

[WORD OF MOUTH]

WHAT PEOPLE ARE TALKING
ABOUT IN ATLANTIC CITY, NJChicken Bone
Beach Jazz
Musical heritageHistoric
Gardner's Basin
Fresh air, family fun

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WORD OF MOUTH

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and décor at Red Square;Chicken Bone Beach Jazz
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at Historic Gardner's Basin

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The New Face of Gaming:
A surge in development,
renovations, and celebrity
sightings gives Atlantic City
the upper hand in tourism.WRITTEN BY
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[PROFILE SERIES]

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COMRADES'
DELIGHT

Join the Russian revolution in Atlantic City's RED SQUARE.

WHEN AD SALESMAN Peter Romano is ready to seal a deal, he likes to do it in an atmosphere that's distinctive. The coolest place he knows—literally—is the vodka vault at Red Square.

The vault is maintained at a frigid 0-5 degrees Fahrenheit, temperatures so cold that stepping in without a coat feels like smacking against a wall of ice. But its appeal mainly lies in its unique exclusivity. If you don't lease one of its 32 vodka lockers at a cost of \$3,000 to \$6,000 a year, the only other way into the vault is with the purchase of a \$200 bottle of vodka.

For Romano, it's simply the cost of doing business. Five times a month, Romano treats clients to the novelty of dinner and drinks at Red Square. The experience of donning an employee-issued Russian fur or authentic wool military coat and cap in the vodka vault works every time.

Like its sister bar in Las Vegas, Red Square is filled with points of interest. Various shades of red light cast an immediate air of mystery.

Even before seeing the 60-foot bar, which is made of real ice, you'll notice the Russian décor. Bright primary colors, gold accents, and dome shapes mimic Russian cathedrals. Outsized Soviet agitprop is painted on the walls. And waiting behind the lush, red velvet curtains lies one of Atlantic City's best-kept secrets, an intimate, dimly lit dining area featuring five separate banquettes.

Red Square's menu showcases caviar and trendy cuisine influenced by European, Asian, and American flavors. The menu also features vodka-infused dishes and martinis with inspired

names like Chernobyl and Sputnik One. Let's not forget Vodka Flights, four shots of vodka served in a square of red ice.

Red Square stocks more than 100 varieties of the world's finest vodkas. Jewel of Russia, in limited-release hand-painted bottles, and Siku, made in Greenland from melted glacier ice, are two choices.

In summer 2006, Red Square will welcome a newcomer to its shelves: Trump, the World's Finest Super Vodka.



Inside Red Square's Vodka Vault

[WORD OF MOUTH]

TAKING STAGE



Dante Hall

Intimate crowds

Executive Director Joanna Sykes-Saavedra, a veteran of New York City and Philadelphia theatre, brings big-city jazz, opera, and theater to Dante Hall at a fraction of the cost.

"A child's ticket will never cost more than \$5, the price of a movie, and adults won't pay more than \$30," says Sykes-Saavedra.

Big and bold

At Boardwalk Hall, where Luciano Pavarotti, Sir Elton John, and Bruce Springsteen have played to sell-out crowds, boxing icon Arturo Gatti routinely packs the house.

Recording artist Sean "P. Diddy" Combs was just one of several celebrities at a Gatti boxing match earlier this year, according to Valarie McGonigal, Boardwalk Hall's director of marketing.

It's not unusual to see hot names in Hollywood and professional sports in the crowd, she says, nor is it unusual to spot "major bling and serious clothing. Big boxing matches are a place to see and be seen."

UNIFIED GROOVES

Live music at **Chicken Bone Beach** celebrates Atlantic City's rich black heritage.

EVERY THURSDAY evening in July and August, the Atlantic City Boardwalk at Kennedy Plaza is packed with hundreds of music lovers.

"All ages, colors and sizes," is how Henrietta Shelton describes it. "It's a rainbow of colors when you come to our show."

That is exactly the effect Shelton hoped for when she founded the Chicken Bone Beach Jazz on the Beach Series in 2000.

The concert series has played host to jazz greats such as Etta Jones, T.S. Monk (son of the legendary Thelonious), Ahmad Jamal, and Ramsey Lewis. Many of these musicians serve as a connection to the city's past, having graced the stages of Atlantic City's famed black nightclubs: Club Harlem, Grace's Belmont, the 500 Club, Timbuktu, and the Wonder Garden.

Less celebrated but equally important are the collective contributions of blacks who helped

build Atlantic City. After the Civil War, blacks migrated to the booming resort town to staff its hotels and build its infrastructure.

