

Caribbean Casino Collectors Club

Quarterly Journal



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Casinos of the Caribbean

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Caribbean Casino News

Casino Openings and Closings and new Chip Issues

Caribbean Region

- **Casino Gambling: Russia's Export to Latin America**

By Jean Friedman-Rudovsky / La Paz, Time Magazine, Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009 (submitted by Jim Noll)

A little less than a century ago, Western leaders feared that Russia would export its revolution. These days, at least in Latin America, they're more concerned that it may be exporting its gambling problem. Moscow banned casinos in most of its national territory last July, confining the multibillion dollar industry to Siberia. Since then, gambling operations have been trying to win back lost profits in Europe and Latin America. And not everyone is happy about it.

"Bolivia is a gambling company's paradise," says an exasperated Marco Antonio Cardenas, the director of the National Lottery of Bolivia, which also regulates casinos. In the last year, he says, gambling operations here have nearly doubled — there are now more than 80 casinos and about 10,000 gambling machines in his country of 9 million people. And Cardenas attributes the rise to foreign investors taking advantage of Bolivia's loose regulations. Once a gambling company is granted a license to operate, there are no limits on the number of sites it can open in Bolivia. (Other countries limit the number of casinos that can be opened in proportion to population size.)

Bolivia's laissez-faire gambling market is good news for companies such as Moscow-based Ritzio International, the largest casino operator in Eastern Europe. Ritzio does \$1.2 billion in business annually at its 1,000 venues worldwide. The Russian giant is the majority shareholder in Lotex S.A., whose 15 purple and orange Bingo Bahiti clubs have become a fixture in Bolivia's major cities over the past two years. Inside the venues, large Bingo rooms are the main attraction, although there are also hundreds of blinking slot machines and other automated games that accept dollars or bolivianos. The casinos are rarely packed but do draw a steady crowd, officials say.

Ritzio says its international expansion is not tied to curbs on gambling inside Russia. "The [prohibition] law has intensified the process of our internationalization, but not radically," a Ritzio spokesman says, explaining that when Russia announced the ban in late 2006, the company already had assets in eight countries. (Today that number is 15, including Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Mexico.)

But others involved in the industry believe the capital flight is directly related to new Russian regulations. "It's preposterous to think these [gaming zones in remote locations proposed by the Russian legislation] could be up and running soon," Samuel Binder, deputy executive director at the Russian Association for Gaming Business Development, told Reuters in July. "Even those who have investments for gaming have realized they'd rather take their money elsewhere in the ex-Soviet Union or to Latin America," Binder said.

Bolivia's gambling boom is not unique: Mexico and Colombia opened new Russian-owned mega-casinos this year; Chile's gambling sector is rapidly expanding despite the economic downturn; and Lima, Peru, is now known on the South American traveler's circuit as a sweet spot for gambling. Argentina's casino business, the largest on the continent, brings in between \$4 billion and \$5 billion a year.

But Bolivia is the continent's poorest country, prompting many to wonder how investing here could be profitable for Russia's high rollers. Cardenas says that while Bolivia's poor may not frequent the slots, there are plenty who have money to spare and enjoy placing the occasional bet. Bingo Bahiti President Jose Maria Peñaranda says his venue provides wholesome fun. "Everyone loves Bingo," Peñaranda told TIME. "We offer a calm, safe and fun form of entertainment."

Indeed Bolivia only allows "soft" gambling — no dealers and no wheels, only machines programmed to give a win at least 80% of the time. (This is slightly misleading because a Bingo hall produces a winner every game and a slot spin that boosts your score by \$0.05 is considered a win.) On a recent Wednesday evening, the

grandmother of one Mary Aguilar wasn't winning, but didn't seem to mind. "I come most weeks," she said. "It's just a good way to pass the time."

But not everyone is convinced that Bolivia's newest pastime is as innocent as it seems. "It's a dangerous topic," says Santa Cruz District Attorney Hector Cornejo, who's part of a special unit on corruption and gambling related crime. He and others "in the know" — journalists, investigators, public officials — speak in hushed tones about a growing Russian Mafia. Cornejo alludes to casinos being the gateway to an underworld of money laundering, drug trafficking and recent spikes in crime in Bolivia's wealthy city of Santa Cruz, though he offers no specifics. Even Cardenas, who is wary of condemning the sector he runs, has this admission: "Gambling, drugs, prostitution and arms — they go together."

What concerns authorities are not necessarily the on-the-books operations such as Ritzio's Bingo Bahiti, but smaller, rapidly proliferating outlets like those under an umbrella company named Corhat. Corhat's legal adviser, Otto Ritter, claims that not one of his company's 67 Bolivian venues have Russian ties and that their fast expansion is nothing more than a good business model. "Those are just ugly rumors meant to hurt our business," he told TIME. "We have no Russian investors and everything we do is square with the law."

But Cardenas and Cornejo insist that Russian interests are involved in Corhat. While the company, through its lawyer Ritter, rejects the accusation, the gatekeeper at one of the company's operations was less sure. "The Bolivian manager is just a front," a security guard at a Corhat casino in Santa Cruz told TIME on the condition of anonymity. "There are three Russian guys who are the ones running the show." The company's own headquarters do little to bolster Ritter's claims of legitimacy: Their 8-in.-by-11-in. paper Corhat sign is scotch-taped to the window of crumbling office building. Inside, there's no trace of regular staff: just bare walls and empty desks.

The reason that Russia put the squeeze on its own gaming industry in 2006 was the link drawn by its Interior Ministry between gaming operations in Moscow and a criminal organization in Georgia. Bolivia is not likely to limit gambling operations, however; its newly approved constitution allows for the maintenance of the industry. Indeed, gambling looks set to be a growth industry in the region: Even Latin America's economic powerhouse, Brazil, is currently considering lifting its long-standing prohibition on casinos.

