

# the **INSIDE** Straight™

## Greetings Poker Fans

This year, we thought we'd do the Fall *Inside Straight* newsletter AFTER the gaming show to let you in on what was hot, and pass along feedback from your peers, versus a pre show newsletter that would have been tainted more with our own selfish perspective. Where to start?

The show was a huge success, and this year IGT showed an insane number of games – more than 300. In the saner and more down-to-earth world of video poker, we showed 25 new games, with more than half of them available now or submitted throughout the country. And we're proud of that. You really could buy stuff from the Action booth!

We also showed our IGT Progressive Controller, set up our own little bar equipped with Action Gaming products, and demoed a collection of both single- and multi-hand poker games. Finally, in the "Say what?" category: we gave away more than 5,000 smoothies a day for three days. That's right – over 5,000! I'm not surprised that listening to sales people all day, walking the aisles, and looking at machines made people thirsty!

My favorite thing about the show this year, however, had to be the attitude and general good will around the well-organized show. Even though our feet were tired every day, we really enjoyed talking to everyone who packed our booth for three straight days.

So enjoy this issue, relive the show, or let us take you to parts of it – vicariously.

Warm wishes,

*Mike Fields*



**Spotlight 2003**



### Fall 2003 Inside The *INSIDE* Straight

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# Four Aces Conduct Progressive Gaming Panel at G2E

Some of the usual suspects were corralled at G2E for a panel focused on how to make money using progressives – without getting stung by pros and vultures, and having your locals suffer.



Panelists included Cliff Paige, Director of Slot Operations, Gold Coast Casino; Sean Evans of Aristocrat, who's had experience with progressives in some of their games; Bob Dancer, prolific poker author and professional player; and IGT's very own Mike Fields, self-confessed lover of progressive video poker games.

Some Panel highlights for those who missed it:

- Progressives are harder to play perfectly, without a calculator, and as such are less susceptible in many cases to pros, offered Bob Dancer. Professional players want games they can practice and play for hours without strategy deviation.
- Dancer also pointed out that there are pros who regularly troll some properties and call in the troops when certain high denomination progressive jackpots get to certain levels. This brings a whole new meaning to "slot route," huh?

- When barring pros from your games, Dancer suggested that you always do so professionally, privately, and as pleasantly as possible, and cited a number of highly visible cases where players were – correctly or incorrectly – barred from casinos, resulting in some negative publicity.
- To make meters move, it was suggested that it is better to progress only one jackpot, but several people agreed there is a lot of emotion surrounding play for four aces when they top \$900 on a dollar *Double Bonus Poker* game, or a game where the straight flush is progressed and hits the \$300 mark. These emotions drive play, loyalty and profit.
- When determining what games to progress, it was suggested that you progress your most popular games, match your competition, and then offer one unique game that no one else has as a "product differentiator."
- When progressives get "ripe," sometimes jackpot followers take over seats on games keeping them from a casino's loyal, frequent players. This can be a challenge

to manage, and we've heard of one clever idea where a casino kept a "Who's got next" list – like at a basketball game – with the casino's top patrons getting seating priority based on their player card levels. Obviously, this ensures the right people get their shot, and is worth it on a high dollar game to keep your best players happy.



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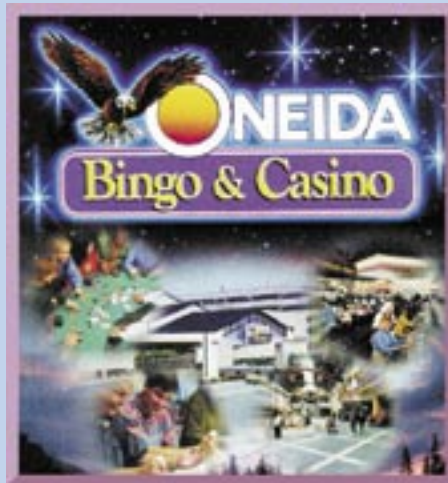
## Win A Free T-Shirt! Go to [www.IGT.com/Video Poker](http://www.IGT.com/VideoPoker)

With all due modesty, we had a great time at the expo, and we'd love to know what you thought of our booth in the Action Gaming corner of IGT's "Spotlight 2003" extravaganza at this year's Global Gaming Expo. Win a free T-Shirt by taking part in our after-the-show survey. Visit our web site at [www.IGT.com/VideoPoker](http://www.IGT.com/VideoPoker). At the top of the page you'll find a direct link to the brief online questionnaire. And if you weren't able to attend the show, you have all the more reason to click! You can still get a T-Shirt and request information on your choice of any of the great games that were in our booth. You'll feel like you were at the show, but without the aching feet!

