



Dreaming Of Italy: Las Vegas And The Virtual Grand Tour

Giovanna Franci, Federico Zignani, Jose Gamez

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In *Dreaming of Italy*, Giovanna Franci compares three Las Vegas Italian-themed resorts--Caesars Palace, Bellagio, and The Venetian--to their Italian counterparts: the ancient Forum of the Caesars, the breathtaking Lake Como resort town of Bellagio, and eternal Venice, jewel of the Adriatic. Franci not only examines architectural format and decorative details but considers how the mystique of these Italian sites has been transplanted to the Nevada desert. In the process, she addresses the compelling phenomena of modern mass tourism and postmodern travelers to whom the distinction between the real and the fake is often far less important than the appeal of a destination that allows a visitor to make a virtual Grand Tour within the confines of a single city. Franci's perceptive commentary offers unique insights into the trends and intentions behind recent development in Las Vegas. She shows how the builders of these three casinos use architectural language to unite the themes and functions of American consumer culture with the romantic mythology of some of the world's most fantastic oases of pleasure. In this context, Las Vegas emerges as far more than a popular tourist icon. It is rather the first urban spectacle of the postmodern world, a chameleon-like city continuously reinventing itself to offer visitors an unflagging array of experiences, sensations, and hedonistic delights. Federico Zignani's dazzling photographs bring to life the physical details and idyllic ambiance of the lavish Las Vegas resorts and their Italian inspirations.

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