

Caribbean Casino Collectors Club Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 4 Fall 2009

Casinos of the Caribbean

Antigua	Jamaica
Aruba	Martinique
Bahamas	Mexico
Bermuda	Nicaragua
Barbados	Panama
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Bonaire	St. Kitts
Costa Rica	St. Maarten
Cuba	St. Vincent
Curacao	Suriname
Dominican Republic	Trinidad and Tobago
Guadeloupe	Turks and Caicos
Haiti	U.S. Virgin Islands
Honduras	

Caribbean Casino News

Casino Openings and Closings and new Chip Issues

Caribbean Region

- **Gamblers will find plenty of good bets in the islands**
BY BILL ORDINE, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Sunday, 08.16.09

The main attraction of a Caribbean vacation has always been the sugar-white sand and clear, turquoise sea of a quiet beach. But some visitors prefer to spice up their tropical getaway by trying their luck at the green-felt gaming tables. Throughout the region, at least a dozen islands offer casino gaming. Island casinos range from the grand and luxurious, such as Atlantis Resort's 60,000-square-foot, Vegas-style gambling palace on Paradise Island in the Bahamas, to the curiously named American Casino at Jack Tar Village in the Dominican Republic, which has about 40 slot machines and a dozen table games. Gambling has carved out a niche in such tourist spots as the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Aruba and St. Maarten. But there are also casinos on islands less identified with gambling, such as St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. Kitts.

ATLANTIS

Undoubtedly, the most extravagant casino in the tropics is at Atlantis, with 80 table games, 875 slots, and a race and sports book. The casino caters not only to guests of the sprawling resort -- elaborately themed after the mythical lost continent, complete with a vast water park, aquariums and dolphin habitat -- but also to cruise-ship passengers, who arrive daily, and boaters, who tie up their yachts at one of the 170 slips. The Atlantis motif is carried throughout the casino, which is decorated with Dale Chihuly glass sculptures. From some spots in the casino, gamblers can catch a glimpse of the resort's picturesque grounds.

"Gaming has evolved here as the property has evolved and expanded," says George Markantonis, president and managing director for Atlantis. For example, exclusive boutique gaming areas have been added outdoors and inside, as part of the upscale Cove -- one of the hotels at the luxury complex. In addition to the Atlantis, the Bahamas has the Crystal Palace Casino at Cable Beach, on the north side of New Providence island, where there are Wyndham and Sheraton resorts, and the Westin and Sheraton Our Lucaya Beach and Golf Resort on Grand Bahama island.

Travelers looking to try their luck should be aware of local regulations on each island, such as the gambling age and currencies that can be used. For instance, while the gambling age in Las Vegas and Atlantic City is 21, casinos on many islands, such as the Bahamas, Puerto Rico and St. Maarten, allow 18-year-olds to play. And while casinos in the Bahamas and on St. Maarten use only U.S. dollars, in the Dominican Republic, dollars and pesos are accepted.

CARIBBEAN CASINOS

St. Maarten, the Dutch portion of the island shared with St. Martin (French), has 13 casinos. The Casino Royale is among the largest gaming halls and was recently renovated. The 14,000-square-foot casino has 30 tables, 400 ticket-in/ticket-out slots and Texas hold 'em poker. The stand-alone casino is part of the Sonesta Maho Beach Resort, which offers restaurants, shops and a new nightclub.

In Puerto Rico, there are nearly 20 casinos, each in a hotel or resort. Most are in the San Juan area, though some casinos are in Fajardo to the east and Ponce in the south. The El San Juan's 12,000-square-foot casino -- with carved-wood ceilings and crystal chandeliers reflecting its Old World charm -- recently got new furnishings and coinless slots as part of the resort's \$50 million renovation.

The so-called ABC islands -- Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao -- offer a range of gaming styles. In Aruba, the Marriott has the 15,000-square-foot Stellaris Casino, a relatively large gambling parlor by Caribbean standards. Meanwhile, Hotel Kura Hulanda in Curacao, which has 80 rooms in restored 18th- and 19th century Dutch Colonial buildings, is associated with a "European-style, split-level boutique casino." The casino is nestled in a peaceful village complex with a spa, gardens and an anthropological museum.

On St. Kitts, the Royal Beach Casino at the Marriott offers 35,000 square feet of gaming and includes just about everything a player can find in Vegas, including 350 slots, about 30 table games, a sports and race book with large-screen plasma TVs, and poker tournaments. In keeping with a long-standing gambling tradition, the casino regularly runs junkets on charter jets for its high-rollers.

The challenge for gamblers is finding time to splash in those turquoise waters while avoiding being soaked at the green-felt tables.

Antigua

Aruba

Bahamas

- **Isle of Capri Casino extends stay at least until August 31**

Friday, 29 May 2009, Bahamas Islands Info, www.bahamaislandsinfo.com

SAINT LOUIS – May 29 2009 - Isle of Capri Casinos, Inc.. (NASDAQ: ISLE) announced today that it has entered into an agreement to continue operating the Isle of Capri Casino in Freeport, Grand Bahama during a transition period, following which Isle of Capri intends to exit the operation. The term of the transition period ends on August 31, 2009, although under certain circumstances, it may be extended for up to two additional months in order to allow sufficient time for a new operator to receive necessary approvals.

Under the agreement, the Company will also continue to assist the Government of the Bahamas and the owner of the Our Lucaya Resort, Hutchison Lucaya Ltd, in their efforts to identify and select a new operator for the casino. A number of entities have already expressed interest in assuming management of the facility, but the final decision as to a new operator will be solely the responsibility of the Bahamian government and Hutchison Lucaya Ltd.

- **Isle of Capri Extension 60 Days More**

By INDERIA SAUNDERS ~ Guardian Business Reporter ~ inderia@nasguard.com. August 17, 2009
Submitted by Jim Noll.

The Minister of Tourism is pointing to a possible two-month extension to the closure of Grand Bahama's Isle of Capri casino — just enough time for government to decide on a takeover operator. "The way we've structured the arrangement with Isle of Capri, we could have another 60 days beyond the end of this month in terms of getting this done," Minister Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace told Guardian Business last week. "We are fairly confident we have a solution to that and we are looking at what's the best long-term solution." It's a decision requiring the extra decision-making time, said the minister.

He asserts that so far there have been several applications that the government is "seriously considering". It's a ray of hope for the roughly 200 casino employees, given their continued employment is contingent on those negotiations. Finding an operator for the Freeport casino could mean the jobs of its employees are saved, avoiding a compounding of the unemployment situation on the island - nearing 15 percent. Vanderpool-Wallace's statements are the most up-to-date information on the casino's future, following Isle of Capri's March statement outlining plans to shut down operations in Freeport and effectively leaving its 234 employees in limbo. The minister of Tourism has since spoken about interest in the property but has declined to offer details or names of the applicants.

U.S.-based Capri has attributed the move to its retreat to its core market — mid-west America. Isle of Capri sustained a more than 30 percent slide in net revenue for its Freeport casino during the 12 months ending May 2009, compared to the year ago period. According to the U.S. gaming company's recently released results, net income for the fiscal year ended April 26, 2009, came in at \$11m. That's down from the \$15.5 it realized the year before. Still, the Freeport casino's results come as tourist-based companies worldwide are hit by the pressure of the economic downturn. In casino town Las Vegas, hotels have seen sharp declines in guests as Americans cut back on spending, opting to take cheaper vacations closer to home.

In an earlier interview with The Guardian, Vanderpool-Wallace said "surprising" interest had been expressed from investors in the United States "and beyond". "A number of them are being considered by our team to see what are the ones we would like to look much more closely at," he said earlier. "Obviously, the terms need to be discussed and sorted out and none of that is easy in this kind of business environment as you see, [at] casinos nearly everywhere, the business has fallen off, even in places as venerable as Las Vegas." Former Tourism Minister Obie Wilchcombe said earlier that a failure to attract a new casino operator to the Our Lucaya Resort would knock another nail into the island's economic coffin.

