

Spectacular Duisburg Nights



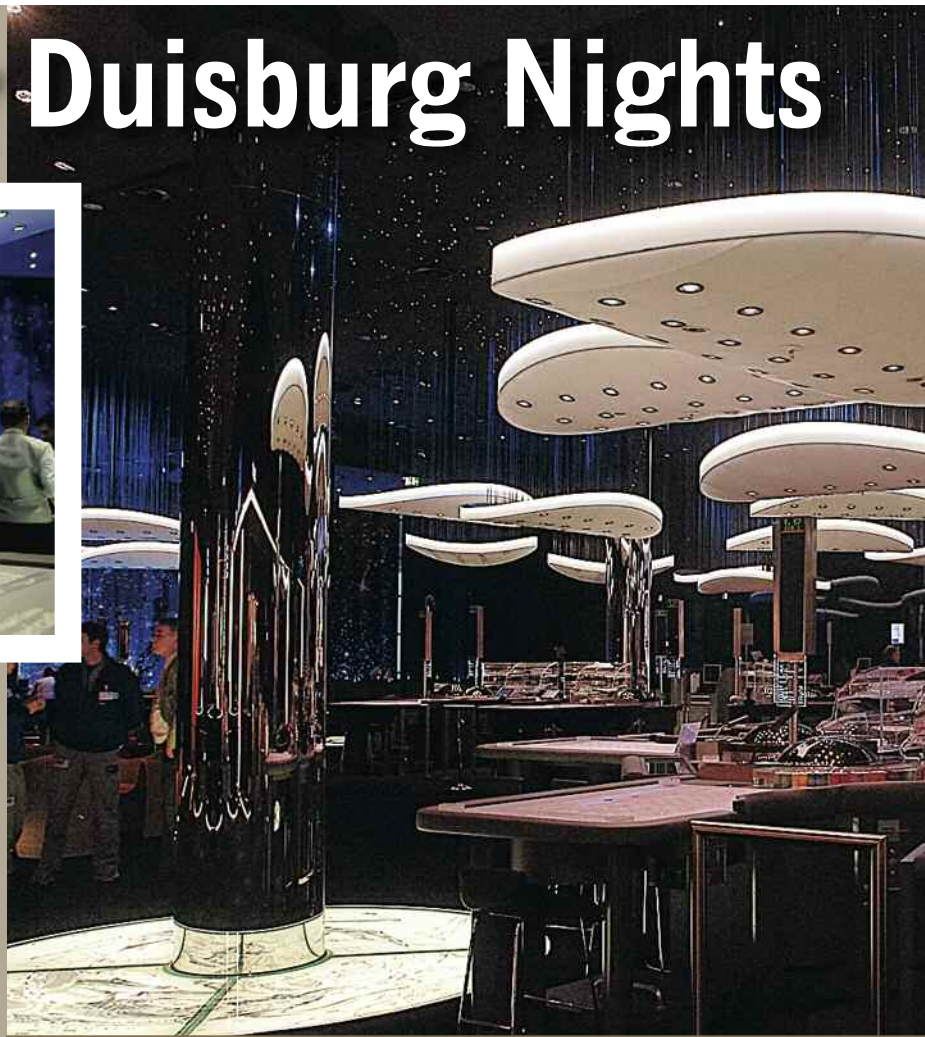
Opening in the new entertainment complex, Citypalais, in Duisburg, Germany, Westspiel Group has created a stunning new location

The Westspiel group of casinos already boasts the largest casino in Germany, that being Hohensyburg in Dortmund. However, from February this year, Westspiel can also boast the most modern casino in Germany as well. On February 23, Westspiel opened its latest casino in Duisburg. Those who know Germany know that Duisburg is the steel capital of Germany. Now it pertains to be the gaming capital of Germany as well.

Duisburg is in the heart of the Ruhr Valley and 10 million people live within a hundred kilometre radius of the casino. The Dutch border is less than 30 minutes drive away from the casino. Thus, Duisburg was the natural choice for Westspiel's latest casino.

The opening was a great success; indeed better than expected. Along with 1,000 invited guests; another 5,000 people visited the casino on its opening night. Prominent guests were from the state political scene, including the state finance minister and the Duisburg mayor. The casino was so busy that the playing public had to, at times, wait to enter the new location. Indeed the casino was very busy right until closing at 4am.

Westspiel invested 35 million euros in this casino, engaging the star German architect office of Günter Merckle from Münster. The design of the casino gives it a fresh, modern and futuristic feel. Westspiel expects 700,000 guests to cross the threshold of the new casino this year. Looking at the preference play: slots are responsible for approximately 75 per cent of turnover; live tables 25 per cent. Of the turnover, 80 per cent is paid as tax to the German state. This money is used predominantly to fund social projects. Indeed, since 1974, 4,500 such projects have been funded via tax collected from Westspiel. This is the German way of increasing gaming acceptance among the public and ensuring constant revenue to government coffers. The high taxes, however, can stifle innovation. Considering that Germany has a similar number of slots than neighbouring Holland, but almost five times the population, the German casino market can definitely be seen as underdeveloped. The Duisburg casino is split into two playing areas – slots



and live tables. It is German law that slots and live tables have to be in two separate areas. The entrance times are from 11am until 3am – at weekend until 4am. Players have to pay an entrance fee of 1 euro to the slot area; 5 euros to the live table area. Due to the high tax rate, Westspiel depends upon the entrance fee as an important source of income.

