

INDIAN GAMING BRINGS

HOT SLOTS

Close
TO

HOME



(Top) Shanghai Fats Asian cuisine restaurant at Thunder Valley Casino. Photo by Steve Yeater. (Bottom) Thunder Valley Casino. Photo by Steve Yeater.



By Kimberly Horg

Californians no longer have to travel over the Nevada border to enjoy gaming entertainment. Indian gaming casinos have popped up all over California's central valley in past years, letting locals take advantage of the variety of slot machines, table games, buffets, bingo palaces and live entertainment without having to leave home.

Black Oak Casino

Centrally located in Tuolumne, visitors will find Black Oak Casino. Black Oak has been doing business for over three years and currently has 600 slot machines along with six table games but it is in the final stages of building a larger casino. The plans for Phase II include 940 slot machines, 24 table games, three restaurants, 24 lanes for bowling, a live entertainment lounge with a dance floor, a gift shop, arcade, sports bar, two casino floor bars and a non-smoking gaming area. The Phase II main gaming floor opened on January 12th, with the rest of the tri-level 164,770 square foot entertainment facility scheduled to open by the end of January.

"The opening of Phase II of Black Oak Casino is the culmination of the vision and perseverance of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians. This project, which started as a challenge for economic self-sufficiency and self-esteem, has grown to become the benchmark for positive economic diversity and growth for Tuolumne County. This level of support is special among Indian Gaming properties in California and has been well earned by the responsible way the tribe has reached out to the community," said Al O'Brien, marketing manager of Black Oak Casino.

Black Oak Casino's expansion will also add approximately 350 jobs in addition to the 400 positions currently supporting Black Oak Casino operations, bringing the payroll for Phase II Black Oak Casino to \$25,000,000 in 2005.

"The Tuolumne County logging and mining decline has necessitated a move to diversify the local economy. With 700 team members employed, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Economic Development efforts bring economic growth and a solid employment base to Tuolumne County," said Ron Patel, casino manager of Black Oak Casino. "In addition, the economic benefits to our community will



continue as the Tribal Economic Development projects at the Westside Lumber site begin.”

There are plans of a Phase III after Phase II is done that will offer hotel accommodations. The casino is open 24 hours a day and is located at 19400 Tuolumne Road, Tuolumne.

Right outside of Tuolumne, located in Jamestown, is The Chicken Ranch Bingo. It is a small establishment with computerized slots and a large scale bingo area. No restaurants here but there is a snack bar that offers a variety of food. Evening bingo sessions are Thursday through Saturday beginning at 6pm. Warm-up begins at 7pm and regular bingo starts at 7:30pm. There are Sunday afternoon sessions that open at 1:30pm, warm-ups at 2:30pm and regular bingo is at 3pm. The casino is open daily from 9am until 1am.

Jackson Rancheria Casino

Heading north on Highway 49 will take travelers to another Indian gaming facility, located in the historic mining town of Jackson. Open since 1985, Jackson Rancheria Casino accommodates guests with a hotel, shopping, conference center, entertainment, dining and goes by the motto that it is “Where Friendship is the Largest Jackpot!” With 1,500 slots and 40 tables including: Blackjack, Poker, Pai Gow, Craps and Roulette, the odds look good.

“More people are enjoying this type of entertainment closer to home,” said Rich Hoffman, Jackson Rancheria, public relation manager. “No airports or snowy mountain passes to navigate makes it an easy day-trip.”

Business is steadily increasing and people are flocking there from around the world, mostly from northern California, he said.

