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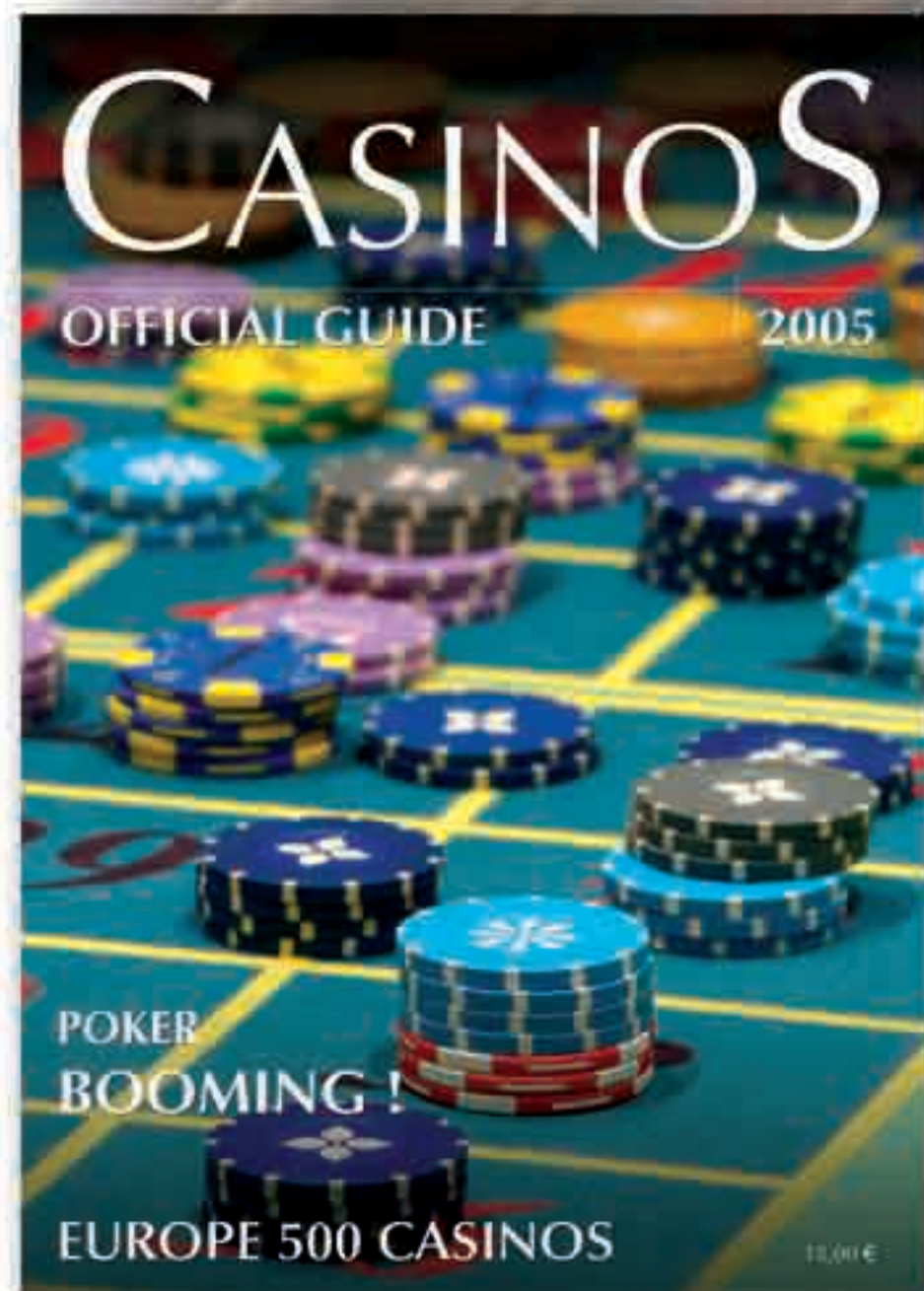
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No. 3

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**NEW TIMES  
THE TECHNOLOGY  
REVOLUTION**



Over the last 200 years, the gaming industry has been dominated by Western European Casino equipment manufacturers. However, since the 1950's, and to their dismay, they have had to share their leadership with US companies. The development of slot machines changed tastes in Casinos all over the world. The enormous advances of computer science were applied very efficiently to slots, attracting players by means of technology that simplified games and made them easier for beginners.

Classic games, such as French Roulette, Baccarat, Blackjack and traditional poker, among others, lost ground first of all to more dynamic versions, such as English or American Roulette, Craps, Texas Hold'em, etc., before finally bowing to the supremacy of slots.

By the late 20th century many experts, such as the European Association for the Study of Gambling, to give just one example, had already begun to discuss the loss of ground of classic games in favour of slots, and to predict that, in a short time, they would hold the top position in the sector. Early in the 21st century these predictions, except for rare exceptions, had already come true. From the start, the US slot manufacturing industry clearly had the upper hand over European firms in the same business. After a short while, certain German, Austrian and Spanish companies began a competitive deployment of their R+D departments, allowing them to recover much lost ground.

Moreover, over the last three years companies from Eastern European countries, such as Slovenia, Slovakia and Russia, have burst onto the market. To the surprise of many, these countries now manufacture the best multi-player electronic roulettes. However, one-player slots are still the favourite of Casino visitors.