- **Committee Formed to Examine Gaming Laws**

By KIEV LIGHTBOURNE ~ Guardian Senior Reporter kdl@nasguard.com (submitted my Jim Noll)

A committee has been formed to comprehensively examine the country's gaming laws, and its members are expected to have recommendations completed by the end of next month, Tourism Minister Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace told The Nassau Guardian yesterday. The formation of the committee, which comprises tourism stakeholders and government officials, comes weeks after Bahamas Hotel Association president Robert Sands said the association supported a national lottery and the amendment of the gaming laws to allow foreign residents to gamble in casinos in The Bahamas. It also comes on the heels of a "favorable and good" meeting the BHA had with Vanderpool-Wallace to discuss the issue.

"They talked to me about (gaming laws) and there are some other things that we need to do to the (legislation) that really relates to the Financial Transactions Reporting Act, to make sure that casinos onboard cruise ships are included," the minister said. "There are a whole variety of things that need to be fixed in that act, and rather than trying to do them piece meal we decided to do it more comprehensively, so that is really what our goal is."

However, the minister stressed that he could not say at this time whether the act would be amended to allow legal foreign residents to gamble in The Bahamas. "I cannot tell you that until after we put forth our recommendations as an entire group. We are meeting with as broad as a group of people as we possibly can to make sure we capture all the things that we want to recommend, and thereafter we will take it forward and my colleagues will decide what kind of amendments we need to make and it will go to Parliament, etc. Specifically what will be changed at this stage I cannot tell you because I merely am a member of the committee and not the person who speaks on it singularly," Vanderpool-Wallace said.

Bahamian citizens and legal residents are prohibited from gambling under the current law. However, foreign visitors are allowed to gamble. Sands said yesterday that during the BHA's meeting with the minister the association put forward a very "compelling case". "I think it is fair to say he agreed with some of our positions. He would consider some of our considerations and some of our positions he did not support. But we thought it was a very good meeting and we look forward to hearing how best he can bring to reality a number of the points that we have put forward," Sands said. The BHA suggested a "shopping list of items" which spoke to the competitiveness in the jurisdiction versus South Florida, widening the net of the population count with persons who are currently excluded from gambling in The Bahamas, and the whole question of a number of procedural issues.

"That basically was the three main buckets under which we discussed opportunities for review and change as regards to gaming regulations that govern the way we operate casinos here in The Bahamas," Sands said. If Parliament were to adopt the BHA's position and allow legal residents to gamble in casinos, supporters of the move believe that this would expand the potential base of customers at the hotels to include those on work permits and foreign nationals residing in The Bahamas. While the BHA does not support extending casino gambling to Bahamians, Baha Mar Chairman and CEO Sarkis Izmirlian told The Nassau Guardian back in May that he would welcome Bahamians gambling in the Crystal Palace Casino. He also believes that the government would benefit substantially from a national lottery.

Izmirlian said that given the substantial revenue shortfall being experienced by the government, a national lottery could be the way to go. "Our gaming laws in The Bahamas are just not competitive versus other jurisdictions in the U.S. and other places in the world, and we really need urgently to address our gaming regulations here in The Bahamas," he said.

- **Bahamia Casino, Closed Casino Entire Rack Sold to Chip Dealer**

Submitted by Von McKenzie, October 1, 2009

The entire rack of the closed Bahamia casino in Freeport, Grand Bahama, has been sold to chip dealer Jim Shaffer of the www.thechiproom.com. This includes all denominations and varieties, \$1, \$5 (five varieties), \$25, \$100 and \$500. Prices per chip are 75c (\$1, \$5 and \$25), 85c (\$100), and \$1.89 (\$500).

This previously unknown tournament set was part of the deal.



- **Treasure Bay Casino to replace Isle of Capri**

By Clarence Rolle, Sept. 3, 2009



Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas - Simultaneously with **Isle of Capri** announcement of its exit plan from the operation of **Our Lucaya Casino** by October 31, 2009, The Minister of Tourism & Aviation, The Honourable Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, has confirmed that **Treasure Bay Casino and Resorts Inc.** has been selected as the replacement to whom Isle of Capri will hand over operations.

The Minister pointed out that Isle of Capri and Treasure Bay had worked closely with representatives of The Government and Hutchison Lucaya Ltd. on arrangements which would ensure the continued operation of the Our Lucaya Casino, which is a vital economic component of the Grand Bahama tourism product. The Minister also said that he was pleased that Treasure Bay had agreed to continue the employment of the existing staff and to work towards a smooth transition.

Treasure Bay will now work expeditiously to complete the requirements for the issue of a Certificate of Consent from The Hotel Corporation of The Bahamas, and to apply for and meet the licensing requirements of the Gaming Board. Casino Management, Lease and Guarantee Agreements will be executed following the issue of the gaming license to Treasure Bay. Headquartered in Biloxi, Mississippi, Treasure Bay Gaming and Resorts Inc. owns and operates Treasure Bay Casino and Hotel in Biloxi and Divi Carina Bay Casino on St. Croix, Virgin Islands. The company also manages the Alhambra Casino in Aruba and the Flamingo Casino in Bonaire.

In responding to their selection as the replacement casino operator at Our Lucaya, Treasure Bay stated, “The selection of Treasure Bay as operator of Our Lucaya offers our company a new opportunity for strategic growth in resort markets. For quite some time, we have considered expansion into the Caribbean, and this casino offers the right operational fit with our portfolio, which includes properties located in Biloxi, Miss. and on the islands of St. Croix, Aruba and Bonaire, said Susan Varnes, chief operating officer of Treasure Bay LLC.

“As longtime developers and operators of Caribbean gaming properties, we plan to apply our experience at Our Lucaya to achieve strong fiscal results, as we have accomplished in similar jurisdictions. For us, there is no doubt that this property, located on the beautiful beaches of The Bahamas, holds the type of potential that can be enhanced by our proven business model.

“We will work hand in hand with the resort operator and the Government of The Bahamas to strive for increased visitations and revenues, resulting in a true shared success,” Varnes added.

- **Is This Chip From the Bahamas El Casino?**

Submitted by Robert Eisenstadt, October 3, 2009

The latest edition of The Chip Rack lists El Casino chips with the WAVE mold is an Unknown Location. Does anyone know where these chips were used?



Belize

Bermuda

Bonaire

Cayman Islands

- **Cruise Gambling Mulled**

By Alan Markoff, alan@cfp.ky, Cayman Compass, Wednesday 29th July, 2009

(Submitted by Jim Noll)

Larger ships sought

Visiting cruise ships will stay in Cayman longer if they are allowed to open their onboard services, including gambling. Speaking at the Chamber of Commerce legislative luncheon last week, Minister of Tourism McKeeva Bush said the Cayman Islands government had discussed with the Florida–Caribbean Cruise Association the possibility of having ships stay in port longer, or overnight, once cruise berthing facilities are built. “However, they would want their on–board services to remain open while berthed here,” he said. “Longer stays are bound to result in greater spending here, benefiting downtown and other tourist–heavy concerns.”

Speaking more about the matter this week, Mr. Bush told the Caymanian Compass that the cruise lines would want to have their gaming facilities open in Cayman’s waters if they stayed in port longer. “Obviously, the local people would have to weigh in on the issue,” Mr. Bush said. “It’s not something I can make up my mind on alone. But I would like to see the cruise ships here longer.” Backbench MLA Cline Glidden Jr., who is part of the elected government’s port redevelopment team, said that having a cruise berthing facility would change Grand Cayman from a one–tour destination to a two–tour destination. That means cruise passengers would have time to visit more than one attraction if they didn’t have to spend hours getting to and from the ship. If the ships stayed later as well, he said this would only increase the average spending per visitor.

