



SLOT FUTURES

OUR ANNUAL RUNDOWN OF THE NEW SLOT GAMES ARRIVING AT A CASINO NEAR YOU

Every October, the world's slot manufacturers and their customers, the casinos, gather in Las Vegas for the Global Gaming Expo (G2E), the most important trade event on the industry's calendar. This is where the slot-makers introduce the new games that will appear on slot floors everywhere in the coming months.

If you're a longtime *Strictly Slots* subscriber, you know that we've already gathered information on these new games by the time G2E opens its exhibit floor. The manufacturers often give us exclusive information on the games they're going to launch at G2E and into 2024. We share that information in this annual feature.

On the pages that follow, you will get a sneak peek at what's arriving on a slot floor near you during the coming months. You'll see a lot of hold-and-respin features this year, as well as "pot-style" bonuses, where pots or sacks or piggy banks grow as coins land on the reels and travel up to the pots, making them larger until they randomly burst to initiate a bonus.

Enjoy the sneak peek at all the new games—arranged alphabetically by manufacturer—that are coming your way soon. We hope we're able to alert you to great new play experiences.

Enjoy the games, and good luck on the slot floor!

BY FRANK LEGATO

AGS

AGS has been involved in a multi-year effort to complete the company's product library with games of all styles. Last year, we saw the first high-denomination three-reel video from the company, as well as the first cabinets in the Spectra series, the Spectra UR43, featuring a 43-inch portrait monitor.

This year, the Spectra UR43 will be joined by several other Spectra iterations, including the upright Spectra UR49 Curve, the Spectra UR43 Premium, and the Spectra UR43 with digital signage in multiple premium configurations. Next year, AGS will launch the jumbo Spectra UR75, with a massive 75-inch curved portrait monitor, and the Spectra SL49 Premium—the Spectra 49 on a slant base with premium digital merchandising.

One of the G2E launch games on the new Spectra UR43 is **Monkey Blast**. The game looks like a social game, but it plays like a casino game.

Monkey Blast is part of the new Clustercade game family, distinguished by a unique six-by-eight reel array with cascading symbols—in this jungle-themed game, fruit symbols. When there's a fruit win, those symbols disappear and new symbols cascade down to replace them, for possible multiple wins on a single wager.

The ways-to-win game pays for adjacent symbols. When five or more matching symbols align horizontally or vertically, a special "Cluster Pay" is awarded. When a coin symbol lands on the reels, the cartoon monkey character will toss a coconut at the reel window to open up a three-by-three grid containing a mystery symbol. The symbol transforms into a paying symbol, clustered on nine reel spots. The grid grows with each consecutive coin that appears, up to a six-by-six grid.

Free games are triggered by bananas that accumulate in a pot-style feature.

On the Spectra 49 Curve is the hilarious **Moo Moo Madness**, a game

themed around alien spacecraft descending on a farm and its bemused cartoon cows. Much like the chicken character in last year's Cluck Cluck Cash, coin symbols make the cow on the screen grow fatter, until bursting to trigger a bonus event.

One of the bonuses is a "Hold and Win" bonus, a unique hold-and-respin event in which 2X and 10X squares land along with instant-win cash-on-reels symbols. A special "Grab" symbol consolidates all cash-on-reels symbols on one square bearing the accumulated amount, opening up the rest of the grid for additional cash.

The other main bonus is the very funny "Cash Bonus." The alien spaceships begin beaming cows up to their vessels, and the player touches as many on the screen as possible, transforming them into credit awards with each touch.

The 49 Curve also hosts a new traditional three-reel video slot, **Straight Cash**. It

is a mid-denomination game (quarter to \$5 denominations) with a respin feature in the base game in which a symbol will lock on one reel and the other two reels respin. There also is a classic wheel bonus in this game.

The growing lineup of games on the Spectra cabinets are joined by other new games on the still-popular Orion family of cabinets. One of the standouts is **Mariachi Party**. This game takes the pot-style bonus to Mexico, with piñatas serving as the pots. Each piñata can trigger a hold-and-respin round with a special enhancement—the pig adds extra spins, the eagle collects all cash-on-reels symbols into a single symbol, and the donkey expands the reels.





AINSWORTH GAME TECHNOLOGY

Ainsworth is another company that has been filling out its game library with a multitude of game styles—and cabinets. Making its debut at G2E will be the Raptor, a beautifully designed cabinet with an oversized, dual-bash-button panel fronting an elegant J-curved, 49-inch 4K monitor.

One of the launch games is **Jackpot Kingdom**, which combines several compelling game mechanics, including a hold-and-respin feature, free games with increasing multipliers, and “Shake ‘n Break,” a unique feature that randomly increases the value of all cash-on-reels symbols on the screen.

The game brings back the Ainsworth “Hold & Stack” feature. Shield symbols trigger the feature and remain in place as cash-on-reels symbols.

Above each reel is a credit award. If the reel fills up with collected shields, the accumulated coin amount is immediately awarded. The awards grow larger the further on the player gets in the feature. The random Shake ‘n Break feature causes the screen to shake when a large credit award lands, after which all other shield values are upgraded to that level.

There are three base games in the series, and each has a different multiplier feature for the free spins.

