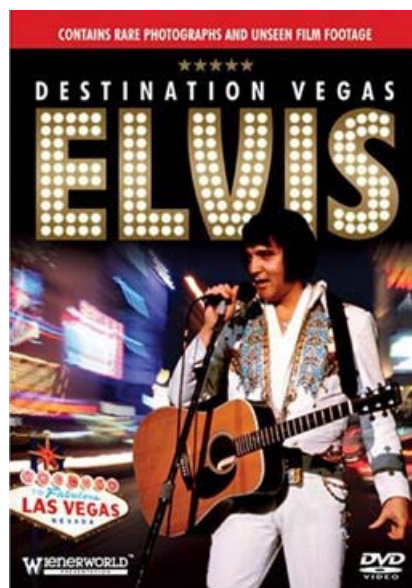




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Elvis Presley - Destination Vegas - Elvis DVD



By Travis Jensen

When the name Elvis Presley is mentioned, many things come to mind. The first thing should be that he was a legendary performer, larger than life itself to most. He was the highest selling single artist in history, with over a billion records sold world-wide. He is usually at the top of the list for the richest dead celebrities...number one this year! He has become an American icon as the king of rock and roll who has set the pace for what has now become the standard for musical artists in popular culture. He was the first to have his own bachelor pad, entourage, jet airplane, and all of the "bling" you see today.

This video delves into the typical Elvis footage, but also explores the darker side of his fabulous career with previously unavailable private footage of the Vegas years. For those of you who may not be from this planet, the Vegas years started for Elvis in the late 1960's which stemmed from his magnificent '68 Comeback special, which is probably most noted by his black leather suit and stunning good looks. This is where he was notorious for his sequenced jumpsuits and excessive lifestyle that led to his unfortunate demise at such an early age. The nation still mourns his untimely death with hundreds of thousands of people visiting his home in Memphis Tennessee every year.

This video marks the 30th anniversary of Elvis' death, and as many Elvis videos that I've ever seen, and I've seen a lot of them, it starts at the beginning of his career, during the Sun Records days with Sam Phillips in Memphis. He exploded on the American music scene in 1955 and never looked back. His early television appearances were probably his most notorious, especially at that time, as most people had never been exposed to his unique behavior. He was a guest on the Steve

Allen, Milton Berle and Ed Sullivan shows, which were probably his most noted appearances. It was at this time that he earned the nickname "Elvis the Pelvis" from network decisions to film him from the waist up because of his gyrating stage dances - a name he most certainly hated. One of these performances, which Elvis has noted as one of his most embarrassing moments, has him in a coat and tails serenading a basset hound while singing his popular hit "Hound Dog." I particularly enjoyed his duet with Frank Sinatra featured in this video.

There are brief mentions of his service in the United States Army which lasted for only two years, but focused mostly on his return which sparked a very successful movie career. He already had "Love Me Tender" and "Jailhouse Rock" under his belt at the time, so he was familiar with being on a movie stage set. Throughout most of the 1960's, Elvis main source of income was through making movies, a total of 31 films to his credit. I have 22 of them. Most of these movies were made with little variation in the plot, but always did well at the box office. Soundtrack albums were made, but didn't do nearly as well as previous records from the 1950's.

This video closely documents Elvis' triumphant return to the music scene in 1969, in which Las Vegas was the pinnacle of his performances, although he also toured extensively across the United States. There are many recordings of some of his more obscure shows, which appear to be fan recordings, some of them silent, of course, because of the primitive recording devices that were used at the time. For a better part of these several years of the remainder of his life, he looked the part of a living legend; fit and virile. However, his addiction to prescription pills and excessive lifestyle lead to an increasing mental instability and obvious declining health. There are a few recording here in which Elvis seems to be rambling in a drug-addled retort to the critics and fans where he appears to be defending and justifying his actions of his personal life. Towards the last few years of his life, for some he became a punch-line, a joke of comedy and tragedy, but for those who new him personally and for those of us who loved him as a performer, saw him as a man who was self-destructing and desperately needed help, but never got it (or wanted it for that matter). During his time in Vegas, he would do multiple shows during the week, pushed as far as he could go by his manager Colonel Tom Parker who was regarded by many as being partially responsible for leading him to his death. His exhausting, constant touring schedule was the developing reason for his addiction to pills. This is where his drug abuse escalated and took a firm hold on him and didn't let go until his death on August 16th 1977.



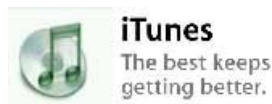
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