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Mine's Bigger Than Yours!

Macau vs Vegas

Macau Casinos Top Las Vegas as Adelson, Wynn, Battle Stanley Ho

By William Mellor and Oliver Staley

Jan. 3 (Bloomberg) -- The Hotel Lisboa used to be the only game in Macau. The birdcage-shaped casino has welcomed Chinese playing baccarat, blackjack and sic bo -- an Asian dice game -- amid smoke-stained walls and frayed carpets for 35 years.

Now, the Lisboa and other casinos in Stanley Ho's gaming company, Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM), are facing a horde of competitors. Ho, who had a government monopoly on Macau gaming for four decades until 2004, has seen his share of gambling revenue dive to 55 percent from 100 percent -- and it's still shrinking.

All around the Hotel Lisboa, crowded into a territory measuring just 28 square kilometers (about 11 square miles), gambling billionaires Sheldon Adelson of Las Vegas Sands Corp., Steve Wynn of Wynn Resorts Ltd., and Kirk Kerkorian of MGM Mirage are building new resorts complete with artificial canals, singing gondoliers, luxury shopping malls and celebrity chefs. Local investors who have joined the fray include Hong Kong-based Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd. and kung fu film star Jackie Chan.

Blurring the battle lines is the maneuvering and feuding within the sprawling Ho family. Patriarch Stanley Ho, 85, a billionaire in his own right, says he wants to sell as much as \$1.9 billion worth of shares in closely held SJM to raise funds to go head-to-head with the Americans. That plan has so far been blocked by a lawsuit brought by his sister, Winnie Ho, 84, who holds a minority stake in SJM's parent company and says she wasn't consulted about the share sale.

Father of 17

Meanwhile, two of Ho's 17 children have formed joint ventures with his Western rivals. Pansy Ho, 44, chief executive officer of the family company, Shun Tak Holdings Ltd., has used her own money to form a 50-50 partnership with Kerkorian's MGM Mirage, which is building the \$1 billion MGM Grand casino-hotel within walking distance of her father's flagship Lisboa.

And Lawrence Ho, chairman of Hong Kong-listed Melco International Development Ltd., has teamed up with Australian tycoon James Packer to invest as much as \$3.3 billion in three casinos in Macau. Lawrence, 30, and Packer, 39, raised \$1.14 billion by selling shares in their joint venture, Melco PBL Entertainment (Macau) Ltd., on the U.S.'s NASDAQ Stock Market in December. The stock rose 11.9 percent, to \$21.26 on Dec. 29, in its first ten days of trading.

In all, foreign investors are staking \$20 billion on making Macau, a former Portuguese colony that's now a special administrative region (SAR) of China, into the gambling capital of Asia.

"In 10 years, Macau will resemble Vegas on steroids," says Brian Summers, who helps manage \$28 billion at Santa Fe, New Mexico-based Thornburg Investment Management Inc., including \$240 million worth of Las Vegas Sands shares. Summers points to the demographics. Macau (population: 500,000) is the only place in greater China -- the mainland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan -- where its 1.3 billion people can gamble in casinos.

The complete article can be viewed at <http://quote.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601093&sid=afExx.fgg6tM>

....from the UK

Gambling in the UK—an article from Gordon House

The face of gambling in the UK has changed dramatically over the last few years. In days gone by one had to go looking for gambling opportunities - now gambling comes to find you. It seems to have started with the introduction of fixed odd betting terminals in the betting shops which effectively have brought the casino in to the betting shop arena. The rapid growth of betting exchanges and the explosion in online gambling has increased the opportunity to gamble immensely. One can now access gambling 24/7 and gambling advertising is also on the increase. There are countless pop ups to entice one all over the web and advertising at major sporting events can be seen nationwide and often on televised sporting events. It seems that the industry is taking advantage of the opportunity to advertise their products freely without any real restrictions.

A new prevalence study has been commissioned for later in the year and the one certainty it will bring is that the increasing opportunity to gamble will bring about an increase in the number of people who develop a problem with gambling. Everything seems to be on the increase except the amount of money being made available to help treat those adversely affected by gambling. It is often said that it is only the minority who gamble problematically but with so much more opportunity to gamble it follows suit that more people will gamble. So this minority is already becoming a very significant number and is beginning to affect thousands of people, remembering that it is not only the gambler who suffers but often at least ten people associated or connected with the gambler.

In a recent report by the British Medical Association it was suggested that gambling should be recognized as a mental health issue in the same way that drugs and alcohol are. It also suggested that a screening tool should be used in doctor's surgeries to help recognize people who are developing problems with gambling. Another recommendation from the report was that the money made available to help those that become affected should be dramatically increased and the Responsibility in Gambling Trust (RIGT) should be looking to raise in the region of £10,000,000 rather than the current £3,000,000 that is being sought.

