

Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens Transforms Into Whimsical Winter Wonderland

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A Bountiful Ocean Spray Cranberry Bog, Fanciful Penguins and Carnation-Covered Polar Bears, Shimmering Lights and a Towering Tree Make This a Display to Remember

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LAS VEGAS

Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens combines the nostalgia of yesteryear with the wonders of modern technology to create a multitude of picture-perfect moments this holiday season. A colorful cranberry bog calls to mind the vision of a plentiful holiday table while the playful antics of festive arctic animals capture the hearts of visitors. In the center of it all, a dazzling holiday tree laden with sparkling ornaments sends gazes soaring while joyful sounds of the season evoke fond memories of home.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20051215/LATH078>)

As guests enter the Conservatory, they will be captivated by the vibrant beauty of an illuminated cranberry bog with four gold-leafed rose topiaries, overflowing with approximately 1,000 fresh roses and rising from the sea of brilliant red berries. The bog celebrates the time-honored tradition of the cranberry harvest and pays homage to an American holiday favorite. Ocean Spray provided more than 400,000 individual cranberries, weighing approximately 2,000 pounds, to create this vivid new addition to the Conservatory's annual holiday exhibit. Cranberries grow on vines in low-lying, marsh-like environments called bogs. Small air pockets inside the cranberries cause the fruit to float in water, which is how many cranberries are harvested, creating a stunning scene in nature. This holiday season, Bellagio is bringing the natural beauty of the cranberry bog to Las Vegas.

Another new delight this year is a colony of endearing penguins. The group of 20 portly marine birds can be spotted within an arctic scene. While most are stationary, state-of-the-art animatronic technology brings five adult and two baby penguins to life.

A short distance away, a family of polar bears can be found sharing a moment of quality, family time. A baby bear frolics playfully on his back on a frozen stream as mama and papa bear watch with affection. The topiary bears' fur, made of 25,000 white carnations, was carefully hand-applied by Bellagio horticulturists and is kept fresh by a specially designed water drip system.

The dazzling centerpiece of this beautiful exhibit is a towering 45-foot Shasta Fir tree bejeweled with red, pink and silver ornaments, a golden star tree topper and dozens of flickering candles. Powered by electricity, the candles retain an old-fashioned look and feel of an era when fire illuminated the night. Six to 18-foot ornaments hang from above and circle the tree to create a stunning visual. The tree's dramatic touch is created with thousands of white lights choreographed to music and the dancing waters below.

Visitors are invited to enjoy the delights of this winter wonderland from December 4 through January 4.

Holiday Exhibit Fast Facts:

- * Cranberry bog
 - Ocean Spray provided 400,000 cranberries weighing 2,000 pounds
 - A perennial plant, cranberries grow on long-running vines in sandy bogs
 - Cranberries are "wet harvested" by flooding bogs so berries float to the surface
 - The cranberries used in this display were grown and harvested by Ocean Spray growers in Oregon
- *Penguins
 - 7 animated, 13 stationary
 - 3 1/2-foot adults, 24-inch babies
- *Polar bears -- covered with 25,000 hand-applied, white carnations
 - Father bear: 12,000 flowers
 - Mother bear: 8,000 flowers
 - Baby bear: 5,000 flowers
- *Holiday tree
 - 45-foot Shasta Fir from Mt. Shasta, Calif.
 - 6- to 18-foot red, pink and silver ornaments adorn the tree
- * Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens' 2006 Calendar
 - Chinese New Year Exhibit: January 14 - February 25
 - Spring Celebration: March 5 - May 13
 - Summer Garden Party: May 21 - September 9
 - Harvest Show: September 17 - November 25

Photo: NewsCom: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20051215/LATH078>

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