Antigua

Aruba

- **Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic 2009 Won By Brandon Hall**
OnlinePoker.net, October 12th, 2009 Author: A. Mitchell

Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic 2009 Won By Brandon Hall Brandon Hall has won the 2009 Aruba Poker Classic Championship, beating a field of 475 players to take down the \$753,330 first prize. Robert Mizrachi was the runner-up for \$414,680 but a deal struck when the two players were heads up meant each player effectively chopped the pot and played for \$30,000 change.

The seven man final table was soon down to six players after Matt Ross liked his pocket 7's and went all in pre-flop only to be called by Jose Santos with A-K. An A on the turn and river knocked Ross out of the tournament but \$41,000 richer for the experience.

The tournament was held at the **Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino and Spa.**

- **New \$5 Chip Issued by the Alhambra Casino**
December 1, 2009, submitted by John Genualdi

The scans are of a commemorative chip just released today by the Alhambra Casino in Aruba. The building side shows the Alhambra Casino by night and the other side is being dedicated to Roger who worked for the company for 35 years. He was the doorman greeter for the Alhambra Casino for 25 years and is retiring due to poor health. The Alhambra Casino is presenting to Roger today this chip and other items for his service.

They only made 1500 and I had to talk to several people including the general manager before they would sell me one. An interesting fact is they don't have their name or location on the chip but anyone who has been there would recognize that is from the Alhambra Casino in Aruba.



- **Casino Radisson Aruba Closing Down**

December 3, 2009, Amigoe Newspaper, submitted by Michael Siskin

ORANJESTAD — The casino of the Radisson hotel will be closing down per January 31st. The reason for this is that Radisson has not renewed the license contract with the casino's manager The Millennium Resource Group. "It's a bitter pill to swallow for the employees with the coming holidays" according to Chairman Rudy Geerman of the trade union Federacion di Trahadornan Arubano (FTA).

The Millennium Resource Group had submitted an application for the dismissal of 91 employees to the Directorate Labor & Research (DAO), Dorothy Laclé van DAO confirms. The Amigoe had been informed by The Millennium Resource Group that they consider Radisson's course of action as 'outrageous'. "How is it possible that they had not informed us sooner that the contract would not be renewed? We will now only have two weeks in February to pack up." The casino namely has to be cleared for the hotel on February 14th. The casino personnel is 'apprehensive and depressed' said a spokesperson of The Millennium Resource Group – who wished to remain nameless. "There are people who have been working with the casino since the beginning (in 2000, red.). The casino had become their second home and they are now forced to leave without being able to do anything about it."

The Millennium Resource Group presumes that the Radisson hotel wants another company to manage the casino. The Group had therefore instituted legal proceedings against the hotel to enforce a renewal of the contract. The verdict had been given on November 25th and unfavorable for the casino-manager. The hotel had brought up the argument that the casino had not yielded as agreed upon, according to The Millennium Resource Group. "How could we comply with the agreed upon revenues in view of the severe recession" the spokesperson said.

The hotel management of the Radisson did not want to respond to the situation today. The Millennium Resource Group will be holding a meeting with all personnel tomorrow to inform them of their rights. According to Directorate of Labor, an application for dismissal usually takes up to six weeks to two months.

- **Bad News in Aruba**

12/6/2009 and 12/28/09, Michael Siskin

From what I have heard, both the **Key Largo** casino and **The Casino at the Radisson** are currently closed. In both cases, the workers have refused to work. At the Key Largo, the employees were supposedly not being paid. At the Radisson, the Hotel won a court case against the casino management company to end their agreement due to failure to provide contractually agreed upon returns, and announced that the casino would be closing at the end of January 31st. In response, the employees have supposedly walked out. I sent people to get me some chips from the Radisson when I heard they announced the closure at the end of January. They went to the casino and it was already closed. They couldn't get me a single chip. sad So, for those who commented

about the poker chip in my posts, I was not able to get any and my ability to get more in the future is in doubt.

The Casino at the Radisson: The Radisson announced that it was ending its casino management contract with the current management company after prevailing in a lawsuit against them based upon the failure of the management company to provide the minimum returns required in their contract. Soon after, the Radisson announced the termination of one casino employee. The employees walked out, but returned to work one hour later. The casino is currently up and running. The Radisson has announced that the old casino management company will be replaced on January 31st. Since the Radisson is due for renovations in April, it is not clear whether the casino will be closed at any point for renovation.

Key Largo: As part of bankruptcy proceedings involving the Aruban Resort & Casino, which owns the Key Largo Casino, the Key Largo is closed. It remains to be seen whether the Aruba Resort can bounce back and whether it intends to reopen the casino.

Bahamas

- **Bahamas Casino Used As Ugly Betty Location**
Posted By Tom Travis | Wednesday, September 30, 2009

The cast of hit US comedy series Ugly Betty are heading to an exclusive casino resort in the Bahamas next month, according to reports. A source at Entertainment Weekly revealed that the Atlantis Resort and Casino has been chosen as the location for a special new episode of the ABC show, which is broadcast on Channel 4 in the UK. The episode is due to air in November and is believed to feature most of the characters, who will be involved in a photo shoot for Mode magazine.

It is unknown whether the Ugly Betty cast members will have time to enjoy the casino facilities during their stay, but the Atlantis offers an abundance of live gaming tables, slot machines and blackjack tournaments. The main casino floor contains 90 table games including blackjack, baccarat, craps, roulette and Caribbean stud poker. As the venue for the European Poker Tour's annual Caribbean Adventure, the Atlantis is certainly well equipped to host large crowds. This year's event saw a record 1,347 poker players take part, with Canada's Poorya Nazari claiming the \$3 million (£1.8 million) first prize.

