

Architectural Icons Make Cities Famous

What's Your City's Claim to Fame?

By Jeff Coy, ISHC

Paris was the world's most-visited city in 2010 with 15.1 million international arrivals, according to the World Tourism Organization, followed by London and New York City.

What's Paris got that your city hasn't got? Is it the nickname the *City of Love*? Is it the slogan *Liberty Started Here* or the idea that *Life is an Art* with images of famous artists like Monet, Modigliani, Dali, da Vinci, Picasso, Braque and Klee? Is it the Cole Porter song, *I Love Paris*, sung by Frank Sinatra? Is it the movie *American in Paris*? Is it the fact that Paris has numerous architectural icons that sum up the city's identity and image --- the Eiffel Tower, Arch of Triumph, Notre Dame Cathedral, Moulin Rouge and Palace of Versailles?

Do cities need icons, songs, slogans and nicknames to become famous? Or do famous cities simply attract more attention from architects, artists, wordsmiths and ad agencies? Certainly, having an architectural icon, such as the Eiffel Tower, built in 1889, put Paris on the world map. But all these other things were added to make the identity and image. As a result, international tourists spent \$46.3 billion in France in 2010.

What's your city's claim to fame? Does it have an architectural icon?

World's Most Famous City Icons

Beyond nicknames, slogans and songs, some cities are fortunate to have an architectural icon that is immediately recognized by almost everyone worldwide. These architectural icons may be buildings, bridges, monuments, signs, landmarks or observation towers. A great architectural icon is one that is immediately identifiable and conveys its location.



The Hollywood hillside letters are easy to recognize.

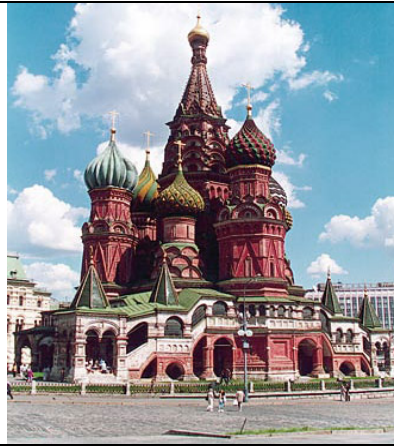


So is the Welcome to Las Vegas sign.

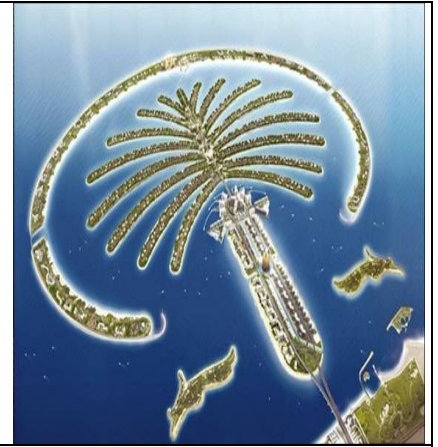
But what about these icons? Do you know what cities they represent?



What city?



Where is St Basil's



Where is Palm Tree Island?



Where is it?



Paris or Las Vegas?



Jesus Overlooks What City?



Where is it?



Space Needle is in what city?



Gateway to the West

What makes a great city icon? One that is immediately recognized by its shape. One that is original, one of a kind and over the top. Never copy the symbol of another city, not even the idea behind it. How can you emphasize your uniqueness by copying someone else? Oh, it works if you want to be branded fake, like the fake Eiffel Tower in Las Vegas. A great city icon should symbolize the values of the people who live there. For example, the Statue of Liberty stands for New York openness, welcoming of strangers, freedom and hospitality.

World's Top Observation Towers

Cities that want to attract international attention and visitors typically compete for the Olympic Games or a World's Fair. A tower structure is often built as a landmark entrance to the games or fair.

The most famous and perhaps the oldest is the Eiffel Tower built in Paris, France in 1889 by Gustave Eiffel as an entrance to the 1889 World's Fair.

At 1063 feet, it was the tallest man-made structure in the world from 1889 to 1930. It has become one of the most recognizable structures in the world and a worldwide icon for the City of Paris.

The tower was criticized by the public when it was built; many called it an eyesore.

Eiffel had a permit for the tower to stand 20 years. It was to be dismantled in 1909, when its ownership would revert to the City of Paris.

