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Spiegelworld to Unveil Superfrico Dining Concept at The Cosmopolitan (Exclusive)

The new Las Vegas restaurant will be an "Italian-American-Psychedelic" experience alongside the live entertainment company's show *Opium*.

BY MELINDA SHECKELLS

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A performance at 'Opium' at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. ERIC KABIK/COURTESY OF SPIEGELWORLD

This fall, live entertainment production company Spiegelworld is throwing a disco pizza party in **Las Vegas**.

Ross Mollison, head of Spiegelworld, creators of the hit Las Vegas show *Absinthe*, tells *The Hollywood Reporter* in an exclusive interview that the company will premiere a fully integrated dining and cocktail concept, Superfrico on Sept. 24 at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. The space was formerly supper club Rose.Rabbit.Lie. and shares walls with Spiegelworld's current show *Opium*, which is set to reopen after a long pandemic hiatus on the same day.

At Superfrico, there's no dress code and no 28-course prix fixe menus. "It's our ultimate, be-all, end-all, taste-all house party with questioning creatives everywhere you look — in the kitchen, behind the bars, inside the walls, under the bed—and you're all invited," Mollison says. Expect pizza, of course, and pasta dishes, steaks, seafood, small plates, photo-worthy desserts and late-night finales.

“It’s playfulness with ingredients and a sense of turning the volume up to 11,” Mollison says. “Every city in the world now has, at the very least, restaurants of great interest if not restaurants of great quality. So it’s not enough for us in Las Vegas just to have restaurants of great quality. We need restaurants that are unique,” noting that he is equally inspired by Tokyo’s Robot restaurant as he is the city’s 13-seat new wave pizzeria Savoy.



Spiegelworld founder Ross Mollison. MIKAYLA WHITMORE/COURTESY OF SPIEGELWORLD

The “Italian-American-Psychedelic” menu Mollison describes takes on grandma’s favorites with “international pizza czar” chef Anthony Falco and executive chef Mitch Emge from Eggslut at The Cosmopolitan in the kitchen. Leo Robitschek of Make It Nice/Eleven Madison Park serves as “principal pourer” with bottled cocktail flasks

and a selection of small-batch beverages for on spot or for takeaway from Superfrico’s onsite Bottle-O retail store. General manager Greisy Pacton jumps across the boulevard from Giada and Gordon Ramsay Steak.

Expect blurred lines at Superfrico — whether dining or coming to *Opium* next door. Superfrico’s interconnected bars, lounges and dining rooms will create a “clusterflourish,” as Mollison puts it, as performers come and go from their dressing rooms to the Opium theater through Superfrico’s kitchen and dining rooms.



A performer at Opium at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. MATHIAS CLAIMER/COURTESY OF SPIEGELWORLD

Superfrico’s walls are decked with art selected by curator Heather Harmon, who has expanded Spiegelworld’s art collection with more than 20 original works in a variety of media, from illustration to neon, both commissioned or acquired for the venue; all by significant artists. The pieces reflect the company’s circus roots and love of repurposed and one-of-a-kind pieces. NY-based artist Adehla Lee’s “Psycho Pop Party”, which serves as Superfrico’s emblem, is an explosively wild candy-colored acrylic painting.



Adehla Lee's painting 'Psycho Pop Party'
COURTESY OF SPIEGELWORLD

A major debut of this kind in the culinary realm is a defining moment for Spiegelworld, after 18 months of the most turbulent waters the entertainment industry has ever weathered.

When *Absinthe* opened in a temporary tent on the corner of Flamingo Road and Las Vegas Boulevard on April Fools Day 2011, the Las Vegas entertainment world had no idea what was about to happen.

Under the moniker Spiegelworld, Mollison's troupe of performers, including high-wire walkers, burlesque dancers and acrobats, began creating

live entertainment experiences in New York City in 2006 on a pier in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Their seductive, bawdy, sometimes raunchy approach seemed prime for Vegas — where live themed entertainment had long been dominated by Cirque du Soleil — so they picked up their Spiegel tent and headed out west, plopping it down on one of the most famous, most highly trafficked corners in the world and striking a deal with Caesars Palace.

Fronted by ringleader The Gazillionaire and his sidekick Penny Pibbets, the show was a huge hit — so much so even locals came in droves to see the outlier. The cast made dirty jokes, they talked about drugs and sex and the audience couldn't believe what it was seeing and hearing. Every move Spiegelworld made was a well calculated thumb of the nose to their French-Canadian circus-performer neighbors — or so they positioned the rivalry.

Now with three shows — *Absinthe*, the *Atomic Saloon Show* in the Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian Resort Las Vegas, and *Opium* — Mollison says Spiegelworld is ready for its second act and its second turn at The Cosmopolitan

In 2014, Spiegelworld opened Rose.Rabbit.Lie. at The Cosmopolitan, an interactive supper club in partnership with Coastal Luxury Management, best known for L.A. Food & Wine, Pebble Beach Food & Wine and Monterey's Restaurant 1833. Spiegelworld crafted a thunderous performance element with tap dancers, singers, acrobats and magic around Coastal's decadent presentations including \$1,200 giant Alaskan red King crab and intricately braided Beef Wellington. Labyrinthine dining rooms, with vanishing walls and hidden rooms, created a stand-out performance space for the next era of Vegas' age-old dinner-and-a-show concept.

In an adjacent theater space, Spiegelworld debuted Vegas Nocturne, a show packed with vaudevillian acts, naughty banter, a girl in a bubble who pops herself and even a chihuahua named Mr. Piffles (alongside his owner comedian and magic dragon Piff) that loved to be fork fed steak tartare.

That didn't last long. Six months after opening, Spiegelworld departed the space amid growing tension with CLM and the casino-resort. Everybody sued everybody — The Cosmopolitan and Spiegelworld eventually came to an agreement and all claims against each other were retracted.

In 2018, Spiegelworld struck a deal with The Cosmopolitan's current owners Blackstone to open a new show called Opium in the theater-area only, while the casino-resort managed and operated Rose.Rabbit.lie on its own until it shuttered earlier this year.

"We were looking to have one partner operating both the restaurant and the theater, because the way the spaces are designed, they're really cohesive, integrated spaces. And so it makes a lot of sense to have one operator," says Patrick Nichols, general manager and chief strategy officer of The Cosmopolitan.

"When we opened Vegas Nocturne back in 2014, the working concept was a 'short social experiment.' And it's no longer an experiment. It's a proven business model we're offering for guests that they love— a night-long experience that starts with dinner, combined with a show, combined with a late-night experience, more or less in the same venue. Late night entertainment is a huge part of Las Vegas, this is just a different take on that for people who might not want to be in the middle of the dance floor at a nightclub."

The city took notice, with supper clubs popping up right and left — 2019's **Mayfair** at Bellagio and 2021's **Delilah** at Wynn. But now Mollison's come to shake things up, once again.

"The moments that we have throughout the restaurant will be curated. Some will be five seconds, some might be 20 seconds, some might be two and a half minutes," he says "That's the delight of the unexpected nature of it. But it doesn't necessarily interrupt the flow of your evening. It will be happening all around you."

With a concept and — history — as elaborate as all this, the concept deserves a name of the same caliber. So what exactly does Superfrico mean?

"We've had a team of people working on names for so long. And we also have been working on the concept for a disco show," he says. "There is an Italian cheese called Frico and then there's the idea of super — and the whole idea of super freak. It just is such a fun word to say. It just kind of came out of everything we seemed to be working on at that point in time. This is somewhere you walk into with purpose, like you are going somewhere. And it's called Superfrico, which sounds like a pretty exciting place to me." **THR**