“Right now, cruise passengers are limited as far as time in what they can do,” he said, adding that one of the reasons the Pedro St. James tourist attraction hasn’t been more successful is the limited time cruise passengers have here. Mr. Glidden said studies have shown that up to 30 per cent of cruise passengers will come ashore after sunset if a cruise ship were berthed. However, he said that leaves 70 per cent of the passengers still the ship, and the on–board services need to be available for these people or the ships won’t stay in port.

“What the public is going to have to decide is whether it is worth it to them to make concessions to get the ships to stay longer,” he said. “There are some significant benefits for the ships staying here.” If Minister of Tourism McKeeva Bush has his way, passenger ships as large and grand as the Queen Mary 2 will come to the Cayman Islands. Mr. Bush said at the legislative luncheon the Cayman Islands Government has commenced discussions with the Florida–Caribbean Cruise Association on the subject. “They appear receptive to our request for bigger and quality ships such as the Queen Mary [2] visiting our shores,” he said. “They require that we get our cruise berthing in place, but they are definitely willing to rekindle a partnership with us.” Mr. Bush said he believes the Cayman Islands must go forward with the building of a berthing facility for at least four cruise ships. He did not think building a berthing pier for only two ships would suffice. “I don’t think two is enough,” he said. “If anything, I think what we should be considering is if there should be [berthing facilities] for six.”

Although he supports the building of cruise berthing piers, Mr. Bush said he would only do so if an environmental impact study showed it would not detrimentally impact Seven Mile Beach. “That’s my biggest concern,” he said. During the legislative luncheon, Mr. Bush stressed the importance of facilitating the cruise industry. “If we think we’re the only girl on the block, we’re sadly mistaken,” he said. “There are plenty of other places for the ships to go.”

Mr. Bush expressed a sense of urgency in coming to a decision on the berthing facility. “We cannot just sit down for two to three years,” he said. “We don’t have that time to wait. “We have to move quickly. If we don’t, we’re going to lose business and if we do, we’ll be able to increase revenues.” Mr. Bush said there have already been six discussions with the Cruise Association and that representatives from that organisation are scheduled to visit Cayman in the coming weeks. Mr. Glidden Jr., said the government is pursuing a financing arrangement for the cruise ship berthing facility similar to the agreement that funded the Royal Watler Cruise Terminal. “What we’re looking for is a buy–in from the cruise lines where there would be no cost to government,” he said, explaining that the Cruise Association would guarantee the loan through payments made from arriving cruise tourists on a per–passenger amount. “If we think we’re the only girl on the block, we’re

sadly mistaken. There are plenty of other places for the ships to go.” McKeeva Bush.

Costa Rica

- **Proposed Tax on Gambling Could Alter Online and Offline Casino Gambling**

By Adam Williams, Tico Times Staff | awilliams@ticotimes.net
(Submitted by Jim Noll)

On Tuesday, July 21, Finance Minister Guillermo Zúñiga announced that the Finance Ministry will introduce a bill in the Legislative Assembly to impose a special 2 percent tax on gambling revenues – online and offline – earned in Costa Rica. The bill is set to reach the Legislative Assembly on Monday, Aug. 3, and a vote on its approval is expected to be held sometime in mid-August.

If the bill passes, Zúñiga said, the Finance Ministry plans to create a regulatory body comprised of representatives of the Ministry of the Presidency, Security Ministry, the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT), the Chief Prosecutor's Office, the Judicial Investigation Police (OIJ), and the Superintendence of Financial Entities (SUGEF). This board would attempt to ensure that all gambling locations and affiliates are licensed and are honoring the imposed tax. The Finance Ministry estimates that the proposed 2 percent tax will generate \$85 million in government income. “The principal idea of the bill is to regulate activity,” Zúñiga said. “Gambling is something that we are currently not monitoring and, thus, not taking advantage of. If we can regulate it, it could create millions of dollars for the economy.”

- **Barceló will manage two 5-star hotels in Costa Rica**

Wed, Apr 15, 2009, Real Estate Buzz

The Spanish firm Barceló Hotels & Resorts announced yesterday that it will manage two five star hotels, the construction is underway in Garabito de Puntarenas and Santa Cruz de Guanacaste. ICT boost local tourism and decides how to revive the industry. The first opening is planned for late 2010 in Jacó, Garabito. The second building will be opened in late 2011 and is located in Playa Azul, Santa Cruz de Guanacaste, as announced the signing on its website.

The group, originally from Palma de Mallorca and 75 years in the hotel business, has signed a management contract for both buildings, whose construction cost \$ 301 million. The amount for the construction of the hotels will be borne by investors, whose origin is not revealed by Barceló. The hotel chain will manage them under their brand Barceló Premium (highest category). The announcement of the company is at a time when the country has experienced a significant decline in tourist arrivals.

The press release, the group qualifies as Guanacaste and Puntarenas as “two of the most recognized for its spectacular beaches and lush vegetation.” With the opening of Barceló Jaco Beach and Barceló Playa Azul, the corporation will reach 1319 with six rooms in the country. With that number of hotels, Costa Rica will become the third major country in Latin America for the group. The first in importance is Mexico with 12 locations, followed by Dominican Republic, where Barceló manages 11 establishments. The Spanish company operates in Costa Rica the hotels San Jose Palacio and Palma Real in the capital as well as Tambor Beach in Puntarenas and Langosta Beach in Tamarindo, Guanacaste.

The Hotel Barceló Playa Azul, in Guanacaste, is intended in part to serve tourists who come to medical treatments. The building will include a hospital, a health and beauty center with 60 rooms and a research center. In total, the hotel will have 248 rooms and 50 villas, plus a shopping center. The complex will cost \$ 237 million in total. The other hotel, Barceló Jacó Beach, will feature 150 rooms and investments exceed \$ 64 million, this is good for the sector of investments in Costa Rica Real Estate news of this area.

In recent years, Barceló Hotels & Resorts has strengthened its presence in Central America. In late February Barceló Managua opened a five-star hotel of 147 rooms, the second operating in Nicaragua. The firm is one of the oldest hotel chains in Spain and ranks among the 24 largest in the world. Have 185 hotels in 15 countries under the brands Premium, and Barceló Comfort.

Cuba

Curacao

- **Sunset Waters Resort Closes**
Submitted by John Glanfield

The Sunset Waters Resort, a slots only casino, went bankrupt and closed July 22, 2009. It had opened in 2000 when it replaced the Coral Cliff Hotel & Casino.

Dominican Republic

- **Sosua Bay Grand Casino Opening Announced**
May 18, 2009, Reuters

Caribbean Casino and Gaming Corporation (Pink Sheets:CGAQ), today is pleased to announce the Grand Opening of our wholly owned subsidiary, the new Sosua Bay Grand Casino.

Our beautiful luxury casino is set to open August 1st 2009. The Sosua Bay Hotel and Casino is complete with a top notch casino, world class gym and spa, state of the art convention center and full scale discotheque. This casino represents a totally new building just a stones throw from the lobby of a beautiful 250 room luxury hotel. We plan to supply our guests with all the amenities of a large scale casino hotel and the beauty of the Caribbean.

President and CEO Steven Swank commented, "It goes without saying this is a very exciting time for CGAQ. We have constructed what I believe will be one of the nicest casinos in the Caribbean. The grand ball room will host international superstars for your entertainment. We have large scale plans that we feel will immediately put our casino on the map, I look forward to informing investors as further events unfold."

