

Vegas Always Wins

Beauties from around the globe travel to the Las Vegas Model Search International competition at the MGM Grand hoping to win the \$50,000 Cash Jackpot!

Just when we thought that “Celebrating the Glamour Lifestyle” in Las Vegas was a distant memory, the city of high-rollers and big stage spectacles hit another jackpot. Yes, Las Vegas decided to roll the dice in welcoming another high-stakes event to the city, and most importantly to Las Vegas, with the backing of the legendary MGM Grand Casino. No snake eyes here, this marriage of glitz, money and glamor promised a cash prize, as well as the opportunity to leave Las Vegas a winner.

Welcome to the Las Vegas Model Search International competition, the culmination of years of planning between industry veteran emcee, performer, producer and host Jim Gibson and LVMSI Chairman Robert Saroli. No stranger to those in pageantry, Mr. Gibson has hosted or performed at more pageants or modeling competitions than anyone in the world, with an estimated 1,500-plus events under his crown, so to speak.

Over the past 35 years, Jim has had the fortune—Las Vegas pun not intended—to witness several of the industry’s brightest stars take to the stage. Stars such as Halle Berry (Oscar-winning actress), Vanna White (*Wheel of Fortune*), Mariska Hargitay (*Law & Order*), Sandra Bullock (Oscar-winning actress), Brooke Burke (*Dancing with the Stars*), Leeann Tweeden (Fox Sports), and hundreds more. And if following an early stint as Director of Pageant Affairs of the Miss Universe Organization, being married at the Mar-a-Lago estate of Mr. Donald Trump, with Mr. Trump personally signing the marriage license as a witness, doesn’t sound like three cherries on the one-armed bandit, nothing does.

Also, giving credit where it’s due, Jim stated, “Donald owns the greatest pageant in the world, Miss Universe. While working for him I learned so much, and I’m trying to follow in his footsteps, as he is a friend that I truly admire.” With the industry know-how of Jim Gibson and the



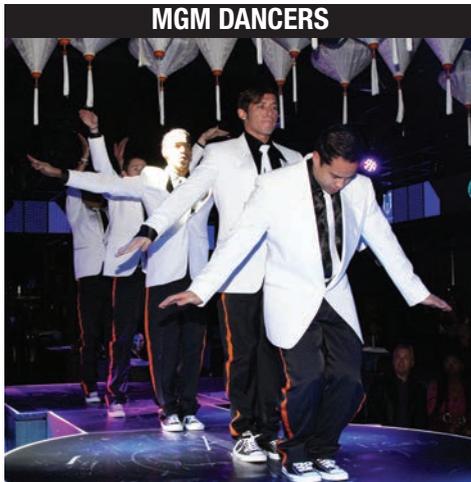
FIRST PLACE WINNER: ADELINE MOCKE

Las Vegas style of show business, the stage was set for the Las Vegas Model Search International.

The inaugural competition had Las Vegas back on a winning streak. Hundreds of young ladies from around the world, minimum age of 21—married or single—gambled on making the trip to the LVMSI pageant. Selected from over 300 applicants, only 50 worldwide beauties were invited to travel to the final competition at the MGM Grand Casino. The delegation, competing in Evening Gown, Swimwear and an On-stage Interview, consisted of 28 delegates from the United States and 22 international models representing 19 countries. Who would best represent the inaugural LVMSI title?

According to LVMSI Chairman Robert Saroli, “A Las Vegas Model Search International contestant is a young woman who, when she walks into a room, is immediately noticed for her stunning beauty, grace and professional image. She’s not a Barbie Doll; she is a real person and is comfortable with the on-stage presentation. That is the image we are looking for at Las Vegas Model Search International. And what is more Vegas than the MGM Grand? MGM Grand presenting the LVMSI... the perfect venue for such an amazing production.”

What was in the cards for the delegates once they arrived in Las Vegas? The Vegas royal treatment where they were feted like the celebrity stars they witnessed on the stages



MGM DANCERS



INTERVIEW



ENTERTAINMENT



VEGAS JACKPOT: (L-R) MGM Rep Rachel White, winner Adeline Mocke and Chairman Robert Saroli.

throughout the city with the MGM Grand providing full limo service, carte blanche dining and tickets to its award-winning theatrical shows. While providing a welcome respite from the pressure of competition, the women of LVMSI had their eyes on the ultimate Vegas title and prize package, which included a record \$50,000 in cash.

Dennis LaFontaine, the Director of Entertainment Marketing for the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino, explained that this was a perfect match from the start. “MGM Grand is pleased to be the host property for Las Vegas Model Search International,” he said. “In the entertainment capital of the world, MGM Grand prides itself on entertainment value and the Las Vegas Model Search International was a perfect fit.”

After all the glitz and glamour that Vegas had to offer, nothing could compare to the grace and beauty that took to the stage, gambling that their dreams of becoming the first LVMSI Queen could become a reality, one that such Las Vegas celebrities and notable personalities as DJ Tiesto, former MGM-TV President and current CEO of Trifecta Entertainment Hank Cohen, television host and writer Robin Leach, Chris Phillips of Zowie Bowie, amongst others, held the winning cards for in their hands.

Of the experience of judging at this inaugural event, Hank Cohen, the former President of MGM-TV, said, “I have been a big pageant fan ever since my days in Specials at ABC, and I think LVMSI speaks to a more rele-

vant contemporary audience and where the televised pageant business is headed.”

With all the pomp and circumstance of an MGM Grand production, the finalists were announced as the Las Vegas Models International Search welcomed her queen-of-hearts. Fourth place was awarded to Rebecca Andrews of Louisiana (\$2,000 cash), third runner-up Billie Powers of Pennsylvania (\$3,000), second runner-up Elizabeth Ruiz representing Cuba (\$5,000), and first alternate Avtil Mattie of Australia collecting winnings of \$10,000. Not a bad gamble on a new concept of pageantry in Vegas. But just which of the ladies had finally caught the eyes of the judges?

With a roll-of-the-proverbial-dice, Adeline Mocke, from the Karoo Desert of South Africa, had taken the ultimate gamble on herself by taking out a loan to help pay for her green card to the United States, while wondering how she would pay for her student loan debts accrued while attending the university. Wonder no more! Adeline hit the LVMSI jackpot in winning the \$25,000 first-place cash prize along with other awards valued at an additional \$25,000.

Upon accepting the title and cash prize, Adeline declared through tears of joy, “I can’t believe this! A dream from long ago has come true. In the desert where I come from, nobody believed that I would ever leave there. When I got to Capetown, nobody believed I would ever get to America. Now I can pay off the bank loan. I can

continue my studies, and I can stay in America. Dreams do come true, however big you dream.”

More recently, Miss Mocke reflected on her good fortune. “This competition was very important to me, but I believed that if it was meant to be mine it would happen,” she said. “Winning that \$25,000 was the biggest blessing I have had in my life financially. To me it’s not just the money, but a very big stepping stone to the next level in my career and my personal life. This has been the biggest life-changing experience and I will forever be grateful to the Las Vegas Model Search International team for creating this opportunity.”

Stated appropriately, “Champagne wishes do come true at Las Vegas Model Search International as the gorgeous contestants sparkle under the spotlight for a special shot at stardom and pageant platinum!”—Robin Leach [Television Personality - *Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous*].

For Adeline Mocke, Las Vegas, the MGM Grand, and the Las Vegas Model Search International pageant, it was a winning gamble. □