## And the Winnah is...

As with every show, some lucky customer always walks away with one of our beautiful overhead signs INCLUDING the LCD displays.

This year was no different, and we were pleased to present the package to a loyal and valued customer, Oneida Casino. According to Sandra Mahn, Director of Slot Operations, "G2E was amazing this year and IGT games were really the stars of the show. To top it off,



we won this spectacular sign! Our players love Action poker games and when you add a progressive jackpot to that – look out!"

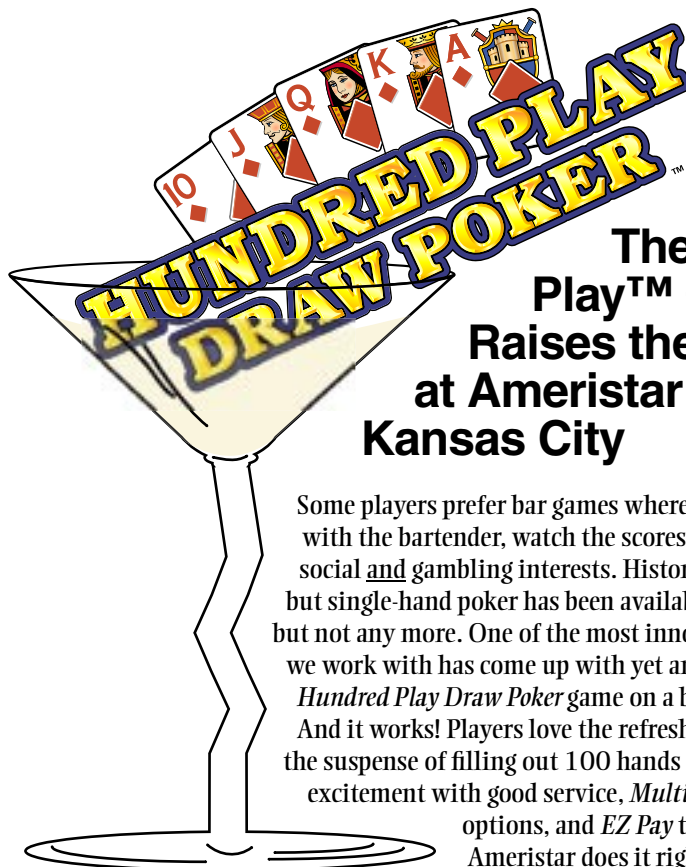
Buddy Bartholow, Action Gaming representative at Sodak Gaming said, "Congratulations to Oneida on behalf of Sodak/IGT! They're a great customer and a great casino. This sign will allow the casino to offer their players a multi-denom, multi-level Action Poker Progressive. It's an exciting time, Poker Lovers."

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## Wonder What Nikol's Been up to?



After taking time off for maternity leave to bring little Ryan Joseph into the world, Nikol Abelman has returned to "active duty" to take care of business for her Nevada customers. Sister Makenzi is seen here with her new baby brother. Congratulations, and welcome back, Nikol!



## The Hundred Play™ Game Raises the Bar at Ameristar Kansas City

Some players prefer bar games where they can banter with the bartender, watch the scores and satisfy their social and gambling interests. Historically, nothing but single-hand poker has been available for bar tops, but not any more. One of the most innovative casinos we work with has come up with yet another first – the *Hundred Play Draw Poker* game on a bar top machine. And it works! Players love the refreshing change and the suspense of filling out 100 hands at once. Match this excitement with good service, *Multi-Denomination* options, and *EZ Pay* tickets... and Ameristar does it right... again! These bar top games are 100 proof!



