

Choctaw Casino Resort Holds Six-Day Grand Opening Celebration

A crowd of thousands from Dallas to Tulsa were on hand to witness the recent grand opening of the new \$300,000 Choctaw Casino Resort, located off Highway 75 in Durant, Oklahoma.

According to Chief Gregory E. Pyle, "This is a proud day for the Choctaw Nation as we open the doors and show our guests what we've been working so hard to complete. The new Choctaw Casino Resort means new opportunities for our area and we're glad to have so many guests share in our excitement."

A host of celebrities were on hand to welcome guests including world-renowned Master Chef Roland G. Henin and professional poker players TJ Cloutier, Kathy Leibert and Tom McEvoy.

Gamers quickly filled the 110,000 sq. ft. gaming floor to try their luck at one of 3,000 slot machines, 30 poker tables and 38 table games. With each play, Choctaw players club members earned entries for the grand opening cash and Lexus® giveaways worth \$500,000. For two days, Choctaw Casino Resort gave away \$1,000 every hour from noon to 9 pm, followed by three days of giving away \$10,000 every hour from noon to 9 pm. In addition to the cash prizes, Choctaw Casino Resort also awarded lucky visitors with a Lexus GS 350, RX 350 SUV, or 250 convertible.

Poker players made their way to the new poker room as the celebrity tournament featuring TJ Cloutier, Kathy Leibert and Tom McEvoy began. Guests played poker with the pros and attended seminars complete with question and answer sessions.

The six-day affair also featured Master Chef Roland G. Henin, one of 60 Certified Master Chefs in the United States. Master Chef Henin is teaming up with new Choctaw Casino Resort Executive Chef Christopher Tunnell to provide culinary delicacies such as lobster, prime beef and macaroni and cheese with truffles.



Members of the Choctaw Nation proudly cut the ribbon allowing thousands of guests entry to the new \$300,000 Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.

While Master Chef Henin is an award-winning, internationally recognized culinary expert, who coached the U.S. Olympic Culinary Team to the gold in 1992, Choctaw Casino Resort Executive Chef Tunnell is a Tulsa, Oklahoma native who is classically trained through the American Culinary Federation and has received top training honors from venues such as Mandalay Resort Group, Harrah's Hotel and Casino and The MGM Mirage Corporation.

Executive Chef Tunnell leads a staff of more than 200 under the management of the Delaware North Corporation to service a variety of restaurants at the new Choctaw Casino Resort including 1832 Steakhouse, Tomatillo's Mexican Grill and a Food Court, which includes Americo's Italian, Durant Station Deli, Dixon's Grill and the famous Salt Lick Bar-B-Que of Austin.

The staff also provides room service to the 330 newly furnished hotel rooms with amenities such as room service, flat screen TVs, marble top vanities and over-sized showers or Jacuzzi tubs. The new hotel also features Oka Spa, a full-service spa that uses organic products, and retail outlets Choctaw Trading Company, Chahta Gifts, and Bijoux Terner.

Fantasy Springs Resort Bets on New Sweet Treat Ice Cream Shop

Just about everyone loves premium ice cream. "Lique" (pronounced "Lick") is the newest addition to the lineup of six eateries inside Fantasy Springs Resort Casino. It features a menu filled with 16 ice cream flavors – many that rotate depending on the season – specialty sundaes, milkshakes, burgers and hot dogs, and low-fat frozen yogurt on the lighter side. Waffle cones are made to order and dipped in chocolate and chopped nuts at the patron's request. Patrons can design their own sundae from an unending combination of toppings and flavors. The interior of Lique matches the mouthwatering treats served from the ice cream case.

The Cabazon Band of Mission Indians' Tribal Council envisioned the restaurant as a modern and 'cool' spot for customers to enjoy a small indulgence, though they wanted to maintain the feel of a 1950s malt shop. The result – a candy color-inspired eatery that puts the emphasis on fun and the food. Lique is open seven days a week.

Fantasy Springs hired nearly 30 people to work full-time at Lique. These positions include ice cream servers, cashiers, and cooks and kitchen staff. Many of the employees say they are very happy to have jobs now and will help make Lique one of the popular spots at Fantasy Springs. To make their

jobs and the look of the restaurant even more fun, the staff wears black and white checkered fedora hats and shirts and aprons printed by Desert ARC, a local organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities.

From start to finish, construction of the outlet took slightly more than a month and was primarily done by the resort's own engineering staff. Once the initial design of the room was completed by the interior designers, resort executives and the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians Tribal Council, the Fantasy Springs engineers drew up blueprints and brought in the heavy machinery. A total of 30 engineering crew members put more than 3,000 man hours into the project and completed the ice cream shop ahead of schedule.

The building of the shop also helped pump money back into the area's economy as several local vendors were utilized for kitchen equipment and flooring. "Every design and building element used was an environmentally responsible choice," said Robert Cipillone of Andrea Piacentini Design, Inc. The paint used has low volatile organic



compounds (VOCs) and the tile laid down has no releasable elements.

Executive Chef, Freddy Rieger, designed the scrumptious menu and included suggestions for sundaes from the Cabazon Indians Tribal Council. ♣

Many Nations, One Common Goal . . .

Sovereign Nations Scholarship Fund



"Our concern is for all of Indian Country – not just our own tribe or the tribes that do well for themselves. Having a qualified Indian workforce in the next century is going to be important for all tribes in maintaining their sovereignty."

— Stanley Crooks, Chairman
Shakopee Mdewakanton
Sioux Community

The Sovereign Nations Scholarship Fund was launched in 2001 with a challenge grant of \$900,000 from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota. We are asking other tribes to contribute until the fund totals \$10 million.

By establishing the Fund, we hope to build an endowment that will help meet the higher education needs in Indian Country for generations to come, resulting in higher employment rates, increased incomes and a better quality of life in our communities.



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