

FEATURES

[15TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE]

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO: FABRIZIO BOCCARDI



T.R. Witcher

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There are no sharks yet for **Fabrizio Boccardi**, the Italian entrepreneur who is trying to build a brand based on a fictional alter ego and use it to reinvent the Las Vegas casino experience. But Boccardi's still got plenty of plans.

The "Tyrant" was Boccardi's fictional hero, Michael Tirrano, a ruthless Las Vegas casino mogul antihero, first introduced in a 2008 novel by thriller writer Jon Land. Think *The Godfather* crossed with *The Da Vinci Code*. (Tirrano's underwater office at his Seven Sins megaresort in Las Vegas was patrolled by a great white.)

Despite the recession, the book did well enough for Boccardi to ink a deal with DC Comics to develop a comic book line. A second novel has been announced. And he says he's reached a deal with Hollywood to bring the Tyrant to the big screen, though he won't say which studio is involved or when an announcement will be made. He's optimistic it'll get going next year.

Boccardi insists the Tyrant is not a gangster franchise. It is becoming, he says, *more epic*: "I like to say we are building, figuratively speaking, the Batman of Las Vegas."

And it gets bigger than that. His company, King Midas World Entertainment, signed an agreement with a global licensing firm to create product lines around the Tyrant brand, but Boccardi won't say what he's planning. Food and wine? Luxury goods? Lounges or nightclubs? "I'm thinking about telling you," he says, sounding

vaguely apologetic, before explaining that someone could read about his ideas and steal them. Vegas is, after all, a competitive town.

But he knows that it's tough to license a brand no one has heard of. Which is why a film, should it be made, needs to be big. Because the brand—the movies, the comics, the products—still remains the means to an end: Get a casino. He doesn't have one. He still wants one. He's got ideas about reinvigorating the gaming experience, making it more fun.

Think he'll share the details? Maybe when those sharks land at McCarran to fill a real life Seven Sins hotel.

It may all come to naught—Boccardi had these same dreams in 2008, too—but then again, his persistence has to be some kind of virtue. “What I care about is to live my life the way I want it and to build something that will last after my death,” he says. “That’s why I do this. This is why I don’t really care if it takes a year or 10, as long as it happens and it’s successful.”

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