

[THE NIGHTLIFE ISSUE]

MICHAEL AND DAVID MORTON SPARK A HARD ROCK HOTEL RESURGENCE



MB stands for "my brothers," because Michael (left) and David collaborated on the new restaurant.

Photo: Christopher DeVargas

Brock Radke

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MB Steak could soon be a familiar restaurant brand with locations across the country, but the first one could really only exist at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas. It's too perfect.

"We know everybody here, the dealers and the cocktail waitresses and the girls who answer the phone," says Michael Morton. "I know most of the valets. The other day I met one, and he said, 'I used to be your brother's driver. When he sold this place in 2006 the only thing he took was Jimi Hendrix's Flying V guitar, and I drove it to Beverly Hills for him.' Where else could I possibly go to hear that story?"

MB stands for “my brothers,” because brothers Michael and David Morton created the restaurant, their first-ever collaboration. Michael has been a huge figure in Vegas hospitality for years, and David operates several restaurants in Chicago. Their older brother, Peter, opened the Hard Rock Hotel in 1995, just a few months before Michael opened the Drink nightclub blocks away. This is what you call full-circle.

The Mortons aren’t just landing at the Hard Rock; they’re helping reinvigorate it. The striking, two-story MB Steak took over a former gray shell space in the newer, western end of the resort (along Harmon Avenue), where other new features include a retail shop, the Oyster Bar restaurant and the *Magic Mike Live Las Vegas* show in the former Body English club space.

“People who haven’t been here in a while have come to [MB Steak] and seen the building and been wowed,” Michael says.

“This is a credit to Michael’s history, but thus far, it’s been the kind of power-player, who’s-who scene dining downstairs every night,” David says. “This probably sounds naive, but I didn’t really realize how many important executives and influential people are residents in this town, and it feels like it has that Vegas energy, where everyone knows each other.”

The restaurant was conceived and designed for that scene, with the brothers pulling out all the stops. A tunnel-like entry leads past a sexy bar and lounge (with a secret, private bar room you’ll have to find on your own) to a dark and alluring dining room. Awaiting upstairs is a private dining room and garden bar with—wait for it—natural light pouring in through roll-up windows and a skylight. It’s intensely unique, and it has its own valet, a key feature for convenience-loving locals.

“In our meetings, Michael talked about these ta-da moments and how things can feel sexier and cooler,” David says. “And there’s no penalty box, that place every restaurant has where you get stuck sitting when it’s too full.”

The team recruited chef Patrick Munster from SW at Wynn to create a menu that splits the line between traditional steakhouse favorites and more foodie-friendly fare. But the vibe is as important as the cuisine. “Your latest work should be your best work,” Michael says. “There are a lot of really good restaurants out there. We wanted to create something with a different feel, always asking, how are we gonna turn this thing up?”

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