










greed

Not only is greed good, it's the engine that keeps Las Vegas purring. We scoured the Strip and beyond to find the **best places to double your money**, make a killing, be a high roller . . . and lose it all. So party like a pro—but don't say we didn't warn you

| GAME / PLACE   | THE STAKES                                  | THE SKINNY   | BEST FOR   | BUT BEWARE  |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>No-limit hold 'em</b><br/>Green Valley Ranch<br/>2300 Paseo Verde Pkwy.<br/>Henderson, NV<br/>702-617-7017</p> | <p>From three to five dollars.</p>          | <p>Kate Hudson, Scott Baio, and Macy Gray have been spotted here recently, but you don't have to be a celeb or a high roller to play. Says amateur player Kelly Marks, a.k.a. the Bug Man, "The dealers are the friendliest in town. It's like Cheers; everybody knows your name." Guests are given a pager that buzzes when their seat at the table is ready.</p>  | <p>Players who want to have a good time and don't mind blowing a little dough. Regulars at this off-Strip poker room consider it the softest game in town; in other words, a good place to fleece unsuspecting fish. It's also got the biggest bad-beat jackpot (the hand to beat is usually four tens, and it pays out \$40,000).</p>  | <p>In this town, you might be the fish. Keep an eye out for—and steer clear of—poker heavies such as Phil Gordon and Mike Mizrachi, a.k.a. the Grinder.</p>   |
| <p><b>Horse</b><br/>Bobby's Room at the Bellagio<br/>3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.<br/>702-693-7290</p>                    | <p>Usually between \$4,000 and \$8,000.</p> | <p>The pros agree that Bobby's Room, an intimate two-table space decked out with plasmas and photos of poker greats, is the best place to play high-limit poker in Sin City. (Horse is an acronym that stands for hold 'em; Omaha; razz; seven-card stud high; seven-card stud high-low eight or better.)</p>   | <p>Really, really good players. This is where you'll find all the pros, including Phil Ivey, Jennifer Harman, Doyle Brunson, Patrik Antonius, Gus Hansen, Sam Farha, and Eli Elezra.</p>   | <p>When we say really good, we mean it; professional poker players love to take your money, and they love to do it here. Casual players should not apply.</p>          |
| <p><b>Tournament poker</b><br/>The Rio<br/>3700 W. Flamingo Rd.<br/>702-777-7634</p>                                 | <p>A \$10,000 buy-in.</p>                   | <p>The World Series of Poker Main Event has been won by a no-name player every year since 2001. Last year, former social worker (he retired after his win) and father of six Jerry Yang took home \$8.25 million. Could you be next?</p>   | <p>Pros and pro wannabes—and the very lucky. Says poker pro Joe Tehan, "The Main Event at the WSOP is a great chance to score big. The thrill of getting deep in tournaments can't be matched in a cash game."</p>   | <p>Although you can't lose more than your buy-in, only about 10 percent of players will end the game "in the money"—which means the other 90 percent will be out \$10,000.</p>  |
| <p><b>Craps</b><br/>Casino Royale and Hotel<br/>3411 Las Vegas Blvd. S.<br/>702-737-3500</p>                         | <p>Three dollars and up.</p>                | <p>Casino Royale is the only casino in Vegas to offer 100 times odds. For pass line bets* and even-money bets, the house has an edge of 1.41 percent—but the house has no edge on odds bets.</p>    | <p>Cheap-thrill seekers. Statistically, this is the best bet in town, but cheap drinks (dollar Michelob's) and low-limit tables are its main draw.</p>    | <p>Though the odds can't be beat, the locale (it's next to Denny's) is a bit seedy, and the overall ambiance is somewhat sketchy: The bathrooms are prime coke-snorting territory, and the entrance is guarded by underage youngsters toting forties.</p> |
| <p><b>Low-limit slots</b><br/>Harrah's Las Vegas<br/>3475 Las Vegas Blvd. S.<br/>702-369-5000</p>                    | <p>A penny and up.</p>                      | <p>With more than 1,500 slot machines, Harrah's has everything from old-school Triple Diamond to video poker. Progressive games, such as Wheel of Fortune and Megabucks, have jackpots of up to \$1.2 million.</p>    | <p>Almost everyone. Though you'll still find plenty of blue-haired ladies in pink velvet, slot machines aren't just for octogenarians anymore—really.</p>  | <p>Steer clear of machines on the end of slot banks, as they typically have the highest hold (which means they'll take more of your money).</p>   |
| <p><b>High-limit slots</b><br/>Wynn Las Vegas<br/>3131 Las Vegas Blvd. S.<br/>702-770-7000</p>                       | <p>Ten thousand dollars.</p>                | <p>Wynn Las Vegas is the ritziest casino, and its dark-hued high-limit room has the highest-denomination slot machine in town. Break for a cocktail on the back balcony, which overlooks the pool, or to have dinner (from any restaurant on the property, including Okada and Daniel Boulud) in the private dining room.</p>  | <p>Gold diggers. The one thing the people playing \$5K per spin have in common is that they're filthy stinking rich, so if you want to score a sugar daddy—whether a Fortune 500 exec in Brioni or a poker pro blowing off steam—this is the place.</p>    | <p>This is not a room for the practical—or the nonfilthy stinking rich. The average person here plays seven spins per minute. Remember, that's seven \$5,000 spins.</p>   |
| <p><b>Baccarat</b><br/>The Venetian<br/>3355 Las Vegas Blvd. S.<br/>702-414-1000</p>                                 | <p>From \$100 to \$15,000.</p>              | <p>Invented by Italian Felix Falguiere in the Middle Ages, Baccarat is the game of choice for Asia's high rollers. The plush Baccarat Salon at The Venetian is the go-to spot in Las Vegas.</p>   | <p>Those who want some old-world ritual with their cash. Games are preceded by an elaborate ceremonial cleansing. There's even a sommelier to navigate you through the tea offerings, which include everything from green tea and oolong to Pu-erh.</p>  | <p>Chinese superstitions dictate that you avoid seat no. 4 (it's unlucky), sex before gambling, and saying the word "book," which sounds like "lose" in Cantonese.</p>  |

\*A pass line bet is one bet on an area called the "pass line." A player places his money there before the first roll (also known as the "come out" roll) and leaves it until money is won or lost. If the shooter rolls a 7 or an 11, you win, but if he rolls a 2, a 3, or a 12, you lose. If the shooter rolls something other than those numbers, he rolls until he hits either the same number again or a 7. If he rolls your number again before a 7, you win, but if he rolls a 7 first, you lose.

Photographs clockwise from top left: Mark Sullivan/wiremag; Gregg DeGuire/wiremag; Seth Lover; fotosearch.com (2); the Kobal Collection/MGM/United Artists/Sony; photospin.com; punchstock.com (2)