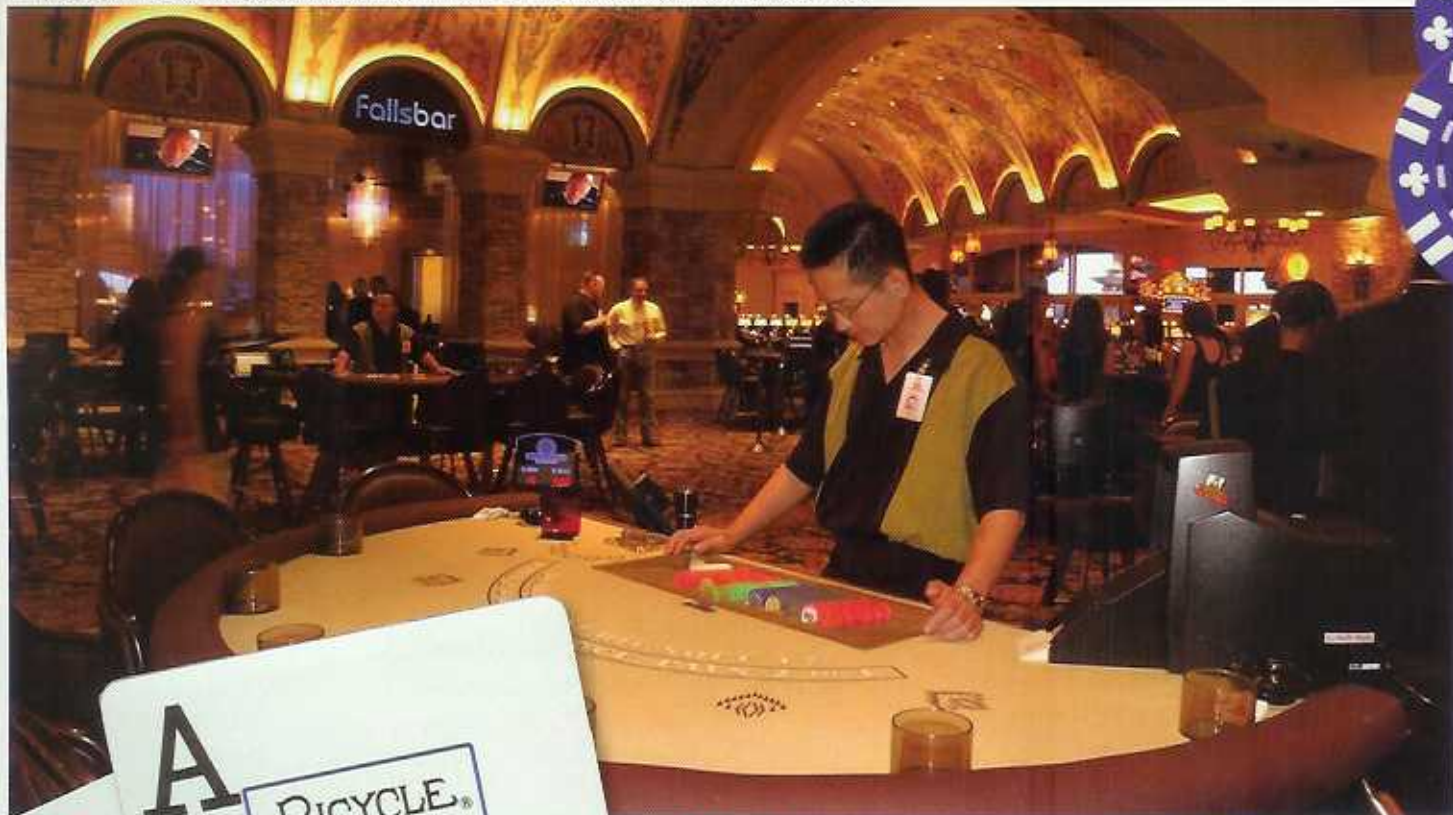
If guests want to grab a burger and hit the slots, then Uncle Bud's Burgers serves up burgers, shakes and more. Raging River Restaurant gives visitors casual dining. The newest restaurant in the casino, The Bronze Eagle, offers good food with great sunset views. There is also the Main Street Food Court featuring an Italian deli, Asian Palace, Southwestern Grill and a café.

A fine dining restaurant, Lone Wolf's is located in the 146-room hotel, which offers California cuisine style entrées in an elegant setting. The Savage Scizzors beauty salon is also located in the hotel and an event center will be finished by February. For those visitors who are under the legal age to gamble, Minor's Camp Arcade is open for guests' ages 7 to 17. Those 18 and over can become Dreamcatcher's Club members and earn rewards that are redeemable anywhere in the casino. Open daily are gift shops ranging from hand-crafted selections at G Gallery to clothing and greeting cards at Kesler's Mercantile.

Thunder Valley Casino

Thirty miles northeast of Sacramento, in Lincoln, is yet another gaming destination. Thunder Valley opened in June 2003 to serve up gaming fun to northern and central California residents. The United Auburn Indian Community (who own and operate the casino) pro-

The pit area at Thunder Valley Casino has a beautiful hand-painted dome ceiling. Photo by Steve Yeater





(Top) Shanghai Fats Asian cuisine restaurant at Thunder Valley Casino. (Bottom) Thunder Valley Casino. Photos by Steve Yeater.



