

# Where the Stars come out to play

Celebrities catch  
casino fever

By **Lisa Arcella**

**E**veryone noticed, but no one seemed particularly shocked to see **Scarlett Johansson** and **Selma Blair** playing craps at Caesars Las Vegas a couple of weeks ago. They seemed just like dozens of other giggling girlfriends who were in town for a weekend of fun. In fact it has become a matter of course these days to have a famous face dancing across the room in a casino nightclub or even sitting next to you at a poker table.

"Casinos have so many publicity opportunities and it's a place where a star's handlers want them to be seen," says **Steven Striker**, who runs Striker VIP, a concierge service that caters to celebrities and those who want to be treated like a star. "Plus they come to relax and have fun, too just like everyone else."

Weekends seem to be the best time for celeb spotting at almost any time and any place. "It's 100% likely that you'll see someone at a club or even at a beauty salon getting their hair done," says Kate Bennett, a contributing writer at Vegas magazine. "And with that mix, the average Joe from anywhere can at least be within eyesight of a celebrity, if not in the same room with them."

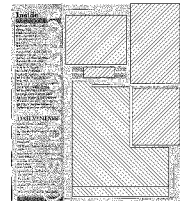
During Valentine's weekend for example, Vegas was invaded by more than 200,000 of the famous — and not so famous — in for the NBA All Star game, the fashion shows, Chinese New Year and **Paris Hilton's** birthday party at Body English. And even though many celebrities are paid for their appearances, just as many come to party and gamble like everyone else — but with the obligatory red carpet treatment, of course.

Here are some of the best spots for celeb spotting...

## EAST COAST

While Vegas is a non-stop party, you can still do plenty of celeb spotting and save on the airfare by heading out to Atlantic City or Connecticut. By far the hottest place in town for the stars is at Jay Z's 40/40 club situated at The Walk in front of Caesar's Palace Hotel and Casino. Of course **Jay Z** and girlfriend **Beyoncé** are frequently there, but **Jamie Foxx** and **Queen Latifah** have been recent guests.

The Borgata also has its share of VIP guests. **Bruce Willis** visits often and is always spotted playing blackjack on the casino floor. **David Schwimmer** likes to eat at Chef Luke Palladino's Ombra trattoria. **Jamie Pressly** had dinner not that long ago at Bobby Flay Steakhouse, where the Food Network star is seen all the time. **Jon Bon Jovi** and **Jimmy Fallon** are fans of the tequila bar



Gypsy. When she's not playing poker at Foxwoods Resort Casino, **Carmen Electra** has been seen at B-bar, the Borgata's ultra lounge. **Paris Hilton, Justin Timberlake, Sharon Stone, Tara Reid, Nick Lachey** and **Eva Mendes** have all partied at MIXX in the hotel. Morton's Steakhouse in

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Caesars has served Food Network star **Rachael Ray** and Grammy-award winning rapper and actor **Ludacris**.

But the stars don't just come out at night. Last November, **Mick Jagger** was seen taking his kids to see Happy Feet at the Imax theater in the Tropicana!

## WEST COAST

TAO at the Venetian has been designated the hottest place in town for star watching. Just about every weekend there is a major star here; **Lisa Marie Presley** celebrated her 39th birthday at the restaurant before heading into the club upstairs to dance with her pals. **Tommy Lee, Pam Anderson, Carmen Electra, Jamie Foxx, Kanye West, John Stamos, Jay Z, Vince Vaughn** and **Usher** are just a few of the names that have been there recently.

Pure at Caesars' is also a very hot multilevel entertainment zone. **Kidd Rock, Pink, Paris Hilton, Eva Longoria** and **Charlize Theron** have all stopped by recently.

At The Playboy Club in the Palm, **Derek Jeter** was spotted with no less than 10 pals watching the Superbowl and **Kate Bosworth** was at the Blackjack tables not long ago. Best buddies **Tobey McGuire** and **Leonardo DiCaprio** love to gamble here, too. Moon, a club within the Playboy Club, is one of the places to dance and maybe spot Vegas regular **Britney Spears**. She often stays at the \$40,000 (yes, you read that correctly) a night fantasy suite in the hotel.

