

What's In a Title?

POKER GAMES DEPARTMENT



Where Poker first originated is the subject of some debate. To the best of anyone's records the game of Poker was invented in the 1820's by sailors in New Orleans, and was played with either a 20 card deck or a 32 card

deck. Through the years there have been many variations of Poker using the traditional 52 card deck, as well as games including the jokers or wild cards. The current preferred game of choice within Card Clubs and Casino Poker rooms is Texas Hold 'Em.

About a decade or so ago Poker rooms started to close down and were not seen as profitable real estate within a Casino environment. However once Poker started to be televised, and glamorized, the Poker popularity really took off and has been gaining momentum ever since.

Currently in the US there are a total of 646 Poker rooms that are either opened, or planning to open soon. Here is a breakdown:

- 1-19 Poker Tables: 554 properties
- 20-39 Poker Tables: 63 properties
- 40-79 Poker Tables: 23 properties
- 80+ Poker Tables: 5 properties

The 3 largest Poker rooms in the US are Card Clubs located in California: Commerce Casino, 152 tables; Hawaiian Gardens Casino, 130 tables; and the Bicycle Casino with 115. The next largest rooms are found in Casinos: Foxwoods Resort Casino, 100 tables and the Borgata Hotel Casino with 85 tables.



Kathy Raymond, Director of Poker Room Operations, Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

To get the overall feel of the department I went right to an expert, and would like to thank her in advance for her insight and valuable comments. Kathy Raymond joined The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino as Director of Poker Room Operations in March 2006. Prior to this Kathy was at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut where she had opened the property in 1992 as a Poker Dealer and with hard work and dedication steadily advanced in her career to the position of Poker Room Director in 1998, and held this position for 8 years.

G&L: Tell us about the Venetian Resort and your amenities.

KR: The Poker Room offers 39 tables within its main arena as well as 10 additional tables

directly adjacent to the room. We offer 24/7 butler service for tableside dining, top shelf beverage service including FIJI water, a self-service coffee station, state of the art waiting list and comp Poker management system, plasma televisions, comfortable seating, a spacious and luxurious gaming area and an extremely professional, skilled staff.

G&L: Tell us about the Organizational Flow Chart and how many total employees you have under you.

KR: I report directly to the Vice President of Table Games but also interact directly with many Senior Management positions. My team consists of three shift managers, a tournament director, approximately twenty three support positions and a multitude of dual-rate staff which subsidize these positions.

G&L: Describe the different Poker games that are offered, and the limits.

KR: The Venetian Poker Room consistently spreads:

- No Limit Hold'em: \$1/\$2 • \$2/\$5 • \$5/\$10 and occasionally \$10/\$20 and higher
- Limit Hold'em: \$4/\$8 • \$8/\$16 • \$15/\$30
- Omaha Hi/Lo: \$4/\$8 • \$8/\$16 • \$15/\$30
- Pot Limit Omaha: \$1/\$2 • \$2/\$5
- 7-Card Stud: \$30/\$60

Occasionally we will spread an \$8/\$16 or \$15/\$30 mixed or H.O.R.S.E. Also, we will spread any other games including Chinese Poker, Razz, Badugi, etc upon request.

G&L: Describe a typical day in your work schedule.

KR: Workdays start anywhere between 9am and 2pm and continue between 8pm and 2am. This is definitely not your average 9 to 5 job. My day typically starts out reviewing the previous day's financial reporting and checking meeting schedules which average about two to three a day with subjects ranging from special events to hiring schedules. Budgets, financial forecasts, marketing and advertising strategies also occupy a good portion of my day. I have an open door policy so I frequently meet with patrons and team members as the needs arise. My office is located on the Poker gaming floor and I ensure that I have the opportunity to get out into the room and talk to my players and team members in that arena as well.

G&L: What are some of your top priorities, and challenges, as the Director?

KR: My top priority is and has always been player satisfaction, and there are many factors in achieving this. First and foremost is the creation of a team that consistently and sincerely cares about our players. Our Poker room could have never achieved the success that we now enjoy if it were not for the dedication and commitment of the incredible team that is now in place. Secondly, it is always extremely important for me to keep my finger on the pulse of the Poker community and responding quickly to shifts in player preferences and acting on surfacing issues.

My biggest challenge is keeping Poker fresh and exciting for our players. Seeking out new opportunities to accomplish this can be very time consuming, but this is also the most rewarding part of my job. We have just concluded a month long Deep Stack Extravaganza event which featured the inaugural North



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Rod Luck, VP of IT, Cache Creek

American Poker Tour tournament sponsored by PokerStars.net and televised for broadcast on ESPN2. This NAPT event was a \$5,000 buy-in and drew 872 players from around the world. My staff and I are ecstatically exhausted as a result of the tremendous success of this event. We got to take a one month breather and then started it all up again with our Deep Stack Extravaganza II which commenced April 1st.

G&L: Has the slowdown in the economy noticeably affected your department?

KR: The slowdown in the economy has not affected the Poker department at The Venetian. As a matter of fact, our business continues to increase monthly. We have seen substantial growth year over year for the past four years and I anticipate this trend to continue. I have seen the slowdown of the economy as an opportunity to gain market share. With any downturn players value their disposable income even more. While the price of playing Poker is consistently the same among most Las Vegas properties, the customer service and the overall player experience in the Poker room becomes the pivotal factor for patrons in their selection of destination. A slowing in the economy is the

ideal time to provide the superior service and amenities to ensure that players are getting the best value for their hard earned dollars.

G&L: Where do you see the future of Poker going?

KR: I am confident that Poker will continue to grow both nationally and worldwide. Poker is a sport of skill and players are becoming more educated than ever. Unlike games where chance is a significant factor, there is a direct correlation between enhancement of skill and monetary gain. Players are looking for better control over their decreasing disposable incomes. Poker is a logical choice of entertainment for many people. Dinner and a movie: \$100 gone with no possibility of retrieval. An evening playing Poker with that same \$100 - with the possibility of going home with more than you started with... much more appealing!

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<u>Poker Room</u>	<u># Tables</u>	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Director</u>
<i>Small Room</i>	<i>up to 19</i>	<i>40K-55K</i>	<i>55K-80K</i>
<i>Mid Sized Room</i>	<i>20-39</i>	<i>55K-75K</i>	<i>80K-100K</i>
<i>Large Room</i>	<i>40-79</i>	<i>65K-85K</i>	<i>90K-125K</i>
<i>Mega Room</i>	<i>80 or more</i>	<i>80K-120K</i>	<i>125K-175K</i>