

TO DIE FOR



Claude Escamilla, executive pastry chef at Jean Philippe Patisseries, adds a final touch to one of his chocolate zombie creations at the shop at Aria. PHOTOS BY RICHARD BRIAN/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL FOLLOW @VEGASPHOTOGRAPH

ZOMBIE A-CHOCO-LYPSE

Jean Philippe Patisserie shops capture the horror, humor of Halloween

By HEIDI KNAPP RINELLA • LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Aria's latest invited guest is 6 feet tall and weighs more than 200 pounds, and if he looks a whole lot worse than the most hard-partying, down-on-his-luck gambler, well, that should be forgiven. He is, after all, a zombie.

And you can even take a selfie with him.

The zombie, named Amaury (in honor of the assistant pastry chef), will go on display Friday at the hotel. Made of 150 pounds of chocolate, with another 50 pounds of rolled fondant for the details, he's just one of three life-sized characters created for the Halloween season by the staff of the Jean Philippe Patisserie shops at Aria and Bellagio.

Claude Escamilla, executive pastry chef of the patisseries, said planning for the figures and 40-plus other display pieces started a year in advance, with 10 people working on them full tilt since January. As for the theme?

"I'm a big fan of 'The Walking Dead,'" said Escamilla,

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A zombie showgirl holding a post-apocalyptic "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign will be on display at Jean Philippe Patisserie at Bellagio starting Friday.



A white-chocolate skeleton in a chocolate electric chair prepares to jolt guests at the patisserie at Aria.



Not all of the Halloween-themed chocolate pieces at the two shops will depict zombies.



Chocolate zombie heads will be on display at Jean Philippe Patisserie at Bellagio beginning Friday.

Online video: See how the zombies are made ► www.reviewjournal.com/chocolatezombies

UNR professor discovers steak that is a cut above the rest

By HEIDI KNAPP RINELLA
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

New option could boost the Nevada cattle industry

Amilton de Mello clearly remembers the first Bonanza cut that came off his grill. "When I tasted that piece of beef, I said, 'Holy Jesus!'" de Mello said. "It tastes absolutely fantastic as a steak."

That was in 2014, when de Mello was working at an Arizona beef-processing plant.

"I was always looking for different opportunities," he said. "How can we make it better?"

His *aha* moment came while working the rib line at the plant. His supervisor

pointed out a small piece of meat at the top of the rib, which normally was added to the cuttings used for ground beef. De Mello noticed how well-marbled the piece was and thought it might have potential as something better than hamburger. He asked to take some home so he could try it. And then came that

divine-inspired reaction.

De Mello told the company it had a tasty treasure that could be sold as a luxury steak instead of treated like more common trimmings. The problem: Since each steer yields only two pieces that total about a half-pound, there's not a lot of volume. He kept pushing the

cut but couldn't drum up much interest. De Mello was working at the plant level, where there's no research and development department. His supervisors, he said, didn't send it up to the corporate level for more study. He's pretty sure they never tasted it.

But the lack of interest changed last year when de

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