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**Steve Levesque: longtime entertainment publicist, mayor of Hot Rod City**

Editor's Note: One of today's guest columnists is Steve Levesque, longtime entertainment publicist and mayor of Hot Rod City, while Robin Leach takes his well-deserved annual vacation to Europe (follow him on his travels at [twitter.com/robin\\_leach](http://twitter.com/robin_leach)). Every day, a new column, plus you never know what Robin will dig up in the wine country north of Rome, so please check back daily.

By Steve Levesque

When Mr. Robin Leach asked me to write a guest column for him, I was honored. I think I might even pilot my Rolls Royce and Ferrari around Las Vegas because of the influence of his hit TV series *Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous*. The only problem is that I'm neither rich nor famous. My cars are from the 1970s and '80s, and a new Toyota costs more than I paid for the '75 Roller or '84 Mondial Cabriolet.



But, hey, I'm living the Robin Leach lifestyle -- just a couple decades too late. Not only am I not rich, but my longtime profession as an entertainment publicist also is to make other people famous -- and that usually leads to increased revenue for them. Before I launched my L.A. and Las Vegas-based firm Luck Media & Marketing, I worked for one of the real legends and characters in entertainment PR: Lee Solters. Lee worked with all the greats, from Frank Sinatra and Barbra Streisand to The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

He represented Caesars, The Riviera and even the debut of the Stratosphere. When it comes to PR stunts, he was one hell of a hullabaloo man. He did the famous press conference with Bubbles, Michael Jackson's chimpanzee. Lee loved Hollywood and all the parties with free jumbo shrimp. I was born and grew up in L.A., going to all the big rock concerts, managing punk bands, working at record companies, becoming vice president of Mr. Solters' music department and achieving success with my old Luck Media.

But after 50 years, The Sunset Strip seems to have lost its luster for me. No more bell-bottom hippies, no more mohawked punkers, nary any hairsprayed metal rockers or hot groupies in halter tops. The turn of the new century Hollywood had lost its sizzle for me, personally and professionally.

A few years before I had purchased a little investment home in Las Vegas, a fun idea for vacations with the family and also for coming into town for client events, I found that when I headed to Vegas and hit Victorville, a dark cloud seemed to lift, and I immediately became happier. When living here, I loved the way the sun was bright and shining the moment I got up in the morning, giving me extra energy that was lacking while stuck in traffic in marine-layered L.A.

So I sold the dream house in Sherman Oaks I had purchased for \$600,000 from Natasha Henstridge, sexy star of Species. I sold it to Charlie's Angels star Kate Jackson for north of \$1 million. Rich with L.A. real estate cash,



I plunked down a chunk of it on a mini mansion here in Spring Valley. Not only that, being greedy with profits from other properties I sold in L.A. and New York City, I also proceeded to purchase additional investment homes in the Las Vegas valley, including nice new homes in Mountains Edge.

Well, ladies, gentlemen and homeowners, we all know what happened next, with home prices dropping 50 percent or more, so now I find that I am working harder to support the negative cash flow on each of my homes, just to keep them afloat, praying that prices will rise again. The ironic thing, so far anyway, is that with foreclosures abundant and home purchases more difficult than ever, the rental market still seems strong, so far anyway.

Another economy-related aspect of my L.A.-to-Vegas tale is that with digital technology, the music industry is in the toilet, and many of our clients at Luck Media are music-related. One of our longtime and bulletproof clients is Air

Supply, the soft rockers who pack them in, including here a few times a year. But most of the baby bands and indie labels are struggling, and that doesn't bode well for music business-related marketing companies.

But due to our long-standing reputation and hard work -- and reduced PR fees -- we're staying afloat and still having fun. And just when I thought I'd seen it all and life was settling down to the mundane? Wham! Opportunity comes knocking. Out of the blue, I received a call from prominent Florida and New York-based real estate developer Michael Dezer. He was calling about my restored vintage Vespas I sell very successfully on eBay.

We hit it off and started talking about our love for vintage cars and scooters, and we came up with a plan. We rebranded his Tropicana Industrial Center on Dean Martin Drive, south of Tropicana, as Hot Rod City. He had purchased this industrial center and the entire block to develop three high-rise condominium towers, but when the economy fizzled, he needed to fill the industrial center with tenants, hence Hot Rod City.

The center caters to small-business tenants in the automotive and motorcycle fields, and there's a museum to showcase some of Mr. Dezer's amazing collection of more than 600 vintage and unique cars and motor scooters. He offered an office for Luck Media and a place to display, sell and trade my own cool cars and bikes. I was even bestowed the honorable title of mayor of Hot Rod City. And there are plans for the King of Kustom himself, George Barris, to get involved with Hot Rod City.



We have on display Barris TV and movie creations such as Grandpa Munster's Dragula coffin car and The Beverly Hillbillies jalopy. Everyone is welcome to drop by Hot Rod City and check out some wild cars, some of which can be purchased with the right offer. And you, too, can get behind the wheel of a dream machine and live a chapter out of Robin Leach's Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous -- Vegas style!

Tomorrow, VegasDeLuxe.com welcomes Katie James of Jubilee!, which is about to turn The Big 3-0, at Bally's and Chef Martin Heierling. Guest columnists this year include Holly Madison, Donny Osmond, cast members of Absinthe and Jersey Boys, Chefs Julian Serrano and Charlie Palmer, plus other surprises, including nightlife analysis by Jesse Waits and Jack Colton.

Robin Leach has been a journalist for more than 50 years and has spent the past decade giving readers the inside scoop on Las Vegas, the world's premier platinum playground.