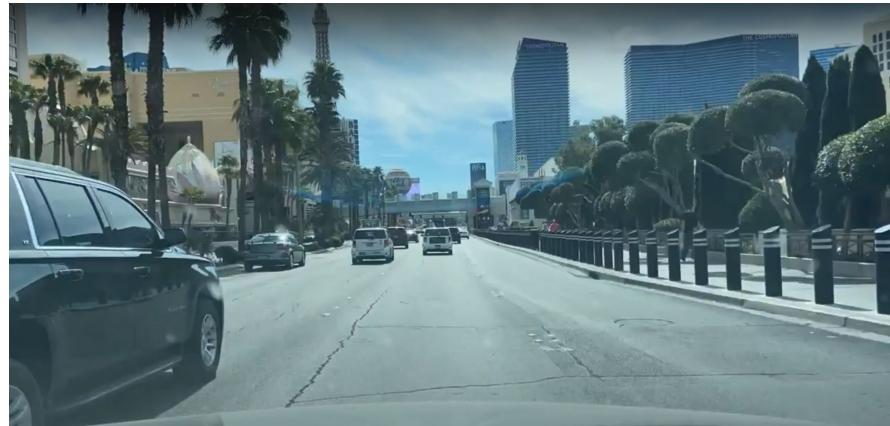


-THE BEST SLOTS, TABLES, CASINOS AND EVENTS IN THE US-



The Ride Into the Storm

BY FOURACEMASTER

When I was a kid, I watched a dead body float right past my sister and cuz in the Atlantic City Ocean; in 2001, I stood on two blocks away from the WTC as the second plane flew into the South Tower; OF COURSE I was going to be in Las Vegas at the onset of a pandemic to watch the casinos shut down for the first time in their history. But today isn't a day for sad stories. Today I am going to tell you about the road trip that lead me through so many casinos and directly into the storm we re just now getting out of. *Sort of. Soon. Probably. Ok enjoy!*

Prelude

It was a cold January day in NEPA (northeastern PA for those of you who don't pronounce the letter "H" as "HAECH") and I had just found out a job I thought I was getting had fallen through. The guy offered me a different gig, and I said, "let me think about it."

It was a decent job. I didn't have any money coming in and even if it was not what I wanted, it would float me to the next one. As I mulled it over, I looked up and saw a sun-drenched add for Las Vegas on the web site I was on but thought nothing of it. Then it happened. I took out the garbage.

Normally garbage is a shit-event, but today it was snowing and icy and I was in my underwear, t-shirt and black socks from the night before because I am stupid. I slipped, fell and dumped garbage juice onto my legs. Both my balls and my legs felt gross, for differing reasons, and I was not thrilled.

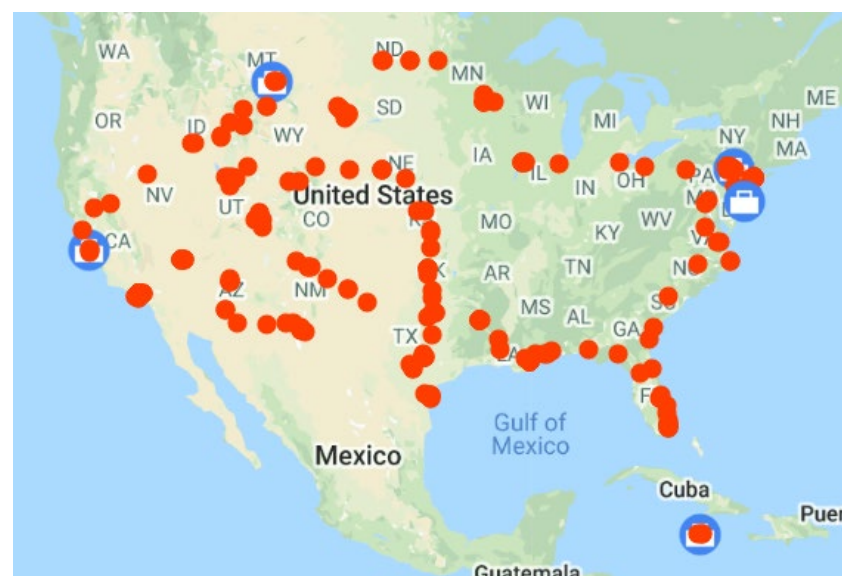
After I cleaned up and showered, I returned to my computer to see the LV add again. I wanted to be there, badly. I audibly said, "Fuck it. I'm driving to Las Vegas."