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vides 2,000 jobs to locals. The casino has 2,700 state of the art slot and video machines, 98 table games including Blackjack and Pai Gow Poker. It offers fine and casual dining plus 3,300 lighted parking spaces.

Thunder Valley announced in December that it will be launching a ground-breaking enhancement to its popular Player's Club card that will offer guests the opportunity to win a bonus jackpot. Beginning in December 2004, the club members that insert their Player's Club card into any slot or video poker machine will become eligible to win Thunder Strike.

"Thunder Strike is a new way to win," said general manager, Scott Garawitz. "As soon as a customer sits down at their favorite ma-

chine and inserts their Player's Club Card, it is hooked into the property progressive that can make them the next bonus jackpot winner. It could be up to \$150,000. That's what makes this thing exciting."

Thunder Valley's Player's Club gives members redeemable points at any location anywhere throughout the establishment. Guests can sign up for a Player's Club card at the casino's Rewards Center.

"With the Thunder Strike bonus jackpot, there's certainly no reason for people to play elsewhere," Garawitz said. "Thunder Strike utilizes cutting edge, state-of-the-art technology and is unique in California and northern Nevada."

The 200,000 square foot, \$215 million casino,





(Top) Chuckchansi Gold Resort & Casino. Photo by Ian Vaughn (Bottom) Fallsbar at Thunder Valley Casino has a huge chandelier in the center of the room. Photo by Steve Yeater.

offers Las Vegas-style gaming, service, cuisine, entertainment and parking for 3,300 vehicles. It also has a 500-seat buffet, food court, Thunder Café, Austin's Steakhouse and Shanghai Fats.

"The casino is a success, actually a huge success, not only for the tribe but for the region," spokesman for Thunder Valley, Doug Elmets said. "The tribe would very much like to build a five-star hotel and resort in conjunction with the existing casino within the next couple of years. There is an advantage of having a Las Vegas-style resort in the Sacramento Valley; it is between San Francisco and Reno and is below the snow line in the winter so no tire chains are required to get to Thunder Valley."

Chuckchansi Gold Resort & Casino

Traveling south-bound in the valley, outside of Fresno, are two Indian Casinos nestled in the Sierra Foothills. Chuckchansi Gold Resort

& Casino is located in Coarsegold about 30 minutes from Fresno. The Picayune Rancheria of the Chuckchansi Indians is the tribe in charge of this casino that opened in 2003. It is an upscale log design, resembling a mountain lodge, with a feel of trying to strike it rich in Lake Tahoe.

It has 1,800 slots, 46 table games, seven award-winning restaurants that all have themes, including a Vintage Steak & Seafood fine dining restaurant modeled after a San Francisco restaurant, the Dueces Diner has a 50's theme, the Gold Field Café celebrates gold mining and it even has a hot-dog cart along with 192 hotel rooms.

"Chuckchansi Gold Casino offers the best gaming, dining and entertainment experience in the Central Valley," said Jennifer Gaebe, the public relations manager at Chuckchansi. "Now, we're looking forward to 2005 with bigger and better promotions and entertainment. It's Chuckchansi Gold Casino—where

big things happen!"

Karaoke is on Mondays and Thursdays at the Firehouse Blues. If you become a member of their players club you become eligible for hotel redemptions when you play on any of the slot machines. The Firehouse Blues is open is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Table Mountain Casino

A short distance away from Chuckchansi is the first casino to open in the southern part of the valley, Table Mountain Casino, in the town of Friant. The





(Above) Table Mountain Casino. (Below) Eagles Landing Fountain is located inside the Eagles Landing Restaurant, one of two award-winning restaurants at Table Mountain Casino. Photos by Table Mountain Casino.

Chukchansi-Mono Band of Indians opened its' casino doors in 1988 as a small bingo hall and has grown to feature over 35 table games including Blackjack, Fortune Pai Gow, No Limit Hold'em Poker, Spanish 21, 3-Card Poker, and Let it Ride as well as 2,000 slot machines. Plus, the most popular five-reel games, like Double Diamond and Double Diamond Run.

