



## ASPERS GO LARGE IN LONDON

The Aspers Group opens the UK's largest casino at Westfield Stratford City, London. The casino is also the first 'large' casino licence to open in Britain with more slots and gaming opportunities than another other location in the country.

Located in the heart of east London, Aspers has set a new benchmark for casinos in the UK appealing to both the professional player and novice. As the largest casino in the country, the 65,000sq.ft. venue offers a stylish and relaxed experience and is a major new addition to the leisure and entertainment offer in East London - a fashionable alternative for locals and visitors to the traditional West End.

Aspers Westfield Stratford City is open 24 hours a day, 364 days of the year. There is an open door policy where all guests over 18 are welcomed (though photographic identification is required for those who appear under 21). The new Aspers Casino is the only place in the UK with casino gaming, bingo and betting in one venue.

There are 40 gaming tables, 150 slots, 92 electronic gaming terminals, 150 seat poker room (with the capacity to expand to 250) with a daily Texas Hold'em poker tournament as well as a wide range of poker cash games, world exclusive bingo products, live entertainment, an 80 seat fast-casual dining restaurant, 100-250 seat function facilities, and the fabulous Sky



"We believe we created something truly special in one of the most exciting areas in Europe. We have a product that will appeal to seasoned and professional gamers, to first timers, to those just looking for a nice meal or an exciting night out. With this broad appeal we believe we have the right product to be a success."  
**Richard Noble,**  
COO Aspers Group.

Bar with amazing views over the London Olympic Stadium.

The new £1.8bn Westfield Stratford City, which as well as containing 250 shops and 70 places to dine also includes a state-of-the-art all-digital Vue cinema with approximately 3,000 seats across 17 screens, a 14-lane All Star Lanes bowling alley and a total of 617 hotel rooms across three high quality hotels including a four-star flagship Holiday Inn, Staybridge Suites for executive accommodation and a Premier Inn.

"We are offering the UK player a glimpse of what a super casino could be like," described Aspers COO, Richard Noble at the press briefing, held two days before launch day on December 1, 2011. "Our shareholders, Crown Casino Group, are looking to bring a slice of Vegas to the UK. Our model is high volume, low spend. We call what we do 'entertainment betting', rather than particularly aiming for high stakes, professional betting. We class this as a space for fun entertainment. It's all about breaking down the barriers for players entering the casino. Only three per cent of

the UK public has ever set foot inside a UK casino, though they've all seen the movies in which a male dominated 'James Bond' professional gambling image remains most prominent in people's minds. That's not the image of Aspers. The average spend for a player is £15-30 per visit, which is no different to a night at the bingo, bowling or cinema. We offer great entertainment, a truly social night out and a good time for all our customers."

As the first large casino licence to open in the UK, there's a certain weight of expectation that has fallen on the Aspers Group, with all eyes concentrated upon Westfield, Richard Noble is aware of the pressure to take gaming to the next level. "I think we can change the perception of gaming in the UK, as long as other operators instigate the same open door policy, in which we can show that gaming is fun and entertaining to a wider customer base," stated Mr. Noble. "While we must continue to be mindful at all times of the social responsibility aspect, I believe an open door policy is the right model. We are looking to players to spend £20 on a night out, it's high volume, low



ticket, in which we're not expecting £100 per visitor. We want to encourage new players to sample the games, to enjoy our tutorial zones in which anyone can learn to play any of our games. We offer low limits, we show people how to game in a relaxed and friendly environment."

Aspers Westfield has a team of slots hosts showing players how to play the games, with a large number of free play machines with which they can enjoy without feeling under pressure. "Our variety of games is unlike anything currently available in the UK," explained Mr. Noble. "Players can enjoy Star Wars and Sex and the City at Aspers Westfield. While we usually have only a very limited palate to chose from at the ICE show in London that is applicable to the UK market. However, here we have brought a world's first to this casino in the form of Novomatic's electronic bingo product. We saw it at the ICE show and believed that it's a product that can introduce bingo into the casino market. Here it's linked to our Novo Unity II system, offering the highest and the lowest minimum bets to encourage everyone to play across all our electronic games terminals."

## WE CAN CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF GAMING IN THE UK IF OTHER OPERATORS INSTIGATE OPEN DOOR POLICIES.

### EYES ON THE CROWN

Siting an unprecedented number of slots for a UK casino, Aspers Westfield Stratford City has adopted many of the slot strategies of the Crown Casino Group. Crown's theory, that slots player want to stick together, to play together, can be seen in the grouping of slots into a single mass close to the entrance of the casino. The escalator rising from the second floor food court of the Westfield shopping centre deposits players in an open space, leading to the tables area to the left, slots front and centre, and the Sky Bar to the right. "To grow a slots business in the UK you need this volume of slot machines," explained Richard Smith, General Manager of the new Aspers Westfield.