For more information on our projects we encourage investors to visit our company site at <http://www.caribbean gamingcorp.com>. We also encourage investors to visit our casino / hotel site at <http://www.sosuabaygrandcasino.com>.

(The casino's Grand Opening is now scheduled for October 24, 2009.)

- **Dominican Republic's casino boom stokes money laundering fears**
June 23, 2009, Dominican Today

SANTO DOMINGO.- The gambling continues gaining a foothold in the country, and in addition to betting parlors, casinos have taken the longest stride, going from around 20 at the beginning of 2005, to 56 today. But their spread has also revealed their illegality, as more than one operates without Law 351's permits and requirements for this type of business, and as a result several of their licenses have been canceled. There's also concern that these businesses are easy front for the laundering of large amounts of money from drug trafficking.

At least two casinos now under construction in the city of Santo Domingo lack the license and two others operate without adhering to established requirements, including the one on the San Isidro highway, formerly the restaurant Blue House, for which the Hacienda Ministry's Casinos Department has yet to issue a license. The same occurs with the casino being built in the facilities of the former theater Agua y Luz, whose promoters, the Group Dawn Properties Ltd, haven't been able to recover the license revoked in 2005.

According to article 1 of Law 351, the Executive Branch issues licenses for "establishments of playing rooms in hotels of first category and other places of first category," of a tourist nature, whereas article 2 stipulates that location, installation and invested capital for game rooms is taken into account. And the Casinos Commission, created for such purposes, verifies that these can be classified as first category and gather the accepted international characteristics for tourism development.

Casinos director Conrado Abud told newspaper Dario Libre that in the case of the casino in San Isidro, they

await the conclusion of the construction of a hotel as part of the facility, before issuing the license. However, the Princesa Internacional, located on 27 de Febrero avenue and open to the public since December, has the operating license, without any signs of a hotel to date. Abud said the Princesa was given a six month notice, four of which have already passed for it to build the hotel or otherwise their permit could be revoked.

Another one whose license was revoked was the casino San Jerónimo, and the Justice Ministry shuttered the hotel after its owner, a Canadian national, was repatriated to his country to face drug trafficking and money laundering charges. However it remains operating as a "game room," Abud admits.

At present casino owners must pay RD\$10 million for an operating license, according to an Hacienda Ministry resolution of August 12, 2008.

- **Dominican Republic Casino News**

From Luis Alvarez

El Embajador just re-opened (very small casino now) is still in the hands of the same company and most of the chips are the same. Enclosed is exactly all the chips that are being used right now.

El Napolitano is open again, under a new company and all new chips.

Lina also re-opened but basically same chips.

Princess (now) Hotel & Casino is inside the City, mostly for Dominicans, has only RD denomination. It is not in Punta Cana, this is a New Casino, opened 2009, Feb. In Santo Domingo, address 27 de Febrero, Santo Domingo, RD. It does belong to the Princess casinos Inc..

Dominicus just closed. The casino is being replaced by an almost finished "Little Breeze" casino.

Guatemala

- **Seattle Developer Plans Chain Of Luxury Casinos—In Guatemala**

Alekson's Luxuriant brand a public-private partnership and a philanthropic endeavor.

By Adam Kirby, Associate Editor -- Hotels, 8/1/2009

(Submitted by Jim Noll)

Seattle—Jim Alekson understands why people shoot him a skeptical look when he explains his plans to start a chain of luxury casino resorts in the Central America nation of Guatemala. After all, the former chief operating officer of Milliken Development Group once shared that skepticism. "I was invited to Guatemala a couple years ago, and I looked at the country at thought, 'Oh, do I really want to get involved in what I perceived to be a Third World country?'" Alekson says. "Of course, my perception of the country has changed dramatically over the time I've been working there."

Alekson sees immense luxury tourism potential in this developing country of 13 million people immediately south of Mexico. His Seattle-based Alekson Development Group has signed an agreement with the Guatemala government for control of six gaming licenses in exchange for 20% of the net gaming win being donated to the Guatemala Pediatric Association. An additional percentage of the profits will be donated to other charities, Alekson promises. "Primarily, we're being set up so we can take the majority of the profits for some resorts and use them for various government agencies to improve the lives of the people of Guatemala," he says.

The gaming operations will be branded as **Luxuriant World Resorts** and operated by a third-party gaming company—Alekson is not sure which one yet, but he says it will not be a Las Vegas-based operator. "It may be more culturally conducive to have someone come out of Europe—Spain or Portugal, perhaps," he says. Adjoining hotels will feature one or more international flags, and the resorts will be collectively marketed within a luxury consortium called Luxuriant Masterpiece Collection. Each Luxuriant resort will be between 300 and 500 acres (121 and 202 ha) and will cost in the range of US\$200 million. New Jersey-based Horizon Hotels Ltd. will act as asset manager for Luxuriant properties.

Alekson has not yet settled on sites for the resorts, but he says destinations near the UNESCO World Heritage-protected city of La Antigua, along with Flores El Peten, near the ancient Mayan ruins of Tikal, are likely candidates for investment. Alekson expects to start development on the first property this year, with the first Luxuriant property slated to open by 2012. Future Luxuriant resorts are planned elsewhere in Central and South America, with a goal of six properties open within 10 years. Peru, Argentina and Brazil are long-term targets, as is Cuba. "One of the things that intrigues me is being able to go back into the Havana harbor and gathering the gambling and hotel establishments that were in the waterfront in the heyday of the 1950s and bringing those back again," Alekson says. "I think that would be an absolute treat to be able to do that again. You could create such an opportunity, from a tourist point of view, and use those same profits to stimulate the economy in Cuba."

Alekson considers Guatemala a logical jumping-off point for the Luxuriant brand due to its close proximity to the United States and its geographic diversity of mountain, beach and jungle locales. That the country is largely unknown to tourists gives it an added mystique, he says. Americans, Canadians and Western Europeans are expected to make up the bulk of visitors. So what changed Alekson's mind about Guatemala's viability as a destination? He spent a week driving around the countryside meeting with natives. "I went, 'Whoa!'" he says. "There are some parts of Guatemala City where you find clubs that are comparable to New York—there are some very sophisticated people in Guatemala. Now, granted, there are some parts of Guatemala that are impoverished, and that's part of what we're doing with the philanthropy."

(Guatemala is small Central American country situated between Mexico, Belize and Honduras. It is mostly located on the Pacific Ocean, but has a small coastline on the Caribbean Sea, just south of Belize. At present there is one casino in Guatemala City, the capitol, called Fantastic Casino.)

Guyana

- **Turkish company to open Guyana's first casino**

Thursday, July 23, 2009 By The Associated Press
(Submitted by Jim Noll)

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AP) — A Turkish company will build Guyana's first casino by October, a spokesman said Thursday. Princess Group Hotels & Casinos will invest \$2 million to build a casino and upgrade a local hotel to a five-star facility, spokesman Oguz Tayanc said. The Princess Casino Guyana is expected to create 150 jobs.

The government awarded the company a gambling license earlier this year despite criticism from churches about encouraging vice. Guyana officials have said that anyone building a hotel with more than 150 rooms automatically qualifies for a casino permit as the country struggles to attract more tourists. Guyana, a country of 772,000, draws 250,000 people a year. Tayanc said it might be a challenge to attract more tourists given the absence of international flights to Guyana, and the country's eco-tourism industry is only in its fledgling stages.

The Turkey-based company owns hotels in countries throughout the region, including Suriname, the Dominican Republic and Belize. Guyana has private clubs that run unofficial betting parlors, but this marks the first time the government has awarded a permit. The casino is expected to open near the capital of Georgetown, and only hotel guests will be allowed to play.

