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Best Casino Movies

By Adel Awwad

Las Vegas and its casinos have always been an inspiration for filmmakers looking to inject

excitement and intrigue into their movies. One of the most famous movies with a Las Vegas backdrop is 1960's 'Ocean's Eleven', which sees the members of the original 'Rat Pack' - Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis - planning to rob five of the top casinos in Vegas in just one night. Things go according to plan - at least until after the heists.

'Ocean's Eleven' was remade successfully in 2001 by Steven Soderburgh, who cast George Clooney in the leading role of Danny Ocean and Brad Pitt, Matt Damon and Elliott Gould as gang members, amongst others. The 2001 version updated the storyline while still putting across the same glamorous image of Vegas as in the first movie.

Nicolas Cage visited Las Vegas in 1992 for his film 'Honeymoon in Vegas'. This comedy tells the story of Jack Singer (played by Cage) who decides to wed his long-time partner Betsy (Sarah Jessica Parker) in Vegas. However, when they arrive, Betsy is spotted by a high-stakes gambler who decides he wants to spend a weekend with her. He engages Singer in poker games in an attempt to wrestle her from him. With Cage acting his best as the love-struck bridegroom, James Caan as the sinister gambler, and a number of parachuting Elvis impersonators, 'Honeymoon in Vegas' offers plenty of laughs.

Matt Damon is Mike McDermott, one of the world's best poker players in the 1998 film 'Rounders', who has given up the game in order to concentrate on finishing law school. When his old friend Worm (Edward Norton) is released from prison, he persuades McDermott to return to the game in order to pay off some bad debts he's accrued. McDermott consequently finds himself playing in a series of poker games where the stakes are forever increasing and the tension is forever building.

Finally, a list of casino movies is incomplete without a mention of the 1995 Martin Scorsese movie 'Casino', which is considered by many to be the definitive casino film. This tells the true story of Sam 'Ace' Rothstein, a mobster who moves to Las Vegas and becomes the operator of the Tangiers casino. Robert De Niro makes the lead role his own, as Rothstein copes with marriage to a drug addict (played by Sharon Stone) and friendship with Nicky Santoro (Joe Pesci), a fellow mobster slowly spiralling into

a world of violence.

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Casinos Italiani

By Adel Awwad

When most people think of Italy, they think of the food, the art museums, or the ancient Roman culture. What most people don't know about Italy is that it can be a great destination for people who want to include some gambling on their vacation. Although Italy doesn't have many casinos, the places they do have are well worth the visit for tourists who want to experience something a little different than what they expected on a trip to Italy.

While there are only a handful of casinos in Italy, visiting one of them is well worth the trip. There are two distinctive sides to gambling in Italy. One is very much like the American version, casual clothes and lots of slot machines. On the other hand, many Italian casinos have what is called the "French Games" section. Even in the more casual Italian casino, the Casino Municipale di Campione d' Italia in Campione d' Italia, part of the casino has a dress code as well as an entrance fee (about \$12.50 US). The other Italian casinos, including Casino De La Vallee in Saint Vincent (near Turin), Casino Municipale di Sanremo in San Remo (near Nice, France), and the Casino Municipale di Venezia in Venice, don't allow people in street or casual clothing and all charge some type of entrance fee. Indeed, Italian casinos epitomize the glamorous image of European gambling made famous in James Bond movies.

All of the cities mentioned only have one casino except for Venice. The Venice casino is interesting because it is really one casino split in two, one which is open in the summer and the other that is open in the winter months. Also a little bit different is that the Casino Municipale di Venezia also offers gin rummy tournaments in addition to the gambling.

Besides the dress codes and the entrance fees, there are other things to be aware of before you plan a trip to an Italian casino. The first thing is that in all of Italy's casinos, the language spoken is Italian. If you are planning on spending any time in casinos, you should, at the very least, learn some Italian phrases and other gambling vocabulary. Also, the gambling age in Italy is 18 so students and younger people who may not be allowed to gamble in the USA, where the legal age is 21, are permitted to do so in Italy. In addition to gambling, Italian casinos feature live music and entertainment as well as restaurants and nightclubs. One thing Italian casinos do not have, however, are hotel rooms, so lodging arrangements need to be made separately.

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