

ATLANTIC CITY



BY RAY COLLINS

Rolling the Dice on Atlantic City

The Beatles. The Rolling Stones. Miss America Pageants. Just some of the hundreds of acts or events that have come to Atlantic City over the years. I had never been there, but now due to a business opportunity I had a chance to go. The verdict?

I won't be going back there anytime soon.

A friend of mine told me to stay at Caesar's Resort & Casino. Having stayed at the Caesar's in Las Vegas more than once, I was hoping for something similar. Not even close. For one thing, each time I walked through the lobby, I saw a long line of frustrated guests waiting to check in.

Despite making my reservations weeks earlier, the clerk told me the only rooms they had left were smoking rooms. To compensate for giving me a smoking room, the clerk offered to give me a free breakfast at the "Chef Gordon Ramsey" lobby restaurant—but he warned me not to go over \$20. (Every entrée on the menu was over \$20. It was good—but seemed expensive for scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage. Dinner was even more out of line. \$154 with tip.)

I walked the boardwalk each morning searching for signs of class—but never found much. It's an odd place without much warmth or fuzziness. I did see some police presence, but for some reason the officers were always in a group talking to each other or walking together—sometimes as many as four across. I wanted to say, "Spread out!"

When I walked around the city away from the boardwalk, I saw a lot of boarded up businesses and homeless people. It feels like Atlantic City is a place that has been forgotten.

Oh--when I first confirmed my plans, I immediately reached out to the Atlantic City Visitors' Bureau. After 12 years of travel writing, publicists usually jump at the chance for a writer to get fresh content on the internet. No response. Not even "Get lost!" I can see why they didn't want coverage.

Am I glad I went? Yes. I love seeing new places. Will I go back? No thanks.

Ray Collins has written over a hundred articles for Family Beautiful since 2010. www.raycollinsmedia.com/articles

