

# New Schussler concept will open in Las Vegas

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Steven Schussler is known for his larger-than-life themed restaurant concepts, so it's only fitting that his next project will be in Las Vegas.

Schussler, founder and CEO of Golden Valley-based Schussler Creative Inc., has signed a letter of intent to open a restaurant called Aerobieu at New York-New York Hotel & Casino next summer. The hotel is located at the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Tropicana Avenue, one of the city's busiest intersections.

Schussler Creative will spend between \$10 million and \$12 million to build Aerobieu, with financial backing from Kansas City, Mo.-based mall developer Red Development. The restaurant will include an 8,500-square-foot bar and dining area inside the casino, plus a patio area with outdoor seating for about 200 people at the base of the hotel's replica of the Statue of Liberty.

"Other than Disney World, I don't think there's any place in the country that could afford us more business or exposure," said Schussler, who also created the elaborate Rainforest Cafe and T-Rex concepts.

Aerobieu is based on the 1997 book Aerobieu Pilot's Journal, in which a fictitious character named Max Morgan runs a jazz club called Aerobieu in Paris between 1939 and 1959. In the book, Morgan wins a DC-3 airplane in an all-night poker game, then travels to New York, London, New Orleans and Havana with jazz icons such as Miles Davis and Max Roach.

Schussler bought the restaurant licensing rights to the book five years ago and has been developing the concept since.

"I read the book and became immensely interested in it," Schussler said. "I thought, 'Why don't we make the restaurant and bar from the book come to life?' "

Like Schussler's other concepts, Aerobieu will be extravagant. The restaurant's interior will feature a replica DC-3, with the wing serving as a stage for live musicians. Outside, a saxophonist will play on the roof of a refurbished 1940s New York taxi in front of the Statue of Liberty; his image will be projected onto a 20-foot moon suspended next to the statue.