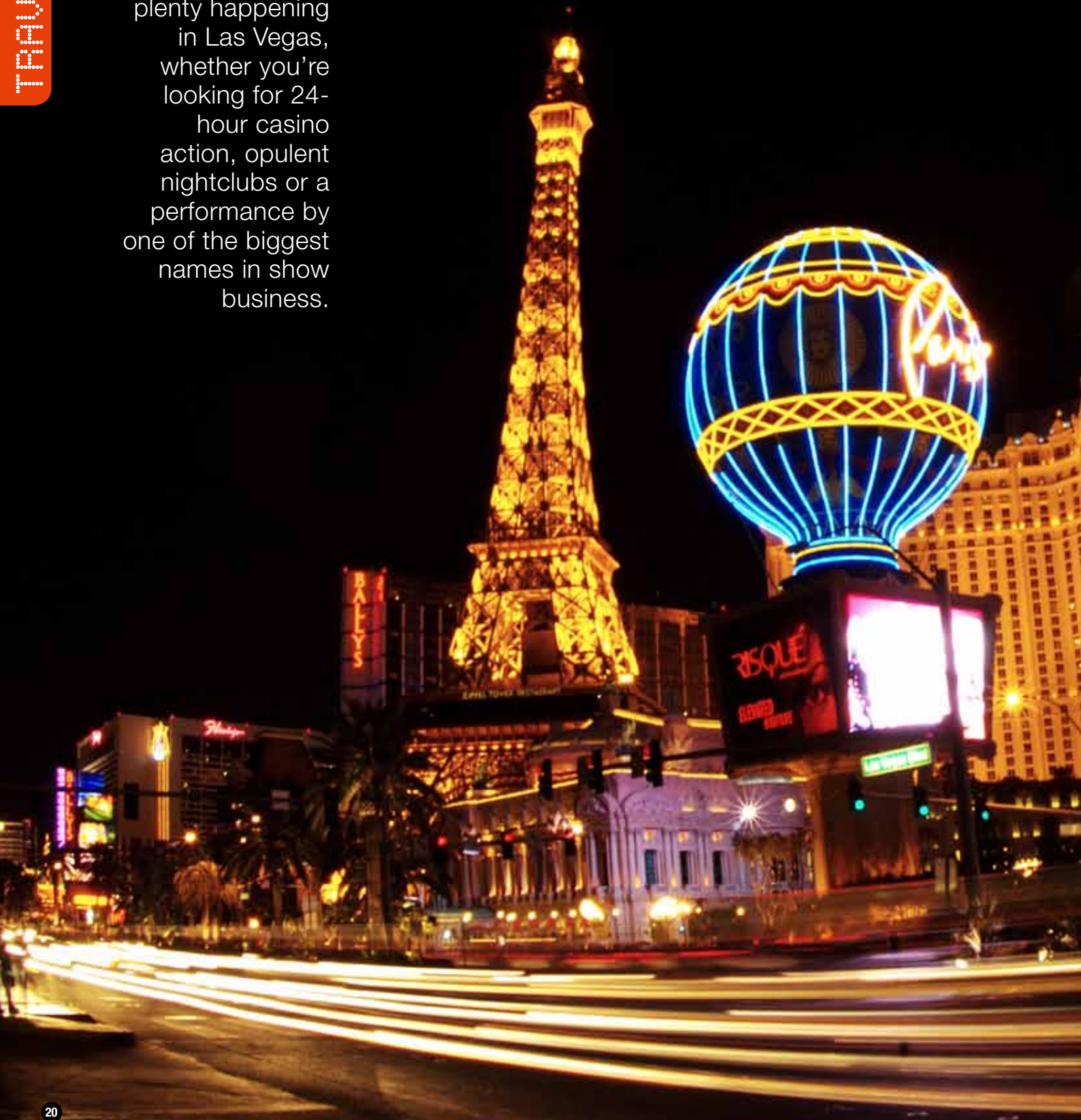


# What happens in Vegas...

There's always plenty happening in Las Vegas, whether you're looking for 24-hour casino action, opulent nightclubs or a performance by one of the biggest names in show business.

TRAVEL











**LAS VEGAS OFFERS** much more than blackjack tables, roulette wheels and slot machines. Visitors can also enjoy wonderful restaurants, shopping and shows or even hiking and biking amid stunning desert scenery. If you're planning a visit to the city that bills itself The Entertainment Capital of the World, here's a rundown on the latest hotspots and happenings.

