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PANEL 1: Title panel. Gambling chips, money, and other symbols of Las Vegas float around the caption and title lettering.

(1) Caption: **Las Vegas** -- there's no place like it on Earth. It's been called a fantasy, a horror, and everything in between. It even has its own creation myth. But above all, it is the undisputed...

(2) Title: CAPITAL OF KITSCH

PANEL 2: Exterior; tourists gawk at the fake volcano outside the Mirage Hotel (see photo).

(3) Caption: These days, **excess** is the name of the game in the town formerly known as Sin City. The latest craze is a megahotel building frenzy, kicked off by the **Mirage**.

PANEL 3: Exterior; establishing shot of the Excalibur (see photo).

(4) Caption: The castle-like Excalibur was the world's largest hotel -- until the 5,005-room MGM Grand opened. Whether the world **needs** so many hotel rooms under one roof is beside the point.

PANEL 4: Triple-wide panel. Exterior; collage of the Luxor (big pyramid), Stratosphere (tall tower), and the battling ships outside Treasure Island (see photos).

(5) Caption: But these new giants are more than mere hotels with casinos! They're family-oriented "entertainment environments"... with casinos. Block by block, Vegas is turning into a vast, Disney-style theme park.

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PANEL 4 (cont.)

- (6) Caption: Cinematic special-effects wizard Douglas Trumbull designed interactive rides for the **Luxor**, including an artificial river and a replica of King Tut's tomb.
- (7) Caption: The 1,149-foot-tall **Stratosphere Tower** looms over the Strip like an immense hypodermic needle, topped by a roller coaster.
- (8) Caption: At **Treasure Island**, full-scale sailing ships battle until one sinks in flames. In true Vegas tradition, the pirate ship always triumphs over the British frigate.

PANEL 5: Exterior; up-angle on a New York family in f.g. They look up at the scaled-down Vegas version of Manhattan (see photo). Dad is impressed, daughter jaded, mom skeptical.

- (9) Caption: Another newcomer, **New York-New York**, re-creates the Big Apple in miniature.
- (10) Dad: It's just like home, only cleaner!
- (11) Daughter: **Way** cleaner.
- (12) Mom: **Why** did we come here again?

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PANEL 6: Interior; Caesars Palace Forum Shops. Romanesque statues (see photo) perform their animatronic show. Some shoppers watch while others walk past.

(13) Caption: That's high culture, Vegas-style -- plunder history, plaster it with glitz, and sell it as a diversion. Even Caesars Palace, the Strip's first major glitter hotel, has added animatronic statues.

(14) Shopper A: Who're **they** supposed to be?

(15) Shopper B: Dunno. Maybe one of 'em invented the Caesar salad.

PANEL 7: Gamblers at a 21 table.

(16) Caption: What ever happened to good ol' gambling, showgirls, and smarmy celebrities? They still form the heart of Vegas, of course, and the crux of its story...

(17) Player: Hit me!

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PANEL 1: Exterior; Nevada desert, 1829. Two Mexican scouts in f.g. look down on an isolated green valley in the desert.

(1) Caption: Las Vegas -- Spanish for "the Meadows" -- was once a green oasis in the Southwestern desert, fed by springwater. It was named in 1829 by Mexican scout Rafael Rivera.

(2) Scout A: I'll bet you two pesos it's a mirage.

(3) Scout B: You're on!

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PANEL 2: Exterior; near the new Las Vegas railroad station, 1905. A railroad official stands on a platform, auctioning off land. The crowd is a mix of scruffy miners and slick-but-sleazy real estate speculators. Two miners converse in f.g.; Union Pacific logo visible in b.g.

(4) Caption: The locale attracted get-rich-quick types from the start - land barons and silver miners. Real estate was a hot commodity as early as 1905, when Union Pacific auctioned off 1,200 lots near its new train station.

(5) Miner A: Two bits sez the swell in the bowler gets this 'un.

(6) Miner B: You're on!

PANEL 3: Interior; Flamingo lounge stage, 1946. Jimmy Durante (see photo) in f.g., addressing his off-panel audience. Behind him is a smashed-up grand piano.

(7) Caption: Mobster **Bugsy Siegel** gets the credit for "founding" Vegas, even though Glitter Gulch was going strong by the time his Flamingo Hotel opened in '46. Bugsy's murder cemented the town's public image as a Mafia haven.

(8) Durante: Hot-cha! Thanks for helping us break in the Flamingo, folks. You've been a swell audience!

PANEL 4: Close shot of Binion's "Atom Bomb Blasts" postcard (see photo). Maybe it's lying on a bar, with a highball glass nearby?

(9) Caption: Luckily, the '50s brought a new player into the game: nuclear weapons testing! Sightseers gleefully awaited each new mushroom cloud on the horizon, and casinos served up "atomic cocktails" like there was no tomorrow.

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PANEL 5: Exterior; establishing shot of the Rat Pack in front of the Sands Hotel, early 1960s (see photo).

(10) Caption: The birth of Vegas "cool" came in the 1960s, personified by the **Rat Pack**: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop. A slicker bunch of drunken lounge lizards never walked the Earth.