Also featured on the Raptor is the **Oriental Gongs** series, a two-game set offering player-favorite game mechanics such as a free-spin feature and Instant Win prizes in the base game, alongside a new hold-and-respin feature with increased anticipation right up to the last spin.

Elsewhere, **QuickSpin Platinum** and **Quad Shot Platinum** both reprise the popular features of the originals, but boast special Platinum features. Both are low-denomination games, unlike the originals. Both are multiple progressives with a twist—the two top jackpots are must-hit-by progressives, which will add an ele-

ment of jackpot fever to the popular brands.

The must-hit-by prize as a mystery jackpot is being offered in custom packages to be applied to other games, including high-denomination offerings like **Thunder Cash Classic**, to debut next month at the show. This new version of a past favorite takes the five-reel Thunder Cash into a three-reel format, with the two lower of its three progressives set as mystery jackpots that scale by denomination.

Another high-denom game to be featured is **Super Charged Link**. It is a follow-up to Ainsworth’s mega-hit Quick Spin brand.

This game breaks more ground—it is a traditional three-reel game with a hold-and-spin bonus feature. It features a player-selectable payline setup—five or nine lines. Three or more orb symbols on the reels transition the screen to a five-reel array. The orbs move to the middle three reels in the five-reel array and lock in place for the hold-and-respin feature.



ARISTOCRAT TECHNOLOGIES

Aristocrat is the most successful slot manufacturer in the business, and looking at its new game lineup for the year, it's easy to see why.

Heading the list is the first-ever series of games based on NFL football. All of the games in this series allow the player to customize the slot according to his or her favorite NFL team. The welcome screen invites the player to "Pick Your Team" from a menu showing the logos of the 32 NFL teams. Once the selection is made, the entire color scheme, reel symbols and top box switch to that team's colors and images. Footage from previously broadcast NFL games is incorporated into bonuses and other game events—footage from the most recent seasons of that team's games.

Super Bowl Jackpots, the inaugural game in the series, saw its first placements in late August. It is the first game in a new cabinet series developed in tandem with the NFL games, the King Max. One of four new cabinets being launched by Aristocrat at G2E, the King Max is a perfect vehicle for the NFL series. Its 63.5-inch curved monitor sweeps from the top progressive meters to a large virtual button deck with dual bash buttons. It's all in front of a two-seat iBench or iChair3, with surround-sound audio.

The art and the game footage are built into a pack of bonus features using the most popular game mechanics of the day, including a pot-style collection feature and Aristocrat's signature Hold & Spin bonus feature. Super Bowl Jackpots is on a million-dollar link, with a top progressive jackpot resetting at \$1 million.

While Super Bowl Jackpots launched just ahead of the start of the NFL season, the next game in the series will hit casino floors shortly after G2E. **Overtime Cash** is a high-denomination three-reel stepper game, and like Super Bowl Jackpots, it launches a new cabinet. Called the Marquis, it is a premium three-reel stepper cabinet with a large bonus wheel on top.

Overtime Cash is a three-reel, nine-line, 10-credit stepper game. That 10th credit is important—it's essentially an ante wager that activates a great feature of the game, the "Interception Feature." It will "intercept" a losing spin and turn it into a winning spin. The extra credit gives you a second chance at winning.

The third game in the NFL series, **Super Bowl Link**, will be released on the MarsX Portrait cabinet. The multiple-progressive game features Aristocrat's pioneering Hold & Spin mechanic in a bonus round that can yield cash-on-reels and a progressive award.

The other three NFL games are each on different cabinets. **Winning Drive** will be featured on the impressive Neptune Double, with its tall dual portraits providing an immersive way to enjoy the sports theme. **Kickoff** and **Ring of Victory** will be mechanical reel offerings, on the RELM XL three-reel and five-reel cabinets, respectively.

Aristocrat is launching several games on the company's new MarsX Flex cabinet. The MarsX Flex, launched earlier this year with **Buffalo Strike!** and **Fu Dai Lian Lian Turtle**, features a 55-inch top monitor for an entertaining play experience. The next game on the format is **Buffalo Ultimate Stampede**, which

combines classic Buffalo game play with cash on reels, a feature meter, and an entertaining stampede feature that unlocks additional rows by landing coins and Buffalo symbols, fully utilizing the large top box.

On Aristocrat's popular Neptune Single cabinet will be a modernized version of an Aristocrat classic, **Bank Buster**. This premium multi-denom, multi-game features Buffalo, Pompeii and another throwback, Louie's Gold. Three pigs sit atop the reel set and interact with the game, expanding cash on reels, repeating wins and awarding jackpots. These "really pig wins" play out on the Neptune Single cabinet and are merchandised with the impressive Stratus sign package.

Premium games to be highlighted at G2E include **Golden Geisha**, evolutions of the Buffalo and Tarzan brands, and a new game in the Dollar Storm franchise, **Dollar Storm Mega Grand Link**.





BLUBERI

Bluberi is launching a follow-up to last year's big hit Devil's Lock. **Shark's Lock** features a shark character that performs a function similar to the devil in Devil's Lock. When it lands in the middle position, the character awards all cash-on-reels coin symbols on the screen, as well as any symbols corresponding to one of the four jackpots. He can also "Rewind" other losing reel spots into jackpot prizes.

