

Guide to the Jay Sarno Papers

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope and Contents Note	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	5
Names and Subjects	5
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Sarno, Jay Jackson, 1921-1984
Title:	Jay Sarno Papers
ID:	MS-00548
Date [inclusive]:	1965 to 2001
Date [bulk]:	1966 to 1973
Physical Description:	1.80 Linear Feet (1 document box, 1 oversized box, and 1 flat folder)
Physical Description:	54 Digital Files (1.51 GB) JPG, MP4, PDF
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	This collection is comprised of publicity and promotional materials documenting the Caesar's Palace Hotel and Casino Resort and the Circus Circus Hotel and Casino Resort. Both resorts were a result of hotel and casino developer Jay Sarno. There is a small amount of material on Sarno in the collection such as newspaper clippings, a press release, and a copy of Sarno's FBI investigation file. The collection includes property records, magazine and newspaper clippings, informational brochures from the two properties, press kits, and a small amount of correspondence. It also includes a prospectus and stock offerings for Sarno's never-realized Grandissimo Hotel and Casino resort that would have been built on Interstate 15 to the west of the Las Vegas Strip.

Preferred Citation

Jay Sarno Papers, 1965-2001. MS-00548. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical Note

Hotel and casino developer Jay Sarno (1921-1984) is known for his innovations that had a major impact on the Las Vegas casino hotel industry. Born in St. Joseph, Missouri, he served in the

armed forces in World War Two and earned a bachelor's degree in business from the University Missouri. Inspired by the hotels of Miami Beach, particularly the Fontainebleau, he began his career in 1958 by purchasing the Atlanta Cabana, a full-service convention hotel that, as he put it, "had the convenience of a motel." Cabana hotels in Dallas and Palo Alto followed in 1962; in these projects, his investors included actress/singer Doris Day. Though Sarno developed these three hotels, he did not manage them past the mid-1960s.

In 1966, Sarno opened Caesar's Palace, the first truly themed resort on the Las Vegas Strip. Two years later, he opened Circus Circus, another themed casino that opened without a hotel. In 1969, Sarno and his associates sold Caesars Palace to Lum's, a Florida-based restaurant company that subsequently renamed itself Caesars World. In 1974, while under indictment for allegedly offering a \$75,000 bribe to an IRS agent, Sarno and his partners in Circus Circus leased the casino to Bill Bennett and Bill Pennington. Sarno, who was represented by attorney Oscar Goodman, was acquitted of the bribery charges in a 1975 trial. He then unsuccessfully attempted to develop the Grandissimo, which would have been a 6,000-room hotel casino near the Las Vegas Strip. Within a decade of his death several themed mega-resorts had opened in Las Vegas, vindicating Sarno's confidence in the Grandissimo.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents Note

The Jay Sarno Papers (1965-2001) are comprised of publicity and promotional materials documenting the Caesar's Palace Hotel and Casino Resort and the Circus Circus Hotel and Casino Resort. Both resorts were a result of hotel and casino developer Jay Sarno. There is a small amount of material on Sarno in the collection such as newspaper clippings, a press release, and a copy of Sarno's FBI investigation file. The collection includes property records, magazine and newspaper clippings, informational brochures from the two properties, press kits, and a small amount of correspondence. It also includes a rare prospectus and stock offerings on Sarno's never-realized Grandissimo Hotel and Casino resort that would have been built on Interstate 15 to the west of the Las Vegas Strip.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Materials are arranged alphabetically according to property name and then by type of material.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research. Arrangements must be made in advance to access digital files; please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives for additional information.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2008 and 2017 by Jay C. Sarno; accession numbers 2009-003, 2017-157.

Processing Note

Su Kim Chung, February 2009. In 2017 Joyce Moore edited and published the finding aid. In 2019, Tammi Kim processed an addition to the collection and updated the finding aid.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Separated Materials

The photographs in were this acquisition were removed from the collection and placed in the Jay Sarno Photograph Collection. PH-0347. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- Casinos -- Nevada -- Las Vegas -- History
- Advertising
- Caesars Palace Las Vegas Hotel and Casino

- Circus Circus Enterprises

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers	
Caesars Palace: Convention and conference facilities information, undated	box 1	folder 1
Caesars Palace: photo jacket, postcard, map, stationary, undated	box 1	folder 2
Caesars Palace: internal newsletters, 1966-1967	box 1	folder 3
Caesars Palace invitation to preview opening (scroll in original gold foil box with RSVP card and envelope)	oversized box 02	
Caesars Palace invitation to opening (scroll in original gold foil box)	oversized box 02	
Caesars Palace: magazine and newspaper clippings, 1965-1971 and 2001	box 1	folder 4
Caesars Palace: oversize photograph of hotel/casino front with "Fiddler" letters depicted in silhouette and aerial photograph of Caesars and surrounding land for loan purposes	oversized box 02	
Caesars Palace: press kit (opening), 1966	box 1	folder 5
Caesars Palace: press kit (hotel and convention information), approximately 1970s	box 1	folder 6
Caesars Palace: room guide (includes room service menu and telephone directory), approximately 1960s	box 1	folder 7
Caesars Palace: architectural drawings for Sarno family penthouse in Caesars new tower, (4 sheets), 1967	flat file 03	
Circus Circus: ephemera and publications (includes hotel guide), approximately 1960s	box 1	folder 8
Circus Circus: magazine and newspaper clippings, 1969-1973	box 1	folder 9
Grandissimo Hotel and Casino Resort: financial prospectus and proposal, 1980	oversized box 02	
Correspondence: various (3 pieces only)	box 1	folder 10
Newspaper clippings on Jay Sarno, 1966-1973	box 1	folder 11
Press release: Jay Sarno (typescript, author unknown), undated	box 1	folder 12
College transcript and select pages from yearbook, photocopies, approximately 1943 and 1948	box 1	folder 13
Jay Jackson Sarno FBI file, 1974	box 1	
Photographs of 1970s Caesars Palace Bacchanal menu, hotel-casino opening invitation, matchbook, ashtrays, and coins; photograph of 1972 Circus Circus	digital file 00	

opening invitation; photograph of 2003 1st Annual Sarno Awards plaque,
2004, 2014

Photographs of 1966 Caesars Palace opening brochure and invitation; photographs of Jay Sarno and his family in 1966; Caesars Palace promotional video in the 1960s, 2014, 2016	digital file 00
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