# G2E '03 – A Synonym for Sensory Overload

The show is always staggering and a bit overwhelming. Whether you made it or not, here are a few impressions we walked, or rather limped, away with.



## Kum-Bay-Ya, people!

This was the best show in terms of people getting along, being polite and it just “felt” good. Possibly there was some “Happy Mist” being pumped into the hall? Whatever the reason, it was really great.



## Out of this world?

Darth Vader? Storm Troopers? A sexy Princess Leia look-alike...Yes! They were all there. Just when you think you’ve seen everything, the show just keeps getting more unpredictable. And cooler. May the aces be with you...



Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa

## Built for comfort

AC Coin showed a slot stand they call “ErgoBase” that had a “V” indentation that acted as a footrest. This is pretty darned ingenious, and we heard that Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa opened with them. While we had mixed reports from people who we dragged down there, we found the slot stands were comfortable, and enjoyed not having to prop our left foot up high on the slot stand that supports a beverage and defines “our territory.” New twists on old things sometimes are best – see “Triple Play” in the encyclopedia for further clarification!



## LCDs are catching on...

This year a lot of liquid crystal displays were being used to promote games and products. This is a great medium, allegedly longer lasting than plasma, and provides a lot of flexibility for promoting anything from games to events to restaurants.



## Progressives rock!

Larry House, IGT’s Progressive Controller guru and resident English-Speaking Engineer, demonstrated the many unique features of this device to a hungry community of customers. The Progressive Controller provides the ability to progress multiple denominations on the same box. This really excited people and inspired some lively conversations about how to make more money per machine.



### The return of spinning reels

Not that IGT doesn't have an awesome crop of spinning reel games out there, but this year a couple of other manufacturers showed up with some interesting products to fit this niche. Lots of people want more spinning reel slot options, and they'll have them in 2004.



### Slot machines or TVs?

There were games this year that showed full-on TV clips in bonus rounds and even as part of the play field. A favorite had to be Drew Carey offering a personal welcome to the bonus round, and then returning to crack a joke and finishing with a "Thank you" for playing. Wow! Has the bar ever been raised! Now what?



### "So, show me what I can buy."

This year, in the world of Action Gaming, we didn't fear this question as more than half of the games shown in our booth were available at the show or submitted nationwide. We were all very proud that 15 of 29 games were looking for homes. Video Poker Product Manager John Daley (at right) is seen showing Spin Poker on a bar top to an unsuspecting customer. "How many would you like?" John asks. Next year, bring your checkbook!



### By Invitation Only...

Thursday morning there was a VIP feature put on by the organizers of the show. By making special arrangements with your sales rep, "Very Important People" such as you were allowed into the show for a "private viewing" before it opened to the public. This was great for supplier and customer alike as you could actually hear each other, take your time and really concentrate on business. If it were only on Wednesday when we were fresher...

IGT

**SPOTLIGHT  
2003**



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# The Eight Wonders of G2E

Welcome to our little corner of the Global Gaming Expo at the Las Vegas Convention Center. For three spectacular days we entertained a steady stream of visitors who marveled at the great new game themes in our Action Gaming booth. In case you missed them, we've included a few of the biggest hits here that should be available in most areas by the end of the year...

**Super Times Pay Poker™ Game**— get it now before your neighbor. Everyone thought this game was going to be on FIRE! (Hint: it is!)



**Five Aces Bonus Poker™ Game**— The *Double Double* game with the extra ace that players are going to fight over. Be sure you have enough of them to meet the demand! And, it's available in single- and multi-hand versions.

**Anything's Wild Poker™ Game**— a new twist on the *Deuces Wild* family, now the player can choose his or her "favorite" card to be wild— sure to be a players' favorite (available in single hand and multi-hand versions).



**Hold 'Em Challenge® Game**— With the exposure that Texas Hold 'em Poker received this past year thanks to the World Poker Tour and ESPN's rebroadcasts of the World Series of Poker, this game is sure to catch on quick.