Haiti

Jamaica

- **Jamaica's Casino-Gaming Commission to be Established**

July 7, 2009, Jamaica Gleaner (submitted by Jim Noll)

A casino-gaming commission is to be established, under the Casino Gaming Bill which has been tabled in the House of Representatives by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Audley Shaw. The bill states that the commission will have regulatory functions over the conduct of casino gaming, including the power to grant gaming licenses to persons to conduct casino gaming within an approved, integrated resort development. The

commission will also be able to grant personal licenses to specific individuals identified as occupying management positions, or carrying out operational functions in a casino, which warrant obtaining assurance that they meet certain criteria of fitness and propriety of character.

Amendment Bill

To facilitate the commission's functions, Shaw has also tabled a bill amending the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act, under which the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission, a statutory body established in 1975, currently regulates and controls the operations of betting and gaming and the conduct of lotteries in Jamaica. The bill confirms the Government's intention to implement legislation to provide a regulatory framework for the business of casino-gaming. It has been proposed that the casino-gaming component should be no more than 20 per cent of the total investment, in any approved, integrated resort development.

The legislation would provide for penalties ranging from \$50,000 for failing to deliver a license that has lapsed or ceases to be effective to \$50 million for removing seals, or devices of like nature, from the gaming machines. Prime Minister Bruce Golding told a town-hall meeting in Montego Bay, St. James, on July 25 that the tabling of the bill had been delayed to ensure that "every sentence was right, every T was crossed and every I dotted".

Mexico

- **Mexico Creeps Towards Vegas-Style Gaming**
3 Aug, 2009 / GamblingCompliance Ltd. / Francois Peglau
Submitted by Jim Noll

Recent communications from the Mexican government have led certain gaming operators to believe that 'Class III', Las Vegas-style slot machines are legal in the country – although manufacturers with valuable suppliers' licenses in the US are proceeding with caution. Though there has not yet been formal changes made to the country's gaming regulations, it was evident from the recent ELA gaming exhibition held in Mexico City that many operators consider the country's gaming market to be opening up to Class III-style machine gaming.

The view that slot machines would be legal under Mexican law has resulted from letters sent to Mexican gaming operators earlier this year by the Mexican Government Secretariat (Segob). In the letters, Segob suggests that Mexican law contemplates a wide range of slot machine-style gambling and not just electronic bingo machines, as was previously thought.

The potential opening comes at a time when the Mexican gambling sector is in need of a boost. Gaming parlours are projected to lose over US\$29m over the course of this year as a result of the swine flu outbreak and the broader effects of the global economic downturn in Mexico.

- **Big Bola casino opens in San Luis R.C.**
September 04, 2009, By Cesar Neyoy, Bajo el Sol (Sumbitted by Jim Noll)

SAN LUIS RIO COLORADO, Son. - A Mexican casino chain has opened a casino here that it promises will offer a "Las Vegas experience" to south-of-the-border customers not currently served by Yuma-area casinos. The Big Bola casino, located on Obregon Avenue near the border, opened its doors Thursday in a ribbon-cutting ceremony that brought the city's mayor, Héctor Rubén Espino, plus hundreds of people eager to try out the slot machines and roulette tables. "Our intent is to capture certain markets such as youth from 18- to 21-year-olds who can't (gamble at) the casinos in Yuma and elsewhere in the United States because they are underage," casino director Guillermo Fimbres said.

The casino is already in contact with tour operators in hopes of attracting bus tours groups from as far away as Las Vegas. While he said the casino is trying to attract San Luis Rio Colorado residents who would not otherwise go to Yuma-area casinos, Fimbres didn't discount the possibility that some who do cross the border will now stay home to try their luck. "There are the lines (at the border), there's the travel, and the simple fact is that when you go over there, you're in a different country than your own. We are local, this is a well-planned city - you can go from one place to the other with incredible ease."

Whether the new casino will impact business at the Q, the casino and resort opened by the Quechan Tribe just

west of Yuma, remains to be seen, said President Mike Jackson Sr. The Quechan Tribe's marketing efforts focus on the Yuma area, Southern California and Mexicali, "so I can't say if it will have an impact," he said Friday. "We will have to wait and see if it has an impact."

The new casino has 300 slot machines, plus roulette tables, a lobby bar, sports betting area with closed-circuit television screens and a restaurant that serves Italian and Mediterranean-style food. Big Bola spent \$3 million on the construction of the building plus another \$3 million on gambling equipment, Fimbres said. An estimated 900 people turned out for Thursday's grand opening, exceeding the soft opening that attracted 300 the day before. The casino was scheduled to open to the public after a ribbon cutting Thursday night, but Fimbres dropped those plans when a large crowd began assembling hours beforehand. "I didn't want to make customers wait, and I gave the order to open the doors," he said. "I didn't want to have them waiting outdoors."

The San Luis Rio Colorado casino is the 14th in the Big Bola chain. "Big Bola is a formula that we have perfected over the years," Fimbres said, "and this casino is the result of a fusion of our experiences." But he added that San Luis Rio Colorado demanded a higher level of quality from Big Bola than have other Mexican cities where it has casinos. "We on the border are accustomed to a different standard," he said. "I'm from Tijuana and I can say that on the border, we have a more elevated standard of quality because of our proximity to the United States." Paolo Navarro, San Luis Rio Colorado economic development director, said the casino opening was "like an oxygen tank for San Luis through the creation of 80 jobs directly and almost 300 indirectly, and through the economic surge generated by the construction."

While not the first casino in San Luis Rio Colorado, Big Bola "is the biggest and most complete, and its facade will improve appearances on Obregon Avenue," Navarro said. Casinos are regulated under Mexican laws that permit slot machines, roulette wheels but bar card games.

Panama

- **Former President Under Investigation**

08-13-2009 | STAFF, mpujolstar@laestrella.com.pa, Panama Star PANAMA.

The Gambling Board met to discuss the corruption accusations made against former President Ernesto "Toro" Perez Balladares, who allegedly gave gambling concessions to two companies in exchange for money. The Economy and Finance Minister, Alberto Vallarino said that a series of investigations are being made with regards to the allegations made by the daily La Prensa against Perez Balladares.

Vallarino said that the concession given to Lucky Games is being examined by Gambling Board personnel to determine any irregularities. The minister said that since Perez Balladares nationalized the casinos there have been mergers, liquidations and sales without the approval of the Gambling Board. "We need to make an exhaustive search of the file to find out what really happened, especially with those limited companies that went through a consolidation process, like in the case of the chance games company CIRSA," said Vallarino.

The Anti-corruption Prosecution Office announced last week that it was considering investigating the alleged participation of Perez Balladares in the chance games industry after a report about his activities was published in La Prensa.

According to the newspaper, representatives of Lucky Games deposited hundreds of thousands of dollars into a bank account in the name of Shelf Holding Inc., a limited company operated by Ricardo Caputo, a close associate of Perez Balladares. The report said that Shelf Holding moved around \$8 million during the last few years and deposited into companies with links to Perez Balladares.

Puerto Rico

- **Police: Lone Man Robs Puerto Rico Hotel-Casino**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico June 21, 2009 (AP)The Associated Press

Puerto Rican police say man robs San Juan hotel-casino of \$340,000 by showing threatening note. Police in Puerto Rico's capital are searching for a lone man who robbed \$340,000 from a popular hotel and casino by threatening a supervisor's family. A police statement says the robber approached the supervisor at the San Juan

Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino before dawn Sunday and showed a note threatening him and specific members of his family.

The supervisor, Denny Ciprian Correa, told detectives he emptied a safe of cash and gave it to the man because he was scared for his life. Police have not said if the supervisor reported seeing a weapon. Police say surveillance videos show the middle-aged suspect walking out of the casino with several full bags. The statement says the man apparently fled in a dark-colored Toyota Yaris.