The Road Trip

By the time I got my shit together, I had a bigger plan. Staying in a gambling town too long is dangerous for a gambler because, you just keep gambling. I redesigned the plan to see sites along the way and end up in LA instead of LV as my midpoint. I was ready.

In a matter of two days I had figured out my initial path would lead me down the eastern seaboard: Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida in time for the Super Bowl weekend. Then I'd scoot west from there and pass through Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada before hitting Cali.

At least that was the plan. Of course, everything went mega fucked up and the image on the right is how it really went down.



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ROAD TRIP: THE EAST AND THE SOUTH

Any road trip begins with “home.” And while there are plenty of casinos in PA, my home has always been AC. My host booked a few nights stay at the Hard Rock for some action.

First Stop: Hard Rock Atlantic City, NJ



This spot is a group favorite. Their lobby bar is top notch with bands and swarms of people coming and going. The restaurants are great, their clubs are hip and the floor energy is awesome. Add the boardwalk into the mix, which gets you access to 5 other casinos, and you have a winning location. I just wish there was more \$2 video poker machines here. I’d probably never leave. I got murdered here but every journey has its obstacles 😊



Second Casino: Hard Rock Hollywood, FL



Two days later, my HR hosts hooked my up with a stop in Hollywood, Florida, as I awaited my Super Bowl crew for the festivities. This place may be my favorite non-LV casino. Their lobby is phenomenal, the casino floor is massive, the venues, pools and people watching are amazing, there is a multitude of restaurants and bars and there are so many video poker machines!

I met a crew of super rich dudes from Ohio in High Limit and got extra drunk with all the beautiful people following them around. Oh and I smoked them on my first visit and won almost everything I lost in AC. I will be back!



Third Casino: Beau Rivage, MS

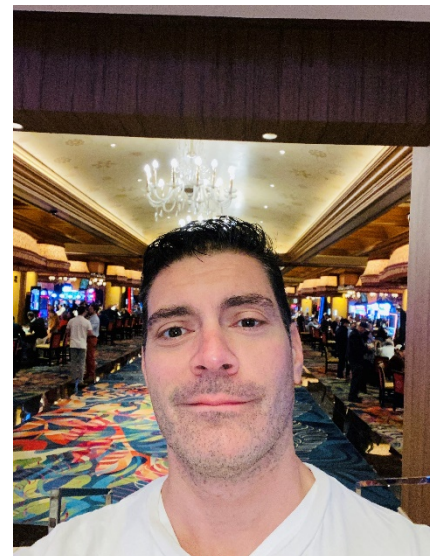


I woke up EXTREMELY hungover in Miami and drove 13 hours to Biloxi, MS, a Gulf-town with tons of casinos and booked my room at an MGM casino, Beau Rivage.

Beau Rivage is a Wynn-styled casino, a mini Bellagio, and is so beautiful on the inside. I’ve been through this casino before to meet up with friends and The Rivage, the Golden Nugget and Harrah’s there has mugged me. This time was going to be different, though. This time I would smoke them!

...Actually, no. The Rivage beat TF out of me.

They have lots of video poker machines but not with the Triple Double and Double Double action I like (no \$2 machines at all). Their other slots were tight AF, and the only win I really got that night was girl’s number from their lounge (that part was a lot of fun). I licked my wounds and picked up a friend at Gulfport Airport in the AM for the next stop.



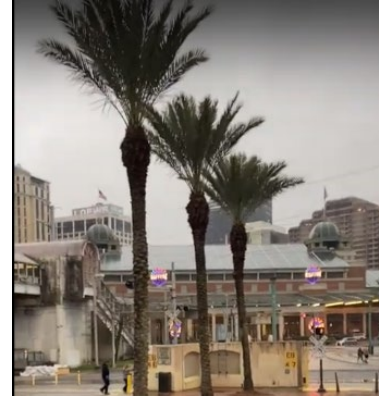
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Fourth Casino: Harrah's New Orleans, LA



As someone who loves both music and drinking, New Orleans has always held a special place in my heart. Once I became a degenerate gambler, it has solidified itself as one of my favorite towns ever.

Harrah's NOLA is everything you might expect: great energy, lots of drinks, great action, lots of drinks, great venues and music, still lots of drinks. I took a loss there but fortunately I was distracted enough to keep it small. What a great couple days.



Fifth Casino: Horseshoe Bossier, LA



My friend left NEPA 30 years ago for basic training and never came home because he fell in love with both NW Louisiana and a Southern girl (although I'm not sure which was first). I've been to this town many times and I can see why. Drew hooked me up with a host from Horseshoe and the rest was history.