PANEL 6: Interior; JFK partying with Peter Lawford, Frank, Sammy, and gorgeous babes. Frank has just picked up Sammy bodily.

(11) Caption: Their antics may have been in questionable taste, but somehow they charmed the nation. Even **JFK** wanted to be seen with these cats! The legendary Sands Hotel was their headquarters.

(12) Frank: Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you for giving me this valuable NAACP trophy!

PANEL 7: Interior; a darkened suite in the Dunes Hotel. Howard Hughes is silhouetted in b.g. A flunky in f.g. hands him the telephone receiver, carefully holding it with a Kleenex.

(13) Caption: Despite waning mob influence, the country still equated Vegas with gangsters and crooked casinos. Then, when **Howard Hughes** bought and moved into the Dunes Hotel, John Q. Public decided that Las Vegas was a safe enough bet.

(14) Flunky: It's Hoover again, Mr. Hughes. He wants to know if you've destroyed those photos yet.

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PANEL 8: Interior; chorus line of topless showgirls, with black "censor bars" over their breasts.

(15) Caption: And boy, was the town ready for Mr. Public! Bare-breasted showgirls debuted in 1958, in extravaganzas with faux Old-World titles such as "Lido de Paris" and "Minsky Goes to Paris."

PANEL 9: Closeup of Elvis and Priscilla Presley in their wedding duds. Heart-shaped border.

(16) Caption: Big-name celebs were also packing in the crowds and living the high life. Elvis Presley's 1966 marriage to Priscilla Beaulieu was one of the most celebrated events in Las Vegas history.

(17) E: Ah do, baby.

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PANEL 1: Exterior; a couple getting married at a drive-through chapel (see photo).

(1) Caption: Marriage is still big business in Vegas, with more than 85,000 weddings annually. Wanta get hitched at 3 a.m., by a minister dressed like Elvis, in your car, under neon wedding bells? No problem! But champagne costs extra.

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PANEL 2: Collage or group shot of as many different Elvis impersonators as possible. All shapes, colors, sizes, ages, etc.

(2) Caption: The King himself comes in all shapes and sizes now -- so many Elvises, it's a wonder there's any room left for other celebrity impersonators.

(3) Elvis A: Thankyaverymuch!

(4) Elvis B: Thankyaverymuch!

(5) Elvis C: Thankyaverymuch!

(etc.)

PANEL 3: Interior; close shot of a sweaty, smiling Wayne Newton on stage, closing his show.

(6) Caption: Ersatz or genuine, nobody does big-ticket schmaltz better than the man variously nicknamed Mr. Las Vegas Show Business, King of the Strip, and the Midnight Idol -- **Wayne Newton**. He ends every show with the same words:

(7) Wayne: Ladies and gentlemen, you have been a **very** special audience.

PANEL 4: Interior; close on Siegfried and Roy with white lion cub (see photo).

(8) Caption: Then there are perennial favorites **Siegfried & Roy**, whose act is an over-the-top mix of pyrotechnic "magic," dancers, and wild animals. S&R's royal white tigers are so rare that only their show-biz careers helped save them from extinction.

(9) Siegfried: Next ve save white lions.

(10) Roy: Ve love the kitties!

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PANEL 5: Interior; Binion's Horseshoe Club. A woman takes a snapshot of her husband, who stands against a wall papered with 100 \$10,000 bills.

(11) Caption: But the biggest lure in town has always been money. Binion's Horseshoe Club, one of the oldest joints downtown, has no fancy architecture -- **cash** is its theme. Visitors still flock there to snap photos in front of a million bucks in \$10,000 bills.

(12) Woman: Say "cheese"!

PANEL 6: Interior; people work their way down an endless buffet, which stretches off into the distance. Similar buffet tables, with different food, run parallel to it.

(13) Caption: Some things -- airfare, hotel rooms, booze -- are purposely kept cheap, to keep the suckers... er, **customers** coming back for more. All-you-can-eat buffets are ubiquitous. Anyone managing to get through Vegas without gambling could eat for days on a shoestring budget.

PANEL 7: Interior; casino. A woman has just pulled the handle of a giant slot machine (see photo), and is rooting for a big win.

(14) Caption: Of course, most folks don't go home without gambling. How can one resist the siren call of neon boasts like "Loosest Slots in Town"?

(15) Woman: C'mon, big money! Big money!

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PANEL 8: Double-wide panel. Exterior; tourists gawk from behind barricades as the Sands Hotel is razed (see photos). Small, inset closeup of Dean Martin near lower right corner, talking to the reader.

- (17) Caption: Alas, even the most famous casinos aren't immune to changing times. The rebuilt Flamingo is now a Hilton hotel. The Dunes is gone. And when the swingin' Sands was razed in '96, its demolition was touted as a once-in-a-lifetime tourist event.
- (18) Caption: Vegas' oversized construction fad shows no signs of slowing. What will become of today's megahotels when their novelty wears thin? One thing's for sure: They're gonna make a lot of noise when they fall.
- (19) Dino: Hoo-boy, there goes the neighborhood!

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