The After School Party at Body English at Hard Rock is a popular stop for rock stars and younger celebrities. Mix at Mandalay Bay is where Ocean's 13 cast including **Matt Damon** and **George Clooney** like to party.

Jet in the Mirage is another favorite of **Leo** and **Jamie Foxx**.

Tryst at Wynn Las Vegas, according to Peter Frank, editor of concierge.com is a hot spot to see "Half-naked girls lounge by a man-made waterfall and lagoon." It's also a great spot to see **Jenna Jameson, Lil'Jon** and **Paris Hilton**.

Triq opened just days ago inside the Desert Passage at the Aladdin/Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino and is set to become the new celebrity hotspot on the strip.

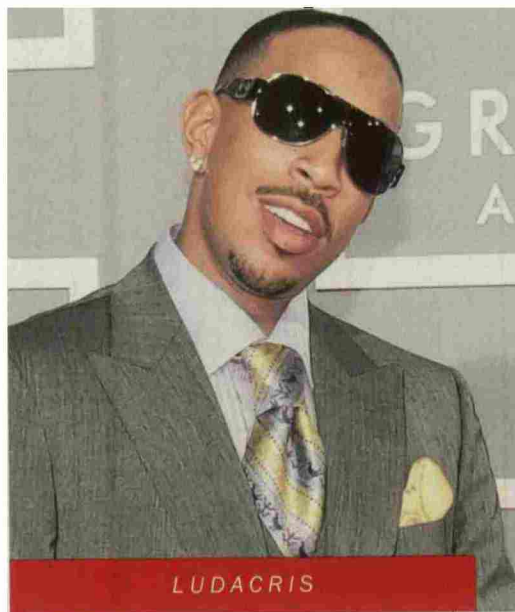
## HOT RIGHT NOW: POKER PARTIES

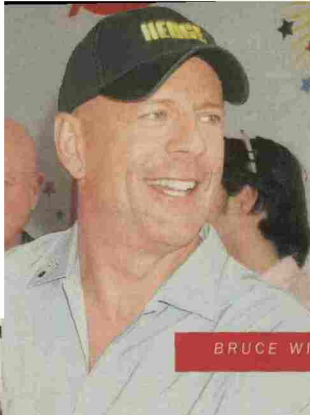
If you watch celebrity poker matches on TV and wish you could get in on that excitement, you can! "One of the most beautiful rooms to play poker in is at the Venetian and you can always spot stars like **Jennifer Tilly** and **Matt Damon** playing at the tables at Caesars," says **Steven Striker**. "It's not uncommon to see **Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey McGuire** and **Ben Affleck** playing at the same table someplace."

Striker says that it's completely possible for an average person to join in at a star-studded table, providing you are there for some serious gambling instead of serious star stalking. "There are cameras everywhere to keep an eye on people who might try to touch or harass a celebrity," he explains. "But for some people it might be a thrill to play against a star and that's possible in many of the casinos."

## Celebrity Full House:

MGM Grand hosted a tournament with rapper **50 Cent**, **Nick Lachey**, **Vanessa Minello**, **Eva Longoria** and **Carmen Electra**. **Kevin James** and **Laurence Fishburne** were seen playing at separate tables at Tangerine in Treasure Island. The Palms, the site of Bravo's "Celebrity Poker Showdown," usually results in a celebrity "full house."





BRUCE WILLIS



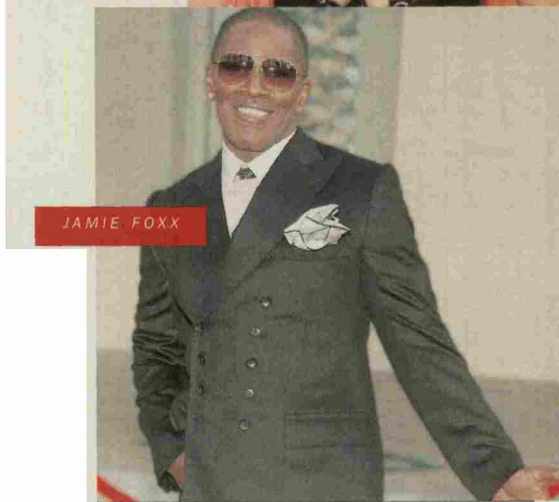
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