



Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino Review – Reinvention and Then Some

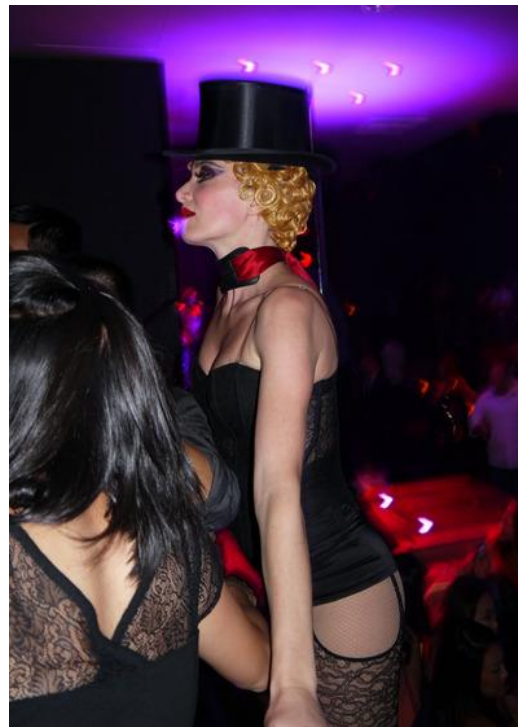
By Stephan Martin



[Email this Article](#) · [Printer Friendly Page](#)

Status quo is not what **Las Vegas** is about. You can blink and the rest of the Vegas strip could have passed you by. **Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino** blinked and then rubbed their eyes and decided to make a dash to the front of the pack. They did just that with a facelift that once again puts them neck-and-neck with the finest locations in all of **Las Vegas**.

Las Vegas has created a setting that allows you to take a cab, tram or walk to any of the glorious properties on the **Las Vegas** strip and all that they encompass. **Mandalay Bay** is one of the places in **Las Vegas** you never want to leave and why would you: they have it all and then some. From giving you three different hotels within the property itself, restaurants that run the gamut of anything and everything that your stomach might desire. Throw in a partnership with **The Light Group**, which sets the standard in dining and daytime and nightlife venues, as well as still being home to endless pools, including the wave pool—and don't forget Michael Jackson and live concerts—what more could you ask for?



Cirque du Soleil performer at Light

The hotels in Las Vegas have become bigger, better and glitzier, but what really seems to define this town is the "experience." **Mandalay Bay** realized that in recent years, no one has been at the front of creating that experience as much as **The Light Group**. Bringing them in to help revitalize things was a brilliant move, and it paid off. Just when you think the nightclub had reached its pinnacle, The Light Group had a little something up its sleeve: **Light**. **Light** is an experience, merging a stunning nightclub, world-class DJ's, a little **Cirque du Soleil** mixed in and it all makes for one memorable night. So much more than the typical nightclub, the moment you walk in you feel the energy. The sound system makes you feel like you are wearing Beats headphones, but the Cirque du Soleil really puts Light over the top. The performers might be walking right by you as they perform in the crowd, or you might take a look at the DJ and behind you can see an incredible stage with performers making their way through.



Daylight

Las Vegas is home to the triple digit temperatures and almost as many pools. A typical pool is not enough in this town; how about spending your Saturday afternoon with 5,000 people looking at a creation inspired by the sands of Ibiza, and listening to DJ's who have come to treat the sun and fun just as they would a nightclub. If this sounds like a good time to you, then **DAYLIGHT Beach Club** was made for you. There is no question this is just one massive party once you walk in. It doesn't matter if you have a cabana, are just having a cocktail in the pool, or are dancing in front of the stage, the energy and fun is like a free-flowing life force: it will suck you in. Don't think for a minute the party is over when the sun goes down! This amazing venue is also home to **ECLIPSE**, providing you with a late-night pool experience that you will not forget.

I do realize that Light and Daylight do typically have diminishing returns on the guest as you get older, so don't think that Mandalay Bay is all about the under 30 crowd. You can't go wrong in Las Vegas with a Cirque du Soleil show and knowing that Las Vegas always goes big, Mandalay Bay decided to follow suit by combining the two monster brands of Cirque du Soleil and Michael Jackson to create **Michael Jackson ONE**. Mandalay Bay has consistently put together a wide variety of concerts including: Rihanna, Enrique Iglesias, Black Eyed Peas and Toby Keith. That does not even include all of the weekly activities that are happening at the House of Blues. If that is not enough music for you; how about just strolling through the casino, you can hear some live Frank Sinatra or the Beatles. Just pull up a seat at one of the casino bars, and you never know what you will find, but I came across both of these acts on a recent Saturday night and both were amazing. If you want to be entertained, it is tough to find one location that has as much going on as **Mandalay Bay**.



Michael Jackson ONE

The lineup of restaurants is as good as the lineup of things to do at **Mandalay Bay**. You can start off with the new **Kumi Japanese Restaurant + Bar** By **Akira Back**. Chef Akira quickly made a name for himself with his sushi and fresh fish dishes at Yellowtail at Bellagio, and Kumi is sure to be another huge success for him. Then you have a who's who of chef restaurants; Master Chef Hubert Keller has **Fleur**, **Charlie Palmer Steak** along with his other restaurant **Aureole**, if you watch the Food Network at all you will be familiar with **Border Grill** and Lupo by Wolfgang Puck. There are other restaurants as well that you might not know, but you should.

