

THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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AT SF ARTS CENTER, MALTZAN SHOWS OFF HOW IT'S DONE

WHAT'S GOING ON

One of the prevailing trends in the design of cultural buildings is to provide a look at how the sausage is made, or, put differently, to show off the work that goes on at the back of the house. This idea is particularly potent when it comes to arts education. Michael Maltzan's just-unveiled Mashouf Performing Arts Center at San Francisco State University (SFSU), which features not one but five performance spaces knitted together with transparent classrooms, is a good example. It's a dream project where theories about creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and public **continued on page 5**



FIELD OPERATIONS SHOWS OFF LATEST PARK PLANS

SANTA MONICA PASTORAL

Despite recently losing Eli Broad's new museum to Downtown LA, Santa Monica still has a very high profile design project moving forward: the Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square. Located on seven acres

of land between Santa Monica City Hall and the Santa Monica Pier, the \$25 million project, designed by James Corner Field Operations, was presented at its sixth and final workshop with the **continued on page 6**

SPECIAL PRODUCTS SECTION
KITCHEN KNOW HOW
FROM INDUCTION COOKTOPS TO HIDDEN VENTS, EVERY PART OF TODAY'S KITCHEN IS SMART. PLUS KITCHEN LEADERS WORKING HARD AT INNOVATION. SEE PAGES 14 - 25

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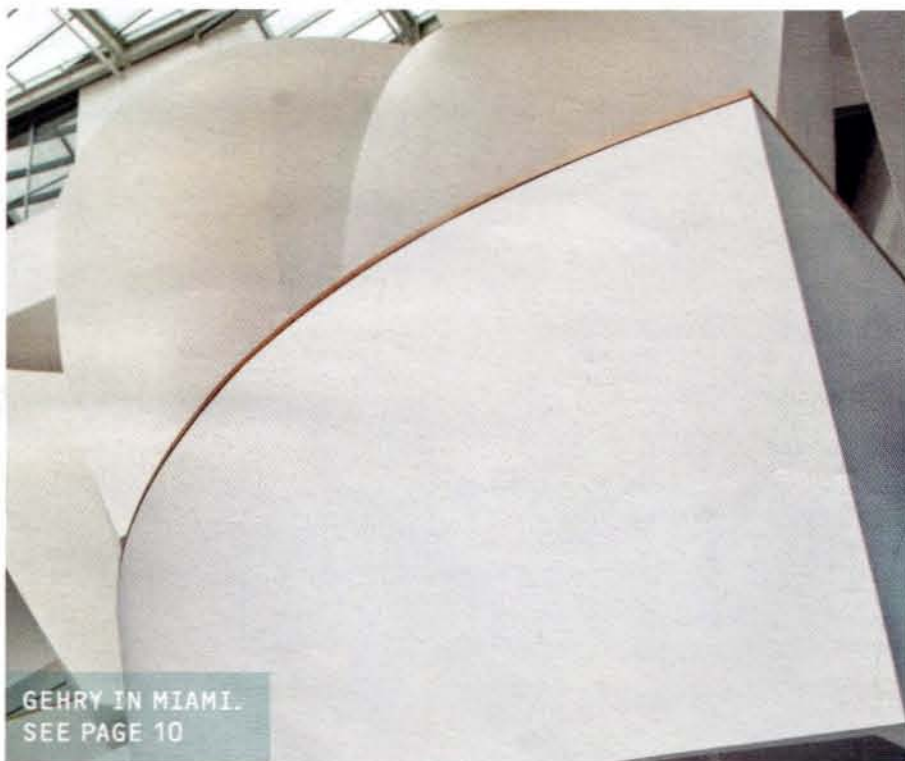
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LA BIKE PLAN RETHINKS URBAN DESIGN

TWO-WHEELIN' AMBITION

Early this month, LA City Council voted unanimously to adopt a revised Bicycle Plan, radically improving its bike infrastructure. The latest iteration—the plan hasn't gone through a comprehensive update since 1996—outlines a 1,680-mile network of **continued on page 3**



GEHRY IN MIAMI. SEE PAGE 10

LOSSES LEAD TO BEVERLY HILLS FOCUS ON PRESERVATION



THREE STRIKES

A symbol of luxury in America, Beverly Hills likes to think of itself as the tops in many categories. But preservation isn't one of them. After the recent demolition of three significant properties—John Lautner's Shusett House, Sidney Eisenshtat's Friars **continued on page 9**