The casino is an old barge casino converted into a modern look and feel casino that you have to walk a little bit to get to (riverboat gaming rules are still in effect in Bossier, but this is how they avoid those rules).

The casino has great staff, good rooms and good food. I was playing a little crazy after Biloxi and got hella lucky to win most of my moolah back.

Sixth Casino: Winstar World, OK



Oklahoma has lots of casinos. Through a culmination of events, I ended up at this one, waiting for a Dallas flight to Jamaica – an unexpected vacation detour my family guilted me into jumping on. This casino has SO MANY SLOTS. So many. But their video poker sucks – practically no machines at all.

It was a cool place even though not much was going on for a Wednesday night. Took a hit here playing Buffalo Gold like I was a millionaire. Big mistake!

Seventh Casino: Sunland Racetrack, NM

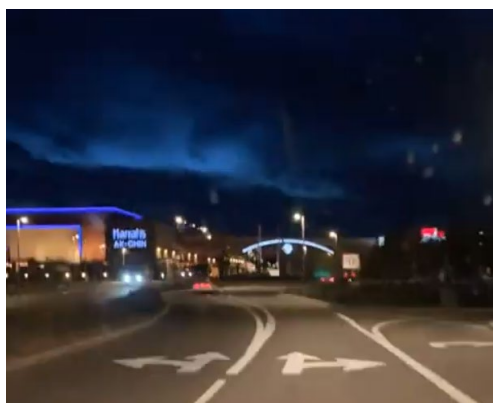


Just outside of El Paso, TX you can find a peaceful, quaint casino and hotel. It has beautiful rooms, great, great staff and good machines.

I spent a few hours walking around this small casino and watching the horses run. I took a hit but had great action there so I can't complain. Also, they had \$2 video poker!

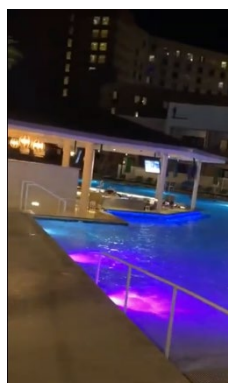


Eighth Casino: Ak-Chin Harrah's, AZ



I drove through miles of cows and their farts to reach this beautiful Indian casino and resort. They have huge rooms, a pool with a swim-up bar, great restaurants, great staff, great hosts and a good selection of machines to play on.

I ended making friends with a degenerate crew who got me the VIP service treatment (I'm sorry I was too drunk to remember any of your names - I am a bad human) and had great action. If I stopped playing before I got drunk, I would have left up a couple bucks. Instead I got murdered chasing my losses.



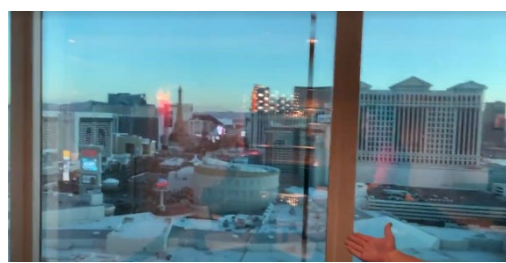
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ROAD TRIP: THE VEGAS PANDEMIC

BY FOURACEMASTER

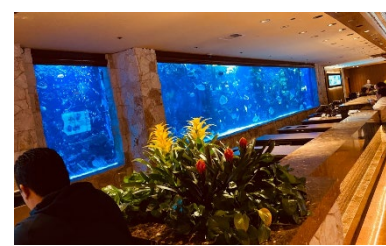
It's all my fault. In life, things rarely go the way you planned. That girl you thought was going to go the distance sneaks out of your hotel room with your Breitling and Ray-Bans. The bet that was a sure thing falls through in stellar fashion at the last second. But when you unleash The Unluckiest Man Alive on the casino-town that never sleeps, it's your fault they close their doors for months. Here is how it unfolded on the road trip.

Ninth-ish Casino: The Mirage, NV



Although The Mirage isn't MGM newest property, it's one of my favorites. You can get great rooms, great food and great atmosphere for your buck. Always ask for the upgrades when checking in.

I say ninth-ish because, much like AC, I hit up so many spots (check out my reviews for the others). I did pretty damn good here until I unleashed The Ultimate Mush.



Tenth-ish Casino: Caesar's Palace, NV

Caesar's Palace is Caesar's Palace. Not their best property, but their best known. Their pool, buffet, sportsbook and action is legendary. But circumstances were NOT IDEAL.