- **Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel & Casino to Open in November**

September 16, 2009, Travel Pulse Magazine

Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc. and Interlink Group will open the **Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel & Casino** in November. Located adjacent to the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan's newest commercial and residential district, the new 503-room property will accommodate both business and leisure travelers, offering meeting facilities, a full-service casino and resort-like amenities, including a sundeck/pool, spa and retail space. Sheraton Puerto Rico will be the first new full-service hotel and casino built in San Juan in more than 10 years and is part of a \$6 billion worldwide effort to revitalize Starwood's most global, iconic brand. This effort includes an investment of over \$2 billion in new hotels internationally and, in North America, an investment of \$2.3 billion in new hotels, \$1.5 billion in renovations and \$400 million in signature brand initiatives.

Sheraton Puerto Rico's superior meeting facilities include 35,000 square feet of meeting space, access to more than 580,000 square feet of additional space at the adjacent Convention Center and the largest hotel ballroom in the San Juan metropolitan area. Guests attending meetings will have access to several open-air balcony verandas and dedicated outdoor event space on a 57,000-square-foot pool deck. The hotel is also the first and only property in the Caribbean pursuing LEED Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

At 20,000 square feet, the hotel's casino, which is operated by CCHRP Hospitality, will be the largest in Puerto Rico and will offer a circular casino bar and entertainment space -- the first in Puerto Rico. The smoke-free 24-hour casino will feature 448 slot machines, 16 table games, a full player's reward program, state-of-the-art specialty video, sound and light features and the island's first multi-denominational slot machines.

"The Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel & Casino is a \$210 million investment to create the area's premier hotel for both business and leisure travelers, with exceptional offerings for guests either at work or at play" said Federico J. Sanchez, President and Chief Executive Officer of Interlink Group. For more information, visit www.starwoodhotels.com or www.interlinkgroupllc.com.

St.. Kitts

St.. Lucia

- **St. Lucia firm gets casino license**

Wednesday, September 23, 2009, Jamaica Gleaner

CASTRIES, St. Lucia (CMC): The St. Lucia government has given the go-ahead to a local business to establish the island's first casino, 10 years after Parliament approved legislation to introduce casino gambling here. The Stephenson King administration has given the nod to Chereki to locate the gaming facility at the Baywalk Mall that is nearing completion at Rodney Bay, north of here. However, a government spokesman told the Caribbean Media Corporation that the Gaming Authority would still have to give it approval before any such facility could begin operations here.

Four years ago, the Gaming Authority approved a license to a United States Virgin Islands-based company to operate a casino known as Treasure Bay, north of here, but construction on that facility never materialised. Chairman of the authority, Lisle Chase, said while the US company has not completely abandoned plans for a casino here, the recent downturn in the international economy might have influenced its decision to place the

investment on hold. Chase said the authority has turned down one other application for a casino license. He said the Chereki family was seeking a partner to operate the casino.

"When they get a suitable applicant, that applicant will apply for a license," Chase said, noting that the authority was not asked to determine the suitability of Baywalk for a casino. "Government took that from our mandate. We have that mandate but Cabinet has the final say. The authority is not autonomous to the extent that it can grant or not grant a license. It merely recommends to the Cabinet to grant or not grant a license."

St.. Maarten

Suriname

Trinidad and Tobago

Turks and Caicos

U. S. Virgin Islands

Greg Susong



On Friday October 9, 2009 Greg Susong passed away. Greg was a member of the Caribbean Casino Collectors Club. He allowed me to copy the design of his ChipGuide website for the Caribbean ChipGuide. He also designed and created the logo for the website, shown below.



Greg was responsible for: The ChipBoard, The ChipGuide, The StrikePoint, and The Slot Card BBS. He is a member of the CCGT&CC Hall of Fame. He was the webmaster of the CCGT&CC website. He started and ran the Tuesday night, before the start of the annual CC>CC convention, "Online Chippers Party" at the Palms Casino. A tradition started during the convention's run at the Riviera was Friday lunch at Kady's Coffee Shop, which we named in his honor, the "Susong Burger Lunch". He was one of the four Limo Studs. He beamed the convention by webcam to those who could not attend. He was an organizer of the Wednesday night online Chippers poker tournament. He turned a hobby of remote individuals into a community. A community of friends. His contributions to the hobby are second to none.

But most of all, Greg was our friend. He always wore a smile that radiated his friendship to all, I never saw him without it. He was intelligent, creative, humble, had unlimited energy, and had the spirit to give without expectations. I am shocked at his passing and will always remember him. Our condolences go out to his wife Carol, his children Lauren and Robert, and the rest of the Susong family.

Caribbean TITOs

By: Jim Noll CCCC R-017

No TITO report this issue.

Collecting Cuban casino chips: The unique hobby of collecting Cuban Casino chips

By Dr. Luis A Alvarez and Frank Hinrichs

(originally published: Cuban Numismatic Association Newsletter 4-5, October 2005)

More and more people have discovered the passion and fun of collecting casino chips. Fifteen years ago, casino chip collectors in the United States numbered fewer than 25. Many of them were gamblers who slipped a chip into their pocket as a memento of the action. Today, there are approximately 2,500 active members in the nonprofit Casino Chip and Gaming Token Collectors Club (CC>CC), which is the largest specialty club within the American Numismatic Association. As interest and the number of collectors have grown, so have chip prices. Don't be surprised to see collectors, bidding at auctions of casino chip club conventions, amounts up to \$ 50,000 and more for casino chips.

How do you explain this unbelievable growth of a hobby that even long time collectors thought they were the only ones collecting these round pieces of clay and plastic stamped with the names of long-forgotten casino? Probably the main reason is not as romantic as the rest. The main reason is the internet and more specifically, ebay.com, which has provided collectors with a vehicle of communication. Other reasons are that collectors are drawn to the vivid history of towns like Las Vegas and Atlantic City, or love to own chips from casinos associated with gangsters and celebrities, such as Bugsy Siegel's Flamingo or Al Capone's Floridian Casino in Miami. Another reason is the more appealing quality and design of gambling chips in the last decades allowing manufacturers to produce chips with beautiful full-color designs and photographs.

With an estimated number of 12,000 legal and illegal casinos known to have operated worldwide in the last century, most collectors specialize on a specific region or theme. Top of the list are the chips from Las Vegas and other famous towns from Nevada, followed by Atlantic City, riverboats, Colorado, Indian reservations, cruise ships and non-U.S. casino. An extremely appealing niche within the non-U.S. casino segment is the area of **Cuban casino chips**. It was December 31, 1958, New Year's Eve, in Cuba. Thousands of partiers were gambling in the island's famous Havana casinos, including the Riviera, Tropicana, Hilton and Capri. The reveling ended, however, with word going around that Cuban President and Dictator Fulgencio Batista had fled the country, leaving it to revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara. With a new government poised to take control of the island in the coming days, Cuban peasants sacked the casinos that had long barred them from entering. Nearly 50 years later, the value of those chips has been restored many times over. It's not the value of Cuban chips, however, that attract the approximately 25 serious Cuban chip collectors around the world. Apart from their artwork and true beauty it's the fact that casino business is interwoven with the history of Cuba. Cuba is one of the few places around the globe where there was an immediate cessation of gambling, starting with the Revolution at midnight on December 31, 1958, and still in place today.

