

MGM Mirage to renovate Luxor Casino in Las Vegas

The pyramid-shaped Luxor hotel-casino is getting a multimillion dollar makeover that will include the addition of lounges, restaurants and a nightclub. The name and distinctive shape of the resort will remain the same, but the interior and most hotel rooms will be renovated, said Jenn Michaels, executive spokeswoman for resort owner, MGM Mirage.

„The outside of the Luxor is one of the most famous icons of Las Vegas. We're not going to change that," Michaels said. „What MGM Mirage and Luxor are looking to do is deliver on the promise of the dramatic exterior with a series of contemporary dynamic amenities within the resort.“

The phased renovation calls for MGM Mirage and its joint venture partners to spend about USD 300 million remodeling about 80 percent of the hotel and casino. The project is part of an MGM Mirage effort to refresh several properties it acquired in 2005 when it purchased the Mandalay Resort Group for USD 4.8 billion in cash, USD 2.5 billion in debt and USD 600 million in convertible debentures.

Company executives said the Luxor, which opened in 1993 and is named for a historic Egyptian city, needed a renovation to compete with newer and bigger developments on the Strip.

„We're not a British museum with ancient artifacts, we're a casino-resort," Luxor President and COO Felix Rappaport told the Las Vegas Review-Journal for a Thursday report. „The pyramid always created a sense of wow and wonder, but the inside never delivered on that promise.“

The projected renovation cost approaches the USD 375 million that Mandalay predecessor Circus Circus spent to build the 2,500-room pyramid in 1993. A theater and two additional hotel

towers totaling 2,000 rooms were added in 1998 for USD 675 million.

Rappaport said MGM Mirage invested more than USD 25 million in improvements soon after taking over the Luxor, including reconfiguring and changing the carpet in the 11,148 sqm and replacing the property's 1,600 slot machines with newer games.

Next year, Luxor's atrium will be changed from a family friendly arcade to more adult-themed amenities with restaurants, lounges and entertainment venues. Many Egyptian theme amenities have been removed, and hieroglyphics and other symbols on interior casino walls also are being eliminated.

The Aurora Lounge near the hotel lobby has replaced Nefertiti's bar. CatHouse, a restaurant and European-style lounge, is replacing Isis and Sacred Sea in an upstairs area above the casino.

Plans also call for opening LAX Nightclub, operated by the Pure Management Group, by Labor Day, and adding other bars and lounges later in the fall. The Luxor Steakhouse is scheduled for to be remodeled early next year, while the pool area also is being upgraded.