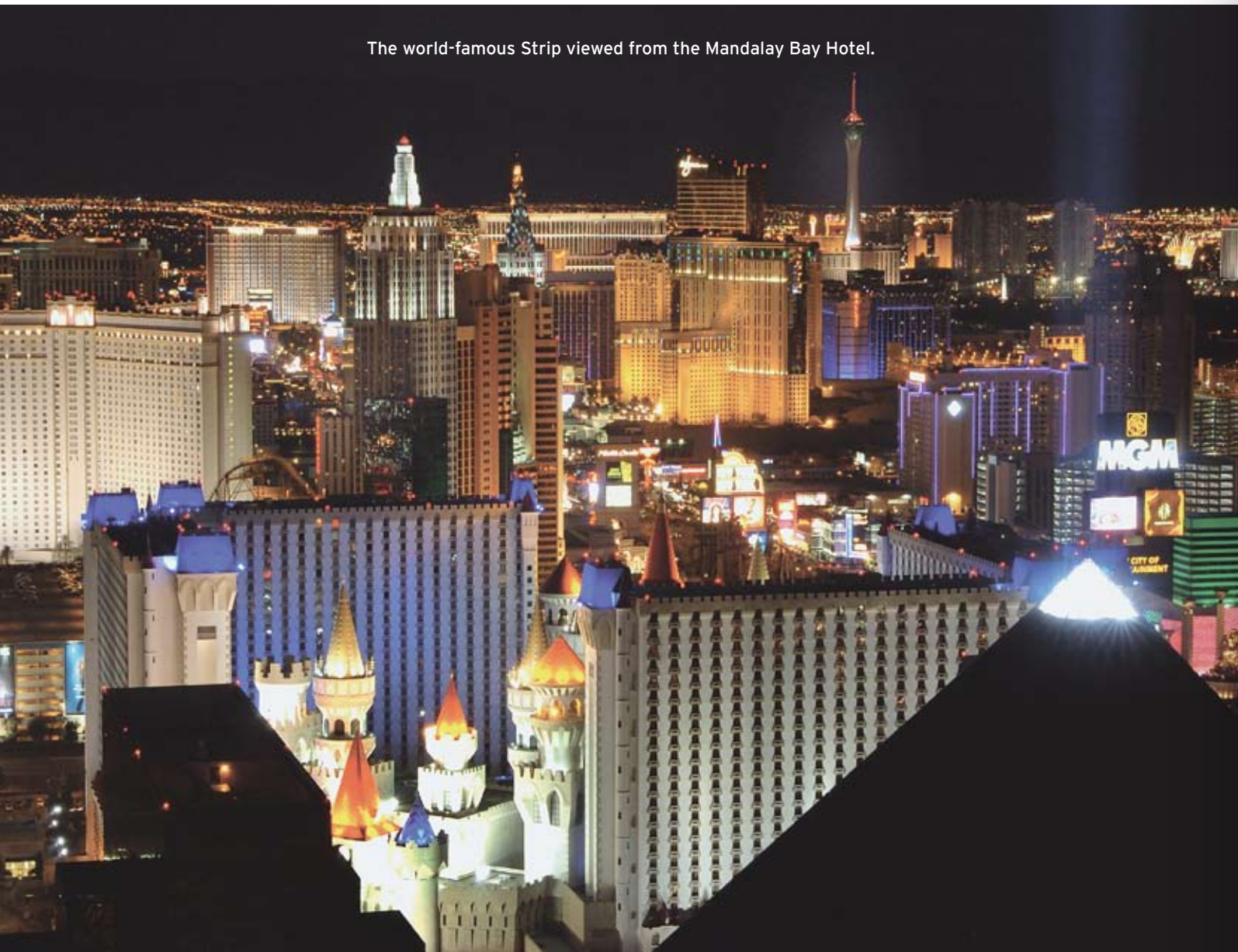


“The Strip” of a Lifetime

For BC Bearing staff attending MINExpo 2008, a Vegas visit wouldn't be complete without a walk down the fabulous Las Vegas Strip **BY ANN COLLETTE**

The world-famous Strip viewed from the Mandalay Bay Hotel.



I LOVE PARIS. I LOVE NEW YORK, Monte Carlo and Venice, too – and what a bonus to be able to experience a little of each all along one shimmering stretch of palm-lined boulevard. Yes, Dorothy, there really is an Emerald City, and you'll find it, along with a lot of other magical places, along a ribbon of roadway they call “The Strip” in fun, fashionable, fabulous Las Vegas.

The Strip is the moniker locals have given the stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard that begins at the iconic “Welcome to Las Vegas” billboard to the south and ends six kilometres (four miles) north at the Stratosphere Hotel. In between lies a dazzling concentration of landmark hotels, fine restaurants and some of the most lavish entertainment on the planet. Indeed, no Las Vegas vacation would be complete without spending a few days exploring the Las Vegas Strip.

REDEFINING HOTELS

Wide sidewalks on both sides of bustling Las Vegas Boulevard support a lively street scene that includes performance artists as well as ample shops and street vendors. But, the real stars of the Strip are the amazing hotels.

The first thing to hit you as you gaze down the Strip are the lavish themed hotels, which give the street something of an amusement park ambience – from the Egypt-inspired Luxor to the Paris and the elegant Venetian – all of which feature scaled-down versions of



Caesars Palace at dusk.

their respective city landmarks.

The Luxor is a destination in itself, built in the shape of a giant pyramid and boasting a multi-megawatt spotlight at its apex that's so bright it can be seen from space. The Paris has its 50-storey, half-sized replica of the Eiffel Tower, while The Venetian offers a recreation of St. Mark's Square, complete with adjacent canal. While themed hotels abound, the Strip also features its share of elegant resort hotels, including The Palazzo, Bellagio and Wynn Las Vegas.

While you'll no doubt be wowed by the awe-inspiring architecture along the Strip,

the facades and street-level decor provide just a taste of the vast assortment of holiday experiences. Indeed, every hotel on the Strip offers visitors easy access to restaurants, shops and entertainment – as well as being a welcome, air-conditioned respite from the heat of the street, especially in summer.

BYE-BYE BUFFETS

If you love good food and fine wine, you've come to the right place. Once considered the world capital of the all-you-can-eat buffet, Las Vegas has since been transformed into a top culinary destination. In fact, Las Vegas

You Walk the Line

As you stand at the confluence of Tropicana and Las Vegas Boulevards looking down the Strip from the MGM Grand to the TI (Treasure Island), you'll be struck by how close everything looks – surely an easy walk. But don't be fooled. The sheer size of the mega-hotels along the Strip creates the illusion that everything is close, but in reality the TI is 1.5 miles away, and that can make for a mighty long walk, especially on a very hot day.

If you're planning to spend the day hoofing the Strip, including exploring the hotels and shops along the way, be sure to wear comfortable, well-worn walking shoes and bring along bottled water. It can get very hot on Las Vegas Boulevard, especially in the dry, desert heat, and bottled-water vendors aren't always at hand depending on where you are on the Strip when thirst strikes.

Tip: If your feet give out on you, you can always ride back to your starting point in comfort on the Las Vegas Monorail, which runs for 6.4 kilometres (4 miles) from the MGM Grand to the Sahara Hotel, with seven convenient stops at major Strip hotels along the way. Hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. (3 a.m. on weekends). □



L'Atelier Restaurant at the MGM Grand.

now features perhaps the most comprehensive assemblage of celebrity chefs, master sommeliers and A-list restaurants in the world, including prestigious AAA Five-