Before the Revolution, especially in the late 1950's, Havana was a world boomtown of gambling, with a total of about 80 known legal and illegal casinos that existed in Cuba from 1840 to 1958. While some places like the Gran Casino Nacional, the Tropicana, and Sans Souci have a longer gambling history, the real boom began when Senator Kefauver started to shut down illegal gaming across the United States in the 1950's. Casino owners were only left with two nearby areas in which to relocate locally: Havana and Nevada. It was just logical that Cuba caught the Mafia's interest as well. Meyer Lansky, who bankrolled Bugsy Siegel's Flamingo, set up operations in both Las Vegas and Havana. He soon rose in the hierarchy and became the godfather of Havana and key mob player on an island, just 90 miles south of Florida, but free of U.S. legislation hindering their key activities

(drugs, prostitution and gambling) to generate income. Enormous U.S. money was invested into new five star hotels with gambling palaces and world class shows of the highest international standards, where stars like Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra and other celebrities were flown in to entertain mainly wealthy U.S. tourists and Cubans.

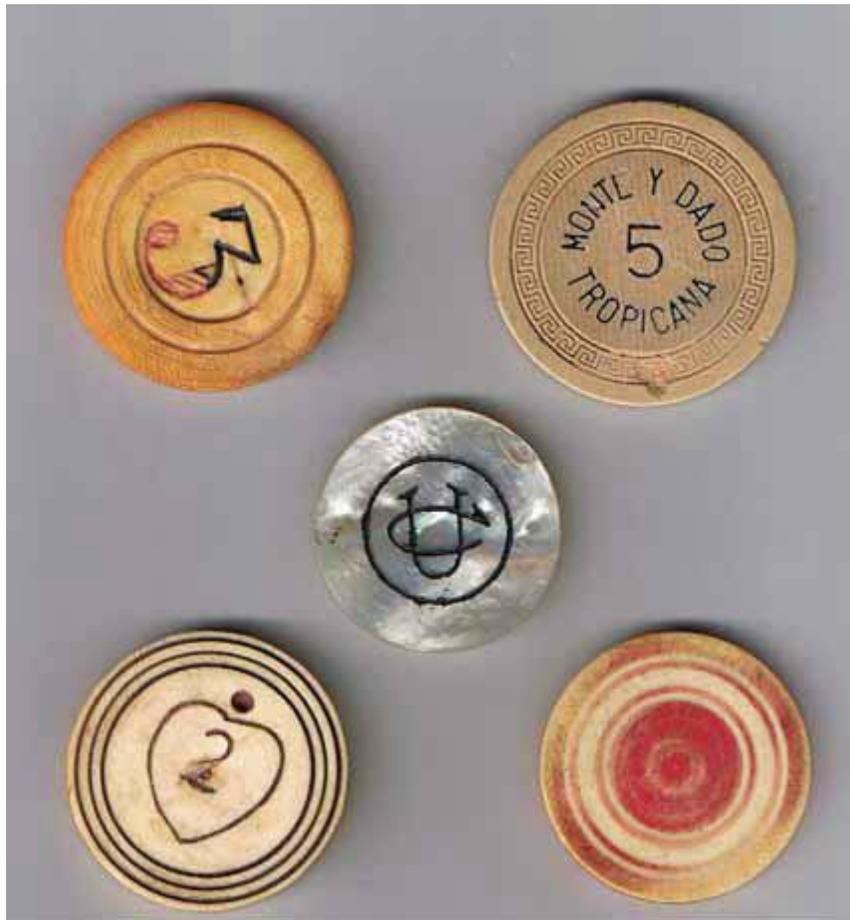
The best known Cuban casinos and chips are either part of the traditional night clubs like “Tropicana”, “Sans Souci”, “Montmartre”, “Gran Casino Nacional” or extend the offer of world class hotels like “Nacional de Cuba”, “Havana Hilton”, “Capri”, “Riviera”, “Sevilla Biltmore”, “Comodoro”, “Deauville”, “Plaza” or “St. John’s”. Some collectible chips have even never seen a gaming table such as the chips from “Casino del Rio”. The “Casino del Rio” was the latest large nightclub and gambling project practically finished and was supposed to be inaugurated in the presence of numerous U.S. celebrities, but Fidel Castro’s advancing rebel troops were quicker, and the only living reminder of “Casino del Rio” are its obsolete casino chips. The involvement of the Mafia in Havana’s hotel, show and gaming business was well known by U.S. government authorities. All key gaming operations were run by Americans with dubious track records and strong stakes in the U.S. gaming business such as Santo Trafficante (“Sans Souci”), Lefty Clark alias William Gusto alias Frank Bischoff (“Tropicana” and “Sans Souci”), Meyer Lansky (“Riviera” and part of “Capri”), Wilbur Clark (“Casino International, Hotel Nacional”), Nicolas di Costanzo and Charles Turin (“Capri”), Jake Lansky brother of Meyer Lansky (“National Casino”) and “Havana Hilton” formerly operated by Senator Kenneth Johnson of Nevada and Sidney Arce of New York.



Serious collectors believe that there must be at least 1,000 different obsolete chips from Cuban casinos. The "Tropicana" itself, with a longer track record, issued more than 70 chips between 1941 and 1958. For collectors, the most popular Cuban chips are the ones that have the word Havana, or in some cases, Habana, printed on them. Most Cuban chips currently sell in the range from \$20 to \$50, but some scarce ones, like the chips from the Havana Yacht Club (considered Havana's premier private social club with a small casino for members in the 1940s), could easily break the \$600 bar. Another chip that is prized in the same range is the extremely rare limited edition commemorative chip issued for a special event of the Capri Casino showing the portrait of its host, the actor of B-movies George Raft. The most expensive Cuban chip sold on ebay in the last two years was one of the scarce crest and seal type casino chips from former Havana Yacht Club that was sold for about \$800. Outside of ebay, among serious collectors, the value of chips can go much higher. Ivory chips from "Club Union" in Santiago de Cuba, with 50 and 100 denominations, easily go for \$1,500 to \$2,000. Other rare chips can go much higher than that. Also, private sets of chips made especially for VIPs in Cuba can go for many thousands of dollars, and these tend to be some of the most beautiful chips in the world.

Higher denomination chips are particularly valuable to collectors due to their rareness. Most gamblers have 'walked out' a \$1 chip, but how many would leave the casino with a \$100 chip in their pocket? Few Cuban chips are in the hands of collectors today, but many collectors believe that warehouses full of chips could come onto the market should Cuba be liberated and opened to the United States. This uncertainty about the real numbers of casino chips available from Cuba in the future has caused collectors to be very cautious when it comes to breaking certain price levels beyond \$500. On the other hand this potential liberation of Cuba bears an enormous potential for significant price increases. Cubans are notorious collectors. It has been part of the culture, but the 12 million Cubans living on the island currently cannot afford such a hobby and have more pressing day-to-day priorities. But, imagine a freed economy and income levels on the island rising! I am sure that the casino chips, and its link to Pre Castro times will catch their attention and the community of Cuban casino chip collectors will grow enormously.

In comparison to most countries, this small "third world country" island that we call Cuba, comes to its history and evolution, particularly when it comes to gaming, casinos and chips. Cuba's chips go back to the 1800s and possibly before. Ivory chips, Mother of Pearl chips, crest and seal chips are all chips from centuries ago; something found only in the most advanced countries. Also, in Cuba, you had games that originated in Cuba used initially in the "street corners", which were later incorporated into the actual casinos. Even before its closing, in the 50's, Tropicana had chips used for playing those native Cuban games. Of these "Monte y Dados" and "El tres," among others, were the most common ones. Also, of great interest was the amount of money that went through those casinos, even when compared to USA casinos. There are Ivories and MOP chips with denominations of 50, 100, and 500, these being from previous century. In this century, there are chips with denominations of up to \$1,000 pesos in numerous casinos. It is significant to note all the peso denominations were equivalent (1:1) to the US dollars during most of this time period. At the time that these casinos had these denominations, few casinos in the US had chips of such high denominations. Imagine the true acquisitive power of those high denomination chips over 100-150 years ago!!

