

# PLAYING POKER MACHINES as a BUSINESS



AS SEEN  
ON  
TODAY  
TONIGHT

Learn how Australia's **leading**  
**poker machine expert** turned  
**\$500 into \$millions**

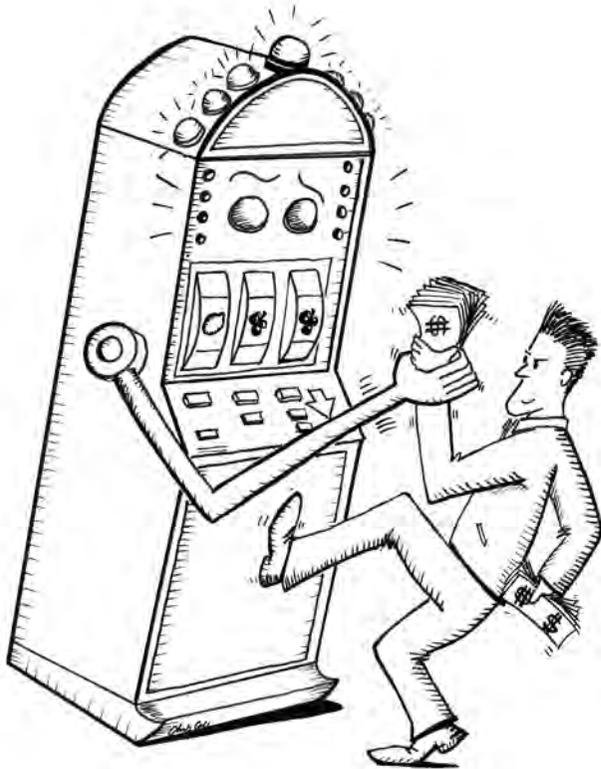
**PETER LISTON**



# PLAYING

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as a **BUSINESS**



Learn how Australia's leading  
poker machine expert turned  
\$500 into \$millions

**PETER LISTON**

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A Cataloguing-in-Publication entry is available by the National Library of Australia.

Cover design and typeset by BookPOD

Printed and bound in Australia by BookPOD

ISBN: 978-0-9872729-0-4

To all of the poker machine authors and  
experts who convinced the world  
that you can't win on the pokies –

**thank you!**

# Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank my generous friend David Bennett. This is the first and last book that I will write and if it were not for David's encouragement there would be one less book to my credit. His knowledge of mathematics and information technology is second-to-none.

I would like to thank my underpaid family members Steven, Liana, Rick, David and Maree. Not only were they a cheap source of labour, but being honest and reliable meant when they played for me, the profits stayed where they should – with me!

I have not forgotten the many people who have provided invaluable assistance to me over the past eighteen years, who I am sure would prefer to remain anonymous, as some of them are now respectable members of their communities and would prefer to keep it that way. Those I can mention are the very talented Chris Cole and Shaun Robson (cartoons), and Jessie Cat (proofreading).

Every story needs a love angle and you will meet mine in Chapter 19. It takes a special person to cope with a pro gambler who lives without timetable or permanent abode. To find that someone who came so beautifully packaged was my major jackpot win.

Finally, I would like to thank my readers. It takes a leap of faith to believe that a clapped-out school teacher can make millions out of playing – yes, *playing* – the pokies. I welcome your input, questions and donations.

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or read more on my website at  
[www.pokermachineschool.com.au](http://www.pokermachineschool.com.au)

# Foreword

“How did you learn to play *poker machines* as a business?”

If I sold a book to every person who has asked me that question I would have a best seller. Very few of those people who asked that question are in fact gamblers, but each of them harbours a dream looking for its own awakening.

Turning a dream into reality is about finding challenges and pitting them against your resources within. Your steps become strides and you become the sum of your obstacles overcome.

This is not a *how to do it* book but a sharing of *how I did it*. Your opportunities are ahead, not behind you. When you do break down those first barriers you will see how quickly success can follow.

You probably enjoy mathematics as much as I do, so I will slip the numbers in as painlessly as I can, smoothed over with tales of high adventure, lost loves and derring-do.

We all have dreams – secret projects we could achieve “if only”. When your dream becomes a challenge, you become!

*This book is not intended to be an inducement to gamble. Most gamblers lose their money because they do not understand the mathematics of what they are doing. If you **only** play when the odds turn in your favour, then the certainty of a profitable outcome is the same as the certainty of an unprofitable outcome if you play the pokies without this information.*

You will notice a number of quote marks around the names of people that I have dealt with over the eighteen years covered in this book. Professional gamblers in particular are very shy of publicity so, while the

stories relating to them are true, I have altered their names. I have also spared the embarrassment for casino staff and some of my colleagues.

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# Introduction

Dreams do come true. This is the story of how Peter Liston, a middle-aged family man and high school teacher walked into a casino, recognised an opportunity, invested \$500 and became a globe-trotting professional gambler.

You are not *supposed* to make money from playing poker machines. Experts still believe you cannot make money from playing poker machines. Yet, I have been milking those one-armed bandits for eighteen years now. I discovered a way to beat those mongrel glorified computers – and you can too.

There is a way to beat the pokies and you will not find it in any other book. Other authors will insult your intelligence by pretending that loose machines, optimising hot and cold streaks, money management and filling your pockets with lucky charms will deliver you from your daily grind. No!

There is a genuine way to make good money from the pokies and it simply relates to knowing how to value the ***progressive jackpots*** that you have seen (but probably ignored) displayed above the banks of machines. When those *jackpots* rise to a level where they hold more expected revenue than I expect to lose on the poker machine, I simply sit down and start playing – and I have not stopped playing for the past eighteen years. I have never had a losing year, and rarely a losing month over that time.