"We and our partners at Crown Limited and Westfield have been working on the Aspers Casino project for over five years and we are delighted that we now opening our doors to the public. Westfield's Stratford City complex is arguably the finest of its kind in Europe and this flagship Aspers Casino will continue to do what we do best – providing our customers with a fantastic live gaming experience." **Damian Aspinall,** Aspers Group Chairman.

"You need the noise and lights to create an atmosphere of play. People don't like to be stuck out on a limb, tucked away from the action. The slots here are not an afterthought, with 150 slots you can build a real slots business in the UK market. There's potential here for a slots manager to grow the business."

The Novomatic Electronic Bingo stands as a huge mechanical show piece connected to all 80 Novo Unity II terminals on the floor, which in turn connects the electronic gaming element of the casino to the live tables area. Powered by Novo Unity II, Novo Multi-Bingo and Novo Flying Bingo offer multi-game selection, giving players the freedom to choose from baccarat, black jack, roulette, poker, sic bo and bingo as well as a growing range of slots, all from their seat. "It's almost a non-invasive way of introducing bingo in a casino environment," stated Mr. Smith. "It's such a spectacular product and one that will be key to getting customers to understand the game. Such is the nature of the product that slot and electronic machine hosts will be vital in ensuring that players feel comfortable approaching and playing this dynamic new machine."

Designs for the casino, from the tables, slots and electronics have been created in joint collaboration with Aspers shareholders, Crown. "We have had a great deal of feedback from Crown regarding the design of the casino and the overall result has been a wholly collaborative effort," stated Mr. Smith. "We are especially excited about our Flexi-Link community jackpot linking our Novomatic Gaminator machines on the floor. We have set the community jackpot to include eight participating players who, in addition to the winning jackpot, also share an eighth of the community prize. We are targeting existing slots players who we think will be impressed with the overall impact of the slots offer."

While you're not always guaranteed a seat in the 20 machine-only casinos around the country, the large casino licence enables Aspers Westfield to offer a true slots experience to players, provide greater variety and a much greater chance of accommodating them at their favourite machine. "The feedback we received from our slots players in Newcastle was that players wanted more frequent wins and greater entertainment from their slots," stated Mr. Smith, who formerly managed the Aspers at the Gate casino in Newcastle. "It's something we've been keen to replicate here."

It's a unique experience visiting a casino in the UK that has its own slots department. Being introduced to slots manager, Dimitrios Ntounis, is another



first - a UK casino with a slots manager! "The project has been challenging," stated Mr. Ntounis, who was previously with Mont Parnes, Greece, Supernova in UK, and Casino Corfu before joining the Aspers Group. "As the first UK large licence we have a wide combination of machines on the floor, from international casino slots, FOBT betting terminals, bingo machines, UK B2 and B3 machines. It's a potent mix and has great potential. The design of the floor is unique. Only a few locations in the world have this layout, which, alongside unique features such as the Sky Bar, creates an exciting mix of entertainment and gaming."

Head of Electronic Gaming, Mark Beattie, agrees with this sentiment. "It's a really exciting time here at Aspers Westfield Stratford City. For the first time, UK customers can experience a truly international style casino. Up until now, consumers have had little access to slot machines, with a maximum of 20 per casino allowed. We will have 150."

"The casino has a fantastic and fun atmosphere. We have all of the classic favourite slot machines, including Pharaoh's Fortune, Cleopatra, Lucky Lady's Charm and Rainbow Riches," states Mr. Beattie. "The quantity we have

**Richard Smith,**  
General Manager  
of Aspers Westfield  
Stratford City,  
London pictured  
with Novomatic's  
dramatic Electronic  
Bingo.

"The Aspers casino forms a significant part of our plans for transforming Newham into a major leisure and entertainment, and tourist destination. Aspers will create more than 400 jobs for local people and most of these are people who have been long-term unemployed. We are committed to working with Aspers to provide training to help develop these jobs into fulfilling careers."

**Sir Robin Wales,**  
Mayor of Newham.

## AS THE FIRST LARGE LICENCE TO OPEN IT'S OUR JOB TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION THAT'S POSITIVE FOR EVERYONE.

means that customers don't have to wait to get on to their favourite machine. We also have a number of new exciting games including Sex and the City and Star Wars - and all the latest multi-game machines with a choice of up to nine different games on each. In total we have well over 100 different games on offer. Customers can play stakes from 1p upwards, with a multi-line, multi-bet format, with prizes of up to £4,000."