**Multi-Hand Blackjack™ Game**— make some money with Video Blackjack! Put this one into your bar tops, and scatter several upright and slant-top machines around your floor. Your Blackjack players are going to love this game.



**spin 'n' hold™ Games**— This new game series includes *Cats And Dogs*, *Double Diamond*, *Wild Cherry*, and *Little Green Men* themes. This crossover game format appeals to Video Poker and Video Slots players alike. The challenge of strategic play adds excitement to the novelty of these games. You're definitely going to want a few banks of these.

**New Bar Top Sensations**— *Fifty Play Draw Poker*, *Spin Poker*, and *Double Down Stud Poker*



*Stud Poker* themes are juicing up the action at bars wherever they appear. We've taken some player favorites and made them available as bar top machines. Increase the play and profit at your bar today by adding these games.



**Triple Play, Five Play, Ten Play Draw Poker™ Games**— Now get all three multi-hand themes— repackaged, refreshed, and revitalized— all together on one chip for one daily fee! There's new sounds, new graphics, new turbo speed mode, and progressive-ready capabilities to boot. Make the coin-in jump with these old favorites with *Multi-Denomination*, multiple game families, and *EZ Pay Tickets*.





## A Boatload Of Fun

by Mike Fields

Every now and then, I find it extremely useful to get the heck out of Nevada, away from our own company and into the field to rub elbows with players and operators from different jurisdictions. I love having players explain their favorite games to me, and how the paylines work, even if they don't really know.

I recently had a chance to go to what has become one of my favorite boats, the Ameristar St. Charles on the Missouri River, and found some very interesting, innovative, and effective things, not to mention some yummy food options. Here are a few highlights of the trip that I think are worth sharing:

### Progressives

These guys got 'em – in nickels, quarters, and dollars – AND in the *Triple Play* format... all making money and all with a regular following. I especially liked their use of plasma displays. Not only did they often display the jackpot – the “greed message” – but they also advertised upcoming events and promotions. I haven't seen this tool used much outside of Las Vegas, but it sure seemed to work on this beautiful boat.

### Multi-denom

Lots of operators offer defined denominations, or limited denominations, but Ameristar offers as many as six denoms on many of their poker games. I found this especially interesting and noted that as the day went along, the denomination played seemed to move up. It seems offering more pricing options accommodates a wider range of players, satisfying those that might not have found a game to play were it not for this flexibility. Clever.

### Tickets

Tickets everywhere. I really liked this. I remember my early trips to the Midwest and it drove me crazy reverting back and handling those filthy coins. The players I talked to love tickets, and they seemed to be on everything – poker, video slots, and reel games. Using tickets on *Fifty Play* and *Hundred Play* games seemed to work like a charm, as I rarely saw an empty seat!

### Game selection

These guys have a great mix of product and even a few poker games that could entice me, without them being so over-the-top as to attract the pros. They offer lots of poker families and a great selection of multi-hand products, again in lots of denominations.

Great job, Ameristar, and kudos to Jim Franke, Vice President of Casino Operations!



The *Five Aces Bonus Poker* game is gonna be a star! This simple, yet elegant, improvement to the game is nothing more complicated than adding a fifth ace to the deck, making it a 53-card deck with tons more ace combos.

In many jurisdictions, The *Double Double Bonus Poker* theme is the most popular game around. Players love the kickers and they love their aces, as they do in the *Double Bonus Poker* game.



The *Five Aces Bonus Poker* game, as you can see from the pay schedule, is really a lot like the most popular *Double Double Bonus Poker* theme – only a little bit better – especially if you love aces.

Players still get their kicker combos for 2,000 and 800 coins, but they also get the chance to nail five aces and get a 150% payout on the top award, over a traditional royal. In dollars, that's \$6,000! In quarters, it's \$1,500!

All that fun is paid for with one coin from the three-of-a-kind, and one off the straight, and we know players do crazy things to get their “kicks!”



# Whoever said, "Do one thing and do it well," never played Triple Play™ Poker.

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Also try your hand at Ten Play™, Fifty Play™ and Hundred Play™ Poker, and Chase The Royal™, an intense new game with four times the royal flushes as traditional video poker games.

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