If you are looking for something completely different than the rest of **Mandalay Bay** and maybe all of **Las Vegas**, you can't find a more unique setting than **Red Square**. The design, colors and menu all speak Russian to you, and to give a sense of those frigid Siberian nights, **Red Square** has a smooth ice bar and a private vodka locker. A vodka locker you ask? Throw on a big Russian fur and hat in this zero degree room, and let the vodka fun begin! In contrast to the setting that is a little dark, **Red Square** is a great place to enjoy friends with large booths and tables that cater to large groups. **Chef Brian Massie** had his hand in the Red Square menu, teaming up with Chef Chris Colon to create some great dishes to share with friends. The cold salmon pizza is served on a very thin crust and topped with the freshest thin cut salmon, a light and refreshing dish. The mini lobster tacos are packed with chilled Maine lobster and complimented with grilled mango and cilantro. These are unlike any other taco you have ever had. Finally, what sets **Red Square** apart is the caviar menu. You are not likely going to find Siberian Black Sturgeon or Special Reserve Keluga caviar anywhere else in **Las Vegas**. On the domestic caviar side of things, Red Square found another outstanding Sturgeon, the Southern Domestic version. You can go with the connoisseur or domestic trio for a chance to try a variety of caviar. Definitely the best venue on the strip if caviar is your dish of choice. While **Red Square** has a Russian backdrop, the service is the antithesis of this frigid country, as the staff makes you feel warm and welcome and they create a memorable evening for all.



Caviar Trio at Red Square

Don't be thrown off by the casual look of **Citizens Kitchen & Bar**, nor assume this is a simple restaurant. Chef Massie put together a menu of high-end what has come to be known as "comfort food" in the recently opened restaurant in the heart of **Mandalay Bay**. The **Citizens** menu begins with continental breakfast, and moves to sandwiches, which you create, or have a soup and salad combination—and that is just for a warm-up. It is a little shocking to say with all of the great steakhouses in all of Las Vegas, but **Citizens** prepared the best filet mignon on the strip and placing it on top of the loaded mashed potatoes makes for one amazing meal. Everything that came out of the kitchen looked fabulous, but if you are looking for the over-the-top experience, how about chili-cheese fries with Kobe beef in the chili?! **Citizens** is an incredible restaurant with fabulous service and you have a perfect view of all that is going on in the hub of **Mandalay Bay** as you are dining.



Chili Cheese Fries at Citizens

With all of that under your belt it is time to make your way to your room, at least to let your head hit the pillow for a few hours. The rooms at Mandalay have a great balance of earth tone colors and a current and vibrant feel that you will love. **THEhotel**, the all suite version of Mandalay Bay, is the last portion of the resort to be remodeled and it will transform into **Delano Las Vegas** in late 2013.



Mandalay Bay Deluxe Room

When you say **Four Seasons**, well nothing much is left to say—you know you are in store for only the best when it comes to your stay. The **Four Seasons** has five floors of **Mandalay Bay** that are dedicated to them, and while part of the property, they are very individualistic and you will feel that with a separate entrance as well as private property. The **Four Seasons** did not rest on its name, at the end of 2012 they renovated all 424 guest rooms, inspired in part by the Art Deco period they created a more modern and stylish feel that fits the Las Vegas style. If you want that once-in-a-lifetime trip and the room to match, the **Four Seasons** suite is about as good as it gets. As you enter the suite, the first thing you will notice is the floor-to-ceiling windows. A nice touch normally, but at night it is jaw-dropping! You have a dizzying, panoramic view of the Las Vegas strip. If you want to take back a memorable view, this is it.



Four Seasons Presidential Suite Strip View at Night (Photo by: Christian Horan)

Finally, they created a complete change to the entrance by adding the indoor/outdoor bar **Press**. You don't have to stay at the **Four Seasons** to enjoy **Press**, a stunning bar that put together one of the best menus of food around. There are a few dishes that are memorable, and they will draw you back and with **Press**, it was a dessert called the "bacon & beer toffee sundae." Yes, it tastes as good as the name. It comes out with the vanilla ice cream surrounded by peppered and candied bacon bits and a separate dish filled with warm, stout beer toffee sauce that is poured over the ice cream to create a flavor explosion. **Press** has other fantastic food and a great drink menu, including the Watermelon Granita, which was made to drink on the patio, but that sundae alone is reason enough to visit **Press**.



Press at Four Seasons



Bacon & Beer Toffee Sundae at Press

After a weekend at **Mandalay Bay**, you might need to come up for air—and a weekend probably won't cut it, you had better make it an entire week. Mandalay Bay did a little more than reinvent itself; it raised the bar for the rest of Las Vegas.

For more information on **Mandalay Bay**, visit: www.mandalaybay.com

For more information on **The Light Group**, visit: www.lightgroup.com

For more information on **Michael Jackson One**, visit: www.cirquedusoleil.com/mjone