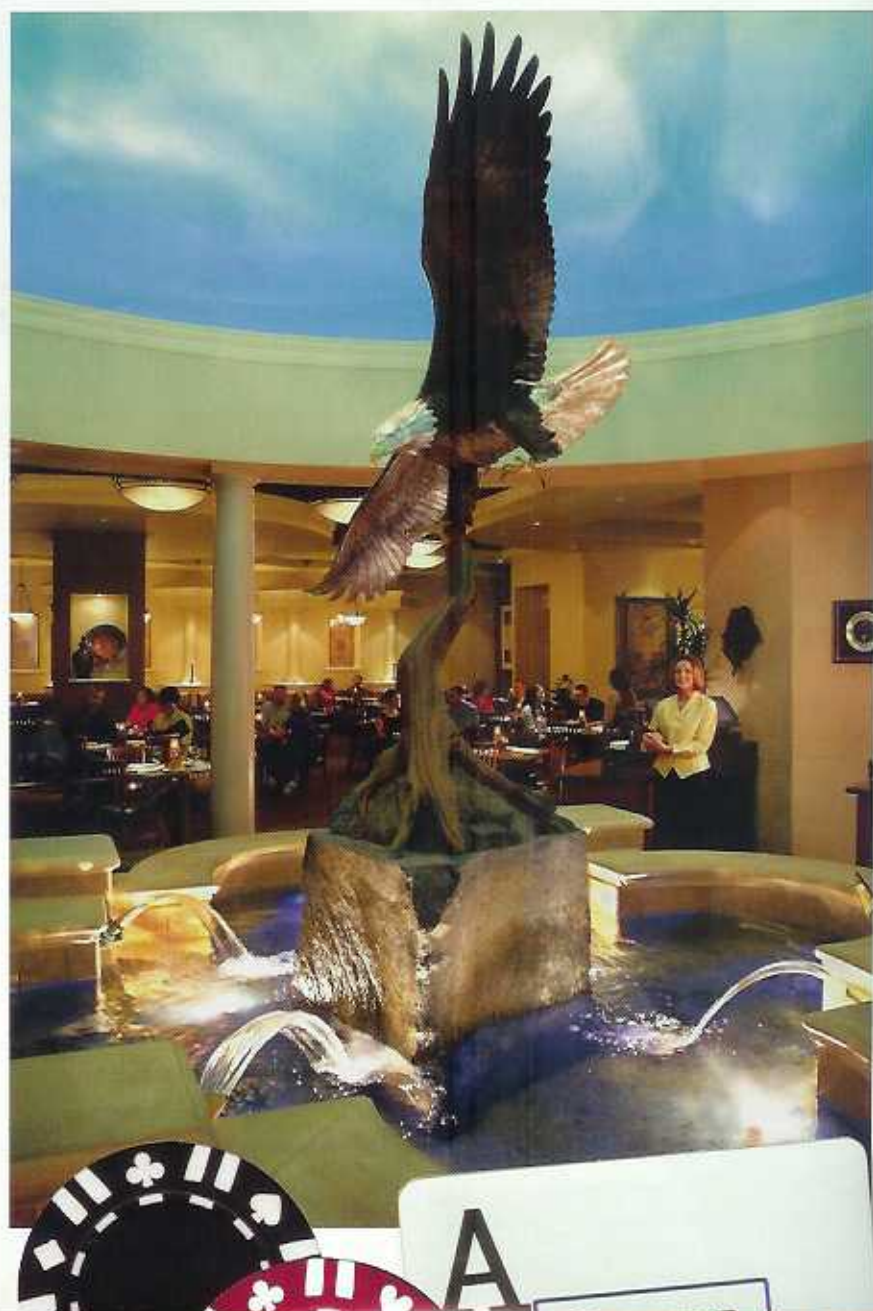
Table Mountain Casino is remodeling their gaming floor with new slot titles and new big money slot machines including top titles like Men In Black, Mr. Cashman, and Lotsa Sevens, just to name a few.

Table Mountain serves its visitors award-winning dining in two restaurants, Eagles Landing Restaurant specializing in a wide variety of food and, a 24-hour all-you-can-eat, Mountain Feast Buffet with food from around the world. Each Wednesday and Friday seafood lovers can enjoy a seafood buffet.

"For an award-winning dining experience, casino patrons can visit Table Mountain Casino's state-of-the-art restaurants, both restaurants feature an international and regional dining experience," said Jennifer Borba, Public Relation Officer at Thielen and Associates. "The California Restaurant Association recently voted Table Mountain Casino 'Best Casino Dining in the Valley'."

Casino patrons can also visit the Table Mountain gift shop, The Trading Post, for a wide variety of authentic Native American collectible artwork, handmade crafts and more. Table Mountain Casino is 15 minutes north of Fresno, off of Hwy. 41 on Friant Road.

Las Vegas move over, Central California has a royal flush of casinos, all within an afternoon's drive!