In Devil's Lock, the collection pots were pig characters that grew fatter in anticipation of the bonus. In this game, the shark sends coins to two "Scuba Pigs" that were initially puffer fish.

Another G2E highlight is **Rocket Rumble**, released in August. At its heart is a feature in a progressive free-game bonus, which the company calls the "snowballing effect."

Bluberi has made it easy to reach that feature in the free games by providing four different ways to trigger the free-game round. There is a collect feature that accumulates symbols toward the free games—a mystery

"must-hit-by" trigger—as well as free-game trigger symbols on the reels and a bonus wheel in which one of the slices is the free-game feature.

The player can earn various free games through these triggers. Once the free games begin, the player is looking for golden rockets on the major symbols. This changes those symbols into the top rocket symbol. Wild symbols can randomly display a 2X or 3X multiplier, and all symbols from up to two reels may randomly respin for higher wins.

At G2E, Bluberi will launch **Yokozuna Panda**. This clever game crosses normally docile Pandas with sumo wrestlers, creating funny "sumo wrestler pandas." The player picks one to win, and at the end of an animated sumo wrestling match, a bonus wheel appears. If the player picked the winner, the credit awards on the wheel are higher—but even if the loser is picked, the wheel bonus is still awarded.

There's even a roulette-style log of who has won the recent sumo battles.

ECLIPSE GAMING SYSTEMS

Last year, Eclipse hit it big with its Cash Arcade series, games recalling carnivals and arcades. Inaugural games Big Shake Neon and Big Shake Carnival have been really popular. Both use a virtual physics engine to create an authentic replica of the mechanical coin-push games in arcades and carnivals.

This year's follow-up to Big Shake in the Cash Arcade Series uses advanced technology to replicate a carnival mainstay, the duck shooting gallery. **Duck Dollars** displays a classic, multi-level board with rows of ducks bearing credit awards, flanked by targets that reveal mystery bonuses. The targets move across the screen like in a real shooting gallery. Beneath the gallery is a simple three-reel array, with payoffs for bar, 7 and duck symbols.

But the cannon symbols are what to look for on the reels—they activate corresponding cannons above the reels to shoot at the ducks and the targets. A single cannon on the reels awards one shot; two cannons award two. Three cannons on the reels trigger the "Firequackers Frenzy," awarding six, nine or 12 shots.

The program employs perceived skill as the cannons swivel and the player can time the pressing of the FIRE button.

Instead of cash-on-reels, the company calls it "cash on ducks." The targets between the ducks are particularly desirable, because they reveal mystery awards that can upgrade the value of the ducks, or grant extra shots at the moving ducks and targets.

One fun feature of this game is a button where the player can change the appearance of the ducks, and the background music heard during play. There's a cowboy duck, wearing a Stetson and backed by country music, and a surfer duck, complete with 1960s California surf music, in addition to the normal shooting-gallery kind.

Among the game sequels to be launched at G2E is **Highway Hogs Pig Out**, the latest game in the fun cartoon-style theme featuring "Hammy Sammy," with a bonus taking place in "Piggy Sue's Diner," in which Sammy "pigs out" on Piggy Sue's famous pies.

Hammy Sammy can appear at any time during the primary game, riding a motorcycle out of the reels to award an instant credit prize. As he revs up his motorcycle, the credits rev up and increase.

The main "Pig Out" bonus displays a field of 25 pie slices for a picking bonus. The pie slices reveal credit awards or progressives, and one awards multiple picks of the slices for larger awards.



UNVEILING THE FUTURE OF ELECTRONIC TABLE GAMES

INTERBLOCK



With an unwavering reputation for over 30 years, Interblock has built a reputation as an industry leader when it pertains to table game innovation. At this year's Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas, Interblock unveiled a groundbreaking portfolio of products, designed to redefine the Electronic Table Game sector.

At this year's G2E, Interblock introduced a new product offering to the gaming industry. As the industry leader, Interblock continues to push the boundaries, revolutionizing the gaming landscape and delivering unparalleled entertainment to casinos and players alike. This year, Interblock launched a new product category within the traditional table game segment, designed to bring a Technology Umbrella to the global gaming industry. This, combined with over 40 new features, functionalities, new product offerings and distribution methods, made this year's G2E one of the more revolutionary exhibitions Interblock has attended. Their new and updated products take center stage, featuring evolved features and functionalities that redefine the gaming landscape.

Smart Pit

Recognized as the "Table Game of the Year," the Smart Pit is a blend of traditional table games and futuristic gaming. Seamlessly integrated into live pits, it empowers dealers with more decisions per hour, increases betting opportunities, and enhances house advantage. Smart Pit's technology umbrella ensures real-time player session valuations and advanced game protection, addressing industry losses due to dealer mistakes. The integration of cutting-edge technology and the live table games themselves offer an engaging experience for players, while operators enjoy optimized staffing, heightened profitability and attraction of new demographics—fostering a new level of customer service. The Smart Pit is an innovative solution that bridges the gap between classic table games and advanced gaming technology, reshaping Live Table Game Pits forever.