- **Radisson Hotels & Resorts Announces Addition of the Radisson Our Lucaya Resort, Grand Bahama Island Showcase Property is Key Addition to Radisson Resort Portfolio in the Caribbean**
GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND, July 2 /PRNewswire/

Radisson(R) Hotels & Resorts today announced the addition of the Radisson Our Lucaya Resort, Grand Bahama Island, a 740-room landmark resort located in the heart of Grand Bahama Island. The AAA four-diamond oceanfront resort was converted to the Radisson brand, establishing Radisson's presence in the Bahamas and strengthening the brand's impressive resort portfolio in the Caribbean. Radisson currently operates two world-class resort properties in Aruba and St. Martin.

The Radisson Our Lucaya Resort, Grand Bahama Island is owned by Hutchison Lucaya Limited, a subsidiary of Hutchison Whampoa Limited, based in Hong Kong. The resort is managed by Harbour Plaza Hotel Management Limited.

To celebrate the new affiliation, the hotel is offering a special \$139 per night rate (plus taxes and fees) that includes green fees at either of the resort's premier, championship golf courses, good now through Sept. 7, 2009. "Radisson is focused on building a vibrant new market positioning through the addition of major upscale properties such as this stunning oceanfront resort in the Bahamas," said Fredrik Korallus, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Radisson Hotels & Resorts. "The outstanding facilities of the resort, combined with our passion to deliver distinctive 'Yes I Can!' service, will give travelers to the Caribbean an exceptional hospitality experience."

"We are delighted to be part of the Radisson Caribbean resort portfolio and look forward to building our reputation as a premier destination resort in the Caribbean," said Ms. Veronica Clarke, Resort Manager. "The

strength of the Radisson brand in the Caribbean and globally will be key elements in building our future business success."

The Radisson Our Lucaya Resort, Grand Bahama Island features 740 elegantly designed guest rooms and suites with sweeping panoramic ocean and island views. The comfortable, contemporary resort is inspired by Art-Deco style and its own sun-drenched tropical location. The resort itself is divided into two different wings, each with a distinct personality. The main building, Breakers Cay, is at the focus of activities while the resort's exclusive Lanai Suites looks over its own private beachfront. Lighthouse Pointe rests at the end of the resort, providing even more privacy.

The resort is located just 55 miles off the Florida coast on a 7.5-acre white sandy beach where guests can enjoy scuba diving, snorkeling, fishing, windsurfing and sailing. The resort is home to two of the finest golf courses in The Bahamas - The Reef Golf Course and Lucayan Country Club, designed by renowned golf architects Robert Trent Jones Jr. and Dick Wilson, respectively. Both 18-hole, par-72 golf courses have hosted numerous championship games, including the PGA's Bahamas National Open and the Senior PGA's Grand Slam.

The resort offers exciting options for night life at a **Vegas-style casino**, featuring 400 slot machines and 30 gaming tables. Nearby Port Lucaya Marketplace provides nightly entertainment, coming alive amid a flurry of bright local costumes and heart-thumping Caribbean beats. Resort amenities include four incredible swimming pools and Jacuzzis, as well as a 25,000-square-foot Spa & Fitness Center offering state-of-the-art equipment and fitness classes. The Spa offers relaxing massages and skin treatments, and also features a Beauty Salon.

The hotel provides 90,000-square-feet of flexible meeting space, inclusive of a 40,000 square-foot Convention Center, all featuring wireless Internet access. The Radisson Our Lucaya Resort Event Coordinators can organize all details of meetings, conventions and events.

- **Treasure Bay to take over Isle of Capri Casino within weeks**

By Clarence Rolle, bahamasweekly.com, Nov 2, 2009

The Bahamas - As a part of the strategic initiatives to bolster the Grand Bahama tourism industry, the Minister of Tourism & Aviation the Honourable Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, today confirmed that Treasure Bay Gaming & Resorts will take over operation of the Our Lucaya Casino from Isle of Capri on or before November 23, 2009.

The Minister expressed appreciation to Isle of Capri for having extended their exit in order to achieve a seamless transfer to Treasure Bay. The new operator will upgrade the equipment, bring innovation, excitement and a vibrant marketing programme to the casino. Apart from some employees who have elected to accept severance benefits at this time, the remainder of the staff will continue in the employment of Treasure Bay. This positive development, said the Minister, comes at the time when expanded airlift from Canada, New York and Florida is commencing into Grand Bahama Island.

Belize

Bermuda

Bonaire

Cayman Islands

Costa Rica

New Themed Casino Under the Hard Rock Brand Opening Soon in Costa Rica

NewswireToday - /newswire/ - San Jose, Costa Rica, 06/11/2008

Rainforest Resort & Casino S.A. is in process to develop a 24-hour resort complex called "**Rainforest Resort & Casino**".

Rainforest Resort & Casino S.A. is in process to purchase and develop several properties into a 24-hour resort complex called "Rainforest Resort & Casino" in the heart of the city of San Jose in Costa Rica. Rainforest Resort & Casino would provide a destination for individuals, families and corporations seeking a destination with 5-star accommodations, live entertainment, gaming, themed restaurants and bars, American' style buffet, banquet facilities, a showroom, upscale boutiques, a convention center, and a multi-purpose venue designed to host meeting and entertainment events including poker tournaments.

The convention center included in the master plan will be the first of its kind in San José. The size and amenities of the convention center will draw trade shows and business conferences from all over the world.

When completed, Rainforest Resort & Casino will be the largest resort, casino, entertainment venue and business complex in Costa Rica. The complete project development will cost over \$81.0mm. Rainforest Resort's Executives are in process to complete the financing structure with the support of a financial institution group based in the United States.