Phase II at Black Oak Casino Now Open in 2005

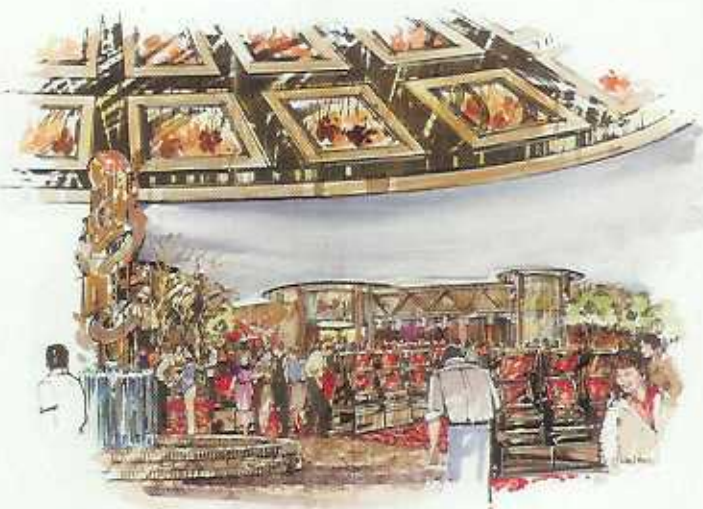
Things are bigger and better at Black Oak Casino now that the Phase II tri-level entertainment facility is near completion. The main gaming floor of the new casino opened on January 12, and the new family entertainment floor debuted January 24. By the end of January, all floors of the new facility were open. Casino patrons will Strike it Rich at this 164,770 square foot facility designed with every detail in mind to make it the regional entertainment destination for the Central Valley and Foothills.

Gaming paradise can be found on the main gaming floor where the Casino houses 940 slot machines featuring the latest in technology and themes, as well as 24 of the most popular live action card table games. Located on the second floor, this gaming area will also feature a non-smoking gaming area with a non-smoking bar. Also available 24-hours a day is Black Oak Café, a café/buffet seating over 200 guests. Guests can also take a break from the excitement to enjoy The Gift Basket, the Casino gift shop, retailing Casino logo and Native American merchandise.

Those seeking entertainment will enjoy Willow Creek Lounge, a 250-seat live entertainment lounge with a dance floor, convertible seating, and gaming bar.

The main gaming floor will also be the hub of The Players Club at Black Oak Casino. The Players Club at Black Oak Casino allows casino guests to enjoy members-only promotions, special offers and more! In addition, Black Oak Casino is one of the few in the Central Valley to offer cash back to their Players Club members.

Designed with three separate floors, the first floor of the casino is almost 53,000 square feet of fun for families and other fun-minded



The gaming floor will feature 940 slot machines and 24 of the most popular live action table games.

guests. Kingpins is a counter-service casual family dining restaurant that seats approximately 120 people and will serve quality burgers, pizza and other tasty entrées. In addition, guests can gather with friends at Black Oak Lanes, a 24 lane state-of-the art Brunswick bowling center, including a pro shop, locker room, and Cosmic bowling capabilities with audiovisual elements.

Kids and adults alike can enjoy the latest interactive video and redemption games spread out over 3,200 square feet in "The Underground" Arcade. Also available for the sport fanatics is The Mill, a sports bar offering alcoholic beverages and casual dining featuring a large-scale video wall and interactive games area.

On the third floor, guests can wine and dine at Seven Sisters, a specialty dining restaurant planned to seat approximately 80 guests. Enjoy a romantic evening on the outdoor covered patio overlooking Turnback Creek featuring torch lighting and the natural beauty that surrounds the Casino.

During construction, the original Black Oak Casino is still open 24-hours a day featuring nearly 1,000 slot machines and 10 live action table games. The facilities include the 24-hour Black Oak Café renowned for its value-priced menu and tasty meals. In addition, the Willow Creek Bar serves beer and wine, which guests can enjoy throughout the casino. The casino is also equipped with seven TVs including four plasma screens, ideal for guests to watch the latest sporting events while sipping a beverage between games.

Black Oak Casino's Phase I Casino brought approximately 400 new jobs to the community and with Phase II, the Casino will now employ nearly 750 members.

Black Oak Casino, owned and operated by the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, opened in May of 2001. Visit Black Oak Casino's website for updates on all of the current promotions and Phase II updates at www.blackoakcasino.com or call 1-877-747-8777.



Seven Sisters is one of seven bars and restaurants that Black Oak Casino guests will enjoy in the new Phase II facility.

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