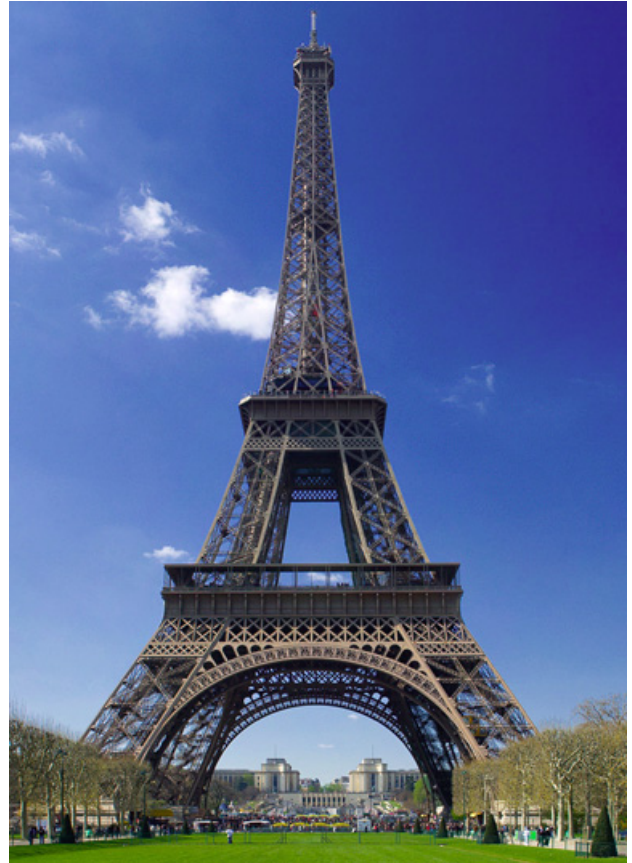
While the city planned to tear it down, it proved valuable for communications and it was allowed to stand after the expiration of the permit.

As the story goes, the French cut the lift (elevator) wires during the German occupation of Paris in 1940 so Hitler would have to climb the steps to the summit. In 1944 when the Allies were nearing Paris, Hitler ordered the demolition of the tower but his general disobeyed the order. Within hours of the Liberation of Paris, the lifts of the tower were working normally.

More than 200 million people have visited the Eiffel Tower since its construction in 1889, including 6,719,200 visitors in 2006. The iron lady has two restaurants on the first level and another restaurant on the second level. It is the most-visited paid monument in the world.

As one of the most iconic images ever, the Eiffel Tower has been the inspiration for the creation of over 30 duplicates and similar towers around the world.

Today, there are 286 man-made towers worldwide. About 149 towers have observation decks, 55 have restaurants, 17 have hotels and 17 have thrill rides, according to Phoenix-Cave Creek AZ-based JLC Hospitality Consulting, the company that maintains a worldwide database of observation towers.



Here is a list of the world's tallest observation towers with restaurants:

World's Top Observation Towers with Restaurants								
Name	City	Country	Height feet	Year Open	Thrill Ride	Hotel	Cost to Construct	Annual Attendance
Tokyo Sky Tree	Tokyo	Japan	2080	2012				
Canton Tower	Guangzhou	China	1968	2010				
CN Tower	Toronto	Canada	1815	1976			\$243,000,000	
Oriental Pearl Tower	Shanghai	China	1535	1994		X		
Milad Tower	Tehran	Iran	1427	2007		X		
Kuala Lumpur Tower	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	1381	1994	X			
Liberation Tower	Kuwait City	Kuwait	1220	1996				
Berliner Fernsehturm	Berlin	Germany	1207	1969				1,000,000
Stratosphere Tower	Las Vegas NV	United States	1149	1996	X	X		
West Pearl Tower	Chengdu	China	1112	2004				
Macau Tower	Macau	Macau	1109	2001	X			
Europaturm	Frankfurt	Germany	1107	1979				
Tokyo Tower	Tokyo	Japan	1091	1958			\$8,400,000	3,000,000
Sky Tower	Auckland	New Zealand	1076	1997	X		\$50,000,000	500,000
Eiffel Tower	Paris	France	1063	1889				6,700,200
Aspire Tower	Doha	Qatar	1043	2007			\$173,500,510	
Sydney Tower	Sydney	Australia	1014	1981			\$36,000,000	180,000
Fernmelde Tower	Nuremberg	Germany	958	1977				
Olympiaturm	Munich	Germany	950	1968				
Heinrich-Hertz-Turm	Hamburg	Germany	917	1968	X			
Hillbrow Tower	Johannesburg	South Africa	882	1971			\$2,800,000	
Colonus	Cologne	Germany	872	1981				
Donauturm	Vienna	Austria	827	1964	X			
Dresden TV Tower	Dresden	Germany	827	1969				200,000
Rhein Tower	Düsseldorf	Germany	789	1981				
N Seoul Tower	Seoul	South Korea	786	1975			\$2,500,000	
Fukuoka Tower	Fukuoka	Japan	768	1989			\$944,400,000	
Tower of the Americas	San Antonio TX	United States	750	1968	X			
Florianurm	Dortmund	Germany	720	1959				
Fernseh Tower	Stuttgart	Germany	711	1956				
Baghdad Tower	Baghdad	Iraq	672	1994				
Telstra Tower	Canberra	Australia	640	1980				6,000,000
Calgary Tower	Calgary	Canada	626	1967			\$3,500,000	500,000
Cairo Tower	Cairo	Egypt	617	1961			\$35,000,000	
BT Tower	London	United Kingdom	617	1964				
Kuwait Tower 1	Kuwait City	Kuwait	613	1979				
Euromast	Rotterdam	Netherlands	610	1962				
Space Needle	Seattle WA	United States	605	1962			\$4,500,000	1,300,000
Carew Tower	Cincinnati OH	United States	574	1929		X	\$33,000,000	
Reunion Tower	Dallas TX	United States	560	1978		X		
Millennium Tower	Abuja	Nigeria	558	2010			\$332,564,000	
Näsinneula ObservTower	Tampere	Finland	551	1971	X			

Las Vegas Eiffel Tower	Las Vegas NV	United States	540	1999	X	\$785,000,000	
Skylon Tower	Niagara Falls	Canada	525	1965		\$7,000,000	
Blackpool Tower	Blackpool	United Kingdom	518	1894	X	\$462,608	
Vasco de Gama Tower	Lisboa	Portugal	476	1998			X
Kyoto Tower Hotel	Kyoto	Japan	430	1964		\$1,056,000	400,000

Source: Jeff Coy, JLC Hospitality Consulting 480-488-3382 www.jeffcoy.com

Top 3 Tallest Observation Towers in the World

The Tokyo Sky Tree is scheduled to open in 2012 at a height of 2080 feet --- almost twice the height of the Eiffel Tower built in 1889. Already topped out, Sky Tree is now officially the tallest tower in the world. Owned by Tobu Tower Sky Tree Co, a division of Tobu Railway, it offers telecommunications, an observation platform and restaurant atop.



Canton Tower opened in Guangzhou, China in 2010 for the Asian Games at 1968 feet --- the tallest tower in the world from 2009-2011. It has an observation deck, rotating restaurant, Sky Walk and an elliptical track around the edge of the tower that is described as an inclined Ferris Wheel with 16 transparent passenger cars. In addition, the Gravity Machine lifts visitors up along the mast from which they are dropped back to the top deck --- a marvelous falling of 148 feet that makes you scream all the way. Adult admission price is US\$23. For more, go to www.cantontower.com.

The CN Tower, with height of 1815 feet, opened in Toronto, Canada in 1976 at a cost of CDN\$63 million (US\$243 million in 2011 dollars) --- the tallest free-standing structure and the tallest tower in the world from 1975-2007. It held both records until the opening of the Burj Khalifa and Canton Tower. The CN Tower, built by Canadian National Railway, is an icon of Toronto and a symbol of Canada. It provides telecommunications, multiple observation levels and a 360 restaurant. The Metro Toronto Convention Center was added in 1984 and the Sky Dome opened in 1986. Access was greatly improved in 1989 when the new Sky Walk connected the tower and Sky Dome to Union Station and the city's underground pedestrian system. Today, the CN Tower is in the centre of a bustling tourist district that attracts more than 2 million international visitors annually.