When completed, the Rainforest Resort will encompass: 179 deluxe rooms, suites and presidential suites; 35,000 + sq. ft. gaming floor; Six themed dining venues; Four themed bars; American style buffet; Banquet salons with a capacity up to 500 people; Business center; State of the art spa and rejuvenation center; Nightclub/Ultra-Lounge; Cabaret presenting comedy and magic shows; Live entertainment with national and international acts; Multi-purpose entertainment complex presenting national and international events; Convention center with a capacity to handle an estimated 3,000 people; National and international poker tournaments and over 1,300 parking spaces.

Cuba

Curacao

Dominican Republic

- **Empresas EE Casino Management Company**

Submitted by Luis Alvarez

Empresas EE manages six casinos in the Dominican Republic. Most of these casinos use generic EE (2nd E is backwards) casino chips.

- Oasis, Punta Cana
- Casino Hamaca, Boca Chica
- Casino Melia Hotel Melia, Santo Domingo
- Casino Maunaloa, Santo Domingo
- Casino Matum, Santiago
- Casino Grand Oasis Marien, Puerto Plata

- **Caribbean Casino and Gaming Corp Opened as Scheduled, with a "Night to Remember"**

MIAMI, FL, Oct. 26 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/

Caribbean Casino and Gaming Corp (CGAQ.PK) had a "Night to Remember" during the grand opening of the **Sosua Bay Grand Casino**. The casino opened as scheduled with a spectacular party and concert event last Saturday. Twice as many people attended the opening in the grand casino. Officials, celebrities, business people and personalities, jammed the casino and the second floor concert.

Rubby Perez, the famous Dominican songwriter and producer performed that night. The second floor of the casino was packed. The concert was a huge success. In the main floor the casino was at more than 100% capacity. All the tables and slot machine were full of people were enjoying the night.

Steven Swank, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer stated: "We're very please with the huge attendances for the opening event. The company still Debit free, and it was a night that all Sosua will remember for long time. What else we can ask for. All the shareholders that came to the events were very pleased. We're looking to open more casinos in the following months. Watch for news. It was a real night to remember for all".

- **Hard Rock Plans to Enter Caribbean With an All-inclusive Resort and Casino**
December 1, 2009, USA Today, submitted by Jim Noll



The Hard Rock chain plans to open its first all-inclusive resort and casino next spring, when it begins operating the 121-acre **Moon Palace Resort in Punta Cana**, Dominican Republic. The Hard Rock chain - known for a music memorabilia collection that includes an Eric Clapton guitar - runs hotel and casinos in Tampa and Hollywood, Fla. The 1,800-room Punta Cana resort will mark the chain's 13th hotel.

Hard Rock International plans to target couples, bridal parties, families, music fans - and gamblers. Expect a major casino with 457 slots, 40 tables, and a high-limit poker room, according to the company's press release.

- **Dominican Republic Casino Management Companies**
Fernando A. Baez

Casinos in Dominican Republic are operated by three major companies:

- Empresas EE, which I'm the Director of Operations,
- Cirsa Group, and
- Comar Group

These three companies use some chips in all casinos of their property. Also Casinos constantly change of ownership here in Dominican Republic. I understand that for easier identification of each casino/chip , beside the name of the casino a date and operator should be place beside.

For example:

- Casino Puerto Plata / Operated by Empresas EE (1987-1992)
- Casino Gran Almirante/ Operated by Empresas EE (1994-1999)
- Casino Gran Almirante/ Operated by Cirsa Group (1999- still)
- Casino San Geronimo/ Operated by Empresas EE (1983-2002)
- Casino San Geronimo/ new administration (2002-2006)
- Casino San Geronimo/ Administration (2006 -still) only slots no tables

Casino Dominicus

- Casino Dominicus at Bayahibe lasted (2007-Nov. 2009) all chips were retired of that administration.
- Now Casino Dominicus @ Bayahibe is operated by Empresas EE (Oct. 2009-)

Casino Hamaca

- Casino Hamaca at Hotel Hamaca by Hilton /Operated by Empresas EE (1994-still)
- Casino Hamaca at Hotel Hamaca by Globalia/ Casino kept by Empresas EE

Casino Matum

- Casino Matum/ Operated by Hotel Matum (circa 1965-1999) Chips Changed
- Casino Matum/ Operated by Empresas EE (1999-still)

New Casino: Casino Grand Oasis Marien / Operated by Empresas EE/ (Oct. 2008-still) uses generic Empresas EE chips. New Casino: Casino Punta CAAna Grand Oasis / Operated by Empresas EE/ (Oct. 2006-still) uses generic Empresas EE chips. You could also open a catalog for Empresas EE chips which are widely used in our seven casinos which we operate.

Any other news, I'll keep on informing.

Guatemala

Guyana

Haiti

Jamaica

Mexico

- **PokerTek Selected as Preferred Vendor for Pringsa/Cirsa and Installs First PokerPro Table in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico**

Press Release, Matthews, NC – November 2, 2009, Submitted by Jim Noll

PokerTek, the industry pioneer and worldwide leader in automated poker tables, announced today that they have been selected as Pringsa/Cirsa's preferred vendor for automated poker tables. The first PokerPro system was installed at the Emotion Bingo gaming property in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico on September 4th. Emotion Bingo is owned and operated by Cirsa and Pringsa Corporations. This is the first installation of PokerPro in Mexico. "We are excited to add electronic poker to Emotion Bingo," said Julian Lopez, Director of Operations for Pringsa and Cirsa in Mexico. "PokerPro allows us to offer the most popular poker games and limits on an electronic platform that emulates live poker. Poker players will find a variety of cash games and tournaments, and compete against other players as they would at a manual poker table."