The explosion in online gambling has seen a significant increase in the number of women gambling and this can be evidenced by the surge in women accessing the Gordon House facilities of residential treatment and help and support through Gambling Therapy. Gambling online takes away the social stigma of gambling and plays in to what has often been described as the "hidden addiction". It is also becoming increasingly popular to play poker and bingo online and again advertising for online poker games is rife. Apart from online poker there appears to be a massive increase in poker games being sold in high street shops but sadly the warnings and awareness of gambling problematically are not as evident!

Banning of Remote Gambling Advertisements on all French Websites

The Journal Officiel of French Republic – Wednesday March 7th, published the law on delinquency prevention defended by Nicolas Sarkozy, Minister of Interior. The chapter concerning online gambling maintains their prohibition, except for PMU and Française des Jeux, with a tightening of penalties against offenders (in Journal of Casinos, 2/23/07).

In the final version, voted by the Parliament February 22nd, ministers of Interior and Finance are allowed to freeze any financial transaction operated by remote gambling websites, which prevents players from having access to winnings.

Moreover, advertisement for gambling websites is prohibited; both advertisers and gambling websites run the risk for prosecution. Advertising is punishable "by a 30.000 euros fine. The court may also increase that amount to four times the investments made for the illegal advertisement ". This measure "will come into force, six months after the law comes into effect". Consequently, on September 7th, there should be no more advertising websites in France for online casinos, sports wagers, horse races or poker. (APM).BD/7/3/07

News from the Netherlands

CRYPTO TO PROVIDE DUTCH GOVERNMENT WITH POKER AND CASINO SOFTWARE

CryptoLogic has signed a three-year licensing agreement with Holland Casino to provide the Dutch operator with poker and casino software. The new site is to be run by Holland Casino for the Dutch government, and will launch in June 2007 serving only players in the Netherlands.

Lewis Rose, CryptoLogic president and chief-executive, said in a company statement that the addition of a government controlled casino was significant for the company and its reputation. He said: "We have an excellent template for other governments interested in realizing the benefits of safe, secure and regulated internet gaming."

Holland Casino, which has 14 land-based casinos across the country in tourist resorts and city centres will use the deal to expand into the online market. The company launched its first gaming offering in 1976.

According to Ron Goudsmit, Vice President of Business Development at Holland Casino, the agreement reflects the company's commitment to responsible gaming.

He said: "We're excited to develop and launch our online gaming site, which includes a comprehensive responsible gaming program, with a respected provider who can deliver a unique experience to our customers."

Since 2004, CryptoLogic has launched over 100 casino games including Hold'Em Blackjack, a combination of poker and blackjack. www.egrmagazine.com 2007-02-09

COMPLAINT AGAINST LOTTERY FOR MENTAL DAMAGE

A woman from Heusden filed a complaint against the Postal Code Lottery.

She claims to suffer from mental damage from not having any lottery tickets whilst the Jackpot hit her street. Last Saturday she declared this on Nova, a Dutch TV programme. Saturday a spokesman of the Lottery also confirmed that that the woman in question did take them to court and according to him the organisation was summoned on Friday.

In the beginning of this year the Jackpot fell on the Hoogstraat, Heusden in Brabant.

Eight participants were to share 13.9 million euros. The woman was not one of them as she didn't have any lottery tickets. According to the National Postal Code Lottery it says in the summary that the woman made a conscious decision not to participate in the lottery. "To make a conscious decision not to participate means that the woman was fully aware of all the ins and outs concerning the National Postal Code Lottery," said a representative from the lottery. "So if you make a conscious decision not to participate in the lottery, then you are also aware of the fact that if the Jackpot falls, you will not be among one of the winners. The Case began on 10 January 2007. De Telegraaf 16-12-2006

What a Surprise! - The woman lost the case.

TRANSAVIA.COM SELLS SCRATCH CARDS ON BOARD

On Friday 1 December 2006 Transavia.com, a Dutch charter company, began selling scratch cards on board its planes. According to the airline company it is the high 'fun calibre' of this type of activity that made them decide to do so. The cards are being sold for two euros.

The scratch lottery of Transavia.com is carried out under the final responsibility of Lotto. Participants must be at least eighteen years old. Transavia.com claims there will be strict supervision on board. This provides the company with a new source of income.

Each scratch card has two games, with the chance on a discount of two up to five euros which you are to spend on board the plane or the big prize of no less than 20,000 euros. There are also 'travel-related products' to win which are sold by Transavia.com. The passenger wins a prize if he or she scratches three matching symbols. Luchtvaartnieuws 30-12-2006

GAMBLING THERAPY PROJECT REPORT UK

The Gambling Therapy Project was first piloted on 5th November 2004. Since then it has been accessed by many thousands of clients.

It is currently a 5 tiered service offering:

1. live one-to-one interaction with an advisor (who can be seen by the client);
2. a forum which consists of just under 2000 members;
3. group support rooms which cover various topics relating to problem gambling;
4. 24 hour email support and advice; and
5. 24 hour sms support and advice.