In a market that expects its floor managers to cover all aspects of casino gaming, the splitting of responsibilities at Aspers Westfield, a casino with a 'real' slots area is going to take some getting used to. "We needed to change the emphasis within the casino and have clear lines of demarcation between slots and tables," says Mr. Smith. "We offer not

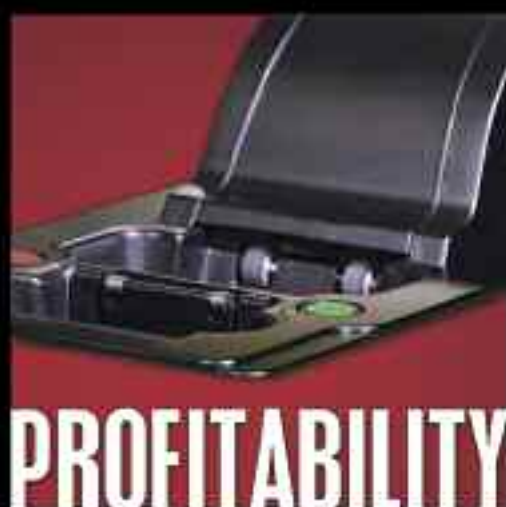
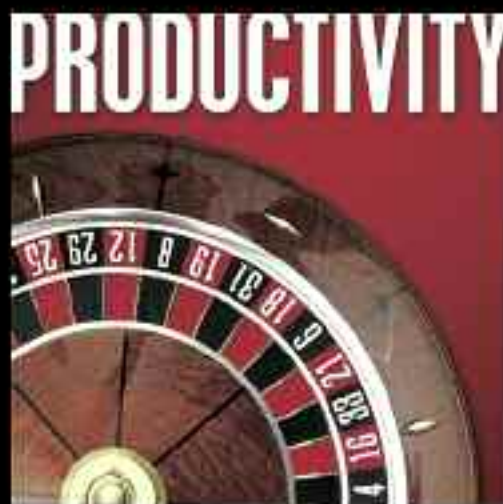
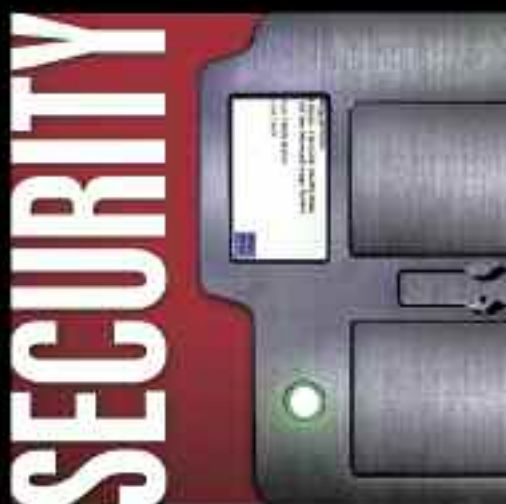
only slots and electronic gaming terminals, but FOBTs in the sports-bar betting area, as part of our licence, in addition to a handful of B2 and B3 machines."

### SPORTING PROWESS

The Sports Bar at Aspers Casino Westfield, nick-named the 'Man Creche' has everything a sports-mad man (or woman!) could want. Aspers Casino Westfield Stratford City is the only casino in the UK where it is possible to place a bet and have an alcoholic drink at the same time. The 27 sports screens offers customers the ability to bet on sporting events and racing from around the world, whilst enjoying a wide range of drinks and bar snacks. And because the casino is open 24 hours a day, 364 days a year, customers will never miss 'must see' boxing matches or test cricket.

The sports betting terminals are from BGT, the Austrian company, Betting Gaming and Technologies, while the casino's imposing multiplayer roulette needs no introduction. "We are the first to introduce Interblock's Organics multiplayer roulette in the UK (the Hippodrome would have beaten Aspers to the punch had its launch not been delayed)," reveals Mr. Smith. It's a

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standalone machine that's not linked to any additional terminals or live wheels on the floor. It's an impressive piece and one that was turnaround extremely quickly during the rushed nature of the fit-out, which, due to judicial reviews, was only green-lit in August of 2011."

