

TRAVEL

DISPATCHES



ETHAN MILLER, GETTY IMAGES

The Riviera's 22-story Monte Carlo tower comes to a spectacular end.

End of an era in Las Vegas

The final tower of the legendary Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas came down in cinematic fashion early Tuesday.

It was a fitting ending for a property that was known as much for its early mobster ties as its appearances in several Hollywood movies, including the original 1960 *Ocean's 11* movie and the James Bond film *Diamonds are Forever*. It now serves as a backdrop in the new movie *Jason Bourne* starring Matt Damon, perhaps its final film appearance.

The 2,100-room Riviera opened in April 1955 as the first high-rise on the Strip and shut its doors in May 2015. In its 60 years it played host to Liberace, Elvis Presley, Dean Martin, Barbra Streisand, Harry Belafonte and Louis Armstrong, along with regulars such as the Rat Pack.

Tuesday's event marked the second of two implosions on the property, owned by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. The Monaco Tower was leveled in June.

Tuesday's toppling is the last in a series of demolitions to make way for the Las Vegas Convention Center District.

Now that the Riviera is gone, the existing Las Vegas Convention Center can be renovated and expanded by 1.2 million square feet. Included in that will be 600,000 square feet of additional exhibit space.

The Southern Nevada Tourism Infrastructure Committee recently recommended funding for the \$1.4 billion expansion and renovation. That recommendation will now be forwarded to the governor and state legislature for approval.



DELTA AIR LINES

The Delta One suite will debut on Delta's first Airbus 350 in fall 2017.

Suite seating at 35,000 feet

Suites on planes, with doors or curtains offering an extra layer of privacy, have become the most coveted spots in the cabin.

Emirates Airlines started the trend, and now Etihad Airways, Singapore Airlines, Asiana Airlines and Air France are among the international airlines that have these super-swank spaces for passengers who can afford them.

With Tuesday's introduction of its Delta One suite, Delta Air Lines is boasting that it will be the world's first airline to have an all-suite business cabin with a door for each suite. Thirty-two suites will be on Delta's first Airbus A350, due for delivery in fall 2017. Delta plans to put it into service primarily on routes between the U.S. and Asia. After that, Delta says, it will begin adding the suites to its Boeing 777 fleet.

In addition to entry doors, amenities in the suites will include customizable ambient lighting; an 18-inch, high-resolution in-flight entertainment monitor; power outlets and USB ports at each seat; multiple storage compartments; and sliding privacy dividers between center suites.

"Bigger screens, wider seats and more privacy should all appeal to premium passengers," says industry analyst Seth Miller. "It shows the company is willing to invest some of its profits in a manner that benefits customers."

Harriet Baskas



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY DAY, USA TODAY

Locals including Isabel Montano and her family have integrated Mexican fare into the Tucson food landscape. The family has made traditional pastries and tortillas (14,000 a day now) at La Estrella Bakery since 1986.

Tucson heats up the Southwest food scene

Locals work to make the city a gastronomic star

Ashley Day
Special for USA TODAY

Scanning the menu of the restaurant I've stumbled into and snacking on my third order of housemade chips and salsa in as many days, I'm as relieved to see a sandwich called The Tucson as I was to find air conditioning. Nook's garden entryway drew me from a scorching walk along Congress Street.

As I bite into the stack of green chilis, chili chicken and burnt cheese that makes this sandwich so Tucsonan, I recognize the plates stacked in the open kitchen as being from HF Coors, the 33,000-square-foot dinnerware factory where I just took an in-depth tour. Talk about local: Coors makes everything on site, from the clay and glaze to the molds and handpainted wares. The virtually indestructible dishes are used in restaurants (and homes) around the country.

When the cook across the counter tells me Nook sources coffee from Exo Roast Co. down the road, I imagine I can trace my way back through this culinary community with the simplest of tasting trails, and I take off.