In the early 1900s, the city's black residents were unofficially segregated to "Chicken Bone Beach," the beach at Missouri Avenue. They turned exile into celebration, enhanced by visits from entertainers like Sammy Davis Jr., "Moms" Mabley, and the Club Harlem Showgirls.

"That beach was a place of high style," recalls Shelton. "Women wore fabulous hats to match their bikinis and bathing suits. Let me tell you, if they could have worn mink coats to the beach, they would have."

As a girl, Shelton experienced the city's last days of segregation, and as a grown woman, she helped secure its place in history under the protective auspices of the Chicken Bone Beach Historical Foundation.



Chicken Bone Beach Jazz Concert



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At a Glance: Atlantic City

[WORD OF MOUTH]



Atlantic City Aquarium

SEASIDE EXCURSION

Families find a welcome change of pace at Historic Gardner's Basin.

TUCKED INTO THE NORTHEASTERN corner of an otherwise bustling city, Historic Gardner's Basin is nestled by the bay on one side and emerging neighborhoods on the other.

Here, seagulls swoop for visitors' scattered crumbs and bay waters lap a hypnotic cadence against the piers. Summer months are filled with boating adventures, festivals and street fairs, and outdoor dining for those who like a side of salty air with their meals.

But it wasn't always this way. The site was nothing more than three abandoned baseball fields when it was rescued in 1976 as part of a citywide revitalization and transformed into a popular destination.

The main attraction at Historic Gardner's Basin, the Atlantic City Aquarium, is a prime spot for family outings and school trips. The

aquarium is home to more than 100 varieties of fish and marine animals native to the Atlantic coast. It also houses a 750-gallon Touch Tank, where little fingers can handle horseshoes, hermit crabs, urchins, and other innocuous creatures. From a third-floor observatory, visitors have an unobstructed view of the inlet and the point where bay meets ocean.

In many ways, the transformation of Historic Gardner's Basin harkens back to the inlet's early days. When Atlantic City was founded in 1854 as a seaside resort town, its lure was the fresh sea air serving as a respite from Philadelphia and New Jersey city life. Five of the city's first hotels were built in the inlet area. While those original hotels are long gone, the lifestyle they inspired—relaxation by the seashore—lives on.

BASIN'S BEST BETS

Off-Shore Outings

Dolphin watching, harbor tours, cocktail cruises, and for adventure lovers, parasailing, with Atlantic City Cruises.

Catch of the Day

Shore Bet Fishing's half- or full-day adventures and bayside fishing aboard a pontoon with Back Bay Fishing.

Festive Occasions

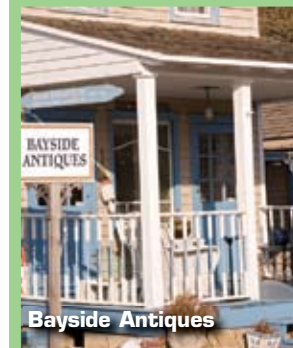
New Jersey Fresh Seafood Festival in June, Atlantic City Ocean Marathon Swim in August, and Festival Latino Americano in September.