I will share with you one of the most amazing stories in the history of gambling born of eighteen years playing poker machine ***linked*** jackpots in hotels, clubs and casinos from around Australia, New Zealand, Asia, North America and Africa. When you finish this book you will never look at the simple poker machine in the same way again.

I am recognized as *the* expert in playing poker machines as a business. Every dollar put through the machines in this book was born from that investment of \$500 when I first tested my theories on the pokies. This is my story.

Playing poker machine linked jackpots has enormous advantages for you over other forms of professional gambling. They are:

- **Extraordinary high returns**  
Average return of around 10% profit per spin.
- **Low risk**  
With 10% returns, you recover your capital very quickly, and you can make many hundreds of times your initial investment.
- **Low startup capital**  
\$500 could get you on your way to your first \$million.
- **Easy to learn**  
If you can press the multiply and divide buttons on your calculator you will have opened up a world of opportunity.
- **Easy to play**  
Once you know how high the jackpot needs to be before the odds are in your favour, you just wait then play.
- **Principles apply worldwide**  
Travel the world making money wherever there are gaming *venues* with poker machines linked to progressive jackpots.
- **Legal and you do not break casino rules**  
No casino rule prevents you from playing a poker machine. However, some venues do restrict the number of people who can play together when a jackpot is high.
- **Tax free**  
Earnings from gaming are tax free in Australia and New Zealand.

This was established by the Federal Court of Australia in three separate cases: *Evans v FC of T 89 ATC 4540; (1989) 20 ATR 922*, *Babka v FC of T 89 ATC 4963; (1989) 20 ATR 1251*, and *Brajkovich v FC of T 89 ATC 5227; (1989) 20 ATR 1570*, but jackpots over \$1200 are taxable in the United States.

- **Exciting**

Imagine walking into a casino anywhere in the world knowing that you may be the only person there who knows how to play their poker machines for profit.

Compared with a “normal” business you have the added advantages of

- No red tape
- No employees
- No debtors, creditors or stock to worry about
- No lease contracts to lock into

## Playing Poker Machines as a Business

# PART ONE

What if? Why not?





# Chapter 1



## The impossible dream

Is there a point in your life when you realise that there is nothing left for you in your job except retirement and a superannuation stream?

I was an accountant and had changed to a teaching career in order to broaden my horizons and improve my communication skills. After twenty years of teaching I realised there was nowhere left for me to grow. By then the accounting option was firmly closed, so I just had to make the most of what I had.

Teaching was no longer providing me with the challenges I needed in a career, but life outside of the classroom was rewarding. I was living on a hobby farm at Healesville, a picturesque, self-contained country town of 7000 people on the outskirts of Melbourne, Australia. Glenice, my wife, was teaching at the local primary school while I taught at Healesville High School. My three children Steven, Liana and Rick enjoyed living in the town and on the property, and thrived in that environment.

Our property contained two houses, and Steven moved from the family home into the cottage that overlooked the dam to be with Hiroko, a Japanese exchange teacher who was staying there. He was far enough away from the main house to escape my requests for odd jobs, but close enough to be there for Glenice's legendary Sunday roasts. Liana was in year nine at my high school and Rick was doing year five at Glenice's primary. We had a good set of friends and we were all involved in sports in the community. It was about as good as it can get.

Our future was pretty much settled. Glenice and I would retire in Healesville and Liana and Rick would eventually head to town for university education and careers. Steven had started a publishing business from his cottage and looked like he would be settled there for some time.

Eighteen years later, I am a globe-trotting professional gambler and quite likely the world's leading expert in playing poker machines as a business.

How did this come about?

Well, a funny thing happened on a Saturday morning in September of 1994. I had come into the city to buy some sporting equipment, and curiosity got the better of me so I decided to sneak a look at the new Crown Casino that had been completed just three months earlier. I am not a gambler and the last place I would have a punt, let alone be seen at – would be on a poker machine, but the Casino had drawn a lot of controversy in Melbourne, so it deserved a very quick look.

Inside the building I saw lots of poker machines, many standing on their own and some grouped together. I noticed that some of these ***banks of machines*** would have an LED display above them linking jackpots ranging from \$100 up to \$200,000. There were gaming tables of various sizes and denominations offering blackjack, baccarat and pai gow poker, a craps table and even a 'two up' ring that was generating a lot of noise. There were fresh-faced attendants in red or black jackets and members of the public who, like me, seemed more interested in looking around than playing. There was nothing here of interest and I headed for the exit and returned home satisfied that I had missed nothing by not visiting earlier. Well, not completely satisfied...

Something was bugging me. I recalled that most of the linked jackpot displays above the poker machines were actually *rising*, and I guessed probably in proportion to the amount of money being spent in the machines below. If these jackpots were rising, would that change the expected returns to the player? Further, would it be possible for a jackpot to rise so high that the odds actually swung in favour of the player? Perhaps not I thought, but the germ of a challenge was stirring

inside me. Two words kept coming. *What if? What if?* Over a period of three weeks those two words became *Why not?* I would like to find out.

The terms '*Slot machine*', 'poker machine' and 'pokie' all refer to the common spinning reel electronic gaming machine that will make up most of the banks of machines that you will find in all casinos around the world. The term '*poker machine*' is the Down Under name for the slots and is not to be confused with *video poker*, a game that is difficult to learn and even more difficult to win. As this book is for an Australian and New Zealand audience, I will generally use the term 'poker machine' or 'pokie' rather than 'slots'.