Bonus Wheel Roulette

Awarded the prestigious title of "Best Electronic Table Gaming Product," Bonus Wheel Roulette breathes new life into the timeless classic. Featuring a captivating dual-wheel bonus system, mesmerizing design and dazzling LED graphics, it immerses players in an authentic and thrilling gaming experience. This innovative version of roulette elevates the



excitement with increased betting opportunities, offering astonishing payouts of up to 500X the bet, surpassing traditional double-zero roulette standards. Bonus Wheel Roulette represents the pinnacle of combining timeless tradition and groundbreaking invention, earning its place as an essential addition to any gaming floor.

Pick2Win Craps

Honored as an exemplary innovation in the world of casino gaming, Pick2Win Craps enables players to choose their dice and have a level of control never seen before within the Electronic Table Game segment. This enhancement can either stand alone or integrate into larger gaming arenas, showcasing Interblock's commitment to versatile and Innovative solutions. With its captivating and distinctive design, Pick2Win Craps guarantees an immersive experience, providing players a new level of control.



EVERI HOLDINGS

Everi is launching several new cabinets and tons of new game titles this year. In all, Everi will launch approximately 86 new game titles in 2024.

Leading the parade of new cabinets is the Dynasty Sol, a portrait cabinet featuring a 49-inch 4K display, a large LCD button deck allowing for player-facing communication of bet options and game features, and unique design elements including eye-catching light bars, a custom candle, optional wedges for merchandising, and wireless charging.

The launch games for Dynasty Sol are **Destiny Link** and **Dynamite Pop!** Each features two base themes, with Destiny Link presenting beautiful Asian-themed artwork paired with a hold-and-re-spin bonus, while Dynamite Pop! offers intuitive game play paired with a fun twist on accumulators.

Destiny Link has a shared linked progressive at the top, the Grand, and a major stand-alone progressive, in denominations up to \$5, with bets that scale down as the player denoms go up, paired with easy-to-understand game play with a twist on a traditional hold-and-spin feature.

Dynamite Pop! has two themes, with three accumulators that players can combine to trigger different versions of the Pop! bonus—which was made popular in the popular Everi game Cha-Ching!

Dynasty Sol is being featured with no less than five other game families including **Treas-**

ure Stacks, Wheel Streak, Hot Spot Multipliers, sister games **Follow the Rainbow** and **Yee-Haw Stampede**, and **Dragon Coin**.

Hot Spot Multipliers is intriguing, in that there are no standard reels. Instead, the screen displays a large bonus wheel over “X”- and “Y”-shaped reel arrays (depending on the base game). Values landing in the center reel are increased by multipliers appearing on the reels that form the edges of the “X” or the “Y.”

Everi is also showing several new game families at G2E on the Dynasty Vue cabinet, the unique form factor introduced earlier this year that incorporates a portrait screen in a footprint with sightlines that resemble a dual-screen or slant-top.

Two of those game families are video versions of Everi’s high-earning stepper products. **Mega Meltdown** and sister game **Ice on Fire** join the High Rollin’ Gems multi-game family as traditional three-reel games with multiple progressives targeted at high-denom video players.

The **Big Bubble** series is one of Everi’s unique non-reel games. In an underwater scene, the main game screen displays ascending bubbles for an all-picking game. Chosen bubbles make their way to the surface, where they pop to reveal credits, bonuses or jackpots. A mystery bonus can occur with the appearance of a puffer fish, jellyfish or clam, which award more bubbles, multipliers, credit awards or jackpots.

The mechanical reel-spinning genre is one that Everi has mastered, and this year the company will have no shortage of stepper titles, both on the advanced Player Classic Signature cabinet launched last year and on two new premium cabinets—Player Classic Reserve and the hybrid Dynasty Dynamic.

Among the first new game families on the Player Classic Signature that will arrive on floors in October is **10X Jackpot**, with base games **Wild Liberty** and **Wild Seas**. As the titles indicate, multiplying wild symbols are the main feature, winning combinations with wilds returning between twice and 10 times the credit win.

Other highlights include a new version of **Cash Machine**, the groundbreaking “Win What You See” game with only numbers on the reels, the winning combinations consisting of what appears left-to-right on the reel array. Its sister game, **Blazin’ Grand**, has been added, following a similar math ride and play mechanic

with an added “nudge” feature that can turn losing results into wins.

Everi is launching two new cabinets in the Premium Mechanical category, with launch titles based on popular Everi franchises. Player Classic Reserve features a large top display with intelligent side lighting, with video monitors above the reels displaying pay schedules and progressive meters, topped by a video wheel clad in a bright chrome bezel.

Launch titles for the new cabinet include **Casper Jackpot Wheel** and **Smokin’ Hot Stuff Jackpot Wheel**. Both are classic three-reel, nine-line steppers with traditional symbols, frequently hitting multipliers and symbol-triggered progressives.

The other new reel-spinning cabinet is Dynasty Dynamic. Integrated with the mechanical reels is a 49-inch video display. A transparent video technology called Dynamic Glass enables 4K video to be displayed over the mechanical reels for a variety of game-play enhancements.

Featured on the Dynasty Dynamic are **Smokin’ Hot Stuff Spin Frenzy** and **The Vault: Beat the Bank**. The Vault brings the popular bank-wide bonus feature of the original to the new format.

Casper and Smokin’ Hot Stuff are brand extensions that add all the modern features.