Manufacturers of equipment for classic games, especially in France, Italy, Great Britain and Spain, did not give up the battle and, in this regard, also began to develop new technologies, including the famous "chipper" machines, automatic card shufflers, gaming

chips containing computer chips –giving operators security and fundamental information-, Progressive Jackpots on gaming tables, video displays, air-renewal machines and smoke extractors built into the tables themselves. This long list of improvements has allowed classic games to retain their importance in almost all Casinos worldwide, but not, however, to knock slots off the top spot.

Moreover, the fall of the communist dictators in many Asian countries and the incorporation of their hundreds of millions of citizens into the world of leisure has obliged the manufacturers of slots and traditional equipment to bring in new games from Asia, such as Pai Gow, Big and Small, Keno, multiplayer electronic craps, and others.

The policy of the slot manufacturers is to rely heavily on the constant development of software that will allow frequent renewal of slots in Casinos. Casinos can afford to do this, because of increased player numbers and amounts wagered.

Nowadays, most slots are connected to each other, offering attractive Jackpot systems, with cashless smart cards which make it easier to control and manage slots and bets, to analyse the progress of the games and to adjust percentages accordingly. Another important feature is the ticket in-ticket out mechanisms, rendering coins and tokens unnecessary.

Right now, at the dawn of the 21st century, there has been no clear winner in the fight between traditional games and slot machines. However, to use an analogy with the boxing world, we would have to say that, for the time being, slots are winning most rounds on points.

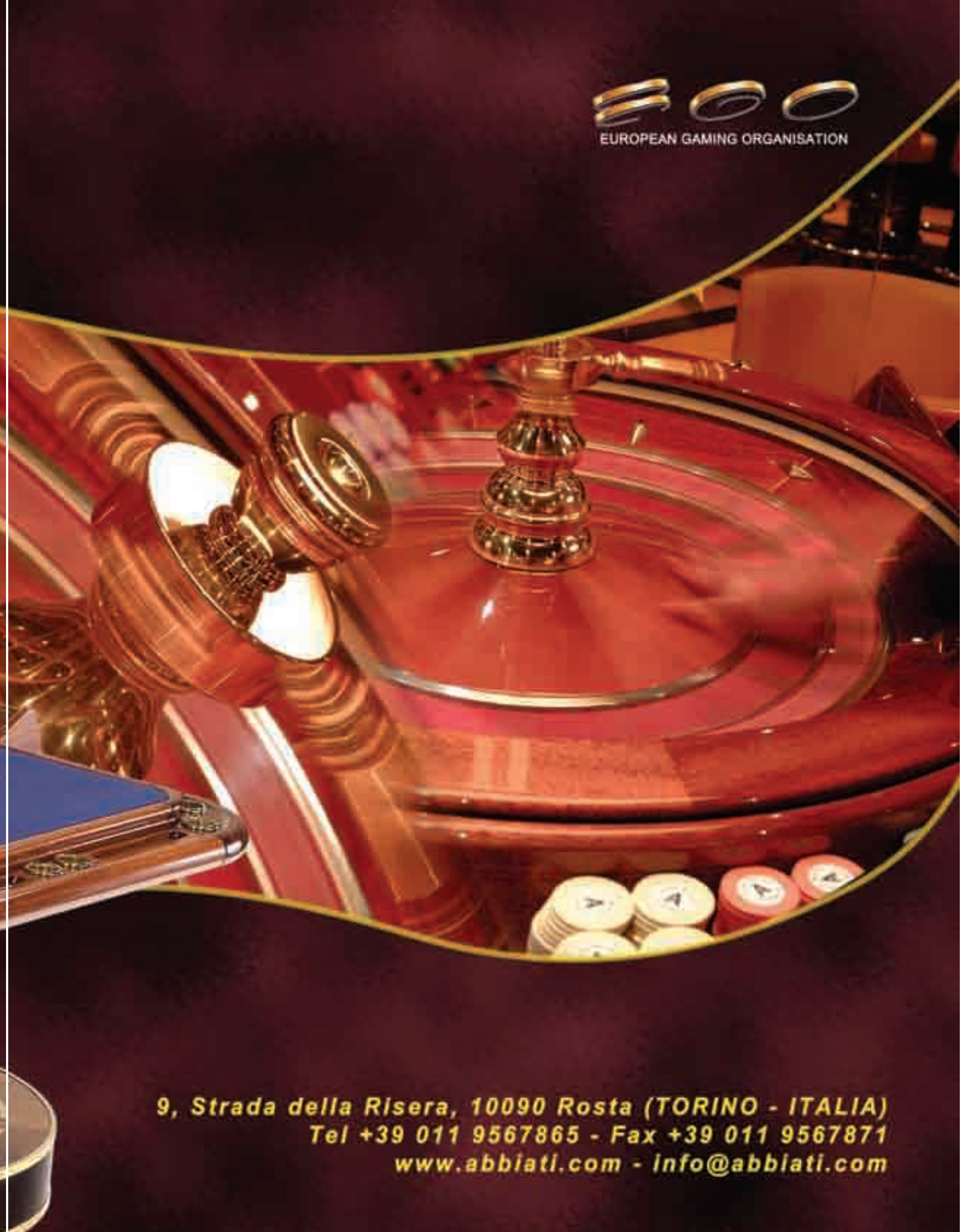
This does not mean that the slots industry wants the match to finish; slots need classic games to ensure that Casinos are still attractive places, with a wide variety of leisure offers.

Moreover, fortunately, there will always be a group of elite players who enjoy the glamour of sitting at a French Roulette table, caressing a fine layout and running a high-valued chip through their fingers, while listening to the famous "*Rien ne va plus*".



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