Exo is a 10-minute walk. The café has a rustic, warehouse feel with coffee roasting right next to the long counter. The coffee shop sources teas from nearby Maya Tea, which has a Prickly Pear herbal tea made from local ingredients, and Seven Cups Fine Chinese Teas, which has a local teahouse.

Next door, Tap & Bottle offers local beer and wine, including Iron John's ale and sour beer and Pueblo Vida's Barrel-Aged Brown.



HF Coors has been making dinnerware since 1925. Shoppers can tour the factory and stock up at the factory store.

"In a border city, you get to introduce and incorporate your traditions."

Isabel Montano of La Estrella Bakery

Iron John's ages beer in southern Arizona wine barrels and Whiskey Del Bac barrels from local Hamilton Distillers.

"The continuity and community here is real deep," says Iron John's co-founder and head brewer John Adkisson. "Once you take that step (to sell your product), everyone reaches out to try each other's new stuff or collaborate. Rather than split up the pie, we want to grow the pie."



Try an authentic Sonoran hot dog made with a bacon-wrapped frank, beans, onion, tomato, mayo, mustard and jalapeño sauce.



Tucson Tamale Company made 1.3 million tamales last year.

ed local, so they bought him more hives and lent backyards. Today he's hosting honey tastings and teaching beekeeping classes at Miraval Resort, and recommending all the other people I have to meet while he runs late to a class.

"I'm very proud of what's happening in Tucson right now," Patterson says. "I'm a native, and in the past five years it's been dramatically different. There are some really smart people doing really cool things."

Patterson references Mission Gardens, where a group of locals is preserving and re-creating native agriculture. The project is one of many reasons the city earned the UNESCO designation as a World City of Gastronomy — the only U.S. city to hold the title.

Only about 60 miles from the U.S./Mexico border, Tucson's also the self-proclaimed Mexican food capital of the country. Natives like Isabel Montano and her family integrate Mexican fare into the food scene, where they've made traditional pastries and tortillas at La Estrella Bakery since 1986.

"In a border city, you get to introduce and incorporate your traditions," Montano says. "What's awesome about Tucson is they've embraced it and made it their own."

Patterson asks what adventure I'm up for, and moments later we're in the Sonoran Desert, where his bees feed off cactus flowers and produce distinct local honey that you simply have to taste when you're here. This is the only place you can taste it.

Land a seat beneath lush green vines on Time Market's whimsical, airy patio; grab the fresh baguette and soft brie you picked up inside, and spread the Sonoran-sourced honey on top while bees from Patterson's backyard (two blocks away) buzz by. Perhaps pair with a house-roasted Exo coffee, and somewhere in between bites and sips, ask someone nearby where you should head next.

Adkisson and Hamilton Distillers' Stephen Paul are just two of the city's prominent food and beverage entrepreneurs, most with Tucson roots, who are building the city into a budding gastronomy destination.

Paul sold mesquite furniture for more than two decades and is using the desert tree's scraps to malt his own barley now. His Arroyo Design has converted to Hamilton Distillers, where visitors can sip Whiskey Del Bac and even help bottle it.

The community has embraced these makers to such an extent that the local Whole Foods carries Iron John's beers, Whiskey Del Bac and Tucson Tamale Company's frozen tamales.

Todd Martin learned to make traditional tamales while visiting his then-girlfriend Sherry's family and started experimenting with flavor combinations. Now married, the Martins opened a tasting room with six tamales on the menu in 2008. Today, they have three restaurants and produce 1.3 million tamales a year.

Combination bakery, restaurant and grocery Time Market stocks a slew of local products as well. Here, I'm meeting Noel Patterson, wine distributor turned accidental beekeeper, for a honey tasting. Patterson's Dos Manos Apiaries is sold inside because owner Peter Wilke (his friend and neighbor) insisted.

Patterson started with one hive — a surprise birthday gift — and couldn't produce enough honey to meet demand. But locals want-