

history of the international hotel in las vegas

History of the International Hotel in Las Vegas is a fascinating journey that captures the essence of Las Vegas' transformation from a small desert town into a bustling entertainment capital. Opened in 1969, the International Hotel was not just a hotel; it was a symbol of luxury, glamour, and the burgeoning entertainment industry that would come to define Las Vegas. This article delves into the rich history of the International Hotel, its impact on the Las Vegas Strip, and its legacy in the hospitality industry.

The Birth of the International Hotel

The International Hotel was conceived in the 1960s when Las Vegas was beginning to emerge as a major tourist destination. Prior to its opening, the city was largely characterized by smaller casinos and motels. The vision for the International Hotel was to create a large-scale resort that could accommodate the increasing number of visitors flocking to Las Vegas.

Construction and Opening

The construction of the International Hotel began in 1967, spearheaded by a group of investors including hotelier and businessman Kirk Kerkorian. The hotel was built on the site of the old Flamingo, which had long been a staple of the Las Vegas Strip.

- Key Features of the Hotel:
- 1,512 guest rooms
- A showroom that could accommodate over 2,000 guests
- Multiple restaurants and bars
- A large swimming pool and spa facilities

The International Hotel officially opened its doors on July 2, 1969, marking a new era in Las Vegas hospitality. It was the largest hotel in the world at the time, showcasing the ambition and vision of its creators.

Entertainment at the International Hotel

One of the defining features of the International Hotel was its commitment to live entertainment. The hotel quickly became known for hosting some of the biggest names in music and entertainment.

The Elvis Effect

Elvis Presley became synonymous with the International Hotel, performing there for the first time in 1969. His residency at the hotel would later become legendary, drawing fans from around the world and solidifying Las Vegas' reputation as a premier entertainment destination.

- Elvis Presley's impact included:
- A series of sold-out shows that ran into the 1970s
- The introduction of the "Las Vegas Show" concept, which featured elaborate staging and production
- Increased visibility and tourism to Las Vegas

Elvis's performances not only brought the hotel fame but also helped to redefine the Las Vegas entertainment scene.

Other Notable Performers

Beyond Elvis, the International Hotel hosted a variety of other high-profile entertainers, cementing its status as a major entertainment venue in Las Vegas.

- Notable acts included:
- Frank Sinatra
- Liberace
- Tom Jones
- Diana Ross

These performances contributed to the hotel's allure, making it a must-visit destination for tourists and locals alike.

The Evolution of the International Hotel

As time passed, the International Hotel underwent several changes, both in ownership and branding.

Rebranding as the Hilton

In 1970, the International Hotel was sold to the Hilton Hotels Corporation, leading to a major rebranding.

- Changes after rebranding included:
- The hotel was renamed the Las Vegas Hilton.
- Renovations and upgrades were made to guest rooms and amenities.

- The Hilton brand introduced its signature hospitality style, attracting a more upscale clientele.

The Las Vegas Hilton continued to thrive throughout the 1970s and 1980s, maintaining its reputation as a premier destination for entertainment and luxury.

Technological Advancements

The Las Vegas Hilton was also at the forefront of technological advancements in the hospitality industry.

- Key innovations included:
 - The introduction of one of the first in-room televisions.
 - Advanced gaming systems in the casino.
 - The implementation of a modern reservations system.

These innovations not only enhanced the guest experience but also set new standards for the hospitality industry.

The Legacy of the International Hotel

Despite its rebranding, the legacy of the International Hotel has continued to influence the Las Vegas Strip.

The Impact on Las Vegas Tourism

The International Hotel played a crucial role in shaping the future of tourism in Las Vegas.

- Key impacts included:
 - Pioneering the concept of large-scale resorts that combine hotels, casinos, and entertainment.
 - Attracting a diverse range of visitors, from families to high rollers.
 - Inspiring subsequent developments along the Strip, including the creation of mega-resorts.

These contributions helped to establish Las Vegas as a global entertainment capital.

Modern-Day Influence

Today, the site of the former International Hotel is home to the Westgate Las

Vegas Resort & Casino, which still honors the legacy of its predecessor.

- Continuing features include:
- A tribute to Elvis with memorabilia and themed events.
- A focus on live entertainment with various shows and performances.
- A commitment to luxury hospitality, reflecting the standards set by the International Hotel.

The story of the International Hotel is a testament to the evolution of Las Vegas and the hospitality industry as a whole.

Conclusion

The **history of the International Hotel in Las Vegas** is a remarkable chapter in the city's rich narrative. From its grand opening in 1969 to its evolution into the Las Vegas Hilton and beyond, the hotel has left an indelible mark on the Las Vegas Strip. Its commitment to luxury, entertainment, and innovation paved the way for future developments and continues to inspire the hospitality industry today. As Las Vegas continues to grow and change, the legacy of the International Hotel remains a vital part of its story, reminding us of the glamour and excitement that first put this desert oasis on the map.

Frequently Asked Questions

When did the International Hotel in Las Vegas open?

The International Hotel opened on July 2, 1969.

Who was the first major performer to headline at the International Hotel?

Elvis Presley was the first major performer to headline at the International Hotel, beginning his residency in 1969.

What was the significance of the International Hotel in the Las Vegas entertainment scene?

The International Hotel was significant as it marked the beginning of large-scale entertainment venues in Las Vegas, setting the stage for future mega-resorts.

What was the original name of the International Hotel before it was renamed?

The hotel was originally called the International Hotel but was later renamed the Hilton Hotel in 1970 after the Hilton Hotels Corporation purchased it.

What notable feature did the International Hotel have when it opened?

The International Hotel featured the largest hotel room in the world at the time, boasting over 1,500 rooms.

What happened to the International Hotel after it was sold to Hilton?

After being sold to Hilton, the International Hotel underwent renovations and continued to host major entertainment acts, solidifying its place in Las Vegas history.

What is the current status of the site where the International Hotel once stood?

The site of the former International Hotel is now occupied by the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, which continues to honor the legacy of the original hotel.

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