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Hotel Flashback: Caesars Palace Celebrates 50 Years

Posted by [Kathleen Kervin](#) on March 24, 2016 in [Uncategorized](#)

By Mary Beth Klatt

The opulent 680-room Caesars Palace began because builder and designer Jay Sarno had a vision: He wanted to construct a unique Las Vegas hotel—an homage to the famed Roman emperor.



An image taken during construction of the Forum Shops at Caesars.

The Roman-themed hotel exceeded even Sarno's own expectations when it opened—with one tower and 680 rooms—in 1966 to great fanfare. Crooner Andy Williams sang and Broadway star Elaine Dunne entertained the more than 1,800 guests who noshed on filet mignon, Alaskan king crab, and champagne at the grand opening celebration, which is rumored to have cost \$1 million.

Caesars Palace opening, 1966.



Caesars Palace opening, 1966.

Some of the biggest names in show business and politics were among the first to see the imported marble statuary and fountains, the 908-seat Circus Maximus showroom, a 25,000-square-foot convention complex, Garden of the Gods pool complex with a swimming pool and spa, and the Roman Forum Casino. The hotel set a new standard in luxury suite design with Whirlpool tubs, floor-to-ceiling windows, colorful shag carpeting, round beds and grand pianos, and even two-story suites.

A view of a Caesars Palace suite in 1982.



A view of a Caesars Palace suite in 1982.

The hotel continued to grow with the addition of the 222-room Centurion Tower (now Nobu Hotel at Caesars Palace) in 1970, another 361-room tower in 1974, and the opening of the 600-room Fantasy Tower in 1979. The hotel now spans 85-acres at the heart of the Las Vegas Strip, with a total of 3,980 rooms and suites throughout five hotel towers. And having opened with just two restaurants, today the iconic resort features more than 25 eateries.

This year, in celebration of the property's 50th anniversary, Caesars has debuted KNA Design's \$75 million revamp of the original Roman Tower into the 587-room Julius Tower.



A guestroom in the newly revamped Julius Tower, crafted by KNA Design. *Photo by Claudio Rangel*

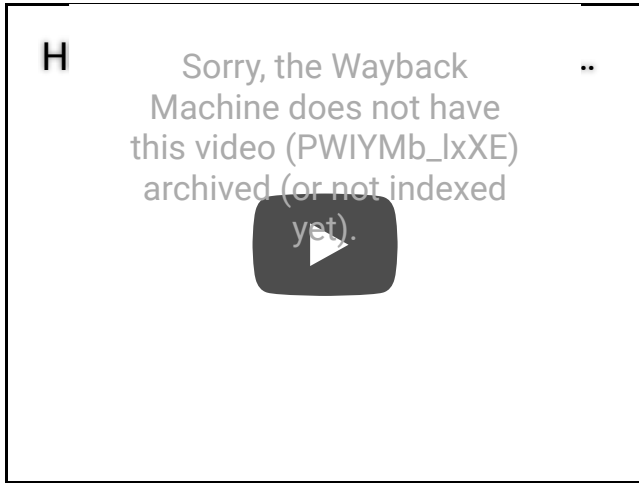
Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Jack Benny, Johnny Mathis, Sammy Davis Jr., Tony Curtis, George Burns, Hall & Oates, Dean Martin, Paul Anka, Liberace, and Smokey Robinson were just some of the headliners who graced the Maximus showroom until it closed in 2000. When the new Colosseum theater at Caesars Palace debuted in 2003, Celine Dion was the headliner, premiering her new Las Vegas show.

Sarno, who died in 1984, would surely be delighted to know that 50 years later, guests still feel like kings and queen when they step inside Caesars Palace.

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