

A large quantity of the yellow \$1 The Chalet chips were sold on ebay. The buyer sent me a few of them. I had seen them before and considered them a UFC per TGT. The Skey molded chips were distributed by BC Wills in Detroit, MI and later had an office in Reno, NV 1937-1965. No records exist from BC Wills and many of their chips are UFC's.

There also exists chips with the DiSq mold with The Chalet. TGT attributes them to Kansas City, MO. Per Harvy Fullers index of NV Gaming licenses there was a The Chalet in Reno, NV but no dates, names, or other info. Was it ever opened? We also found evidence there was a The Chalet in MT. TGT lists a "Chalet Club" in Detroit.

This research is all about The Chalet in Detroit that would have been ran by Lincoln Fitzgerald for the Detroit mob. Fitzgerald later moved to Reno, NV and opened the Nevada Club in 1946.

Now you know the "Back Story." *vbg*

What the heck, let's take a look! *vbg*

Enter our "Friend Of The Hobby" and Ed Hertel.



The Chalet Detroit1att2

Friend:

Saw the post about The Chalet. I got this small-key Chalet about a year ago and tried to come up with something.



The Chalet Detroit2att2

One possibility is that the chip may be from The Chalet in East Detroit which was apparently run by the same guys who had the Chesterfield (also in East Detroit). Both were well known gambling places and often mentioned in the same breath.

I see that the eBay seller of the \$1 yellow Chalet chips was from Michigan. Probably hard to prove, but a decent chance that the small-key Chalet might be East Detroit.

Chesterfield chip:



The Chalet Detroit3att2

My note: The 24845 chips were found in Lincoln Fitzgerald's estate in Reno along with other Chesterfield Club chips. It is said he actually used the CC, USPC chips in his Reno, Nevada Club.



The Chalet Detroit4att2

pic of The Chalet (located on 8 Mile Rd. near the intersection of Gratiot Ave., just north of the Detroit/East Detroit city line and Wayne County & Macomb County line)



The Chalet

Detroit5att2

Off-Smashed Chalet to Be Dealt Final Blow

By ALLAN BLANCHARD

Where police raiders once smashed expensive gambling equipment, axes will swing again for the last time next month.

The old Chalet, the once-plush Macomb County gambling casino, will be demolished to make way for a \$250,000 clubhouse for the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

The Eagles have occupied the old building, queen of Detroit-area gambling casinos in the '30s, since Lady Luck lammed out on the Chalet's operators some 15 years ago.

Like Las Vegas

But for a wild decade when Macomb County was an early day Las Vegas, the rambling casino at Eight Mile and Gratiot in East Detroit operated openhandedly, playing hide-and-seek with police according to the ebb and flow of the political tide.

The facade behind which the croupiers worked was a popular restaurant where the food was good and where couples could dance to swinging bands.

Often the "front" was not needed. The doors to the gambling rooms behind were open to everyone, although local police never seemed quite able to find them.

Fatal Despair

When the heat was off, the Chalet and other Macomb spots—Chesterfield Inn, Blossom Heath and the Palm Gardens—ran with brazen effrontery.

Occasionally public pressure and indignation would rise over the fatal despair of the losers. Distraught wives would complain to the news-

papers, or the family breadwinner would forget his gambling losses by killing himself.

One unfortunate loser most appropriately strung himself up in a tree alongside the Chesterfield, hardly a sound advertisement for the inn's wares.

When the heat was on, the casinos would become more selective in their clientele and operate behind the peep-hole door or zippered curtain.

Escape Tunnel

Old-timers remember a swinging mirror in the Chalet behind which was a tunnel leading to a farm house across the nearby Warren Township line where patrons could find refuge from the police.

The Chalet was undoubtedly the most opulent of the roadhouses. It had trappings to match the class of the limousine trade to which it catered.

When the joints were running unencumbered by marauding police, anyone with \$4 could get into the Chalet, which opened at noon.

