

TRAVEL TALK BY CHASE BINDER - FOXWOODS



EXTERIOR OF ENTIRE FOXWOOD RESORT
PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOXWOOD RESORT CASINO

If You Go

This article is just a teaser.

There is SO much more to see and do—no way could I talk about everything. Some tips:

- Begin exploring options at foxwoods.com.
- Sign up for a Foxwoods Rewards Card online before you go. You'll get offers, info and even the chance to win \$5-5000 instantly on machines at Grand Pequot or Fox Tower via the new FoxPerx.
- If you're new at gaming, set a daily limit of money you can afford to lose. Don't put money into any game you don't know how to play!
- There are ATMs everywhere, but if you want to avoid fees and don't like carrying cash, consider applying for casino credit and get cash via a "marker" at the casino cage.

I'll just say it. Bud and I go to Foxwoods to gamble. Sure... the pools, spas, exercise facilities are top-notch. The shopping and golf are world-class. The entertainment is some of the best in the Northeast. But for us there is nothing, absolutely nothing, like winning a big jackpot at one of our favorite video keno or video poker machines. Bells go off, lights flash, people gather 'round, and soon a casino employee is counting out hundred dollar bills in a brisk rhythm that marks each succeeding \$1000 with a bit of drama. Fun!

We do understand, though, that not everyone is in heaven sitting at a machine or a table for 8-10 hours straight. Nor is it an especially good business model for Foxwoods management to

plan on people like us. A typical casino pulls in about 70% in gaming (that's the money you put into the machines or play on a table that *doesn't* make it back into your pocket). The remaining 30% comes from non-gaming sources - restaurants, hotels, services like spas, etc. If your patrons don't have enough disposable income to gamble (think back to the Great Recession of 2008), not only will your primary source of revenue suffer but all of your non-gaming revenue will suffer as well. Fewer gamblers

knowledge, explained that Foxwoods wants to morph the 70-30 revenue split to 50-50. They've pulled in focus groups, analyzed the demographics, looked at sales figures and come up with a new business plan. Much of the plan is designed to woo the so-called Millennials—the younger crowd that has grown up in the digital age and looks at the world much differently than us Baby Boomers.

How so? At the risk of oversimplifying, young people are looking for experiences. They want action, adventure. A nice quiet dinner out? Nope! They want "eater-tainment" (great word, huh?)—renowned celebrity chefs with cutting-edge menus. A casino logo store? Nope—they want world-class shopping including name-brand outlets. A sedate round of golf? No way! They want eco-tourism—things like zip-lines, elevated obstacle courses, outdoor activities that challenge the mind and body and make use of the vast wooded area surrounding the resort.

As for gaming areas, they want more fun and more noise. They



Chase Binder

the Las Vegas Mario Barth) tattoo parlor? But management is also wise to segment the 9 million square foot resort. While anybody can game anywhere, The Fox Tower is being ramped up for the younger set. (Though I DO have to admit that I won an extremely plump jackpot there a couple of weeks ago.) The Grand Pequot Casino is for the higher-end gamers. (Though they do have 25 cent machines that have paid me a lot of money over the years!). Cedar, Festival and Rainmaker Casinos are designed to make the mid-range gamer comfortable. (Hint—try the bank of progressive nickel video poker machines at Cedar—often they are hot and can pay up to \$1800 for a Royal Flush).

If you've noticed I've come 'round to gaming again, well... that's me. Bud and I have loved the many, many concerts we've seen, the headliner comedians, the great food, the Norwich Spa at Grand Pequot—and I understand Gretta Monahan's 21,000 s.f. G Spa and Salon at Fox Tower is even more amazing. We're excited to see all the new things happening down at Foxwoods, truly. We're quite sure that the business model will succeed—which means that Foxwoods will be there for a long, long time. This is great because this gives us plenty of time to give more of the 4,800 slot machines a whirl, not to mention the 256 tables (Let It Ride and High Five are my favorite games, but there's lots more). Bud will be able to work the Poker Room's 95 tables—always chasing the Bad Beat Jackpot, which can run up to \$350,000 or so.

This gives us plenty of time to give more of the 4,800 slot machines a whirl, not to mention the 256 tables. I'll say it again, we go to Foxwoods to gamble.



CONCOURSE AT FOXWOODS

= decreased need for rooms, food, etc. Luckily for the future of Foxwoods, management has really "gotten" the idea of diversifying revenue streams. At a recent sit-down with Jason Guyot, Foxwoods VP for Resort Operations and Development, it became clear that Foxwoods is evolving towards a purposeful, thoughtful, well-planned goal. "We are going to be a one-of-a-kind, full-service resort destination—and soon, very soon!" said Guyot.

Guyot, a snappy dresser with a bright smile and a wealth of

want skill-based gaming you can do with friends, prove how good you are, and win some money. They want clubs and party pits. They want the sexy look of go-go girls. They want bands they can relate to right on the gaming floor and they want headliner concerts, comedians and entertainers just a few steps away.

Much of the above is already there. The new Tanger Outlets are open and running at full steam. More is on the way over the next few months—and it's exceptional. How about getting a tattoo at a Mario Barth (yes,