

VEGAS INC

Gaming:

How a magic carpet ride became a slot machine game



[Ron Sylvester](#) / Las Vegas Sun

Chicago-based WMS had a casting call and hired actors who served as the artistic basis for characters in the slot machine Aladdin & the Magic Quest, which recently debuted in casinos.

By [Ron Sylvester](#) ([contact](#))

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Brad Rose led the design team for WMS that developed the Aladdin and the Magic Quest slot machine.

[Aladdin & the Magic Quest](#) is as much a ride as it is a slot machine.

The penny slot that began appearing in casinos two weeks ago gives players the sensation of riding a magic carpet. A moving seat sways and bobs as a virtual carpet flies through a castle. Players collect treasures and try to save a princess in the game based on the "1001 Nights" fable.

Brad Rose, lead producer at [WMS Gaming](#), directed the team of about a dozen technicians who designed the game. Rose is based in Chicago but was in Las Vegas to oversee the rollout of the slot.

He sat down with VEGAS INC to talk about the technology behind Aladdin & the Magic Quest and the next generation of slot machines.

Why model a slot machine around a flying carpet?

You get a whole lot of players, a majority of them now, who want to play these games for bonus rounds. So what we built this vision around was a bonus ride.

The idea was once you experience it, you will keep playing, keep reaching into your pocket, putting in money, to try to win this ride. From there, we asked what would fit well. We thought of race cars. But we thought, "We're in the world of casinos. What would be kind of magical and have a treasure involved?" Aladdin was a natural fit.

Were there any limitations or ideas you couldn't do?

The CP3 memory board is 10 times as powerful as any game we have in the field. With previous processors, we would have reached a point where we would have said we can't do any more. With this, what we ended up with was pretty much what we envisioned in our original story boards.

In the game, there is a secondary bonus called "Clash of the Genie." This little Aladdin character takes on this huge genie. You really feel the power of that genie and how small and vulnerable you are as you try to get jewels and save the princess. That probably would have gotten cut if we hadn't had the extra horsepower.

Were you concerned that the game might not work?

When we tested the game with focus groups, we would get these kind of "wow" reactions. When the moderator asked people what gave them that reaction, the answer we got the most was, "I play for the experience and to be entertained. To be moved around like that — I never thought I could get that kind of an experience out of a slot machine."

Slots are such an emotional experience. These people are putting their hard-earned money into this. There was a concern by some that this wouldn't work. People would be drinking and fall off. But what we found was that this was something people wanted.

The graphics in the slots almost look like they are from a movie. Are there similarities in the way you made the game and how movies are made?

We have different kinds of artists. We have artists who work in 3-D. We have artists who used to work on Disney movies. We have an artist who was nominated for an Emmy.

We also have composers. And we had a whole casting call for actors. We don't do a lot of casting calls. With this one, we had a phenomenal turnout.

We built the characters in the game out of real actors. The man who played the genie is actually disabled. He lost his legs in a war. But we wanted him because of his presence. We used him from the waist up for the genie. The energy we got from the actors really translated well into the story.

How have people reacted since the game hit the casinos?

I went to [South Point](#) and [Red Rock](#) to watch people play. I sit next to them and never tell them who I am. I love when they start telling me about the game and how it works. You'll hit the bonus and they'll say, "OK, this is what you have to do." So I think, "How much have you played this game that you can articulate it back to me?" It had only been out a week, and they're telling me how to play it. Players really take ownership in these games.

What's next for slot machines?

It's tough to say. When I started at WMS 14 years ago, we were starting to morph from three-reel mechanical games to this whole new video market. We were starting to roll out the first Monopoly video game. It was 2006 when we brought out community gaming, when slots went from being something people played alone to having these big banks where people interacted and became social. That was a big milestone.

People ask all the time when we're going to have 3-D slots. You can bet when the technology is there, we'll be in that market.