The afternoon trade was comprised mostly of women who for \$2 were offered more than bridge and crumpets.

Bingo Games

The ladies started the afternoon with a buffet lunch and a few games of innocuous bingo, which whetted their appetites for the games in the back room.

Bingo winnings were quickly eaten up by the green baize dice tables, the roulette wheels, blackjack and chuck-a-luck games. Patrons could always play the ponies, too.

When pocketbooks were emptied the ladies headed for home and the kiddies. At the door they passed incoming gentlemen bent on a long evening trying to beat the house.

Twice during the first term

of Gov. Frank D. Fitzgerald, the gambling houses were shut down by the attorney general, Harry S. Toy, later Detroit police commissioner. They always reopened.

Gov. Frank Murphy went into office in 1937 and gaming ceased operating openly for two years.

The Chalet made a bid at opening with \$5,000 in new decorations during Murphy's term. It was quickly swarmed over by State Police.

Similar fates met Blossom Heath and a Redford Township club named Ackmur. They gained no further notoriety as gambling spots.

Club Royale

When Fitzgerald was re-elected in 1938, the Chalet and Chesterfield Inn, operated by Danny Sullivan, celebrated by trying to reopen in their original flashy style.

Pressure from East Detroit residents forced them to go

behind closed doors within two weeks. Neither ever operated openly again.

The Chalet became the Club Royale. In 1943 State Police acted upon rumors that gambling was going on in the club by camping on its bar stools.

Every night for three months troopers were present in the club. They found nothing, but their presence cost the operators \$60,000 in lost gambling revenues. The club closed "for alterations."

Operators Fined

As a result of the Dehnke grand jury in Macomb County the operators of the Club Royale were brought to trial in 1946.

Visiting Circuit Judge Herman Dehnke of Harrisville, accepted pleas of guilty to violations of the state gambling laws and fined the operators the cost of the grand jury investigation.

After the state's Carr-Sigler grand jury and the Dehnke investigation, open and widespread gambling disappeared in Michigan, except at the state-owned race tracks where betting is legal.

Greener Tables

The well-known gamblers of the '30s drifted off to greener dice tables in Las Vegas, Florida and Cuba.

The Club Royale was sold to the Eagles, and Chesterfield Inn became a theater, then a private hall which burned in 1956.

When the old Chalet-Club Royale comes down next month, only Blossom Heath will remain as a lingering symbol of the gambling '30s. It's now the St. Clair Shores Civic Center.



This Is How the Club Appeared in the '30s

The Chalet Detroit6att2Ed:

My note: Interesting that the Governor of Michigan last name was Fitzgerald. Coincidence?
vbg The article says in later years the place was called Club Royale. Where are the chips?
vbg

Still doing some follow-up on the "The Chalet" chips. I contacted the seller who sold the chips. First thing she noted, said was that there were no more. She said in researching past auctions she found one sold and in the description it said it was from a brothel in St. Louis. I'm assuming this was because of the Missouri attribution of the diasqr. I asked her where she got them. She couldn't remember specifically since she's had them a long time, but "most likely an auction or estate sale in Michigan."

I think the Michigan attribution for the smkey chips is probably pretty fair. We'll never know for sure. One thing that is interesting though. In the auction for the Chalet chips she also had almost 300 smkey chips marked "JS" (and some cardboard "Stop Monkeying Around" chips). She said she originally bought them all together in the chip carousel, so there might be a connection with JS and The Chalet.

Who knows. I guess if it was easy it wouldn't be as much fun. *vbg*

My note: I really like the Detroit attribution for The Chalet Skey chips. No I can't prove it. We found 4 places called The Chalet, MT, MO, NV, and Detroit MI.

I have seen no info on the MO place.

The MT, The Chalet was a nice place from the info I have.

I don't believe the NV one ever opened. Did Lincoln Fitzgerald start the NV gaming licensing process for it but never used the name?

The Chalet chips we have were found at an estate sale in Michigan.

What do you think?