BEST OF BREED PHILOSOPHY

There are a total of 325 slots to choose from; those being Novomatic, Atronic, IGT, Aristocrat Technologies, Bally Technologies, WMS Gaming and Ainsworth Game Technology. In the upstairs area there are 28 live tables, offering American roulette, blackjack or poker. Furthermore, Casino Duisburg has Germany's largest roulette installation – delivered by Novomatic. Guests have 25 single sites terminals to play roulette on; choosing from three live tables. In the slots area; 51 terminals are designed around two fully automated Novo multi-roulette wheels.

Robbert van Roosendaal, WMS Gaming's representative in Germany, told G3: "The opening of Casino Duisburg was

impressive, and a huge difference from the old location. Westspiel stated that this is the most technically advanced casino in Germany and I think they are right. I was impressed with the layout of the casino and the accessibility of the two floors. They have separated the slot floor from the table games, which you see a lot in Germany. Westspiel is expanding rapidly in Germany and introducing in all the new and refurbished casinos TITO operated machines. A lot of operators are thinking of implementing this feature into their machines as well.

WMS Gaming has delivered 45 machines to Casino Duisburg with a couple of our newest and most successful products, including Jackpot Party Progressive and the Hot Hot Penny series, and naturally our cascading reels. WMS is happy to see such a huge new casino opening in Germany and is proud to be one of the main suppliers to Westspiel," commented Mr. van Roosendaal.

Over 50 per cent of the slots are linked to a jackpot system. IGT's "Fort Knox" jackpot system have 22 IGT slots linked together – the largest IGT jackpot system in a German casino.



MEET THE TEAM

(Above) Jochen Braun, Director of Classical Games, Westspiel.
(Below) Franz Ziegler, Director of Business Development Westspiel
pictured with Franz Hirthammer, Managing Director of Westspiel
Casino Hohensyburg, on the opening night of Casino Duisburg.



Westspiel's operations in Hohensyburg, Bad Oeynhausen, Aachen and Duisburg all have Fort Knox mystery progressives. On opening night in Duisburg, you couldn't get near the Fort Knox machines and it stayed that way all night long. "We're very proud of that kind of player response," shared Erik-Jan van den Berg, IGT Regional Sales Manager. Thomas Stossberg, Slots Manager of Casino Aachen told G3: "We consider Fort Knox the best game on the floor." Other jackpot systems include Atronic's "King Kong" and "Duisburg Nights" from Aristocrat Technologies. Turning to the live tables, Jochen Braun – the Director of Classical Games, was proud to explain the concept. "We designed the tables ourselves, based on our experience and needs", he said. The ergonomic form, coupled with the security and simplicity was clear to see. For example, only one key is required for technicians and only one separate key for the General Manager. This made-in-Germany technology, manufactured by Willy Klaus in Dortmund, shows cutting-edge technology. Sixty-one croupiers were working on the opening night. For

weekends, the norm is between 40 and 45 croupiers. The live table section can easily be expanded, should Westspiel offer poker tournaments; then up to forty additional poker tables could be integrated in a further section. Summing up, players can choose from a total of 28 live tables; the majority being American roulette and three live tables (roulette) are linked to Novomatic terminals. The configuration is Austrian Gaming Industries' largest electronic roulette installation in central Europe with a total of 75 terminals. 24 of these are linked to a Novo Multi-Table Roulette installation where visitors can choose one of three Novo TouchBet Live-Roulette tables in order to enjoy a classic live roulette game in the privacy of their own individual terminals. The remaining 51 terminals comprise the second Multi-Roulette installation. They offer visitors the possibility to choose from two fully automated Novo Multi-Roulette wheels. Via live camera broadcast each wheel is shown on the individual terminals as well as on five plasma displays. Five further plasma screens deliver detailed statistics for all tables on Novo Wheel Info

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Franz Ziegler, Director Business Development Westspiel.

Displays. Every cabinet features the modern cashless system Ticket-In/Ticket-Out (TITO). Jens Halle, Managing Director AGI, stated: "WestSpiel went out of its way to offer its guests an exceptional choice and atmosphere at the new Casino Duisburg. The new roulette installation at the Citypalais is the biggest of its kind in Germany. With the new cabinets and state-of-the-art Coolfire II gaming technology, we are convinced that we have been able to considerably contribute to a superior gaming experience."

Franz Ziegler, Director Business Development Westspiel, added: "We tried to take up the basic concept of the Citypalais and offer a maximum of gaming excitement at the highest possible technical level in our new Casino Duisburg. The Westspiel Group very much embraces the stable and excellent performance of the Novomatic products over many years of daily operation. The flexibility offered by the various multi-player installations convinced us to choose Novomatic products for the new Casino Duisburg. We are especially proud of our roulette installation."



EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD

Standing above a bank of Atronic e-motion machines, the new multi-level progressive jackpot concept, King Kong Cash made its European debut at the Duisburg casino, available to players on various titles from the Atronic games library including the exotic Treasure Cats and Tiger and Dragon. Players at Casino Duisburg can also enjoy Atronic's newly released five-level progressive jackpot The Game of Life, licensed from Hasbro and operating with a bank of popular e-motion games including Money Magnet, Granny's Trucking, Treasures of Africa and Avalanche of Cash. Included in the slot floor mix are 32 Harmony Slant-Top machines, making Casino Duisburg the very first venue to operate Atronic's brand-new cabinet. Games featured on the Harmony Slant Top include the Jungle of Gold, Tiger and Dragon as well as Crimson Fire, featuring X-Tension, Atronic's new 50-line concept. 16 of the Harmony Slant Top machines have been connected to a casino mystery jackpot link, offering even more excitement to players.

JUST THE TICKET FOR GERMANY

Speaking to Mr. Ziegler on opening night, Westspiel's Director of Business Development was clearly relieved at the immediate success of the new location. He explained that the philosophy of the Westspiel group is based on its customer-orientation, to which he proudly cites the example of ticket-in, ticket-out. Westspiel was the first German casino group to introduce TITO; with slots in casinos in Berlin and Bremen already linked to TITO. "The excellent feedback we received from our guests in Berlin and Bremen showed us that TITO is a success and gave us the confidence to equip all our 325 machines with TITO," Herr Ziegler stated. Asked why Westspiel decided to introduce TITO instead of card cashless; the response was simple and clear from Frank Ziegler. "We put our guests first and ask ourselves what would

be best for our guests. Our market research told us that TITO is the right way for us. Our guests quickly adapted to coinless TITO. Furthermore, it frees up our staff time to concentrate more on our guests, so enabling us to further improve our customer service. It's been a great success."

SINGLE-SOURCE SUPPLY

Westspiel's focus on customer preference has further strategic roots. This can be seen in its choice of components and online system. Component suppliers have discovered the end user and have concentrated more and more on their so-called "pull-through" strategies, meaning the casino group not only specifies the slot manufacturers but also the components inside the slots. However, it is not only the component suppliers who see the benefits of such a strategy. Westspiel practice this strategy. All the 354 slots/terminals in the casino are equipped with a banknote reader from one manufacturer and ticket printers from also only one manufacturer. Armin Mestermann, Westspiel's Chief Technician, has built on this strategy and is accredited with the successful technical introduction of TITO. Casino Duisburg has 100 per cent Ithaca printers. "Our tests with Ithaca printers were very good and we find their service to be excellent. That's why we chose Ithaca", Mr. Mestermann stated.

Ithaca's relationship with Westspiel goes back several years to a meeting at the G2E show in Las Vegas. Ithaca's Gary Parkin explained: "Casino Duisburg is the first Westspiel location that is 100 per cent TITO and 100 per cent Ithaca. Working with Armin Mestermann, we have other operations across the Westspiel estate utilising Ithaca printers, but Duisburg with 350 slots all connected to TITO was a very special project." Working with Ithaca and its European distributor Eurocoin, Westspiel was made aware of the features, benefits, service and support as part of a complete package with the



DESIGNS FOR LIFE

(Above) Franz Ziegler, Director of Business Development Westspiel pictured with Günter Merckle, Casino Duisburg's architect.

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**Franz Ziegler,
Director Business
Development
Westspiel.**

new Epic 950 printer. "Our priority is to maintain our relationship with the customer, ensuring that we deliver on time and to their exact specifications. And due to Westspiel's decision to specify 100 per cent Ithaca, we also offer the additional benefit of reducing the operator's floor percentage of spare printers by 50 per cent."

SUPPLIERS FEED THE DEMAND

For banknote readers, Westspiel continued with a single-source supplier, turning to JCM Europe, the reasons being many years of positive experience and the fact that JCM's European Headquarters are close by. The online system is provided by Bally subsidiary, MCC. In the initial planning stages of TITO, Westspiel wanted to have the option to introduce either TITO or card cashless. MCC offered this flexibility.

It seems that Westspiel has worked long and hard to ensure that it deserves the right to state that Casino Duisburg is Germany's most modern casino. A further 'first' for this casino is that the TITO system has been further adapted, offering promotional tickets. Players can win promotional tickets, paid out in the form of playable credits only. For example, if a guest wins a promotional ticket for 10 euros, after playing 5 euros then wins 100 euros and cashes out; then two tickets would be dispensed. One with the 100 euros win; that can then be cashed out. A second one for 5 euros (again a promotional ticket) that would have to be replayed. "We are proud to introduce this milestone to the German casino market. We are confident we can offer further benefits in the future with this service," Frank Ziegler commented. "We work very hard so that Westspiel is not only the largest German casino group, but the most innovative as well."

In conclusion, Westspiel enjoyed an excellent first night. Innovation and customer-orientation belong to Westspiel's key strategy and the Duisburg Casino can definitely confer to this.