"We are pleased to be selected as the preferred vendor of automated poker tables for Pringsa/Cirsa," said Mark Roberson, PokerTek' Acting CEO and CFO. " are a great partner, and we look forward to working with them to make PokerPro a success." Due to the success of PokerPro in Puerto Vallarta, PokerTek is already planning its second installation with Pringsa/Cirsa by adding two tables to the state-of-the-art CasinoLife Del Valle property in Mexico City. The Emotion branded property in Puerto Vallarta also offers sports betting, bingo and video lottery terminals.

- **POKERTEK SELECTED FOR TELEVISA 'S GAMING PROPERTIES AND INSTALLS AT TWO MEXICO CITY PROPERTIES**

Matthews, NC – November 30, 2009, Press Release , Submitted by Jim Noll

PokerTek has been selected by Apuestas Internacionales, S.A. de C.V. for its gaming properties operated in Mexico under the brand name "" Apuestas Internacionales, S.A. de C.V. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Grupo Televisa, S.A.B. (" in charge of its gaming business segment.

PlayCity currently has 25 gaming properties in Mexico, and has made commitments to PokerTek for 34 units. PokerTek installed the initial units at two of PlayCity's premier properties located in Mexico City: two units at PlayCity Armand on November 20th and three units at PlayCity Antara on November 24th.

“PlayCity’s properties are impressive, and include the latest gaming technology,” said Mark Roberson, PokerTek’ Acting CEO and CFO. “ are pleased to be selected by such a prestigious company as their supplier, and look forward to adding units into their other properties as quickly as possible.”

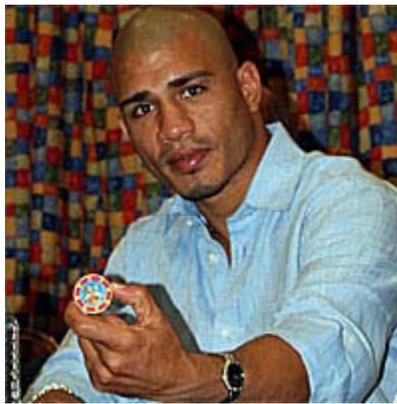
Panama

Puerto Rico

- **Cotto casino chip!**

July 14, 2009, Fightnews.com, submitted by Bob Hiestand

As an acknowledge for his great boxing career, The **Four Points By Sheraton Caguas Real Hotel & Casino** introduced today a chip with the champion’s image. This “Cotto chip” has a real exchange value inside the casino, and is meant to commemorate one of the greatest Puertorrican boxers, who is considered part of the culture and history of his natal town. “This is a real honor for me and my family,” said Cotto, who was deeply moved because of the recognition and emphasized that this kind of distinctions make him fell that all the years of work and sacrifice has been worthy. The “Cotto chip” has a casino value of \$5.00 and are available at The Four Points By Sheraton Caguas Real Hotel & Casino in Caguas Puerto Rico.



- **Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel & Casino Celebrates Grand Opening**

Mon, 16 Nov 2009, EarthTimes.org

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - (Business Wire) Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (NYSE:HOT) and Interlink Group announced today the grand opening of the new **Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel & Casino**. Located adjacent to the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan’s newest vibrant commercial and residential district, the new 503-room property welcomes both business and leisure travelers, offering exceptional meeting facilities, a full-service casino and resort-like amenities, including a sundeck/pool, spa and retail space. Sheraton Puerto Rico is 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.

“We are proud to announce the grand opening of the new Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel & Casino, the first new full-service property in San Juan in more than a decade,” said Federico J. Sanchez, President and Chief Executive Officer of Interlink Group. “The property is a \$210 million investment to create the area’s premier hotel for both business and leisure travelers, with exceptional offerings for guests who are either at work or at play. This significant new property is a vital component of Starwood’s larger multi-billion-dollar worldwide effort to revitalize the iconic Sheraton brand with distinctive amenities and initiatives, including unprecedented meetings amenities, state-of-the-art technology and a casino that will appeal to both guests and locals.”

The Sheraton Puerto Rico is a member of The Starwood Convention Collection, an elite group of Starwood’s largest group and meeting hotels located in top destinations and offering exceptional service and unparalleled facilities. It also represents the brand’s focus, over the past three years, on developing “big box” and convention hotels with unprecedented meeting amenities in key markets. 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 can enjoy several open-air balcony verandas and a dedicated outdoor event space on a 57,000 square-foot pool deck with stunning views. The hotel is also the first and only property in the Caribbean pursuing LEED Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Sheraton Puerto Rico also features a signature offering of the Sheraton brand’s revitalization effort: Sheraton’s “Link@SheratonSM experienced with Microsoft®.” This unique lounge enables today’s travelers to stay connected with instant access to information and technology for work, leisure and social networking. Designed as a social environment, The Link invites guests to interact with each other while they check their email, research local attractions and even print boarding passes using free Wi-Fi and Internet-enabled computer stations.

At 20,000 square feet, the hotel’s casino, operated by CCHRP Hospitality, is the largest in Puerto Rico and offers a circular casino bar and entertainment space – the first in Puerto Rico. The ‘smoke-free’ 24-hour casino features 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 grand opening of Sheraton Puerto Rico comes at one of the most significant moments in our brand’s storied history, as we complete an aggressive \$6 billion growth plan unlike any other for Sheraton,” said Hoyt H. Harper II, Senior Vice President for Sheraton Hotels and Resorts. “This property not only reflects a dedication to open significant, new convention hotels across the globe, it showcases exceptional and unique offerings for both business and leisure travelers. From its robust meeting amenities, to an unprecedented casino, to coveted leisure and resort offerings, Sheraton Puerto Rico is truly a signature property for the Sheraton brand.”