"Interblock is very excited to work together with Aspers Group for the first time on its innovative and largest casino project in the UK, the Aspers Westfield Stratford City Casino," states Tomaz Zvipej, CEO of Interblock. "Working together we decided to select a product that would stand out on the casino floor and attract a new generation of players. The decision was taken to introduce one of our most popular games, the G4 Organic Roulette featuring 12 player stations, placed in two slightly curved lines around an Automated Roulette wheel made of carbon fibre and embellished with beautifully designed Swarovski crystals with six Player Information Displays, showing the latest results, statistic and live video feed. We believe that the Aspers installation will bring Interblock several further opportunities in the UK market and we're hoping to meet and exceed high standards set for this launch."

Interblock guaranteed a September delivery and true to their word, the Organic roulette marks the end of the gaming floor before the Aspers poker area. A large screen can be used to split the area into private function zones for 150 players, or open the expanse to the full 250 capacity. Opening a set of doors at the back of this area leads to a huge open space for further expansion, either of the poker zone, or potentially for Aspers to capitalise in the future on possible legislative changes. Three Hess terminals have also been installed across the floor, following successful trials in Aspers Newcastle earlier in the year, where the ticket redemption machines performed extremely well.

### **MAKING AN ENTRANCE**

"I'm really excited that we've cleared the entrance area of any signs of registration or membership," states Mr. Smith. "We operate a walk-in policy 24/7 for 18 years and over, who are not confronted with a registration desk as they ascend the escalator, or any other barrier to their access of the casino. We obviously encourage them to participate in our Aspire loyalty card programme, but that's completely voluntary, though the take up has been extremely strong across the

"We have had a phenomenal response since we opened in September with well over seven million visitors to date and the much anticipated launch of Aspers Casino will complete this fantastic leisure and entertainment offer."

**John Burton,**  
Director Westfield  
Stratford City

group." Encouraging the public to sample the casino is a key part of Aspers' strategy at the Westfield Stratford City location. The shopping mall, which provides direct access to and from the London Olympic Stadium from the casino and the train stations connecting to London and the Channel, already sees one million visitors through its door per week. The Aspers casino isn't tucked away from the public, but accessed from the food court on the second floor, opposite the Vue multi-screen cinema. It's a position that already generates enormous footfall. "We're looking to draw into the casino a percentage of the overall visitors to Westfield," explains Mr. Smith. "Even a modest one per cent of that figure is 10,000 visitors per week, with our aim closer to 10 per cent."

Despite the competition from the 70+ restaurant food court at Westfield, the casino offers a mid-priced menu of



## THE SKY BAR OVERLOOKING THE OLYMPIC STADIUM IS ONE OF THE BEST FUNCTION SPACES IN THE UK

Indian, Chinese and grill range, with a Nando's style fast turnaround service, which at weekends will provide a relief from the constant queues within the food court (and shouts of children). Westfield is also a strictly no smoking shopping mall, whereas the casino provides a terrace for smoking with a terrific view of the Olympic stadium.

The 80-seat restaurant offers fast casual dining in a modern and contemporary



environment. Everything is cooked to order and is open until 4am every day, seven days a week.

The Sky Bar overlooking the Olympic stadium is one of the best function spaces in London right now and one of the few not yet fully booked for the Olympics. Aspers is to appoint a management team to separately manage the opportunities of this space. "Several Olympic committees have asked about renting the space, including the VIP area within the Sky Bar, which provides private access to the terrace," explains Mr. Smith.

The Sky Bar is the perfect spot to enjoy a fabulous casino inspired cocktail. Low lit with glamorous golden lighting, modern cream leather chairs and a dramatically curved ceiling the Sky Bar is a stylish destination hot spot. Inspired by the glitz and glamour of casinos from all around the world, the cocktail menu is as expertly mixed as it is tongue-in-cheek. Priced from £6.95, guests can choose from a list of classic cocktails including Martinis, Mojitos and Sours. Delicious concoctions include the fruity Bramble 'Blackjack', the classic 'All or Nothing' Southern Punch, the deliciously tingly 'Win a Mint' Mojito or the sophisticated Kir 'Royale Flush'. A firm favourite is sure to be the 'Jackpot', a classic Champagne cocktail mixed with Courvoisier VSOP, sugar, Angostura bitters and finished with a cherry.

**Richard Smith,**  
General Manager  
of Aspers Westfield  
Stratford City and  
**Dimitrios Ntounis,**  
Slot Manager.

Despite the excitement of managing a huge number of slots (for a UK casino), Mr. Smith is relishing the fruition of a much smaller scale ambition. "I'm excited about the trolleys we are introducing to serve food and drinks," he states. "As casinos get bigger and busier, we need to make provision for a valet service, as we can't expect players and staff to go cover the distances involved from bar to seat. Our trolleys have made especially for Aspers for the provision of tea and coffee."

