

Interview with Josep Dos Santos ▶ Just over half a year after the casino opened, the director



A.B.  
Josep Dos Santos, in his office after the interview.

## Josep Dos Santos

Unnic Casino Manager

«The casino will be avant-garde; you won't see any like this, as the machinery will be new»

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Following its presentation at the Andorra la Vella Congress Center, the new Unnic leisure center is well on its way to opening next autumn. You only have to walk around Prat de la Creu to see that the works are progressing well, the scaffolding has even been removed and you can already see the inside of the installation. In addition, 20% of the total, the casino, already has a new director, Josep Dos Santos, with a resounding resume.

**-You have been appointed for a few weeks. Are you busy, hopeful, or excited?**

-You said it, very excited. It is an interesting project, very important for the country and, in terms of my professional career, it is a completely different bet, because in Andorran terms it is strategic in many respects.

**-There's still half a year to go before it opens. Is there a lot of work to be done? What work needs to be done?**

-The task of a director is one when the casino is in full operation, and

another in the current context of preparation for the opening. Now we have to prepare a lot of people who are not qualified to do this job, and we are in it.

**-What kind of people need to be prepared?**

-In the casino, which is only 20% of Unnic, we would be around 80 people, of which almost 40 (50%) will be technical professionals of casinos, who have to understand the games and the machines, and all these people must be trained. The school announcement is out now.

**-This type of professional profile does not exist in Andorra.**

-It is impossible, because this business did not exist in Andorra. But if the casino is in another country, there is no such profile.

**-Where is this profile?**

-This profile is only valid for someone who has just worked in a casino, who already knows it, and this is not available to everyone.

**-Does that mean you have to look for people in another casino?**

-No, we want people from the country, it is one of the most important goals we have. We want all or most of the people who work at our resort to be from the country.

**-During these six months remaining for the opening, would the main task be to train the staff?**

-Correct. This is a very important task, because not only people have to qualify technically, but also customer service, which is the most important thing. In addition, in terms

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«We want all or most of the people who work in our complex to be from the country, and that's why we need to train them»

of Andorra, it is fantastic, because the country is extraordinary, as it is strategically located between Spain and France. The geographical area of our influence is huge, and with a different mood.

**-Should the training be done outside?**

-We will do it here in Andorra, we are not going out for nothing. Everything we have to do we will do in the country.

**-For you who have experience because you have run other casinos, is it a special challenge to run the one in Andorra?**

-I have run casinos in Madrid and I had a hard time with the one in Barcelona, which is currently the most important in Spain, but they have nothing to do with this one, because these casinos work in a very different way, because our profile will be differentiated. Understandably, will be like the one in Monaco.

**-What is the difference between Barcelona and Monaco casinos?**

-Barcelona and Madrid work for their area of influence, which is a specific profile. The one in Monaco

works for the country's area of influence, for Italy and for France, which is the same situation as us, but instead of Italy, Spain. The most important thing for us is to give a range of possibilities to the people of the country, but we must take into account France and Spain, which constantly feed us visitors.

**-That is, will the casino's customers be the same ones who are now visiting the country?**

-Not only these, we want to reach many more, we want to be a must-visit enclave for almost all of Europe, because ours will be an avant-garde casino, there is nothing like it, you will not see any casino like this. It is part of a leisure center that we are working on to make it a completely different complex in Europe.

**-How could we concretize this avant-garde?**

-All the machinery that we will put inside the casino is not there, it is new.

**-Is it not in any other casino?**

-Correct. We are working with many companies together to bring

a new product.

**-Can you give an example?**

-It's very difficult, because neither you nor the people will know them. We are talking about an innovative product in every way. When you go to a casino, enjoy a product that you know, because you've already visited another one. However, this product will not know it, it is new, the best on the market.

**-But will there be the typical games that everyone knows such as poker, roulette or blackjack?**

-We will offer all this, but beyond all this we will do other things, for example events. Texas hold'em tournaments are now all the rage in casinos, and we are working with the media to broadcast these events to the rest of Europe and possibly the world. There are also the World Poker Series and the European Poker Tour, very important tournaments.

**-Is the fact that the casino occupies 20% of a leisure complex a challenge or an opportunity?**

-An opportunity. We are a small part of this complex. The gastronomic offer will be extraordinary, we will have presentations, exhibitions, concerts, shows, everything. Visitors to the resort can enjoy a night of casino, whether experienced or casual. This whole flood of people from the entertainment complex benefits us.