Sheraton Puerto Rico offers guests a wide array of urban resort features. The hotel’s 57,000 square-foot sun and pool deck includes sweeping panoramic views of San Juan Bay, multiple pools -- for both adults and kids -- poolside cabanas and poolside dining. A 7,000 square-foot spa offers a comprehensive array of treatments for women and men. The hotel also features a revolutionary new health and fitness program, “Sheraton Fitness, Programmed by Core Performance,” a holistic program designed exclusively for Sheraton guests through its partner, Core Performance. The program offers a 24-hour fitness center with state-of-the-art Life Fitness equipment. Guests can also shop in more than 70,000 square feet of retail space.

Additional amenities of Sheraton Puerto Rico include:

- ◆ 22 Suites, including a presidential suite overlooking San Juan Bay;
- ◆ Sheraton Club level guest rooms and suites on the penthouse level with access to a 3,200 square-foot lounge, featuring an al fresco terrace, the area's only club level with this amenity;
- ◆ All-day dining restaurant, 24-hour in-room dining and three fine dining restaurants.



- **Caribbean Cage and Hard Rock International to Partner on Local Ventures**

11/05/2009 by Frances Ryan, CaribbeanBusinessPR.com

Caribbean Cage (Cage), a leading gaming and lottery company, and Hard Rock International, one of the world's most recognized entertainment brands, have entered into a strategic alliance to explore gaming-hotel opportunities in Puerto Rico and throughout the region, CARIBBEAN BUSINESS learned. Todd Washington, Cage's vice president of business development & government affairs, said it was too early to talk about specific developments or locations for a local Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

"This partnership with Hard Rock International is a natural extension of our business, which by nature is closely linked to the hospitality and travel industry. It is definitely too premature to pinpoint specific locations or future projects, but one thing we can certainly say is that through this partnership we will aggressively pursue joint ventures that will greatly benefit Puerto Rico's tourism industry and the local economy as a whole," Washington said. The Cage-Hard Rock partnership, according to industry insiders, could present a clear path for delivering high-end video-lottery technology & gaming entertainment through the hotel industry.

Cage had earlier proposed to the Treasury Department to implement a local gaming system, whereby Treasury would be able to uproot thousands of illegally operating slot machines and replace them with video-lottery terminals (VLTs). The Treasury Department has decided to open the process for competitive bids. "That is the position the Treasury Department and the Legislature have taken and we will respect it," Washington said. He said Cage looks forward to participating in the bidding process and expressed confidence his company's proposal will prevail. Estimates of illegally operating adult-entertainment machines range from 20,000 to 90,000, the larger number cited by Treasury Secretary Juan Carlos Puig.

- **HI Development Nears Groundbreaking on Fourth Hotel in P.R.**

10/29/2009 by Frances Ryan, CaribbeanBusinessPR.com

Holiday Inn Tropical Casino Bayamón slated to begin construction in 2010; \$50 million; 160-room hotel, adjacent to local science park Hotel-development company HI Development Corp. Puerto Rico is finalizing plans to begin construction of Holiday Inn Tropical Casino Bayamón, CARIBBEAN BUSINESS learned. The 160-room Bayamón hotel will be HI Development's fourth hotel on the island and will be built with an estimated investment of \$50 million to \$60 million. The company already owns Holiday Inn Tropical Casino Mayagüez, Holiday Inn Tropical Casino Ponce and Howard Johnson's Hotel in Ponce.

Adjacent to Bayamón's popular science park, the new Holiday Inn should create 200-250 new direct jobs from the combined hotel and casino operations. News of HI Development's Bayamón hotel comes on the heels of the company's landing of the exclusive development rights to the popular casual-dining chain Fat Tuesday's in Puerto Rico. The first location, scheduled to open before the end of the year, will be in San Juan's Santurce Sector in the popular Plaza del Mercado (Farmers Market).

Miguel Vega, executive vice president & director of operations at HI Development, said hotel construction is set to begin next year and take 18 months to 24 months to complete. Adjacent to the science park and the Plaza del Sol shopping center, the new hotel will cater to a mixed clientele including corporate visitors, medical-tourism guests and local customers. "On one end, it will cater to a vibrant corporate and industrial community that works along the island's northern corridor, conveniently located between San Juan and that industrial zone, with the trusted name of Holiday Inn. From a local perspective, the hotel will be minutes away from Bayamón's Inter American Advanced Medicine-San Pablo Hospital (HIMA-San Pablo Hospital), which will be able to complement the hospital's investment in medical tourism," Vega said. The new Holiday Inn expects to bring yet another level of convenience to local tourists as well, Vega added.

"For west-coast residents, the new Holiday Inn Bayamón will also be an ideal alternative, minutes from top shopping and entertainment districts in the San Juan metro area at more affordable rates than San Juan hotels," the HI executive noted. For local business affairs and special events, the new Holiday Inn will be equipped with meeting facilities including a multiuse ballroom with capacity for 300 people, convertible to three breakout rooms for smaller meeting sessions.

- **Tourism Co. Working on New Gaming Bill**

10/22/2009 by Frances Ryan, CaribbeanBusinessPR.com

Goal is to replace existing gaming law to make industry more competitive. Treasury moves to renew licenses of off-casino adult-entertainment machines. The Puerto Rico Tourism Co. (PRTC) is drafting a legislative initiative aimed at replacing the island's existing gaming law (Law 221 of May 15, 1948), CARIBBEAN BUSINESS learned. The proposed initiative would make the industry more competitive by allowing the operation of different and technologically advanced gaming options currently not available on the island and streamlining the permits process.

In a related development, the Treasury Department has decided to begin renewing licenses for existing adult-entertainment machines operating outside of sanctioned hotel casinos. Many of the machines are illegally paying out cash prizes. Adult-entertainment machines are regulated by Treasury, while hotel-casino slot machines are under the watch of the PRTC. PRTC officials declined to comment on the new gaming bill, saying additional information to finalize the measure is still pending.