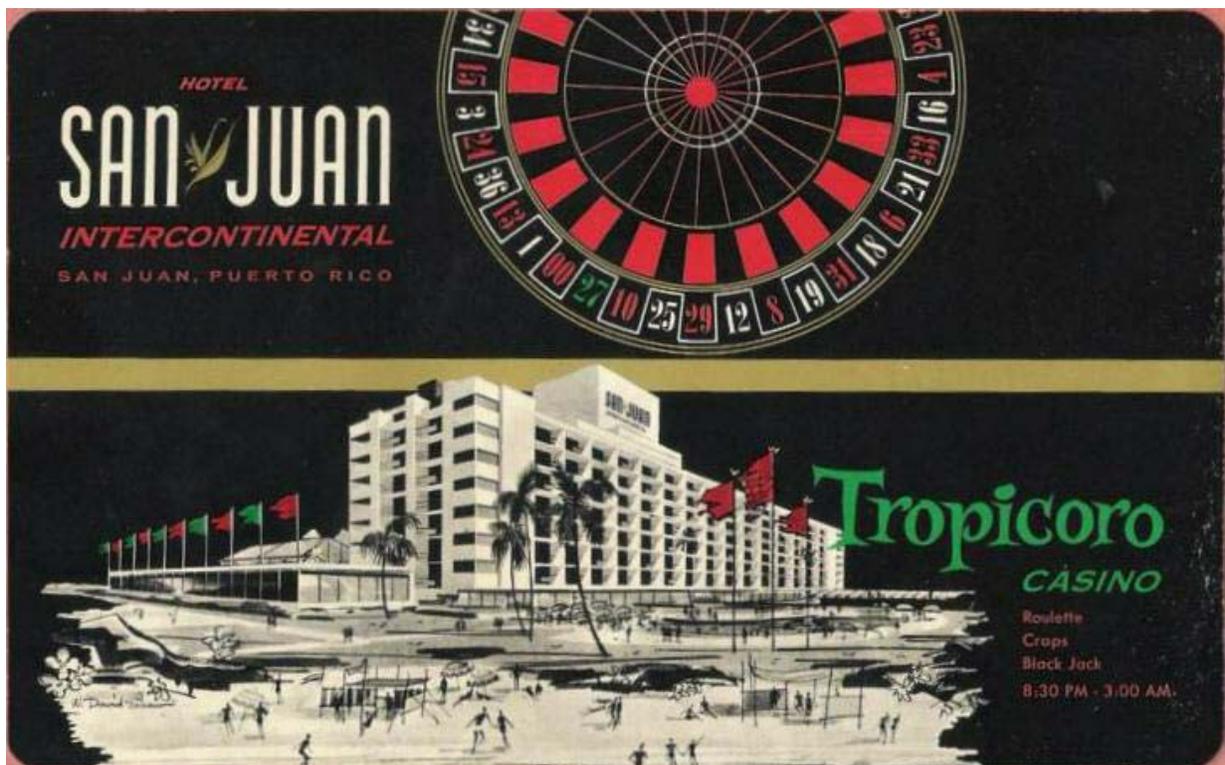


Independently from what the future brings for Cuban casino chips, today it's a fascinating hobby that gives many people a kick out of growing their collections and hunting the little obsolete treasures from Cuba's pre Castro gambling history.

Finally, Tropicoro Casino Mystery Solved



In the past, I have written about casino chips from the Tropicoro casino with the unexplained initials “SJI”. A location was never firmly established for the Tropicoro casino. Under Puerto Rico gaming law, casinos can only be established inside a hotel. The hints that we had were that the “SJI” initials on the chips and that the El San Juan hotel once had a Tropicoro nightclub. There is an Intercontinental Hotel in San Juan today at 5961 Isla Verde Avenue that opened in 2000. I was able to determine, through research on the internet, that another Intercontinental Hotel had opened in 1949 at 6063 Isla Verde Avenue, which was right next door to the current Intercontinental. At some point in the 1950’s, the original Intercontinental became the El San Juan. I strongly suspected that “SJI” on the Tropicoro chips stood for “San Juan Intercontinental”, but I was not able to find any proof. Well, finally proof has been found. There was an eBay auction for the item pictured below, a roulette card from the Tropicoro casino in the San Juan Intercontinental. Thanks to John Genualdi for calling my attention to the eBay auction.



Caribbean Casino Chip Hordes

Knowledge of the quantities of available casino chips will help collectors to determine values. Please send additions and modifications for this list to: chas@ckaplan.com

Aruba

- Americana - Bud Jones brass and silver inlay racks, most denoms (Nevada Jacks)
- Aruba Caribbean - Bud Jones rack, most denoms (Nevada Jacks)
- Aruba Palm Beach, H&C rack, most denoms except \$1 (Nevada Jacks)
- Arusino, H&C rack, all denoms except \$1
- Concorde, chips with hot stamp overlays
- King International, H&C rack, all denoms
- Palace, Chipco \$5, \$20 and \$25 chips (Nevada Jacks)
- Palm, Bud Jones \$5, \$25 and \$100 chips (Nevada Jacks)

Bahamas

- Bahamia, H&C rack, all denominations (www.thechiproom.com)

Cuba

- Casino de Capri - SMKEY rack never reached the casino before it closed

Panama

- Casino Nacionales de Panama, H&C rack, \$1 and \$5 (Spinetti's)
- Club Asia Colon, \$10 (Spinetti's)
- Club Las Asiaticos, \$10 and \$50 (Spinetti's)
- Club Mundial De Panama \$10 (Spinetti's)
- El Panama, H&C rack, \$1 and \$5 (Spinetti's)
- Holiday Inn, H&C rack, \$1 and \$5 (Spinetti's)

Puerto Rico

- Ambassador Plaza, H&C rack, most denoms (Nevada Jacks)
- Caribe Inn - Bud Jones and HCE racks, most denoms
- Cerromar Beach - Bud Jones, HCE and LGKEY rack, most denoms (Nevada Jacks)
- Condado Beach - Bud Jones and H&C rack, all denoms
- Dorado Beach - Bud Jones, HCE and HHR racks, not all denoms (Nevada Jacks)
- Dutch Inn - Bud Jones rack, all denoms
- Flamboyant Hotel - rumored that a Florida collector has most of the chips
- Palm Hotel - casino never opened, all chips available
- Ponce de Leon - SMKEY rack, all denoms (Spinetti's)
- Quality Inn - Bud Jones rack, all denoms
- Ramada - Bud Jones rack, all denoms
- Ritz Carlton - H&C rack, most denoms

St... Marteen

- Mullett Bay - Bud Jones rack, all denoms

The Caribbean ChipGuide

Caribbean ChipGuide Values

Here are some recent additions:



Caribbean Casino Collectors Club News

With the colder weather moving in, many of you will be taking winter vacations in the warmth of the Caribbean. When you do, please be on the look out for new chips and other items from Caribbean casinos and please send me scans when you return.

I am on the educational program for the 2010 CC>CC convention. The title of my presentation will be "Pirates of the Caribbean" and will discuss the influence of organized crime, the Mafia, on Caribbean casinos. If you have any suggestions, articles, or topics you would like to see covered, please let me know. The CC>CC convention for 2010 will again be at the South Point Casino. It is wonderful venue for the convention, new and very accommodating. The dates are June 23 to 26, 2010.

So that's it for now, happy chipping.

Charles Kaplan

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Williams, Dan	R-008	ddhdk@aol.com
Yaksich, Rudy	R-057	serb2222@aol.com
Zilberg, Boris	R-028	

TOTALS: Printed 61 of the 62 records.

Atlantis Roulette Chips For Sale

This set of roulette chips from the Atlantis casino on Paradise Island in the Bahamas is for sale by Dick Brach for \$125. Please contact him at Cabodick@aol.com if you are interested.



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