The Premium Video category is another that boasts a new product offering this year, the Dynasty Sol Sync. The cabinet integrates the stylish Dynasty Sol cabinet with uniquely shaped LED signage and wedges that combine for a premium bank presentation, spiced up with bank-wide bonus features.



GAMING ARTS

Last year, Gaming Arts highlighted its large-format cabinet, the VertX Grand. This year, the follow-up is the VertX Duo, with twin 32-inch 4K monitors. It is a complement to the company's current dual-screen cabinet, the Phocus S104. In addition to the 4K monitors, it features theater-quality sound, enhanced graphics and advanced ergonomics.

Some of the new games in the company's G2E lineup will be available on both dual-screen cabinets. One is the **Jungle Rising** game family, with base games **Jungle Days** and **Jungle Nights**.

The main difference between the two games is the jungle background displayed in the top box, day and night scenes. It is a three-pot, collection-style game. The collection pots are displayed in a unique manner: jungle animals sit on pedestals. As colored coins are collected in the base game, the like-colored pedestals rise until one or more trigger eight free games.

Each of the collection pots represents an enhancement to the free games. There's a multiplier reel, where wins are multiplied by up to 20X. There's a symbol upgrade where the lower-paying symbols are removed from the reel strips, and there's a trigger for extra wilds that appear on the reels during the free games.

In the free games, any coin that lands will also give you plus-one in the free games. So, you start with eight, but you can actually easily get up to 20 or 25 free games just by getting a little lucky with the coins.

The first G2E launch that will be exclusive to the VertX Duo is **Jackpot Sweep**. It features a hold-and-re-spin bonus feature with four progressive jackpots. The bonus includes a new feature called "Slip and Slide." When you initiate the feature with six or more gem symbols, all the resulting cash-on-reels symbols move as far left as possible, and the three jackpot icons appear at the left of the screen. Each time a row fills with cash-on-reels symbols, the player wins the corresponding jackpot (or a chance at the top Grand), and the symbols consolidate onto one spot to clear the way for more gem symbols.

Another inaugural VertX Duo game family consists of sister games **Hoo's Wild!** and **Roo's Wild!**—the "Hoo" is an owl; the "Roo" a kangaroo. This game includes a random feature with fixed-value jackpots that scale according to the bet. When you win one of the jackpots, even the lower ones, you get a certain number of free games associated with it. If you win the

Minor, you get the \$50 and you get the 10 free games on top of that.

In addition to the new cabinet, Gaming Arts will use G2E to launch several new games for the VertX Grand cabinet. The **Big Fat Dragons** family, previewed last year and released this summer, will be one of the highlighted games, but several high-profile titles will be G2E launches.

One of those featured games is **Deal Or No Deal**, based on the long-running game show that is popular both in the U.S. and Europe. The game's main feature is a re-creation of the central gambler's game in the show—the player is shown a field of 26 briefcases, and picks one as his or her assigned case. The briefcase values are shown at the side of the screen, and the player begins to pick briefcases from the field.

As the briefcases are opened, the values inside are removed from the display. The player is then given several offers, and each time, chooses "Deal" to accept or "No Deal" to continue opening briefcases—the decision based on what values are left in the un-selected briefcases, and the likelihood the player can win more than the offer.

Also on the VertX Grand is **Pele's Eruption**, themed around an erupting volcano controlled by Pele, who is a "volcano goddess." Similar to last year's Thor's Thunder, game events are met by displays of fire, including an innovative feature called Fire Spins.

The Fire Spins feature is triggered by a

true persistence meter. Players look to collect three of the fire symbols on a reel, which triggers a single spin with every symbol on the array transformed into a cash-on-reels or jackpot symbol. The collected fire symbols remain in place after the player leaves the game.

One other VertX Grand game is among the most creative concepts coming this fall. It is **Presidents vs. Plutonians**—the theme being the four presidents on Mount Rushmore fending off an alien invasion from Pluto.

The central bonus in this game recalls classic first-person shooter video games like Space Invaders. In the feature, the Plutonians are coming toward you. As you collect symbols, you shoot one of the Plutonians. They keep coming at you, and you have to push them back.

The other VertX Grand game, **Puzzle Time**, is based on an ingenious concept—completing a jigsaw puzzle for cash. There are three unfinished puzzles at the top of the screen. The reel symbols include hundreds of puzzle pieces, and letters. The three puzzles behave like collection pots, and the goal is to form clusters of puzzle images on the reels.

You collect clusters and they award pieces of the puzzle. When you fill out the puzzle, you win the prize. Clusters also award credit prizes, which are larger for larger clusters. Unlike most three-pot games, this is true persistence, because these are actually puzzle pieces. If you cash out, the next player will sit down and play to complete the same puzzle.



IGT

IGT's latest success began earlier this year with the launch of the new PeakCurve49 cabinet and its inaugural title, the multi-level progressive (MLP) slot **Mystery of the Lamp**.

The new cabinet, which will be highlighted with more new titles this fall, features a 49-inch C-curve LCD monitor, with advanced graphics and ergonomic design.

Mystery of the Lamp has two core elements reflecting what's been trending with players—a pot-style collection bonus and the hold-and-respin bonus that follows.