**SEE** Celebrated crooner **Celine Dion** has just returned to **The Colosseum** at **Caesars Palace** for another three-year residency. Her new show, with its combination of classic hits and popular covers, premiered in March to rave reviews. Expect a heartfelt tribute to Michael Jackson, a hologram duet with Stevie Wonder and a rousing "River Deep, Mountain High" finale. [www.caesarspalace.com](http://www.caesarspalace.com)

Elvis is back in the building. **Cirque du Soleil's** latest show on the Strip is a celebration of the life and works of Las Vegas legend **Elvis Presley**. Playing in the **Aria Resort & Casino** within the **CityCenter** complex, Viva Elvis features many of his greatest hits accompanied by dancing, live music and Cirque du Soleil's trademark acrobatics. [www.aria.com](http://www.aria.com)

**EAT** The latest addition to the menu at casino resort **Wynn Las Vegas** is **La Cave**, an intimate, low-ceilinged venue in which to enjoy Chef Bill DeMarco's small plates of charcuterie, flatbreads and cheeses matched with a wide range of American and international wines. [www.wynnlasvegas.com](http://www.wynnlasvegas.com)

New casino resort **The Cosmopolitan** offers a lip-smacking collection of restaurants including **Blue Ribbon Sushi Bar & Grill** by Manhattan siblings Bruce and Eric Bromberg, French bistro **Comme Ca** by award-winning Los Angeles chef David Myers and modern Italian restaurant **Scarpetta** by New York's Scott Conant. [www.cosmopolitanlasvegas.com](http://www.cosmopolitanlasvegas.com)



Latest shows on the Vegas strip include Cirque du Soleil's take on Elvis Presley at the Aria Resort and Casino (top) and Celine Dion at Caesars Palace (above). Visit La Cave (left) for small plates of charcuterie and cheeses and a wide range of wines.





Nightlife Central: soak up the buzz on the Strip in Las Vegas, where you'll find some of the largest and most spectacular hotels, casinos and resorts in the world.





CityCenter (above), home of the high-end retail precinct Crystals. Nightspot Chateau Nightclub & Gardens (right) has a rooftop garden with views of the Vegas skyline.

**DO** **Red Rock Canyon** tends to get overshadowed by the much better known Grand Canyon, which is a pity because this scenic area of rock formations and desert 24km west of Vegas can be a welcome respite from the neon-lit craziness of the Strip. Popular with hikers, bikers, joggers and climbers, the canyon is also home to a wide variety of wildlife including coyotes, hawks and bobcats. Be sure to check out the visitor centre which details the history and geology of the area. [www.redrockcanyonlv.org](http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org)

Don't fight it. You know you'll end up going shopping at some point during your trip so you might as well start at the swankiest mall in town. **Crystals** is an unashamedly high-end 46,000-sq-metre retail precinct within **CityCenter**. Browse the latest offerings from fashion big-hitters Prada, Christian Dior and Bulgari then check out the Vegas debuts from Tom Ford, Paul Smith and Porsche Design. Tiffany disciples will be particularly pleased – the centre has a stunning two-level flagship store that's guaranteed to prise open the most reluctant of wallets. [www.crystalsatcitycenter.com](http://www.crystalsatcitycenter.com)

**Contact** [www.visitlasvegas.com](http://www.visitlasvegas.com)

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**DRINK** Vegas' newest nightlife venue is **Chateau Nightclub & Gardens**, an opulent French-inspired nightspot which opened at **Paris Las Vegas** in March. The two-storey, 3,700-sq-metre venue features a high-energy nightclub, an outdoor area overlooking the Strip and a glass-enclosed rooftop garden with panoramic views of the Vegas skyline. [www.parislasvegas.com](http://www.parislasvegas.com)

Following the success of indoor/outdoor nightclub **Tao** at the **Venetian**, Encore casino resort has opened **Surrender**, an upscale nightspot that further blurs the line between pool and nightclub. Guests start indoors around an intimate dance floor and bar before spilling out into the three-pooled **Encore Beach Club** to lounge in VIP cabanas and dance under the stars. [www.surrendernightclub.com](http://www.surrendernightclub.com)

**STAY** The latest mega-resort to be unveiled on the Las Vegas Strip is **The Cosmopolitan**, a 2995-room casino hotel split across two 50-storey towers. Costing a cool \$US3.9billion, it features three pool areas, a vast 9000-sq-metre casino and Vegas's first desert-inspired spa. Particularly impressive is **The Chandelier** bar, a space-age, multi-storey venue incorporating three bars shrouded by a luminous curtain of two million glass beads. [www.cosmopolitanlasvegas.com](http://www.cosmopolitanlasvegas.com)

Vegas stalwart the **Tropicana** has had a \$US180million transformation that's left it with a sparkly new facade, new rooms and a host of new attractions. Unveiled in April, **The Las Vegas Mob Experience** utilises the latest interactive entertainment technology combined with more than 1,000 authentic artefacts to re-create the rise and fall of organised crime in Vegas. Also making its debut is **Nikki Beach**, an exclusive beach club and nightspot which hopes to recreate the success of its namesakes in Miami, Marbella and St Tropez. [www.troplv.com](http://www.troplv.com)

STORY **ROB MCFARLAND**