Observation Towers With Restaurants & Hotel

Observation towers attract visitors; and when you add a revolving restaurant, attendance goes up. But when you add a hotel nearby, connected to the tower or integrated into the hotel, you create an attraction that draws even more visitors that stay longer and spend more. Here is a list of the world's tallest observation towers with restaurants and a hotel:

- Oriental Pearl Tower in Shanghai
- Milad Tower in Tehran
- Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas
- Carew Tower in Cincinnati
- Reunion Tower in Dallas
- Vasco de Gama Tower & Royal Hotel in Lisboa
- Kyoto Tower Hotel

Name	Location	Height feet	Year Open	Cost to Construct	Annual Attendance	Owner
Oriental Pearl Tower	Shanghai, China	1535	1994			
Milad Tower	Tehran, Iran	1427	2007			
Stratosphere Tower	Las Vegas NV, USA	1149	1996			
Carew Tower	Cincinnati OH, USA	574	1929	\$33,000,000		US National Historic Landmark
Reunion Tower	Dallas TX, USA	560	1978			
Vasco da Gama Tower & Royal Hotel	Lisboa, Portugal	476	1998			Mgt by Sana Hotels
Kyoto Tower Hotel & Sky Lounge	Kyoto, Japan	430	1964	\$1,056,000	400,000	

Source: Jeff Coy, JLC Hospitality Consulting, 480-488-3382. www.jeffcoy.com

The Oriental Pearl Tower in Shanghai, China is located in the Pudong District opposite The Bund. The tower features 11 spheres. The two largest spheres, along the length of the tower, have diameters of 164 feet for the lower and 148 feet for the upper. There is a 20-room hotel called the Space Hotel between the two large spheres. The entire tower is supported by three enormous columns that start underground. The tower has fifteen observatory levels. The highest (known as the Space Module) is at 1148 feet. The lower levels are at 863 feet (Sightseeing Floor) and at 295 feet



(Space City). Yes, there is a revolving restaurant. Customers of the revolving restaurant can enjoy a free visit of the tower, including the three spheres and the Shanghai Municipal History Museum. The project also contains exhibition facilities, restaurants and a shopping mall.

Milad Tower in Tehran is the tallest structure in Iran since 2007 at 1427 feet. The tower, part of the Tehran International Trade and Convention Center, features a 5-star hotel along with restaurants atop with panoramic views, a convention center, a world trade center, and an IT park. The complex offers facilities combining trade, information, communication, convention and accommodations all in one place. The 5-star International Hotel with 560,000 sq feet caters to local and global tourists and their guests attending conventions. The International Convention Center consists of 7 conference salons and an exhibition space with an area of 700 square meters. It also features a lobby, training room, a radio and television studio and reception services. The World Trade Center with 430,000 sq feet area has been established with different sections for national and global commercial business transactions, exhibitions and technical & scientific conventions.



Stratosphere Las Vegas is a tower, hotel and casino. It is the tallest observation tower and the 5th-tallest structure in the US. It is owned by Whitehall Street Real Estate Funds, an affiliate of Goldman-Sachs who purchased American Casino & Entertainment Properties



which includes the Stratosphere along with three other properties. The sale closed on February 21, 2008 for US\$1.3 billion. The property's signature attraction is the 1,149 foot Stratosphere Tower. The hotel is a separate building with 24 stories, 2,427 rooms and an 80,000 sq ft casino. The top of the tower has two observation decks, a revolving restaurant known as "Top of the World" and four thrill rides. In January 2010, American Casino & Entertainment Properties announced a new thrill ride for the top of the tower. SkyJump is a

controlled descent bungee jumping-like ride that allows riders to plummet 855 feet attached to a high speed descent wire. Sky Jump opened in April 2010.

Carew Tower, completed in 1930, stands 49 stories tall in the heart of downtown Cincinnati overlooking the Ohio River. It contains the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza (formerly the Omni Netherland Plaza). The hotel is described as "one of the world's finest examples of French Art Deco architecture" and was used as the model for the Empire State Building in New York City. Carew Tower is technically a building, not a tower, because it has floors from the group up. Prior to the Great American Insurance Building, Carew Tower gave Cincinnati the distinction of having an American city's tallest building, constructed pre-World

War II. The building originally had three towers, the tallest housing offices, the second the hotel, and the third serving as a parking garage which had an elevator rather than traditional ramps for access. There was also a turntable for vehicles to assist in pointing delivery trucks in the right direction. The system has since been dismantled. From 1967 to 1980, the Carew Tower was featured in the opening and closing credits of the long-running daytime soap opera *The Edge of Night*. Today the building is home to the Hilton Hotel, offices and a shopping mall. Visitors can pay \$2 each to access the observation deck, which is located on the top floor. Because of its architectural standards, as well as its identity with the city's heritage, Carew Tower was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994.



