

Casino to reopen at ex-Rat Pack hangout at Tahoe - San Francisco Chronicle

Written by Administrator

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The casino at Frank Sinatra's old resort at Lake Tahoe will soon reopen, nearly 10 months after shutting down amid a slump in gambling revenues.

The Cal Neva Lodge, which straddles the Nevada-California border on Tahoe's north shore, plans to reopen the casino in February on a limited basis with video poker and slot

machines, the North Lake Tahoe Bonanza reported.

The rest of the Cal Neva, including the hotel and restaurants, remained open after the casino and its table games ceased last March 31.

Eric Dale, general manager of Baldini's Sports Casino in Sparks, said he'll oversee the gambling operations, and he hopes to obtain necessary permits from state gambling regulators by the end of this month.

"It will be a small offering at first," Dale said. "That is based on the time of year, as casinos rely more on the local market during the winter."

Sinatra owned the Cal Neva from 1960 to 1963 during its heyday, drawing fellow Rat Pack members Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Peter Lawford, and stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Joe DiMaggio and Juliet Prowse.

Sinatra's gambling license was stripped by the Nevada Gaming Control Board after Chicago mobster Sam Giancana was spotted on the premises.

Canyon Capital Realty Advisors based in Los Angeles took over the Cal Neva in 2009 after foreclosing on a \$25 million loan to its prior owner, financier Ezri Namvar. He bought the resort from Chuck Bluth in 2005.

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Both Dale and Richard Bosworth, Canyon Capital senior director, did not immediately return phone calls seeking comment Thursday.

The Cal Neva is one of Nevada's first legal casinos. The present resort was built in 1937, when a fire destroyed the original lodge that had opened in 1926.

Monroe spent her final weekend at the Cal Neva before she died of a drug overdose in Los Angeles in August 1962. The small cabin where she stayed still stands and is part of a tour offered by the resort.

Information from: North Lake Tahoe Bonanza

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