

Something awesome this way comes

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By WILLIAM H. SOKOLIC
Courier-Post Staff

ATLANTIC CITY

Talk about your ocean view.

Visitors to any of the 10 restaurants and the bar on the third floor of the Pier at Caesars will enjoy a spectacular view of the beach and the Boardwalk when the facility opens this summer.

The Pier, located on the footprint of the famed Million Dollar Pier of yore, will feature high-end retailers among its more than 100 shops and restaurants. Gucci, Armani and Louis Vuitton will all be there, and Tourneau, a luxury watch dealer, will have two stores.

And when you're done shopping, you could get married there.

The four-story Pier, across from Caesars Atlantic City and is on the site of what was also once the Shops at Ocean One, delivers the city's first wedding chapel and at the pier's ocean end, a light and water show will dazzle visitors.

"I couldn't understand why there hasn't been a chapel here before," said Scott Gordon, president of Gordon Group Holdings LLC, the Pier's developer.

Complementing chapel celebrations and the water and light shows will be massive billboards atop and surrounding the building that will recall the glory days of the neon jungle that the Atlantic City Boardwalk once was, developers promise.

Added value

"The Pier gives people another reason to come here," said Vince Chiamonte, vice president of operations for Lyons Group, which will operate three of the restaurants.

Many of the restaurants will do more than serve food.

For example, Game On and The Dubliner will feature live bands and stay open to the wee hours, said Martin Doyle, executive chef of the eateries.

The Pier at Caesars is the latest effort to expand non-gaming attractions as Atlantic City evolves into a regional destination for younger, more affluent visitors rather than a gambling haven for day-trippers.

Taken together, recent business developments make gaming in Pennsylvania a moot issue for Atlantic City, said John Payne, Atlantic City regional vice president for Harrah's Entertainment, which owns Caesars.

"This is not just a place to gamble anymore," he said.



Drawing provided
An artist's rendering shows the neon billboard signs planned for The Pier at Caesar's. It's to open this June with stores, restaurants, live entertainment and more.

The Gordon Group brought the Forum Shops to Caesars Palace in Las Vegas more than a decade ago. The Pier is similar and may even take its name when it opens.

"Both offer a a unique mix of retail, restaurants and design to differentiate them from regional malls," Gordon said.

Aside from the restaurants and bar on the third floor of the Atlantic City building, the Boardwalk level will have more traditional, modestly priced retailers. The second level, linked to Caesars through a bridge over the Boardwalk, will contain pricier shops, Gordon said.

Going to the chapel

The fourth level will host a bar and lounge, a banquet area and the wedding chapel. Already, 33 weddings are booked.

The Gordon Group has hired **Thinkwell Design and Production** of Burbank, Calif., for the indoor water show. It will combine advanced LED and intelligent lighting, a 19,000-gallon reflection pool with a computerized matrix of more than 150 independently controlled fountain nozzles and state-of-the-art audio technology for a 360-degree aural experience that can be enjoyed throughout the complex.

Dancing fountains

"Our goal is to produce a design for this show that would relate directly to its environment, one that would not only draw inspiration from its magnificent oceanside setting," said Craig Hanna, chief creative officer of **Thinkwell**. Gordon thinks the design will transform The Pier into one of the most recognizable international shopping and entertainment landmarks in America.

An aerial tram is planned that would link the Atlantic City rail terminal and convention center with The Walk and the Pier.

For Barry Gutin, who already operates The Quarter's Cuba Libre, 32 Degrees and Brulee, the Pier triggers memories. He played skeeball on its Million Dollar Pier as a child. But it's not nostalgia that led his company to develop its Vino Noir, a chic wine bar.

"We're doing great in The Quarter, and that gives us the confidence to move forward on this project," Gutin said. "Being in an area with 6,000 hotel rooms around, The Pier will deliver a lot of traffic."

Vino Noir will offer more than 100 wine selections by the glass, many not available in traditional outlets.

"Wine has become this year's vodka, gaining in popularity," he said.

The wine bar will also serve olives, cheeses, cured meats and other edibles. It will be configured like a lobby bar without walls. Later in the evening on weekends, a DJ will play uptempo music.

"It will be a place to go to meet friends before or after dining in the restaurants," Gutin said.

Reach William H. Sokolic at (609) 823-9159 or wsokolic@courierpostonline.com