Reunion Tower is a 561 foot observation tower that opened in 1978. It has become one of the most recognizable landmarks in Dallas, Texas. The tower is part of the Hyatt Regency Hotel complex with over a thousand guest rooms, spa, splash pool, the JFK Memorial and the Dallas Convention Center. Reunion tower consists of three floors with circular floor



plans on top of four shafts of poured-in-place concrete. The top three floors are encased in an open-air sphere or geodesic dome. At night the dome at the top of the building lights with hundreds of bulbs that flash in various computer-generated patterns. Three rectangular shafts, containing elevators, rise parallel to the central shaft. Each shaft's out-facing wall is made up of glass panels, affording views of the city during the 68-second elevator ride to the top. Reunion

Tower closed for major renovations in 2007. In 2009, celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck opened the fine-dining restaurant, *Five Sixty*, on the tower's rotating top level. The name is a reference to the restaurant's elevation. The middle floor of the tower is used for special events managed by Wolfgang Puck Catering. As of July 2011, the observation deck was still closed off to the public, but it was said to reopen later in the year.

The Vasco de Gama Tower, at 476 feet, opened as part of the Expo98 World's Fair in Lisboa, Portugal. The Royal Hotel opened in 2010. The observation deck and restaurant closed in 2004 and have not yet reopened.

The Kyoto Tower Hotel & Sky Lounge opened as part of the 1964 Summer Olympics in Kyoto, Japan. Cost to construct was US\$1,056,000. The tower is 430 feet high and attracts 400,000 visitors annually.

Observation Towers with Restaurants and Thrill Rides

- Canton Tower in Guangzhou
- CN Tower in Toronto
- Kuala Lumpur Tower in Kuala Lumpur
- Stratosphere Casino, Hotel & Tower in Las Vegas
- Macau Tower in Macau
- Sky Tower in Auckland
- Heinrich-Hertz Tower in Hamburg
- Donauturm in Vienna
- Tower of the Americas in San Antonio
- Nasinneula Observation Tower in Tampere
- Las Vegas Eiffel Tower in Las Vegas
- Blackpool Tower in Blackpool

Name	Location	Height feet	Year Open	Cost to Construct	Annual Attendance	Owner
Canton Tower	Guangzhou, China	1968	2010			
CN Tower	Toronto ON Canada	1815	1976	\$243,000,000		
Kuala Lumpur Tower	KL, Malaysia	1381	1994			Telecom Malaysia Group
Stratosphere Tower	Las Vegas NV, USA	1149	1996			
Macau Tower	Macau, China	1109	2001			Society of Tourism & Diversity
Sky Tower	Auckland, NZ	1076	1997	\$50,000,000	500,000	SkyCity Entertainment Group
Heinrich-Hertz-Turm	Hamburg, Germany	917	1968			DFMG
Donauturm	Vienna, Austria	827	1964			
Tower of the Americas	San Antonio TX, USA	750	1968			
Näsinneula Observation Tower	Tampere, Finland	551	1971			
Las Vegas Eiffel Tower	Las Vegas NV, USA	540	1999	\$785,000,000		Caesar's Entertainment
Blackpool Tower	Blackpool, UK	518	1894	\$462,608		Blackpool Council: Merlin Mgt

Source: Jeff Coy, JLC Hospitality Consulting. 480-488-3382 www.jeffcoy.com

Canton Tower in Guangzhou, China opened in 2010. At 1968 feet it was the tallest tower in the world until the Tokyo Sky Tree. Not only does it have indoor and outdoor observation decks, it has a rotating restaurant, Sky Walk and two thrill rides: (1) the world's highest



Ferris Wheel and (2) a Gravity Machine. Unlike other Ferris Wheels, it has a 15-degree incline and can resist 8-magnitude earth quakes and Beaufort scale 12 typhoons. An elliptical track is constructed around the edge of the tower's roof. Sixteen transparent

capsules take between 20 and 40 minutes to go around the track. On the top deck, the Gravity Machine lifts visitors up along the spires from which they are dropped back to the top deck --- a marvelous falling of 148 feet that makes you scream all the way. Adult admission price is US\$23. For more, go to www.cantontower.com.