Three lamps sit above the three-by-five reel array for a pot-style collection feature. On base game Treasure Oasis, they are "Ignite," "Double" and "Jackpot." On the other inaugural title, Enchanted Palace, the lamps are "Boost," "Jackpot" and "Collect."

The lock-and-spin bonus event follows, on a field of 15 individual reels—30 if the Jackpot feature is activated. On both games, the Jackpot Lamp is triggered and gems are added to the hold-and-spin event, which awards collection icons for all five jackpots, including the top \$10,000 progressive.

Mystery of the Lamp leads IGT's lineup at G2E in the Premium category, where it shares the stage with several familiar IGT brands—headed, of course, by Wheel of Fortune.

This year, it's **Wheel of Fortune Diamonds Deluxe**, on the PeakSlant49 cabinet. It takes the famous brand and its famous wheel bonus into the modern era with a persistence pot bonus and chances for wheel upgrades when two, three or more bonus symbols land. All wild symbols throw coins to the bonus pot. The Diamond pot triggers a Jackpot Bonus, a match-three picking event, with another triggered event that takes the lower jackpots out of the picking bonus.

On the wide-area progressive side, there are more familiar names, with **Cleopatra Grand** on the large-format Peak65 cabinet.

Cleopatra Grand has the familiar feel of the original Cleopatra, with an added lock-and-spin feature in the free-spin bonus. Free spins are on a five-by-five grid including a middle-reel multiplier and jackpots as well as cash-on-reels symbols. It is in a high-denomination (\$1 to \$25) package with four static jackpots that increase with the denomination. The top \$500,000 jackpot is a wide-area progressive.

Top Dollar Grand, on the DiamondRS Premium mechanical reel cabinet, has all the appeal of the legendary IGT reel-spinner, with flashing cash stacks in a feature that returns up



to three bonus offers the player can accept or reject, based on the cash prizes still left on the bonus display. The base game, Triple Diamond, is a solid choice in itself.

Also on the DiamondRS Premium cabinet is **Diamond Jackpots Double Spin featuring 3X4X5X Pay**, its name spelling out the four multiplying wild symbols in a traditional three-reel game available in single-line, five-line, nine-line and 15-line setups.

Among other mechanical reel-spinners, new core games are featured on another new cabinet, a variation of the Diamond RS cabinet launched a year ago. It is a shorter version—the DiamondRS 27—that really resembles elements of the classic S2000 mechanical reel cabinet.

Leading the lineup of core reel-spinners is **Double Chili Mania Respin**, a game released this summer as an evolution of the classic Double Chili Mania.

Also on the core reel-spinning side are **Double Diamond Deluxe** and **Triple Double Butterfly Sevens**, reimagined versions of two of the most popular classic IGT reel-spinners.

In the Core Video category, another new cabinet is featured, the PeakCurve49. With a 49-inch curved monitor, it joins the PeakCurve27 and PeakSlant32 cabinets, with their lower sightlines. Many of the core video titles are available on two of these cabinets.

Launch titles on the PeakCurve49 include two game families, **Magic Treasures** and **Samurai 888 Spin**. Magic Treasures, with base games Dragon and Tiger, in-

cludes a pot-style collection feature leading to free games and/or a new feature with instant-pay Money Balls, which adds multipliers up to 5X. Samurai 888 Kenji and Sakura feature pots with Coin Boost, Reel Boost, and a Jackpot Bonus that spins a wheel for credit awards, extra free spins, feature upgrades, or one of four jackpots.

Split & Win is a new umbrella game category that adds signature enhancements like the player-favorite lock-and-spin bonus experience. The first IGT title being offered evolves the classic IGT game Cats. The feature here is called "Hold & Split," because money symbols representing cash-on-reels awards can split to award two prizes within one reel spot, counting toward the six symbols needed to trigger the hold-and-respin event. The three lower jackpots are included in the hold-and-respin bonus.

As usual, IGT will launch several new multi-hand video poker titles in partnership with Action Gaming, all with bonus features for an ante wager that does not affect the base-game pay table. One highlighted title is **Multipliers Rising Poker**, in which a hand-specific multiplier streak of 2X, 4X, 6X and 12X appears every 17 hands on average, and remains active for four hands.

Another highlighted title is **Power Stacks Poker**, which offers a feature that awards up to 16 free hands on a dealt Jacks-or-better or three-of-a-kind hand. After the cards are held, a "sticky" feature is applied when the same ranked card is drawn in the bonus hands. This card will replicate across remaining bonus hands, leading to repeat wins.



INCREDIBLE TECHNOLOGIES

For the past two years, Incredible Technologies (IT) has been refining the groundbreaking Prism VXP cabinet, with its 55-inch moving flat-screen monitor that physically rises and lowers according to game events triggered by a main 27-inch 4K landscape monitor and huge, 18.5-inch button deck.

IT is following that up this year with the new Prism Element, featuring a 55-inch 4K portrait monitor (no motion) with the same oversized button panel as the VXP.

The game library for the Prism Element will focus on the high-frequency player.

This summer, the company rolled the cabinet out on test at select locations, with inaugural titles **Lotus Link** and **Treasure Lock**.