Hand to Mouth

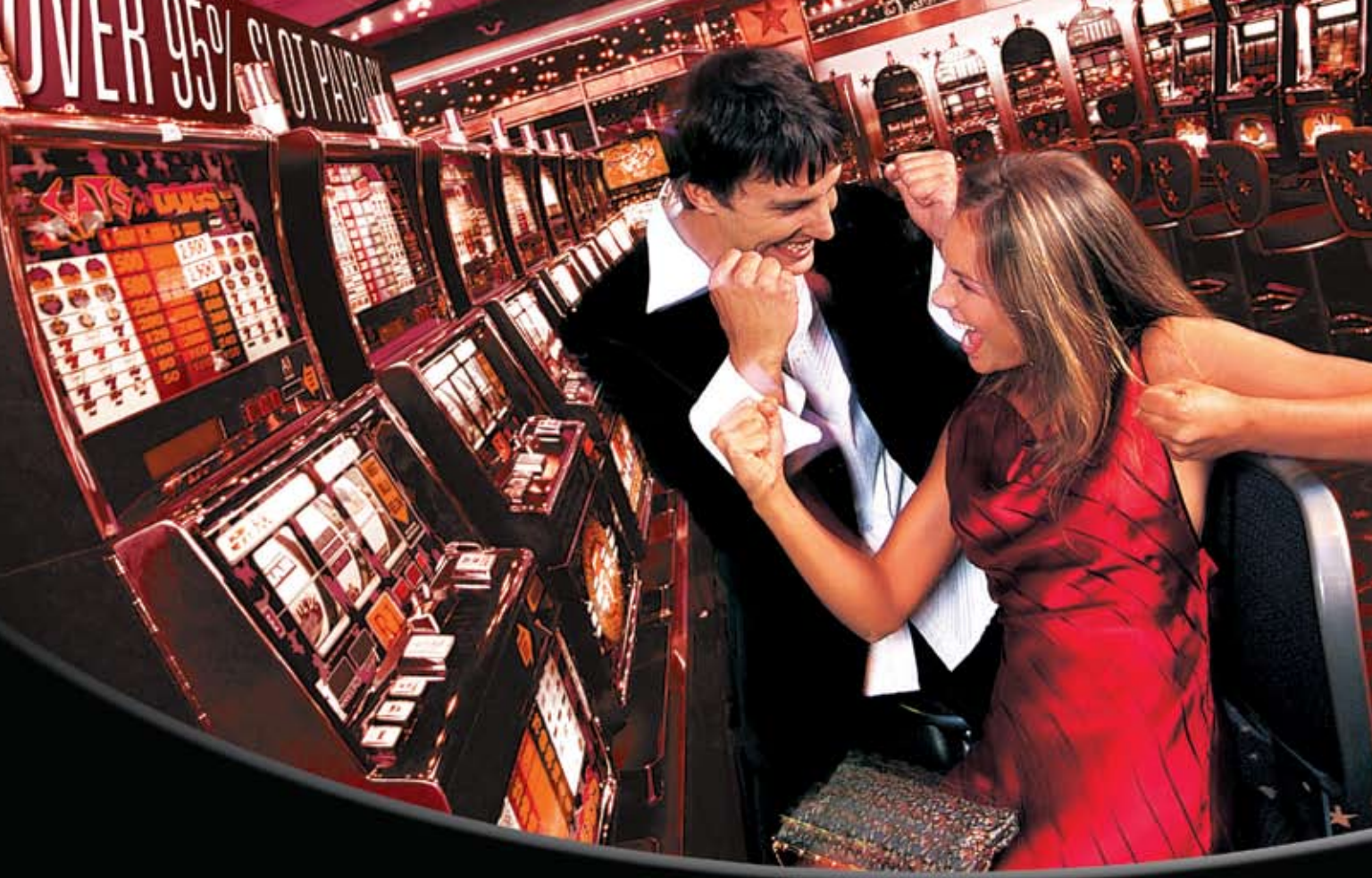
Flying Cloud Café, Back Bay Ale House, and Back Bay Ice Cream.

Shop Hop

Bayside Antiques, Webb Feet Kayaks (general store and kayak tours), and Clauson's Fine Picture Framing and Art Gallery.



Bayside Antiques



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At a Glance: Atlantic City



COURTESY OF BALY'S ATLANTIC CITY

A NEW
GAME 
 ♠ ♦ ♣ ♥ **FACE**

A surge in development, renovations, and celebrity sightings gives Atlantic City the upper hand in tourism.

Atlantic City is the capital of East Coast gaming, and it always will be."

A strong assessment, yes, but in the opinion of Michael Pollock, publisher of *Gaming Industry Observer* and director of Spectrum Gaming Group, unshakably true.

Once seen as the near-exclusive domain of senior bus trips, buffet dining and 1970s-style lounge acts, today's Atlantic City is a popular spot among a more fast-paced set of thrill-seekers. With 34 million visitors a year, it doesn't fall too far short of Las Vegas' 37.4 million, and far exceeds Macau, in Asia, at 18.7 million.

From kitschy and themed to elegant and refined, each of the city's dozen casinos makes a play for the senses. Game rooms reverberate with slot machines' dings, the quick shuffling of cards, the roulette's metered spin, and chips that get stacked and restacked. Doorways hold special meaning, leading to shops and restaurants.

Most of Atlantic City's casinos are located up and down an oceanfront strip known as the Boardwalk. A south-to-north sweep of this artery covers the Atlantic City Hilton Casino Resort, Tropicana Casino & Resort, Trump Plaza Hotel & Casino, Caesars Atlantic City, Bally's Atlantic City, and Sands Casino Hotel. Resorts Atlantic City, Trump Taj Mahal, and Showboat Atlantic City stand at the northern end of the Boardwalk's rough four-mile stretch.