The CN Tower in Toronto opened EdgeWalk in August 2011 to add to its claim to fame.



EdgeWalk is an extreme walk leading thrill-seekers around the edge of the tower. The idea for EdgeWalk first came up about three years ago when Jack Robinson, coo, and his team first heard about the drawing power of outside walks at the Macau Tower and Auckland's Sky Tower. EdgeWalk hosted 8,000 adventure-seekers this year before it closed at the end of the season in October. It is estimated that 14,000 edge-walkers will visit the tower in 2012. The CN Tower attracts 1.5 million visitors annually.

Kuala Lumpur Tower opened in 1996 at a height of 1381 feet. The tower is the landmark of Kuala Lumpur with nearby Petronas Towers. It is a communications tower with observatory, restaurant and banquet rooms whose design reflects the Malaysian Islamic culture. The tower head has 11 levels which include the 360-degree view Seri Angkasa revolving restaurant with 250-seats.



For one week in August every year, the KL Tower transforms into a base jumping platform for parachutists who come from around the world to participate in the event. It all started in 1999. The world record for the most base jumps within a 24-hour period was set at KL Tower. Gary Cunningham from Australia set this record on New Years Eve 2006



completing a total of 133 jumps from the tower. He was supported by a team of 13 packers who guaranteed a continuous supply of packed parachutes. Interested visitors can join the jumpers on the platform to get a first-hand experience. Strapped into a harness and leashed to the tower, the organizers make sure that the only people falling from the tower have a parachute strapped to their back. The event was organized to prevent adrenaline junkies from sneaking into the tower to jump --- only to

be arrested on the spot where they land. Basic package entrance fee for the KL Tower park is RM45 for adults, which includes the observation deck, MP5, Forrest in the City, F1 simulator or pony ride or animal zone. There's also a Flying Fox zipline at the base. Designed by Kumpulan Senireka KL, the tower was constructed by Wayss Freytag of Germany and is managed by the Menara KL division of Telekom Malaysia. Cost to construct was RM270 million, which is US\$86.7 million in today's currency. For more, go to www.menarakl.com.my.

Stratosphere Casino, Hotel & Tower in Las Vegas is the tallest observation tower in the US at 1149 feet. It is one of the most exciting attractions on the Las Vegas strip. It is also a 80,000 sq-foot casino and a 2,427-room hotel. The top of the tower has indoor and outdoor observation decks, a revolving restaurant known as "Top of the World" and four thrill rides: (1) Big Shot, (2) Insanity, (3) X-Scream and (4) SkyJump.

Big Shot at 1,081 feet is the highest thrill ride in the world. Strap into the Big Shot and prepare to be shot 160 feet into the air at 45 mph as you overlook Las Vegas. In a matter of



seconds, the Big Shot thrill ride catapults 16 riders from the 921-foot high platform up the tower's mast to a height of 1,081 feet and down again. Before you can catch your breath, you'll be shot back up again at 4 Gs of force on the way and feel negative Gs on the way down. Cost to ride is \$13.

Insanity the Ride is a mind-blowing experience. It opened in 2005 at 900 feet. It is the second highest thrill ride in the world. A massive mechanical arm extends out 64 feet over the edge of the Stratosphere Tower at height of over 900 feet. This ride will spin you in the open air at speeds of up to 3 Gs. You will be propelled to an angle of 70 degrees, which will tilt your body into one position ---



straight down! If you're brave enough to keep your eyes open, you'll get a breathtaking view of historic downtown Las Vegas. Cost to ride is \$12.

X-Scream is the third highest thrill ride in the world. Ever played on a giant teeter-totter 866 feet above the ground? X-Scream propels you and several other riders headfirst 27 feet over the edge of the Stratosphere Casino, Hotel & Tower. You'll dangled weightlessly above the strip before being pulled back and then propelled back out over the edge again. Cost to ride is \$12.



In January 2010, American Casino & Entertainment Properties announced a fourth thrill ride called SkyJump for the top of the tower. SkyJump is a controlled free fall that sends you jumping off the 108th floor at a scream-inducing speed. The bungee jumping-like ride allows riders to plummet 855 feet

attached to a high speed, descent wire. It opened on April 20, 2010. Cost to ride is \$110. For more, go to www.skyjumplasvegas.com. Stratosphere is owned by Whitehall Street Real Estate Funds, an affiliate of Goldman-Sachs who purchased American Casino & Entertainment Properties in 2008.