Lotus Link, with base games **Soul of Egypt** and **Spirit of Prosperity**, features a three-pot bonus mechanic in a perceived persistence collection feature. As you land scatters on the reels, they'll fly up and make the pots grow. Then, at any random time, one, two or all three can pop with their corresponding scatters. Each title has different features within the Lotus Link Lock & Spin feature.

Treasure Lock Emperor's Gift features a three-pot bonus feature. The pots each enhance the Lock & Spin hold-and-respin feature, with multipliers, a Spin Saver feature that takes the Lock & Spin meter back to three spins, and a jackpot wheel feature.



Also debuting is the **Hold N Gold** game family. This combines some of IT's best-performing titles in the Ultra Rush, Dragon Rush and Ultra Rush Gold game families.

Hold N Gold has a three-spin persistence feature. Little acorns or fireballs—triggering symbols for the hold-and-spin feature—will drop down from the piles above, land on the reels, and stay for three spins, giving the player a better chance to land all six scatters to get into the bonus feature.

The release of the Prism Element certainly doesn't mean IT is abandoning the Prism VXP. This year, it will host the games **Dragon Rush** and **Mega Money Catch**.

Dragon Rush features a giant, flying dragon and a perceived-persistence pot feature triggered by golden eggs for a three-spin-cycle hold-and-respin event. Mega Money Catch uses the moving screen to reprise one of the company's inaugural casino games released in 2011—and uses it to great effect in a revival of the interactive bonus in which the player touches the big screen to catch cash bills as they fly through the air to rack up credits.

KONAMI GAMING

This year, Konami once again adds to the Dimension cabinet series. At G2E, the company will launch the Dimension 43x3, a nine-foot immersive form factor featuring three 43-inch 4K monitors, stacked in landscape orientation.

The new Dimension 43x3 cabinet will feature the **Stuffed Coins** series, with base games **Stuffed Coins Pig** and **Stuffed Coins Toad**. Both also are offered on the Dimension 27 dual-screen cabinet.

The games reprise the popular "Big Coin" mystery feature first seen in the game Ocean Spin. The top screen streams bonus awards and four jackpots across all machines on the bank. Randomly, the game's main character—pig or toad—will appear on the screen to award one or two of the amounts streaming across the top.

Other game families available on both the Dimension 27 and 43x3 cabinets are **Lion Frenzy** and **Multiplier Stacks**.

Lion Frenzy, with base games **Jade Wishes** and **Scarlet Wishes**, features cash-on-reels coin symbols and a bonus of the total coins on the screen when the lion character lands.

Each game will have a unique free-games and jackpot feature. During the free games for **Jade Wishes**, if you get that lion stacked on reel one, it determines the size of the coins on reels three, four and five—it can expand from a two-by-two reel symbol all the way up to three-by-four, increasing its value and the overall win potential.

Multiplier Stacks, with base games **Gathering Tiger** and **Bats A Plenty**, features stacked wilds and multipliers up to 88X. During the free games on **Gathering Tiger**, every time a tiger symbol lands it locks into place. Then, the more tigers you get, the bigger the win potential. On **Bats A Plenty**, before every free-game spin, bats will plummet into the reels from above. It will randomly pick different reels and just load those reels up with the wild bat symbols.

Konami will highlight two titles at G2E that will be available on either the Dimension 49J or the giant Dimension 75C.

Great Guardians builds on the successful math of **All Aboard**, with added trigger symbols on the free games and a stand-alone "progressive coin." When that coin lands during the primary game, that progressive is automatically awarded to the player.

Fortune Mint is a three-level progressive game originally launched on the Dimension 49 that will now also be on the 49J and 75C as **Fortune Mint Trinity**, with new premium packaging and a new game presentation. It features mystery symbols marked by question marks that transform to reveal progressives or multipliers.



LIGHT & WONDER

Light & Wonder's new offerings this year start with new cabinets, including new mechanical-reel formats. Last year, the company launched the Landmark 7000 reel-spinning cabinet, which includes a traditional game element topped by a bonus wheel.

The new cabinet hosted a revival of one of legacy Bally's most legendary games in **Blazing 7s 2X3X5X**. This year, Light & Wonder will launch another new stepper cabinet, the Landmark 7000 Transparent. The name harkens back to legacy company WMS and its "Transmissive Reels" technology, which first put a transparent video overlay on top of mechanical reels to display animation, multipliers and other special features.

Transmissive technology has advanced quite a bit since those first WMS games used it in the mid-2000s. It is much more advanced in the images it can place over the mechanical reels, including the capability to black out the entire screen with animation. However, L&W is using it much more modestly, on games such as **Huff 'N Puff**, themed on the Three Little Pigs nursery rhyme; as well as other favorites from the video side, including **88 Fortunes**, **Quick Hits** and **Reel 'Em In**, the animated fishing game that launched legacy company WMS into the video space.

Another version of the Landmark 7000 will be unveiled at G2E, which includes a top bonus wheel. Its launch title will be **Monopoly Triple Blazing 7s**, combining the classic Blazing 7s game with the venerable Monopoly theme.

The Cosmic cabinet, with its 49-inch curved video screen, has hosted both new games and renewals of L&W favorites, such as Dancing Drums and Gold Fish.

The company will highlight the Cosmic cabinet this fall. The Cosmic features a 49-inch, 4K curved monitor flowing up to the 27-inch top, with one contiguous piece of glass and seamless edge lighting, including skirt lighting that extends all the way to the floor.

