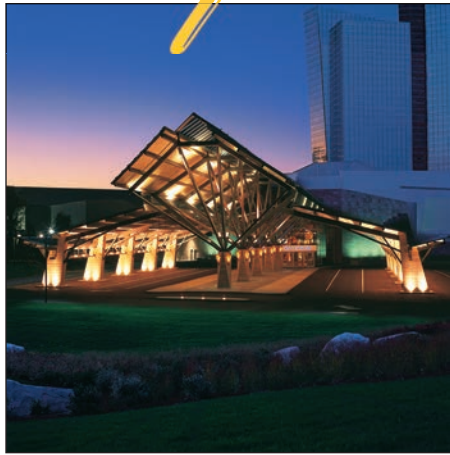


The Resort Entertainment Business

An Interview with Ray Pineault,
President and General Manager, Mohegan Sun



Mohegan Sun Casino entrance (left); Earth Tower and Sky Tower (above)

EDITORS' NOTE Ray Pineault has been with the Mohegan Tribe and Mohegan Sun since March 2001. He served as a Senior Staff Attorney for the Tribe. In addition, Pineault has provided legal services to several of the Mohegan Tribe's departments and entities, as well as Little People, LLC and Crow Hill Properties. Pineault also served as a management board member of Mohegan Information Technology Group, LLC. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Connecticut as well as a law degree from Quinnipiac College School of Law.



Ray Pineault

COMPANY BRIEF Mohegan Sun (mohegansun.com), owned by the Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority, is one of the largest, most spectacular entertainment, gaming, dining, and shopping destinations in the United States. Situated on 185 acres along the Thames River in scenic southeastern Connecticut, Mohegan Sun is home to three unique casinos, two hotel towers including the 34-story, 1,200-room luxurious Sky Tower, as well as the recently opened, 400-room Earth Tower, a world-class spa and golf course, over 85 shops, restaurants, and bars, as well as three award-winning entertainment venues including a 10,000-seat arena. Mohegan Sun is within easy access of New York, Boston, Hartford, and Providence and located 15 minutes from the museums, antique shops, and waterfront of Mystic Country.

When the opportunity presented itself to lead Mohegan Sun, what excited you about it and made you feel it would be the right fit?

I've been with the organization since 2001. I worked with the Tribe in the beginning and was there for five years. I've been in the casino since 2006, and have worked at other places and in other industries. With the team that we have here, the leadership we have always had, and the support we get from the Tribe, the stability, the forward-thinking, and strategic planning, this is by far the best place I have ever worked and the best people I've ever worked with. I could not have asked for a better opportunity.

Will you talk about the investment that continues to be made to improve the property?

We've always known that the resort entertainment business we're in is highly competitive and highly capital intensive. We have many repeat guests, so it's always important to be providing them with the newest and best entertainment options, and we have to stay ahead of the game. The council and management here have always been forward-thinking and forward-looking in providing new and upgraded opportunities, and better entertainment for our guests.

We have been focusing on expansion with the addition of the hotel. In 1996, we started out with a small casino with a few restaurants and it has since gone through four developments. We have a master plan for the property so we can maximize the utilization of the acreage we have here.

We have other things that are on our drawing board now that we hope to announce in the short-term to continue to grow and expand the property.

The Tribe itself is working with the town of Preston on the acquisition of 400 acres across the river from here to develop.

We're always looking to build upon this property. It provides jobs and stable opportunities for our team members, and supports the community in job growth and opportunities.

When you have such notoriety and excitement on the entertainment side, are you able to get the message across about the hotel product?

We can get guests here for the first time for the entertainment experience but keeping them here and coming back is all about our team and the guest experience we provide.

Nothing that we provide is unique in and of itself – there are hotels, casinos, restaurants, and spas throughout the Northeast of the United States. What is unique is our team members and the guest experience we provide and, in order to stay ahead of the game as we do, we need to provide that superior guest service each time a guest visits. We focus our entire team on making sure we're blowing away the guest every time they stay with us.

How much of an impact has gaming had on the business and can the market sustain the supply coming in?

Eventually, it will reach a saturation point. There will be three casinos in Massachusetts in

a short time; New York has expanded with Resorts and a few others recently; and Twin Rivers is looking to add a casino in Rhode Island.

What we're still offering is that high-level guest experience. We help guests understand why they should choose us and drive from Massachusetts or New York because they will have a special feeling and experience. We know that guests are willing to make that time for a brand they're loyal to.

Is there a profile for the Mohegan Sun guest?

Our market is comprised of anyone 21 years of age or older who is looking for a resort destination option that provides one with various experiences such as shopping, dining, a spa, a great hotel stay, entertainment, music, and sports. We provide all of that and we can compete with anybody throughout the U.S. for the guest who wants to come and have a relaxing time.

Our market is very broad and we don't try to limit it to anyone beyond those looking for a way of utilizing disposable income in an entertaining fashion.

How have you designed your focus around the family experience?

For families looking to get away, we want to make sure that there are things for the kids to do while they're here. We make sure we don't take those out of the equation so families can continue to come and enjoy the property.

What has been the key to success in the food and beverage area?

We have a highly successful and fantastic team here that runs some of our own restaurants and provides cuisine that our guests enjoy. We also have some long-term partnerships with the likes of Michael Jordan's group, Todd English, and Bobby Flay that provide our guests with options they're looking for.

How important has the sports arena been when it comes to drawing attention and brand awareness for the property?

The arena is a huge component for Mohegan Sun – we have been ranked among the top five in the world for arenas of our size for the past several years and our team does a fantastic job of bringing in the newest, greatest, and most exciting events and entertainers in the world. Beyoncé, Bruce Springsteen, Kevin Hart, Bon Jovi, Sting, and Justin Timberlake are some regular touring acts that come to Mohegan Sun Arena. ●