Gambling Therapy is also about to launch its email services in at least 14 different languages and is actively seeking to increase this in the near future.

Gambling Therapy also uses an extensive and up to date database of all the gambling help and support agencies around the world which helps to signpost clients to the help they need.

Gambling Therapy is an integral part of the Gordon House association and is run by the professional staff of the association.

The staff team includes BACP accredited counsellors, senior therapists and extensively trained ex-residents of the association and mediators from Scotland, Wales and Australia.

Within the staff team there is over 200 years of experience in the gambling field.

Gambling Therapy Stats

More than:

- ♥ 630,000 visits to the site to date;
- ♥ 23,000 visits during January 2007;
- ♥ 17,000 have used the one to one advisor facility to date; and
- ♥ 2,300 emails received to date.
- ♥ The forum has received over 34,000 messages and personal stories
- ♥ Forum has just under 2,000 active members
- ♥ Forum is visited by over a 1000 clients daily

The online Group support rooms are used by over 600 clients a month and often consist of clients from all over the world, such as Australia, America, Venezuela, Coast Rica, South Africa, Philippines and Canada to mention a few.

Warning!

It looks like G4 has achieved a well recognised reputation on the online gambling market as a solid provider of counselling services and as THE auditing group and certification agency on Responsible Gaming. However, dozens of websites provide information on G4 without having a contract with G4, trying to tell the outside world that they have an agreement with G4 and work according to our standards. It is smart to check and eventually double check if you're not sure. Please contact us if you have any doubts or think that someone might be cheating. info@gx4.com

More News

DANISH SUPREME COURT RULES MONOPOLY IS OK

The Danish Supreme Court last month ruled that the State's monopoly on gaming is legal. The ruling temporarily dashed the hopes of British bookmaker Ladbrokes, which has been trying to enter the Danish betting market.

Ladbrokes had filed suit against the Ministry of Taxation, which administers all betting games in Denmark through Danske Spil, based on 2003 European Community Court of Justice ruling that gaming is a service and therefore open to free market conditions.

The Supreme Court based its ruling on a European Union regulation stating that a gaming monopoly is allowed, if the organization contributes to preventing gambling addiction. The ruling asserted that the state may therefore not run advertisements for the games.

Danske Spil has an annual turnover of \$1.7 billion, one percent of which is used toward the prevention of gambling addiction. The monopoly consists of the State lottery and various odds and tips games.

In all, Danes spend an estimated \$4.6 billion on betting services annually. Ladbrokes had argued that were it allowed to operate in Denmark it would be forced to begin paying taxes to the Danish state. www.ggbmagazine.com January 2007

CYPRIOT CASINOS

Mediterranean island takes first step to legalize gaming.

Cyprus is one step closer to legalization of casinos following the conclusion of a study commissioned by the Cyprus Tourist Organization, which apparently has given the green light to go forward.

The study, which looked into the financial implications as well as the social and tourist impact, is now with the Commerce Ministry for evaluation.

After assessing model casinos from around the world, the study proposes the adoption of a mixed model in Cyprus, which will be a cross between European and American models.

The first phase proposes the creation of two casinos, within or on the outskirts of Nicosia, Limassol or Larnaca. These casinos will be constructed according to European models (casino and hotel only) and will basically be aimed at local gamblers.

The study then proposes the creation of a third casino based on American models (casino resort), to be built between Limassol and the Troodos mountains, close enough to be heavily developed tourist areas and far enough from the town planning area.

Each from the two European style casinos would feature 50 table games and 600 slot machines, along with a five-star hotel with at least 100 rooms. The casino resort would feature 80 tables and 1,500 slot machines in addition to a five-star hotel with 500 rooms, a conference center, spa and golf course.

Commerce Minister Antonis Michaelides urged caution though, saying, "even though we want quick progress, we realize that it will take time as new laws should be drafted, due to the serious implications of gambling."

"Our goal is to attract a number of big players from abroad who will come to Cyprus and leave their millions," he added. www.ggbmagazine.com January 2007

NO CASINOS FOR HONG KONG

The Government of Hong Kong last month made it clear it would not even consider building a casino anywhere in Hong Kong. The Legislative Council voted down a motion raised by Liberal Party leader James Tien Pei-chun calling on the government to actively study the feasibility of establishing a casino on Lantau as an alternative to a goods and service tax and to create more jobs.

"Conducting a study on casinos on Lantau is not in line with our aim of regulating gambling," said Patrick Ho Chi-ping, the Secretary for Home Affairs, adding that condoning the Liberal Party's idea would "send out the wrong message".

Ho said sacrificing moral values and risking the increase of gambling-related social problems was not a gamble the Government was willing to take. *Global Gaming Business* January 2007