

TRAVEL

DISPATCHES



DAVID SPRAGUE, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD
The Walking Dead mazes have found a home at Universal Studios.

Dead ahead in Hollywood

Every fall, chainsaw-wielding clowns and maniacal monsters wreak havoc at Universal Studios Hollywood's Halloween Horror Nights. For the past few years, the limited-time event has featured The Walking Dead mazes. On July 4, the decaying zombies got a year-round Southern California home when the park opened a permanent walk-through attraction based on the hit cable TV series.

Those who dare enter the maze find startlingly lifelike dead characters in scenes culled from the show. Instead of passively watching the action, however, visitors are immersed in it. Cast as survivors of a mysterious zombie apocalypse, they try to survive the onslaught of flesh-eaters.

Upon entering, visitors encounter the now-famous hospital doors scrawled with the words "Don't Open, Dead Inside" from the series' pilot episode. Cue the flailing arms of walkers trying to bust the doors open.

Another animatronic creation is particularly effective and disturbing. Nicknamed "Bicycle Girl," it is a zombified upper torso that crawls toward guests.

The daytime Walking Dead attraction is open during regular operating hours and is included with general admission. But the park clearly warns visitors of the PG-13 nature of the maze.

"To have a brand like *The Walking Dead* be part of a regular theme park is pretty radical," says John Murdy, Universal Hollywood's creative director. "But we can't do *Walking Dead-lite*."

Arthur Levine



GENE SLOAN, USA TODAY

Norwegian passengers can no longer bring their own beverages.

Norwegian puts a lid on liquids

Do you save money by bringing your own bottled water and soda onto cruise ships? We've got bad news — at least if Norwegian is your line.

Effective July 15, the Miami-based cruise operator will ban passengers from bringing beverages of any kind onto vessels in checked luggage or carry-on bags. Passengers will have to buy all drinks they consume on board directly from Norwegian at ship bars or restaurants.

In a statement, Norwegian cited security concerns.

"This revised policy brings the company in line with other best-practice travel security protocols and reduces the need for individual time consuming screening and package inspection of large volumes of beverages," the company said.

There will be an exception for passengers who want to bring wine on board for personal use as long as they pay a corkage fee. Purified or distilled water in factory-sealed containers to be used with infant formula or medical devices also will be allowed.

Norwegian's new policy puts it at odds with rivals Carnival and Princess, which allow passengers to bring water, soda and other non-alcoholic beverages on board. In Carnival's case, carry-on beverages must be in cans or cartons (no bottles) and in limited quantities. Royal Caribbean also bans passengers from bringing bottled water and soda aboard ships.

Gene Sloan

VEGAS: THE 2016 VERSION



AL POWERS, POWERS IMAGERY

T-Mobile Arena on the Strip seats up to 20,000 and will host concerts and sporting events, including an NHL expansion team.

SKY'S THE LIMIT ON NEW ATTRACTIONS

Ashley Day
USA TODAY

If there's one skyline in the world that keeps changing, it's that of the Las Vegas Strip. While hotels and resorts are constantly renovating or rebranding, new construction makes each visit a new opportunity to explore. In 2014, the High Roller and The LINQ promenade essentially created a whole new district behind Harrah's with the world's largest observation wheel and surrounding restaurants and retail. In 2015, the Grand Bazaar Shops added a bright new aesthetic — and heavy foot traffic — outside of Bally's. And 2016 is no exception; the T-Mobile Arena and its supplemental district, The Park, have taken the Strip by storm, with a few more headline-worthy openings along Las Vegas Boulevard.

T-MOBILE ARENA

Las Vegas' first freestanding arena fits right in just off the Strip. The 650,000-square-foot state-of-the-art structure was designed to blend in seamlessly with the desert on one side and with the Strip on the other. With a 200-foot-wide video mesh wall and telescopic seats to customize lines of sight, the \$375 million T-Mobile Arena incorporates some groundbreaking technology. The new venue seats up to 20,000 and will host concerts, awards shows and sporting events, including a just-announced NHL expansion team.

And there will be way more going on beyond the main events. Toshiba Plaza out front has the capability of hosting pre-show entertainment on two stages; an 18,000-square-foot Hyde Lounge overlooks the action on one side and Strip views on the other; craft cocktails from Tony Abou-Ganim are on tap at concessions; and Shake Shack and Pizza Forte vendors feed eventgoers the familiar (not to mention carving stations and food carts with fresh fare made in-house by Levy Restaurants chef Garry DeLucia). Private suites, luxury boxes and club membership — and the menu options that pair with each — will surprise even the most frequent Vegas VIPs.

THE PARK

MGM's new The Park just outside the arena plaza offers four restaurants in an inviting al fresco space. Fans can grab a beer and play a round of cornhole at the new Beerhaus beer garden or



MICHAEL BAXTER

Topgolf has bars, event venues, live music, golf lessons and two pools. Microchips track each player's performance, though visitors can have a full day without ever picking up a club.

snack on starters at California Pizza Kitchen's wide open deck and bar before a show or game, or spill out for revelry afterward. Sake Rok offers Japanese with over-the-top live entertainment, and Bruxie concocts signature waffle sandwiches.

The site's art installations are sure to appear all over social media feeds, from artist Marco Cochrane's Bliss Dance sculpture to the 16 color-changing shade structures rising 55 to 75 feet in the air. Stay tuned for Monte Carlo renovations, including a 5,300-seat theater by the end of the year, and a luxury hotel called Park MGM, plus outposts of New York's Eataly, The NoMad Hotel and The NoMad Restaurant in late 2018.

TOPGOLF LAS VEGAS

Topgolf combines the sport, Vegas-style partying and technol-

ogy for a unique indoor golf experience. Parties of up to six rent a driving range bay where they can enjoy food and beverages as they play various golfing target games. Microchips track each player's performance. The concept's new four-level complex at MGM Grand is its largest ever, with five bars, event venues, live music, lessons, retail and, of course, cabanas and VIP suites.

There are also two pools, so guests could spend a day here without ever picking up a club. A concert venue accommodates 900, hundreds of HDTVs mean you won't miss a game, the driving range offers incredible views of the Vegas Strip, and other games from cornhole to billiards are available.

CAESARS PALACE TURNS 50

The iconic hotel has half a century to celebrate, and guests can get

in on the fun throughout the 50-day countdown. Take a self-guided walking tour through the property to reminisce or discover its history, look for dining and drinking specials at Caesars' bars and restaurants, and use social media to enter sweepstakes and explore anniversary room packages. The festivities culminate August 5-6 with a birthday cake, toast and of course, birthday surprises. Follow #IAMCaesar or visit caesars.com/CP50 for all the info.

EVEN MORE DINING

The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas recently unveiled its own versions of New York's Beauty & Essex and Los Angeles' Eggslut. Beauty & Essex re-creates the swanky shared-plates restaurant hidden behind a pawn shop on New York's Lower East Side with just as much glamour and bling. While Eggslut delivers all of the egg-centric comfort food its cult following has come to expect, namely decadent sandwiches and burgers.

Plus, don't miss chef Brian Marlarkey's Herringbone outpost at Aria, along with the sequel to New York City's Carbone Italian restaurant and the new Brioche by Guy Savoy in the Caesars Palace casino. And stay tuned for Momofuku, Morimoto, Milk Bar and In-N-Out Burger outlets coming this year.



Eggslut at The Cosmopolitan offers all of the of the egg-centric food its cult followers expect.