I made a terrible mistake here. Our crew had always joked that the valley where we grew up contained his bad luck, but I had no idea it was true. I encouraged a man with the worst luck, who has never left NEPA, to come to LV. I paid for it dearly.

I lost everything I had on the trip. I lost everything I had in the bank. I lost a shit-ton of credit. Casinos that have never shut down before would be closing for an indeterminate amount of time. I almost ended America and the world with a pandemic by bringing him out to my home away from home. I am sorry. It was a terrible mistake.



Final Casino: The Cosmopolitan, NV



As the world was realizing that we needed to take drastic measures to protect ourselves from the Coronavirus, I was drinking Bloody Mary's on the balcony of my Cosmo hotel room. Cosmo has been one of my favorite spots since it opened.

I hit the Chandelier Bar, stopped by the Lounge and dropped an ungodly amount of money due to the lasting effects of The Mush's visit. I had late night cocktails with friends and family and bought a new track suit. It was a blast.



Epilogue

I woke up from the skylight-bathed sunrise in Casa Karmina, Venice Beach. I rolled out of bed and knocked over an empty bottle of Johnnie Walker Black and struggled to the coffee maker. Coffee in hand, I walked out onto my deck, all the way over to the couches that look over the Venice beach walkway near Washington and sat and watched masked couples, bikers and skateboarders perform their AM routines. This would be my home base for the next two months.

An email came from a host. He told me the casino closures were extended from April 1st indefinitely. As I took a sip of coffee, I watched the clouds roll in that would cause unusual weather for the next few weeks in Venice. Indeed, the storm had arrived on all fronts.

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EVENTS

A GAMBLER'S TO-DO

June 29th:

- AC casinos are taking reservations
- MGM and Caesars plan to open additional properties Luxor, Linq, and others

July:

- AC shoots for a full July 4th opening with masks

August 6th – August 10th:

- Regular Fun Crew in PH LV (if they open in time)

JACKPOTS

ROAD TRIP HITS

March 6th Mirage LV

4 Js x 5 on \$2 Super Time Pay Double Double Bonus Poker for \$2500



Triple Double Bonus Poker 4 9s for \$1250



March 9th Cosmo: 4 2s on \$2 Super Times Pay Triple Double Bonus Poker for \$4000



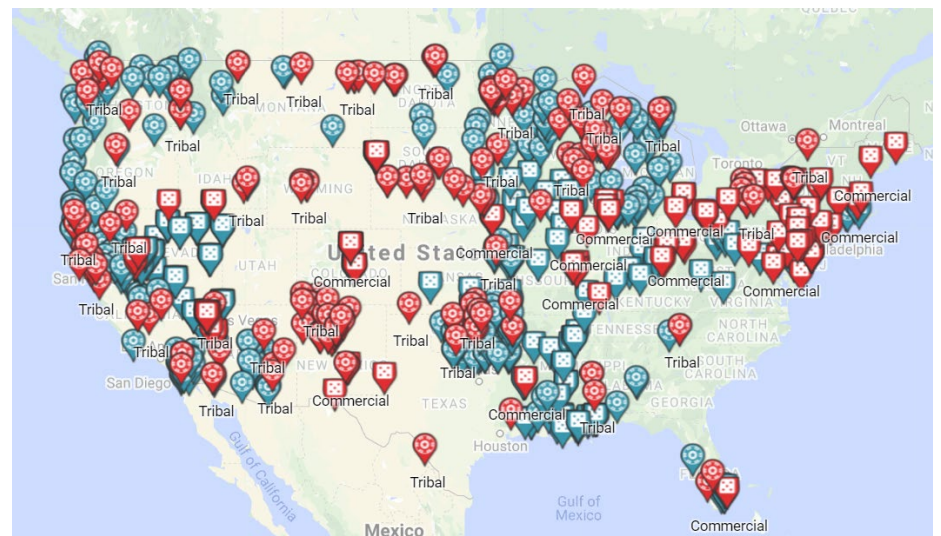
CASINO OPENINGS

CHECK OUT WHAT'S OPEN

Only a couple more weeks until all the casinos that have survived this pandemic will open up.

Here's what we know so far. Be safe out there and hope to see everyone at a bar real soon!

Casinos Open: **673**
Casinos Closed: **316**



Data and graph provided by

<https://www.americangaming.org/research/covid-19-casino-tracker/>

Scenes from the post COVID Casinos (more coming in next THS Volume)





THE HOT LIST

JUNE 17TH, 2020
VOL 4

WWW.REGULARFUN.COM

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