To achieve its objective of securing a new gaming law for Puerto Rico, the PRTC has evaluated other gaming law models including those of Las Vegas, Atlantic City and Macao. The agency hopes to file the proposed gaming bill before the end of the current legislative session, according to CARIBBEAN BUSINESS tourism sources.

St... Kitts

- **Plan For Another Five-Star Resort in St. Kitts Moves Forward**
September 17, 2009, Caribbean360.com



BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, September 17, 2009 - Progress is being made for the development of another five-star resort on St. Kitts' southeast peninsula. An official signing ceremony between Park Hyatt Resorts and the Toronto-based St. Michael's Foundation Limited to take the plan forward is set for today.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of St. Michaels Foundation Limited, Chris Kanhai said the US\$860 million Cockleshell Bay Development on 153 acres of land on Cockleshell Bay, is the future home of a 125-room **Park Hyatt Resort and Spa**, a 100-condominium Park Hyatt Residence, 86 Estate Villas and the **Cockleshell Bay Marina Village** with a 160-slip marina and 234 condominium and Town homes.

He said construction of the marina is schedule to begin in January 2010 and the resort in November 2010. The project also includes the several amenities including a **casino**, four restaurants, tennis courts and swimming pools. Kanhai added that the hotel, marina and the Park Hyatt Residences are to be completed by 2013 and the Marina Village and Estate Villas by 2015.

Earlier this month Cockleshell Bay Marina, through St. Michael Development Ltd, signed a 10-year operating agreement with Camper & Nicholson's Marinas for the development and operation of the Cockleshell Bay Marina.

St... Lucia

St... Maarten

Suriname

Trinidad and Tobago

Turks and Caicos

U. S. Virgin Islands

Venezuela

- **Hilton 'evaluating' Venezuelan hotel seizure**

October 14, 2009, AFP, submitted by Jim Noll.

WASHINGTON — The US-based Hilton hotel chain is "evaluating" the Venezuelan government's seizure of one of its hotels on the **Caribbean resort island of Margarita**, a spokeswoman told AFP on Wednesday. President Hugo Chavez ordered the "acquisition by force" of the landmark hotel Tuesday, according to Venezuelan officials. "At this time, Hilton Worldwide is evaluating how the Venezuelan government's action affects its interest in this hotel," said Karla Visconti, a Hilton Worldwide spokeswoman for the Caribbean, Mexico, and Latin America.

In a brief statement Visconti said the hotel "remains a member of the Hilton system of hotels, and welcomes guests with the same level of service they have come to enjoy." The sprawling Margarita Island complex includes 280 rooms, 210 suites, a casino, stores, restaurants, offices and meeting areas, as well as the adjoining marina. The hotel, in Nueva Esparta state, was targeted for state takeover less than a month after it was used to host the Africa-South America Summit.

The assets will be held by the state tourism corporation Venetur, which reports to the Tourism Ministry, part of an "urgent" effort to boost "the social development side of the tourism and hotel industries in Nueva Esparta state," the Venezuela government's Official Gazette said. Caracas earlier seized the Hotel Hilton in Caracas and re-named it the Hotel Alba, a reference to the Venezuelan-led leftist regional alliance Alianza Bolivariana para las Americas (ALBA). In the past four years, Venezuela has implemented the nationalization of industries it sees as strategic including electrical utilities, cement, steel, oil services and banking.



Members of the Venezuelan Army guard the entrances to the Margarita Hilton Hotel

CREDIT CHIPS

by Luis Alvaez

Credit chips show up in different casinos, mostly around the Caribbean, Central America and north of South America. Unknown as to how often these show up in the rest of the world. One of the best known was the credit chip (or Credit cheque) is most likely the 1950's Cuban Casino de Capri beige \$100. The fact that it says "credit" vs. "credito" as one would expect, suggests that previous "credit chips" already existed.

Until recently, I was unaware of the difference. I walked into a Dominican casino and while asking for denominations in order to purchase a full active set, there were some "beautiful" chips in 2 racks that were not mentioned to me. I asked: "What are those chips, they are really nice?" The dealer looked back to the supervisor, she nodded "yes" and then he said, "Those are credit chips" and kept on dealing. I went to the supervisor who previously had given the dealers permission for me to buy all the different denominations. I asked her: "Can I buy some of the credit chips?" Very uncomfortable, she said: "I do not think so." I then said: "Can I look at them?" She picked one up and showed it to me, it was a PJM, very attractive with the name of this newly re-opened casino, but completely different in design and type of the regular chips. I asked if I could buy them again. She again said: "I do not believe so." I told her about my collecting and gave her my CC>CC membership card, my medical card, I used to smile I used a lot when I was young and handsome. Then (not because of the smile, but because she was getting more and more uncomfortable) she pulled me to the side. She said that these chips belonged to a group that was part of the management of the casino and that if you ran out of money you would go to the person in the house and give them a collateral and they would give you the value of the collateral in those chips. Then you took the chip to the table and give the table the "credit chip", which to the house was money, and the house would give you the amount of the credit chip in "house chip". The credit chip would be put in the racket for "credit chips" and the player would be given regular chips to play with. The "credit chips" were returned to the "lenders" at the end of the evening and the lenders would pay the house cash for the "credit chips". All was counted and that was the end of the business between the house and the lenders. It hit me that if they sold me one of the credit chips when the house returned the credit chips to the lender, it would not balance!! I said, that is right, she mumbled: "I guess."