### SEARCH AND DEPLOY

Table equipment throughout the casino was supplied by TCSJohnHuxley. "We knew what we wanted to achieve and with such short lead time due to the judicial review (the casino was greenlit in August), we had pushed so many deadlines back that getting everything ready on time was going to be a challenge," admits Mr. Smith. Additional logistical dilemmas were presented by the proximity of the casino to the Olympic stadium, with strict security meaning that delivery trucks had to be stopped, searched, scanned and sealed in a location on the M11, before they could be allowed into the vicinity of the stadium. As a result of these restrictions, Aspers realised it would be much more beneficial to use one supplier to co-ordinate the whole logistics process.

"Having TCSJohnHuxley deliver, fit and install everything made a great deal of sense due to the logistical issues," stated Mr. Smith. "We based the table gaming floor to a large degree upon Newcastle, while the slots area was dictated by the product available to us for the UK market, though we are delighted with the mix of Novomatic, IGT and WMS Gaming gaming machines."

TCSJohnHuxley supplied all gaming tables - 25 poker tables, 24 card tables, 12 American Roulette tables, 1 Dice table, 1 Money wheel and table and 1 Double-ended MultiPLAY table. In addition, there



are 80 Novo Unity II TouchBet terminals featuring multi game selection of live Punto Banco, live Roulette, automated Roulette and automated Bingo. Concluding the product list, 12 CC2 chip sorting machines, 13 e-FX Elite double-sided displays, 13 Saturn Roulette wheels, 3 Omni Baccarat displays, all chips and accessories.

TCSJohnHuxley were chosen as the preferred logistics supplier for all the gaming equipment and slots. This entailed all equipment from the gaming suppliers being collated in Stoke for a coordinated delivery process. The TCSJohnHuxley Stoke facility was also used as a hub for project planning, with all equipment and planning meetings taking place at the location.

"We have been extremely impressed with the way TCSJohnHuxley approached this project," states Mr. Smith. "The attention to detail and meticulous planning across all levels of the team ensured the installation ran smoothly, on time and within budget. TCSJohnHuxley pulled out all the stops to ensure the whole project was a major success and the finished product looks stunning!"

David Heap TCSJohnHuxley Group Chief Executive comments: "We are extremely honoured to be involved with this prestigious project. Not only is this a 'first-of-its-kind' showcase casino, it also indicates the confidence Richard Noble and the Aspers Management team had in the abilities of TCSJohnHuxley, to deliver and install the best equipment available on time and with no issues."

"Being the first large licence to open in the UK is really exciting," states Mr. Smith. "It's our job to make a first impression that's positive for everyone." Aspers advertising campaign began in November, with ads in the London Evening Standard newspaper, which Mr. Smith described as a daily teaser campaign, with local advertising in and around the Westfield shopping centre and an additional poster promotion on the London Underground. "We must work to

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**David Heap**  
TCSJohnHuxley Group Chief Executive.



encourage the public to visit casinos in this county," states Mr. Smith. "As the first large casino licence in the UK, there is a great deal of weight on our shoulders to show the legislators what can be achieved with a location like this. We know that we have to get this right for ourselves and the industry as a whole. Positive legislation change would help develop this offer further, as key to the future success of this location is the growth in the UK of the slots offer."

The casino has already received a lot of very positive publicity having worked with the local job centre organisation, Work Place, training unemployed young people in the local area to be croupiers. Creating positive recruitment stories.

### Recruitment

After many weeks of preparation, the recruitment process began three months ago with the recruitment of Trainee Croupiers and Trainee Cashiers. To make sure we find the right staff, we have worked closely with Workplace - a recruitment centre based in Newham that is committed to helping employers find the right local people to work for them as well as supporting local people who want those jobs.

A training school for 36 Trainee Croupiers at the London Gaming Academy, based at Charlton Athletic Football Club, commenced on 03 October for eight weeks of intense training. The training school provides each candidate with the fundamental skills of dealing Roulette, BlackJack and Three Card Poker; a City & Guilds qualification; as well as being funded for the obligatory gaming licence that is issued by the Gambling Commission to be a Croupier in the industry, all costing just under £200 per person.

Linda Lewis, Regional HR Manager for the Aspers Group commented: "In addition to the trainee roles we have also recruited Experienced Croupiers, Coaches; Cashiers, Poker Dealers and Managers for all Gaming departments. We continued to use Workplace to source candidates but also placed advertisements on GamingFloor, on our website, www.aspers.co.uk as well as inviting our existing talent pool from our other casinos to apply for internal development opportunities. All applicants went through an interview process before a table test - designed to assess dexterity, knowledge, commentary and above all customer service."