

Cromwell will be final Las Vegas Strip resort to reopen

By [Bailey Schulz](#) Las Vegas Review-Journal

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The Cromwell, the last Strip resort with its lights still off, is set to reopen to adults only on Oct. 29.

The boutique property's hotel and gaming floor will be open seven days a week for those 21 and over, according to a Thursday statement from parent company Caesars Entertainment Inc.

Josh Swissman, founding partner of Las Vegas gaming and hospitality consulting firm The Strategy Organization, said the new adults-only rule makes perfect sense at The Cromwell, a smaller boutique that has a heavy focus on its casino offerings.

"All bets are off as companies are opening post-COVID," he said. "There's no better time to reinvent yourself."

Filling a niche

As Strip resorts struggle to find ways to boost visitation levels — especially midweek — during the pandemic, many are looking to lure people back by

filing certain niches, according to Brendan Bussmann, director of government affairs for Las Vegas-based Global Market Advisors.

One example is Park MGM, which reopened [last month](#) as a smoke-free property. The Cromwell's 21-plus opening is another way to address customers' wants, Bussmann said.

"Cromwell sees a niche here," Bussmann said. "It's listening to customers, and now's the most important time ... to listen to customers to get the faith back up from tourists."

Swissman said Caesars picked the perfect resort in its portfolio to test the 21-and-over model; it's a smaller property, meaning trying out a new policy has a relatively low financial risk. It also has a history of being a "hardcore gambling place," having formerly been Bill's Gamblin' Hall and Saloon before it was renovated in 2014.

The property still has in-demand gaming offerings, including single zero roulette, double-deck blackjack, "EZ Baccarat" and 100-times odds on craps.

"They have a lot of the great odds and types of games and offerings that savvy gamblers seek out," Swissman said. "It only makes sense that a place that embraces the gambling experience as much as the Cromwell does makes an all-adult move. ... You couple that with (Drai's Nightclub) on top of it being the quintessential adult offerings in Las Vegas, and it makes all the sense in the world."

Repositioning the property could generate buzz for the Cromwell and allow its marketing team to focus its resources on a narrow market, said Mehmet Erdem, an associate professor at UNLV's college of hospitality.

“Given the dire outlook of our city’s convention business (and) travel for the foreseeable future, it is not surprising for casino-resorts to shift focus on target markets and try to establish a sustainable business model,” he said.

Nehme E. Abouzeid, president of consulting firm LaunchVegas, said the move also helps Caesars differentiate Cromwell’s brand from other properties.

“Brand differentiation is important to consumers so they know what kind of experience they’ll get when they stay there,” he said. “It allows Caesars to segment its database and put compelling marketing offers in people’s hands, especially as the city tries to build back up its occupancy amid COVID-19.”

A growing trend?

There’s another adults-only resort set to open in Las Vegas next week: [Circa](#).

The property, which opens to the public Wednesday, is the first to be built from the ground up in downtown Las Vegas since 1980. Its hotel tower is set to open later this year.

Even though the 21-and-over rule seems to be picking up steam in Las Vegas, it has yet to be seen if it will become a trend.

Swissman expects operators will take a “wait and see” approach to see how the policy fares at Circa and Cromwell before making any changes to their properties.

“The other (resorts) are so much bigger, and a big switch like that has potentially more risk,” Swissman said. But “it seems like it’s becoming more commonplace to go back to this adults-only programming.”

Abouzeid said bigger resorts need to cater to the widest audience possible to fill rooms year-round

“Additionally, when sports and entertainment come back around, those vehicles drive visitors of all ages here,” he said. “Being 21 and older may be limiting then.”

Opening details

Guests of all ages will be allowed at Cromwell’s restaurant Giada.

Other amenities will include the restaurant eatwell, which will open for fast-casual service and mobile ordering; Bound Cocktail Lounge; Interlude Casino Lounge; Drai’s Lounge; The Abbey, a high-limit slot area; table games; a fitness center and the Curios retail shop.

The 188-room property will also debut its newly-branded William Hill Sports Book next week. The venue now includes self-service sports betting kiosks and an expanded betting menu with live in-play wagering, according to the statement.

Valet will not be available initially. Self-parking at the resort will be free to hotel guests, Nevada residents and Caesars Rewards loyalty members rated Platinum and above. Beginning Oct. 30, all others will be charged to self park.

The property hasn't been open to the public in more than seven months. "Love Island," the CBS dating competition series, [took over The Cromwell](#) for its second season this past summer.

After The Cromwell opens next week, Caesars will have one more Las Vegas property to reopen: Rio, located near the Strip.

"Caesars will open its remaining Las Vegas properties in line with customer demand, regulatory requirements and any additional health and safety considerations," Caesars' statement said.

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