The newest jewel in Atlantic City's crown, Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, is a short drive away on the bay side. It's close to Harrah's Atlantic City and Trump Marina Casino Resort.

As you might expect, nighttime entertainment caters to Atlantic City's increasingly diverse crowds. They'll still find classics such as Tony Bennett and even a magic show or two. But popular artists such as Eminem, Hubastank, and Ricky Martin, along with political



Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa

♣ TRUMP TRIAGE



Trump Taj Mahal

BACK FROM A BANKRUPTCY reorganization and raring to go, the man who wrote *The Art of the Comeback* is taking a stab at one.

Trump Entertainment Resorts Inc., plans to spend \$110 million sprucing up its three Atlantic City properties.

Trump Plaza's New Yorker will be replaced with a \$4 million eatery, and Trump Marina will also benefit from a new dining spot along with other improvements. A new 800-room tower gets under way at the Taj in June 2006.

All of these upgrades are in addition to \$32 million spent during 2005 on renovations at all three properties.

Was it worth it? At Trump Taj Mahal, at least, The Casino Control Commission reports a 3.3-percent increase in gaming revenues for December 2005 over 2004.

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Taj Mahal

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◆ BREAKING GROUND



Bella condominium

AT THE NORTHEAST end of Atlantic City, the Bella condominium stands 27 stories tall, providing panoramic views of the ocean and casinos.

Still undergoing renovations, more than half its units sold at \$445,000 and up, making Bella a prime example of how Atlantic City has found its stride in a booming real estate market.

“There are so many places where you can have a vacation home, it’s a sign of success that people are considering Atlantic City as a second residence,” said Tom Scannapieco, whose New Hope, Pa., development company is handling Bella’s renovation. “These people see the new direction Atlantic City is moving in, and view this as a ground-floor opportunity to get in on the action.”

satirists like Bill Maher and Dennis Miller, also take main stage.

Thanks to its casinos, Atlantic City is definitely a hot topic for investors these days. The fuss began in July 2003, when Borgata opened its impressive doors. The days of status quo were gone; similar establishments hustled to keep up with the new competition while developers worked to accommodate a fresh wave of visitors. In fact, Borgata’s opening has proven to be such a catalyst for capital improvements citywide that Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services issued a report—titled “Borgata Effect On Capital Investment in Atlantic City Gaming Market.”

The report analyzes recent casino investments and how they drive market performance, stating that gaming products have improved significantly in the past three years, and pointing out that casino upgrades are continuing.

“There’s not a month that’s gone by in the last two years that I haven’t gotten an inquiry from a real estate investor or someone else in the business,” says Pollack. “Everyone’s kicking the tires on that car.”

Atlantic City has the undeniably plum position, under New Jersey state law, as the only municipality where casino gaming is allowed. Add that to the fact that there is no legal limit to the number of casinos built there, and the picture becomes that much more ideal for industry growth and development possibilities.

The abundance of Atlantic City gaming provides employment for more than 45,000 people, with annual salaries topping \$1.1 billion in 2004. In 2005, gaming revenues topped \$5.02 billion, a 4.4 percent increase from the year before.

All of this bodes well for the larger community.

Casinos must contribute 8 percent of gross gaming revenues to the Casino Revenue Fund, managed by the Casino Control Commission. More than \$300 million annually is routed to programs serving New Jersey’s senior citizens and disabled. The Community Reinvestment Development Authority’s alternative revenue tax program has generated urban revitalization funds for more than 20 years. The improvements have helped shape the image of Atlantic City as a favorable place to live, work, and play.



Showboat Atlantic City

EARLY ♠ TO RISE

AS THE FIRST casino to open its doors on the East Coast, Resorts Atlantic City set the precedent for other gaming establishments that soon popped up on the Boardwalk. But it’s not stuck in a 1970s time warp. Resorts management has always believed in enhancing the casino experience with attention to décor, amenities, and entertainment.



Resorts Atlantic City

Sophisticated and stylish are the buzzwords surrounding Resorts Atlantic City today. Nikki Beach and 25 Hours bring an ultra-stylish feel to nightclubbing and cocktails. Gallagher’s Steak House, Capriccio and Asian Spice ensure that dining is gourmet and eclectic. And entertainment is a funky mix of old and new with casino standards Smokey Robinson, and Engelbert Humperdinck, plus fresh faces Snoop Dogg, Jerry Seinfeld, and Kathy Griffin.

It’s worth a visit, especially if you haven’t been in a while.