So, that was one end of the deal, how about the borrower, the one who borrowed the credit chips, what did he give as collateral?? Anything? Like what, money? No, if they had money they would not need the credit, True, I said acting even more stupid than regular. So, what would they use? She said, Rolex, car, a check or I.O.U. I said: "But, what if the guy gave a check with no funds or not pay the IOU?" or the first time she laughed maliciously and said "I do not think so, HA,HA,HA." That was about as much as I got from her. A friend that was with me, went in to another casino, asked the same, and of 3 more, only one discussed the credit chips with him. And the story was quite different and paranoiac, but substance was identical.



I finally had the answer to my Capri de Casino \$100 credit chip. Always in excellent condition. Of course, just like 100 & 500 chips, they rarely touched the table. I can imagine Lansky counting his "credits" and ready to get one of his goons to collect in the 1950's. I had seen one in a very low class casino in Quito, Ecuador while lecturing in the Hotel I was staying, but 5 blocks away. But of course I didn't care, but it drew my attention. To mention that I was more amused by the semi-hand made chips the casino used. They did not let me keep or buy any, those chips really had a value, hand made and painted. But, not enough interest on chips back then.

By now I have figured out that most of the "Credit chips" I was able to notice were in casinos where mostly Dominican played and interesting, in those casinos, there were no ATM machines. Where the resort casinos or those

mostly visited by tourist, ATM's were all over the place, but no "credit chips" appeared.

One of my goals is to have as many Dominican Republic chips as possible and eventually if I can accomplish the collection of most live casinos (most casinos are active in the DR) and some old ones, I may do a catalog, whether internet or paper. Based on statistics it appears that the Dominican Republic is only second in number of casinos to Puerto Rico and this fluctuates.



This chip shows that credit exist in many clean(?) places, just in those corrupt ones like Cuba/DR

Caribbean Casino Profile

The Atlantis Casino - Paradise Island, Bahamas



The Royal Towers, connected by the Bridge Suite

The Atlantis is a resort and waterpark located on Paradise Island, The Bahamas. The resort was created by South African hotel magnate Sol Kerzner and Kerzner International Limited. The Atlantis is the largest, over 2,300 rooms, upscale resort in the Caribbean, consisting of:

- The Beach Tower
- The Coral Towers
- The Royal Towers the feature the connecting Bridge Suite which is the most expensive hotel room in the world at \$25,000 per night. I've been in it, AMAZING!
- Harborside Resort consists of 392 villas and features a harbor-front restaurant
- The Reef, the newest building at Atlantis, consists of condominium hotel residences
- The Cove Atlantis is a 600-suite tower that opened in 2007
- Aquaventure - Opened in 2007, the 63 acre, 200 million gallon Aquaventure combines slides, lazy rivers, and rapids into one large waterscape. The centerpiece of the attraction is the Power Tower which contains four waterslides and a rock-climbing wall
- The Current - is a mile long, three million gallon water ride complete with waves and artificial tidal surges.
- Mayan temple slides - At the Royal Towers is the Mayan Temple entertainment attraction consisting of 4 major slides: Leap of Faith, the Challenger Slides, the Serpent Slide, and the Jungle Slide.
- The Dig - is a series of aquariums located beneath the lobby of the Royal Towers and is the world's largest open air marine habitat.
- The Marina and Marina Village - The resort features a marina designed to dock large yachts.
- A 50,000 square foot casino, largest in the Caribbean



Mayan Water Slide



The Atlantis Resort



The Aquarium

The Atlantis originally opened as the Paradise Island resort by Huntington Hartford. The resort soon failed as it had no casino and the only way to get to the resort was by ferry. Mafia interests soon took over and had the political clout to secure a casino license, it was actually transferred over (stolen from) from the Bahamian Club, and to have a bridge built to allow easy access. There have been several ownership changes over the years, which included Merv Griffin's Resorts International.

Caribbean TITOs

By: Jim Noll CCCC R-017

At long last we have two "new" TITO's to report that were added to the CCG.

One is a 2009 item from the US Virgin Islands Lottery, from the Crown Bay Gaming and Sports Lounge at Crown Bay Plaza on St.. Thomas. The location, near the cruise ship docks offers a full service bar, gaming and off-track horse racing. The other is from El Casino in Puerto Rico which is a 2009 updated TITO, its logo text is a better match to the graphics used by the hotel/casino on other items including chips.

The 35 known TITOs from the Caribbean area contained in Ver. 2.01 of the TITO Collectors Catalog which is available from me on CDROM in both Word and PDF formats for \$25 including shipping, in total over 2000 TITOs are now cataloged.

As I do not travel to the Caribbean area I am going to ask those of you that do to add TITOs to your collecting interests during Caribbean trips.

Anyone with questions on TITOs and TITO collecting please feel free to contact me at jenca@pacbell.net.

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)
- Dorado Riviera, \$5 Small Key, RIV-5aa
- Dutch Inn - Bud Jones rack, all denoms
- Flamboyant Hotel - rumored that a Florida collector has most of the chips
- Hilton International, Mayaquez - \$5 bud jones, \$25 and \$100 H&C
- 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

Here are some recent additions:



Caribbean Casino Collectors Club News

CCCC member Luis Alvarez is now in planning the **Dominican Republic Casino Chip Hunt**. He plans a several weeks on the island visiting as many casinos as possible and hunting down as many current and obsolete chips as he can find. If you are interested in joining the hunt to get some of these chips, please contact Luis at: tecnamar@aol.com.

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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CCCC R-005

I collect almost any casino collectible from **Aruba** and chips from **Bonaire** and **Curacao**. I am looking for many chips, playing cards and matchbooks and especially the **\$1 Aruba Palm Beach**, **\$1 Porto Paseo** (Curacao) and **\$1 Black Coral** (Bonaire) chips.

Please send me your trader lists and scans.

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