

Revel to Preview April 2

Eight-week mega-resort preview to precede Grand Opening on Memorial Day Weekend; Reservations available starting March 5.

By Ray Schweibert Posted: February 9, 2012

ATLANTIC CITY — Monday, April 2, was announced as the starting date of an eight-week preview to Atlantic City's forthcoming \$2.4-billion beachfront destination — Revel — the first Atlantic City casino built from the ground up since the Borgata in 2003.

A progressive schedule of restaurants, gaming options, performance spaces, spas, day-life and **nightlife amenities** will complement the preview, including the initial opening of seven of the resort's 14 total restaurants.

All of Revel's gaming options will be open from the April 2 outset, as mentioned in a media conference call with Revel CEO Kevin DeSanctis on Feb. 9, but the property's retail outlets will not open until the formal resort premiere eight weeks later. All 14 restaurants will be open by the premiere, or "Grand Opening," on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend, May 25. Reservations will begin to be accepted for both the preview and premiere on March 5 by **going here**. The entire Revel property will be smoke-free, with the exception of an outdoor area adjacent to the larger of its two nightclubs where patrons can go to smoke — an area that other guests would not ordinarily pass through to enter the building.

DeSanctis hosted a media Q&A conference call to share more information and details about the opening, including why Revel opted to open incrementally as opposed to hosting a single grand opening to kick off the summer.

"Having done this on multiple occasions, it's been my experience that the worst possible thing you can do is open everything at once with a big splash, because the reality is this is a six-million square-foot facility and lots of things are going to go wrong," says DeSanctis.

"I've always been a proponent, in every organization I've been in, to do your best to bring things online in stages so you can determine what the issues are and make sure that, from a guest perspective, you set the expectation that we are opening things [the right way]. It's an all-new staff, we have all-new IT [information technology] systems, and I have to assume some things are going to go wrong.

"What we're basically saying is that we're going to take eight weeks to bring things online, keep previewing things, let everybody understand that we expect people to be interested and want to see what we're doing while at the same time understand, frankly, we expect some issues."

DeSanctis says that by Memorial Day most of the preliminary bugs should be ironed out and by July 4 the property should be hitting its stride, but based on the sheer size and scope of

Revel it may take a year before it reaches its full potential.

“By Memorial Day weekend we should be in pretty good shape, but frankly I expect us to hit our stride somewhere around the Fourth of July, and that’s really the key — to hit the season with everybody having had some experience under their belt, and provide as strong a correlation between guest expectation and guest experiences as possible. In reality, in a facility this size, it’s going to take a year before we really know how this facility operates and really understand the dynamics of operating this property.”

Revel includes two entertainment venues, a smaller one in the center of the casino called The Social that will be operational immediately, and the 5,500-seat Ovation Hall, which will be utilized for multiple purposes including headline acts starting this summer. DeSanctis declined to mention any headliners already booked by Revel but said that the information will be released soon.

“We are clearly going to be very aggressive,” he says. “Our view is that entertainment is going to be very important not only for us, but for Atlantic City. We have what I think is one of the nicest venues in the northeast, and we will be fully utilizing that venue. I can’t talk about specifics, but I can tell you that we will be very aggressive on the entertainment side.”

The decision to make Revel the first casino to voluntarily go smoke-free throughout the property was met with some ambivalence, says DeSanctis.

“Whenever you try something new you’re always a little concerned about it,” he says. “Right now, the way the rules work is that about 25 percent of your gaming operation can be smoking, and the reality is, that’s very hard to police and not optimal from our perspective. Our thought process on the gaming side was very simple — you either go smoke free or you allow 25 percent of your facility to be smoke free, and we just took the plunge and said ‘you know what, we’re going to go 100 percent smoke free on the gaming side.’ On the non-gaming side, a certain number of rooms can be designated for smoking and in every other part of your facility you can’t smoke. We’re just taking the final step and saying everything’s smoke-free.”

He also fielded a question regarding the purpose of the large sphere on the top of Revel.

“Just think of it as a big piece of art. As you probably recognized, we don’t have a name on the building, and we just thought that, architecturally, the building had such a nice design that we didn’t want to mess it up by plastering a name across it. So instead we thought we’d do something on the top of the building that would really represent the brand.”

DeSanctis addressed the issue of Revel's having received a \$260 million tax abatement from the state, and gave a rough sketch of how the property plans to reinvest that money.

“As you know our goal is to take the projected monies of about \$260 million over the next 20 years and invest them back in the neighborhood, and I think our goal is that every time you come to Revel you’re going to see something in the surrounding area that looks a little nicer

than it did the last time you were here.

"I'd love to be able to tell you that we'll have everything done the day we open, but I think what you'll see in the surrounding neighborhood is constant progress. Unfortunately it looks like a construction zone in some areas, but that will clear up as the road's completed and the landscaping's planted, which was projected to be done in May and we're a little ahead of that."

The Revel CEO says he has an optimistic view of Atlantic City's future.

"A long time ago, when I first approached city council with this, I said the last thing Atlantic City needs is [just] another casino, and I still believe that today. If we can't offer a product that has a much broader appeal to the leisure and group customer, then I don't think we will have achieved our goal.

"Based on what I'm seeing, I think that this should be a very good summer for the city. There will be no lack of things for people to do, and very exciting things for people to do. As I've said on many occasions before, we will be a very good tool in the toolbox of Atlantic City, and coupled with what's happening with the other folks in town, I think it's going to be a great summer."

Fast Facts:

Revel spans 6.3 million square feet, and stands 47 stories and 710 feet tall. It received about 63,000 job applications to fill 5,500 positions. Set to become the first casino built from the ground up to open in Atlantic City since the Borgata in 2003, Revel will have 1,898 hotel rooms, employ about 5,500 people, and include such amenities as:

"Revelry" — A showcase of restaurants, shops, nightclubs and more, 61 feet above sea level.

"The Mezz" — A theater with a capacity for 5,500 and 160,000 square feet of meeting space, 87 feet above sea level.

"Resort" — More than 1,800 guest rooms and suites and starting at 114 above sea level.

"The Lobby" — Encompassing two acres of outdoor space anchored by SkyGarden and InOut Pool — a pool that begins indoors and continues outside — at 114 feet above sea level.

<http://www.atlanticcityweekly.com/arts-and-entertainment/features/Revel-to-Preview-on-April-2-139022339.html?page=2&comments=1&showAll=>