Macau Tower aka Macau Tower Convention & Entertainment Center is located in the former Portuguese colony of Macau, now part of China. It opened in 2001. At a height of 1109 feet, the tower has an observation deck with panoramic views, restaurants, theaters and shopping malls. It also features Skywalk X, a thrilling walking tour around the outer rim, and SkyJump, a bungee jump from the tower's outer rim and the second highest SkyJump after the Stratosphere in Las Vegas. On a visit to Auckland, New Zealand, Macau casino billionaire Stanley Ho Hung-Son was so impressed with the Sky Tower in Auckland that he commissioned a similar one to be built in Macau. The tower was designed by New Zealand engineering firm Beca Group and Gordon Moller of Craig Craig Moller. The tower is owned by the Society of Tourism & Diversity Macau and managed by Shun Holdings. In 2006, the father of contemporary bungee jumping, AJ Hackett, broke his own Guinness World Record at Macau Tower of "the highest bungee jump from a building" achieved in 1987 from the Eiffel Tower. Macau Tower has appeared in episodes of *The Amazing Race* and *Jack Osbourne: Adrenaline Junkie*.

Sky Tower is a communications and observation tower in downtown Auckland, New Zealand. It is 1,076 feet tall from the ground to the top of the mast. It has become an iconic structure in Auckland's skyline. The tower is part of SkyCity Auckland casino complex originally built by developer Harrah's Entertainment. The tower attracts an average of 1,450 visitors per day or more than 500,000 per year. The tower head contains two restaurants

and a café, including a revolving restaurant turning 360 degrees per hour. Sky Tower has three observation decks. The tower also features the Sky Walk around the exterior and the SkyJump where jumpers can reach up to 53 mph. Designer was Craig Craig Moller and the engineering was from Beca Group. Fletcher Construction was the contracted builder. The tower took 2 & ½ years to build and opened in 1997. The current owner is SkyCity Entertainment Group.



Heinrich-Hertz Tower opened in 1968 at a height of 916 feet. There are eight concentric platforms stacked one above the other for telecommunications, observation deck and restaurant. After the observation deck and restaurant were closed, due to asbestos contamination, former stuntman Jochen Schweitzer had a bungee jumping base installed. The restaurant is not expected to open again due to new fire escape regulations. And the bungee platform was closed in 2001. The tower is named after German physicist and favorite son Heinrich Hertz and serves as a famous landmark of Hamburg, Germany.

Donauturm aka Danube Tower opened in 1964 at 827 feet --- the tallest structure in Austria. The tower is located near the north bank of the Danube River in the Vienna district of Donaustadt. Designed by architect Hannes Lintl, it took 18 months to complete for the 1964 Viennese International Horticultural Show. Since then, it has become a tourist attraction and a lookout point amidst the Viennese skyline. Two high-speed elevators lift 14 passengers up to the viewing platform in 35 seconds. Two revolving restaurants offer a view of the Austrian capital and the Danube River. The observation deck also features a bungee-jumping site that is used at times during the summer months.

Tower of the Americas in downtown San Antonio, Texas is another observation tower with restaurant and thrill rides. After 18 months of construction, the tower opened at 750 feet as



the themed structure for the 1968 World's Fair. Designed by architect O'Neill Ford, it was the tallest observation tower in the USA from 1968-1996, when the Las Vegas Stratosphere Tower was completed. Two observation decks are accessible by elevator for a fee \$10.95 for adults. At 800 feet per minute, it takes only 43 seconds for the elevators to climb to the

top. Three elevators can carry 1,950 passengers per hour. The outdoor observation deck can handle 340 people while the indoor observation area accommodates 500 people. The top house was constructed on the ground and hoisted, using cables, up to the top of the poured concrete shaft. The revolving top house at the top of the tower is 76 feet tall. It is so well balanced that it takes just a 1 horsepower motor to rotate the structure. The top house consists of a lounge and revolving 250-seat restaurant which occupied 10,150 sq feet. In 2004, Landry's Restaurants Inc won a 15-year lease to manage the tower for the City of San Antonio. Landry's completed an \$8 million renovation of restaurant, lounge and observation deck and added a 4-D "ride" called Skies Over Texas that gives the history of Texas in a film format. Landry's spent another \$4 million to add ground level attractions, café and gift shop. The tower reopened in 2006 with the new Eyes Over Texas restaurant, which converted to Chart House in 2007. The Skies Over Texas 4-D theater film ride continues to take visitors on a high-flying trip across the Lone Star State, zooming in on such scenes as a Friday night high school football game and working up close with a space shuttle at NASA.