Games this year on the Cosmic include new versions of **Dancing Drums** and **Gold Fish**.

L&W also is bringing back the **Heidi's Bier Haus** brand on the Cosmic. The classic animated game depicting a Bavarian hut is updated with a new hold-and-spin feature, and a 'build a bonus' mechanic.

One of the most entertaining games in L&W's arsenal this year is another brand extension, the hilarious **Journey to the Planet Moolah**. Characters in this game include the "Unicow," a cross between a cow and a unicorn, and bonuses include a funny sequence in which an alien spaceship beams befuddled cows up to take them to Planet Moolah (which is in "Cowntopia"), along the way generating up to a maximum of more than 400 free spins.

L&W also will feature several new licensed-brand games that will be available on all three main video cabinets—the Cosmic, the Cascada and the Mural—including the latest game in the Willy Wonka franchise, called **Willy Wonka: I Want It Now**. This game mixes an "Oompa Loompa" feature on expanding reels with a hold-and-respin Golden Egg Bonus.

Finally, in a first reveal at G2E, L&W will launch a new jumbo cabinet, including a 75-inch portrait screen, with another new brand extension, **Dancing Drums Ultimate Explosion**, as well as a new Ultimate Fire Link extension. Few details had been revealed as of press time, including the name of the new cabinet.



INNOVATION AND EVOLUTION OF SKILL-BASED SLOT MACHINES

NEXT GAMING



Choosing to become an innovator in any segment of consumer experiences is not for the faint of heart. To venture into the unknown it takes vision, determination, unwavering commitment, the willingness to evolve and, above all, resilience. These attributes are evident with the progress that Next Gaming, LLC has attained with the next generation of their iconic slot titles from Atari and Taito, two of the most prestigious video game creators for decades.

When skill-based or skill-influenced slot machines were first introduced on the gaming floor, the expectations to attract a younger audience was highly anticipated. This transition was necessary due to the decline within certain demographics of the slot player base. To replace this segment, and appeal to a younger demographic, skill-based games were created to attract newer players that were not inclined to play a traditional slot machine. A number of game designers and manufactures did create some very compelling and creative games that were placed in various casinos and multiple jurisdictions. You have to give credit, where credit is due, to the casino operators who were excited and willing to introduce these new games to their players. While the entertainment experience and uniqueness of these games were unquestionable, they could not compete with the revenue derived from a traditional slot machine. The casino operators were generally very patient with hopes for increased acceptance of the games and the attraction of younger players. Ultimately, neither happened to the extent anticipated or necessary to secure a permanent place on the casino floor and the games were removed. At that point, the individual manufactures made adjustments to their game designs and introduced new games, but they did not provide the lift necessary to continue development and they ceased operating. That brings us back to Next Gaming.

Next Gaming continues to be enthusiastic and committed to creating skill-based games that resonate within a variety of demographics. As one of

only a few manufacturers still determined enough to continue their development process, they have embraced their learning curve by listening to player feedback, analyzing player behavior and making the necessary modifications to increase customer acceptance. This has resulted in the creation of the next generation of their iconic titles. To better determine what modifications were made to the next gen skill-based games, Mike Darley, CEO of Next Gaming, offered his comments.

“It’s been a very interesting and illuminating process evaluating the outcomes of the skill-based gaming genre and making the necessary modifications to enhance the player experience. First of all, our games do not play like a traditional slot machine and we certainly recognize that. Consequently, we need to make the playing experience as easy, enjoyable and entertaining as possible. To achieve that, we made the necessary modifications to make our games ‘Easier to Play-More Wins.’ The outcome of our analysis showed that most of the play on our games was predominately in the ‘Easy’ and ‘Normal’ skill range. While the ‘Hard’ play was designed to be aspirational for the skilled player, the abundance of play was in the other two ranges. So our goal was to keep the ‘Easy’ and ‘Normal’ player engaged, informed and rewarded more often. We introduced instructions within the games to communicate to the player, while playing—various prompts to increase the quality of their experience and make the games easier to play. Additionally, we modified our payout distribution schedule to increase the win frequency for those players and increase their playing time, while maintaining a balance between all skill sets. With those changes, we anticipate that the acceptance of our non-traditional slot games with Asteroids, Arkanoid, BUST-A-MOVE and Zforce will appeal to a wide range of players.”

In addition to Next Gaming’s skill-based initiatives, they have also continued their development of traditional video slots with the release of Grumpy Cat, Sunken Fortunes and Mayan Thunder, and have many other titles in the works.

One of their other concurrent initiatives is to enter the iGaming market. For their slot game portfolio, they have teamed up with Probability Gaming in designing two outstanding games—Terracotta Warrior and Katana Warrior—which will be offered for both iGaming and casino play. For the iGaming portion, Next Gaming has partnered with ZULU, a Maltese game studio and platform provider servicing an international market that includes Latin America, Belgium, France, Croatia and Bosnia.

The demand for skill-based iGaming slot games continues to be significant. With the brand recognition of their Atari and Taito portfolio, they are currently engaged in multiple initiatives to bring those popular games to the online space.

For more information, visit www.nextgaming.co.