**-Which casino is more interesting to you, a regular customer or a casual one?**

-The casino never works for a specific profile, but to capture the widest possible range of all segments of society. We must work to meet the needs of this whole range. We're all interested, because the experienced have ever come for the first time.

**-Is the cohabitation between the experienced client and the novice complicated?**

-This cohabitation is space but not game or table. Machines and tables choose for themselves the type of customer between the experienced and the one who is just looking for a night of fun.

**-How do you deal with a new customer who doesn't know what to do when they come in?**

-In our staff we have guests at an information point who receive all these people, give them a tour of the

whole casino and then invite them to have a drink.

**-Do you advise what you can play according to your profile?**

-No, we never advise or induce, we only explain.

**-What does the novice customer usually play?**

-Usually the first step is the machine, because the tables, being unaware of the game, never approach it. After the explanation, they lose their fear, because they see that it is simple and affordable, and they enjoy the tables.

**-Is it the table the most usual?**

-And the machine too. The world of leisure is well established in Europe. There is an extraordinary casino in London called the Hippodrome and ours will be similar, as it is a comprehensive leisure complex.

**-I wanted to ask you if it would be like Monaco or Las Vegas, but you answered me before ...**

-Yes, but we don't look at ourselves in a mirror, we have to work for the mood of the people here and take into account the most regular visitors from the neighboring countries, and in this sense I have seen tourists from different destinations.

**-The Russian was a regular visitor to Andorra and now it may cost him.**

-I don't know, everyone will be welcome at the casino.

**-When an experienced customer enters, is security alerted?**

-The world of cinema has hurt casinos. Security personnel are to monitor work protocols. We are a completely transparent company because it is constantly audited. Security is the same as any other entertainment complex. And if someone gets a bad drink, we control it, we have no problem.

**-So, is security more dependent on workers than on customers?**

-Not of the workers, of the protocols that everyone has to follow, because they are very important.

**-How does the casino deal with the player who is making a lot of money?**

-The best publicity we can have is what you just said. If I could advertise people winning at the casino it would be the first thing I would do. I wish we could do the same as the lotteries do.



►► Dos Santos, in front of the façade of the future casino.



«The casino never works for a specific profile, but to capture the widest possible range of all segments»

«Once they arrive, guests explain their offer to the novice customer, but we never advise or induce a particular game»

«If I could advertise winning people, that's the first thing I would do, because it's the best I could have»

**-But can't a casino allow many people to win?**

-People go to the casino to enjoy. Some win and some don't. And we have to take stock.

**-Is the percentage of winners limited?**

-More or less.

**-In any case, how does the security of the casino work?**

-It only controls the protocol and when a person wins, he does it under the rules of the casino and absolutely nothing happens. One day he wins, another he loses. But people only look when they win, and never when they lose.

**-Will they have any kind of collaboration with the Police?**

-More would be needed, we are in collaboration with the Police for everything they need. It is very important.

**-What are your goals?**

-In other countries the casino audits on time, that's what he has to do.

**-Are you all right?**

-Yes, the collaboration with the Police is good. Controls game facilities and development. As long as they hold your opinion, it's good.

**-How they want to communicate all**

**the news that the casino will present. Slowly or first off?**

-The best publicity out there is word of mouth. We will go up a flight of steps, one step at a time every day, until all our facilities are known, about three or four months before opening. And once the advertising is open, it will come on its own.

**-What is the game offer that the visitor will find?**

-We will have the classic casino games: American roulette, various types of poker, blackjack and baccarat (point and bank). The rules allow us more games, but we will start with these.

**-Do you want the best players in each specialty to come to Andorra to compete?**

-We would love for them to visit us and I think they will in the end. If we manage to make the tournament we want, these players will glass. It will give prestige to us and to them, because we are unique in Europe.

**-Do you want to broadcast online from the Andorran casino?**

-It would be great, it's a very good advertisement. The Word Series, for example, are tournaments that are seen all over the world, because they are games that have a lot of follow-up. The casino has a small stake, but it is gaining in advertising. However, winning a tournament like this will cost us a lot, because they have a high group of players.

**-Is being the first in Andorra a special challenge?**

-I have to thank the company for trusting me, I'm very happy, and it's the most special challenge of my whole career, impressive.

**-Is the position of casino director well represented in the series and in the movies?**

-Not at all. My job is to receive the client, who is at ease, who enjoys the facilities as normally as possible and nothing more. The movies show a story about not sleeping.

**-Does that hurt?**

-Not me, but in casinos. It hurts because this is not the job.

**-Do they have to make an effort to reverse this image?**

-I don't have the power of cinema or all the casino directors together. A minute of cinema can ruin years of work. ≡

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