

The Lights of LAS VEGAS

Everyone should go to Las Vegas once in their life...EXACTLY ONCE. Everything bad has already been said about Las Vegas. So let me say some good things, which I will do as soon as my nerve endings return to my body. Humans are not designed to be assaulted like this. Every sense, except common sense, is overstimulated here.

So we show up after dragging our asses through the Southwest Airlines gauntlet. Southwest is the cheapest airline in the country, with an emphasis on the word LINE. Most of any trip on Southwest consists of standing in line. On some airlines you earn perks by being a good customer. On Southwest you earn perks by standing in line. They open the gate 1 hour before the flight, and the first 30 people in line get to board first and pick any seat they want and actually find space for their carry-on luggage. So people have figured out they need to be there one and a half hours before the plane is set to leave to be among the first 30 in line. Now it takes 30 minutes through security and an hour and 30 minutes in line, that's 2 hours minimum in the airport building itself. Add to that travel from home and parking and we're talking about 3 1/2 hours door to take off. And that doesn't count, God forbid, that you have to check luggage, which on Southwest actually requires a separate reservation and at least another hour in line.

But I'm straying from the real story here, Las Vegas. The words Las Vegas are not Spanish at all but actually Yiddish for Aaching eyeballs. There are so many light bulbs in Las Vegas, that if you stretched them all end to end you would have a lot of broken glass. Not only that, they flash on and off constantly and there are movie screens everywhere and slot machines that blaze. And then fireworks INSIDE, and that doesn't even count the intense light and heat emanating from your wallet where your money is burning toward the center of the earth.

So then there are the shows. By the time we leave tomorrow, we will have seen three shows: Mystere, Excalibur's Kings Feast and tomorrow night, Lord of the Dance. Human beings were not meant to do some of the things in these shows. In Mystere, for example, people climb up poles like they are the devil monkeys in Wizard of Oz. And two men perform a gymnastic routine where one holds the other one who is standing on his hands, but then the first one does a slow somersault and leaves the head of the second one sticking out of his ass. It's incredible. We could do a great parody of this act with me in tights and a parrot walking on whatever body part happened to be on top at the moment. Or maybe two parrots in tights.

In Excalibur they ride horses at full speed in a space not much bigger than your living room. And they throw real javelins and joust and fall off the horses and execute fight choreography so bad it's a wonder they don't die laughing. Tomorrow night we get to see Lord of the Dance, which I suspect might be a Las Vegas combination of Lord of the Flies and They Kill Horses Don't They? where Irish people in skimpy clothing roast a wild pig and attempt to kill each other by dancing to death. I'm sure it will be great, but I won't see any of it, because I will almost certainly be blind by then. Definitely visit Las Vegas. If you lose all your money, at least you'll qualify for disability.