

SLOTS LANDING

A chip's-eye view of the riverfront's latest house of cards

When Lumière Place, designed by the Las Vegas architecture firm behind the Bellagio, Mirage and Caesars Palace, opened its doors December 19, holiday revelers got the first chance to check out its many charms—around the clock, no less, during the week of Christmas and New Year's. But with so many games to play, and so much to eat (six restaurants are already open on-site, with a seventh due any day), patrons may not have noticed all the details that go into making this more than just your average River City casino. —Margaret Bauer

The ceiling, a sleek bronze-colored expanse, is perforated with millions of tiny holes, behind which speakers are hidden—you won't see any of those water-stained, disc-like beige ceiling speakers here. According to Jeff Babinski, Lumière Place's senior director of operations, these allow "the right sound at the right time" to be piped in.

The light over each of the 49 table games isn't just decorative—a tiny camera inside allows security to remotely view the action. "Everything is recorded," says Babinski, though for security reasons, he declined to give an exact number of cameras monitoring the facility.

First, notice their sheer numbers: 2,000 slots line the main floor. With a price tag of \$10,000 to \$11,000 apiece, these machines cost approximately \$21 million total.

No outside contractors will be allowed to maintain the slots—the casino will use its own three lead technicians, with a team of 14 additional slot techs, to care for its thousands of machines.

You'll see no coins in cups here—when you win big, you can print off a ticket, redeemable at the cage or any of the automated redemption machines throughout the floor.

That shagadelic carpet covering the floor? Imported from London, natch. But the cost of the carpet is nothing compared to what supports it all, a \$10 million "concrete honeycomb" floating in a concrete basin (within the necessary 1,000 feet of the riverfront, of course).

Each machine features a tiny touch screen, connected to each player's account via a bar-coded player card, that allows patrons to order drinks, monitor how close they are to reaching Missouri's \$500 loss limit and, when their luck runs out, even call the valet service for a quick getaway.

Those table games that wind their way through the main casino floor run \$2,100 to \$2,200 apiece. But the real kings of cost here are the roulette tables; the wheel alone, which lights up at the end of each spin, can go for \$24,000.