Nasinneula Observation Tower opened in Tampere, Finland in 1971 at a height of 551-feet. It features an observation deck with restaurants and thrill rides. In fact, the tower is located inside the most popular park in Finland, Sarkanniemi Adventure Park, which features an aquarium, planetarium, children's zoo, art museum, amusement park and dolphinarium as well as 5 roller coasters and 3 water rides. Two elevators, the fastest public elevators in Finland, take 16 people up to the top of the tower in 27 seconds. The tower has a revolving restaurant that makes one revolution every 45 minutes. Designed by Pekka Ilveskoski, it is the tallest observation tower in the Nordic countries. The design was inspired by Space Needle in Seattle.



Las Vegas Eiffel Tower aka Paris Las Vegas opened in 1999. It is a hotel and casino owned by Caesar's Entertainment Corp. The Paris Hotel has 2,915 rooms and 85,000 sq feet of casino space. It is a half-scale tall replica of the Eiffel Tower that reaches 541 feet high. The Eiffel Tower restaurant is located on the 11th floor. You can take a glass-enclosed elevator to the top of the observation deck at 460 feet. When the scale model of the Eiffel Tower was built, it was planned to be full-scale, but the airport was too close and the tower had to be shrunk. The architect was Bergman Walls Associates.

Blackpool Tower is a 518-foot observation tower and tourist attraction that was opened in 1894. The idea for the tower came when Blackpool mayor John Bickerstaffe commissioned the design of a new landmark for the town after he visited the Great Paris Exhibition in 1889 and was impressed by the Eiffel Tower. When he returned to Blackpool, he set up a committee to raise funds to build a similar design in the town. He invested two thousand pounds of his own money, along with other investors, to form The Blackpool Tower Company in 1891. Total cost for the design and construction of the tower and buildings was 290,000 pounds. When the tower opened, 3,000 customers took the first rides to the top. Tourists paid sixpence for admission, another sixpence for a ride in the lifts to the top and a

further sixpence to see the Blackpool Tower Circus. Today, the tower consists of (1) a dungeon, (2) ballroom, (3) circus, (4) aquarium, (5) restaurant, (6) Jungle Jim's Towering Adventureland, (7) Jurassic Walk, (8) Charlie Cairoli's famous clown exhibition, (9) tower heritage trail, (10) tower lounge bar, (11) 4-D cinema and (12) the tower top. The enclosed tower top is situated at 381 feet. The tower top reopened after a renovation in September 2011 as the Blackpool Tower Eye with a glass floor where visitors can look straight down. Current management is the Blackpool Council and the Merlin Entertainment Group. Overall visits to Blackpool remained at 10 million in 2011. Of 5 million visitors between May and August, 56% percent of them stayed in hotels at least one night.

In addition to observation towers with restaurants and thrill rides, it is worth mentioning three observation towers (without restaurants) that offer thrill rides:

- Spinnaker Tower at 558 feet that opened in 2005 in Portsmouth UK has a free-fall rider.
- Dreamworld Tower at 415 feet that opened in 1997 in Coomera, Australia has a giant drop and tower of terror.
- Scream Tower at 338 feet that opened in 1992 in Heide Park, Germany has a gyro drop tower.

Bottomline, the most attractive observations towers in the world, due to their height, restaurants, hotels and thrill rides, are:

- Canton Tower in Guangzhou
- CN Tower in Toronto
- Stratosphere in Las Vegas

What's your city's claim to fame? Is your city getting its fair share of the domestic and international tourist market? Is your city an attractive destination for leisure, recreation and entertainment? Does your city have a nickname, slogan, song or an architectural icon? For years, famous cities around the world have built and promoted architectural icons to attract visitors with varying degrees of success.

What could an architectural icon do for your city?

[See City Branding, Part 1, Nicknames, Slogans & Songs](#)
[See City Branding, Part 3: Observation Towers in the USA](#)



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