HOPES ARE HIGH THAT AMERICA'S CUP 2013 WILL SPEED DEVELOPMENT OF SF WATERFRONT



REGATTA DAZE

After flirting with Newport, Rhode Island, the organizers of the 34th America's Cup sailing competition, which will take place in 2013, have in the end committed to San Francisco. It's a promising match in a number of ways. Silicon Valley-based Oracle

CEO Larry Ellison, the event's most visible booster, can see his team defend the cup on (almost) home turf; sailing fans get to see the action from the shore, unlike past America's Cup races; and the city gets additional funds and a **continued on page 6**

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VEGAS BETS ON RETAIL

Beyond the Architectural Hooplah, City Center Offers a Full House of Inspired Design



Crystals' Grand Stair was inspired, says David Rockwell, by the Spanish Steps in Rome.



SHOPS

The Las Vegas Strip may sparkle, but don't let that fool you: the city is still hurting. Casinos aren't as bubbly, hotel rooms are a lot cheaper, and shopping districts are not ringing with cash register ka-chings.

But the shine is still on ultra high-end retail companies like Gucci, Fendi and Prada. And for the intrepid design fan—wear sun-glasses!—these retailers offer plenty of new

twists on old retail formulas.

Still new after a year, the emirate-grade retail at Las Vegas City Center's Crystals within the hotel/casino/residential/entertainment complex is ambitiously over-the-top, using contemporary architectural high-jinx to outshine Vegas' fake castles and faux world capitals. Last year, the media went wild over the \$9 billion City Center, focusing on its

architecture. No surprise, it was built by a run of star talent, including Rafael Viñoly, Daniel Libeskind, Helmut Jahn, Norman Foster, and Cesar Pelli. But Crystals' retail designs hold their own with dynamic, layered, and sometimes surprisingly original designs.

MGM, the complex's owner, encouraged the center's retailers to try different moves from their other stores.

And in the formula-obsessed retail world that wasn't easy. Most, but not all, obliged.

And it paid off. Unlike other Vegas retailers, preoccupied with portraying extreme luxury over design innovation, these stores are making design the centerpiece: experimenting with creative forms, textures, technologies, and spatial experiences. While other new retail outlets have opened up in places like the Wynn's new Encore and at the Venetian's new Palazzo, and others, including Caesars' Forum Shops have undergone major renovations, none of them come close to the architectural ambition expressed here. When Crystals opened last year it was only 40% full. Now it's

almost 90% occupied.

The Crystals building was designed by Daniel Libeskind. Outside it shows the architect's signature angular edges as well as silvery metallic patina. Inside New York-based David Rockwell (who also designed the interior spaces for the Cosmopolitan Hotel and Casino next door, which opened this past December), helped envision the stores. He started the ball rolling with what he calls "a 21st century park" approach, filling the lofty, light-filled interior with exuberant hybrids—a bamboo and pink agate "Grand Staircase," trellises fitted with hanging plants, raw steel "trees," and the piece de resistance—a whopping, 70-foot-tall "tree house" made of

Clockwise from left:

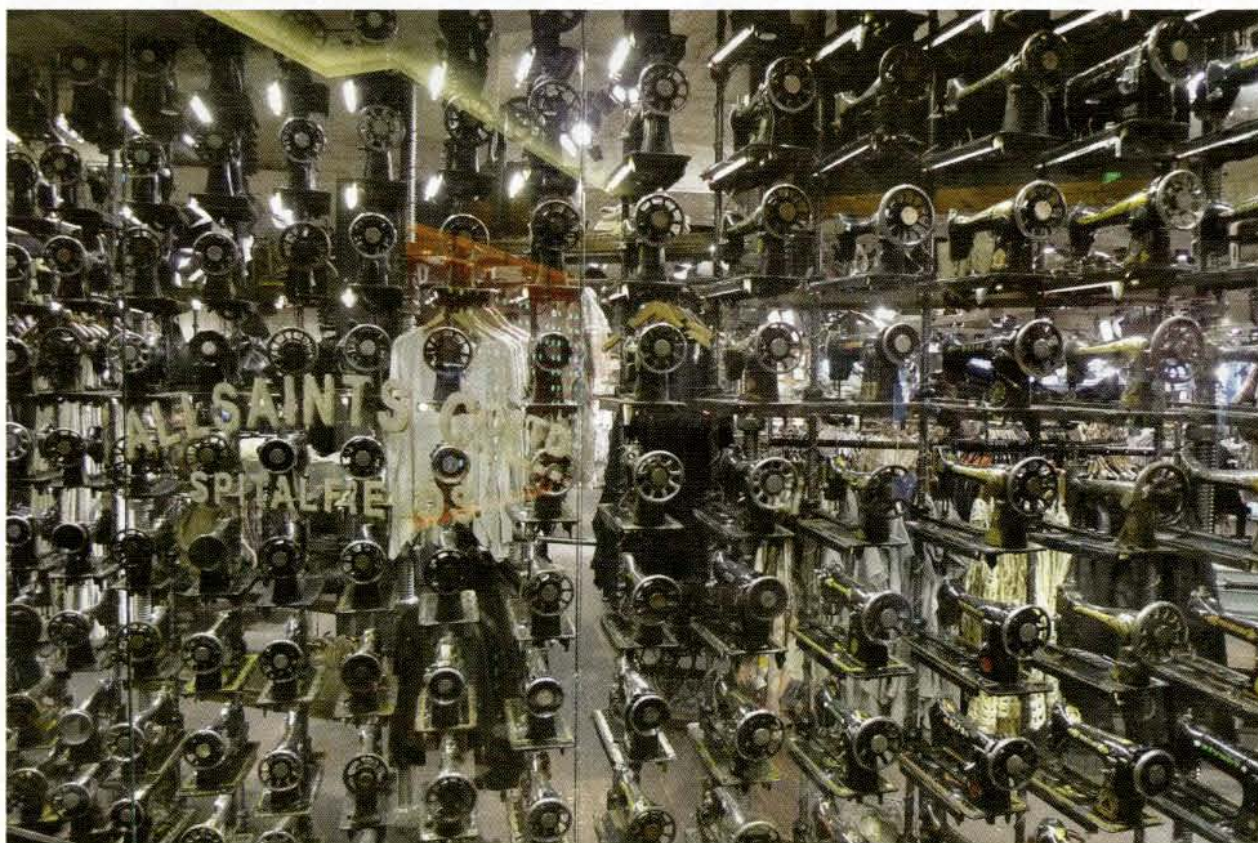
Fendi's Trevi Fountain replica; Marni's "bubble" relief walls; Miu Miu's back-lit yellow facade; and Cosmopolitan's Eat Drink adjacent to City Center.

mahogany and sapele slabs.

At Crystals, foreground and background are equally important, and there is as much emphasis on atmosphere as on the actual merchandise. Prada, designed by architect Roberto Bachici, uses dark and patterned steel tubes to provide a sense of texture, height, and visual rhythm—the company's values, in other words, are writ at every scale. Stainless



IMAGES COURTESY RETAILERS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.



SAM LUBELL



steel cones on the upper floors pierce the exterior wall like portholes—a slightly disorienting Alice in Wonderland at Studio 54 moment. Louis Vuitton's store, designed by interior star Peter Marino, uses the brand's omnipresent diamond-shaped logo as a shiny metallic backdrop—small logos are connected to form room dividers, for instance—cladding walls, staircases, and everything in between (including the store's 31-foot-tall chandelier). In a far corner and exposed to the street, Gucci's is the shiniest of all, with mirrored ceilings and walls and polished steel floors echoing the visitors as much as the merchandise.

Many shops inside Crystals use an elaborate centerpiece

to lure people inside. No one has gone as far as Fendi. A 50-foot-wide marble replica of Rome's Trevi Fountain towers along the opposite side of its Cor-ten steel entrance. The marble was shipped in from Italy in 19 pieces, and was carved by hand by Italian manufacturers Spazio Scenico. "If Rome existed in modern times it would be Las Vegas," a Fendi spokesperson put it. The classical fountain offsets a modern (but still weighty and, yes, baroque) palette that includes metallic room dividers; gold, silver, and salmon-colored travertine walls; ribbed laminate walls that create a sense of movement; and lava stone floors. Bulgari has a water

feature, too: a large tub and backlit fountain meant to resemble a melting glacier. Stella McCartney corralled a giant crystal horse made of 8,000 Swarovski crystals as its showpiece. As for facades, Chanel went abstract, Christian Dior did LED, and Paul Smith chose colorful Mondrian-like patterns.

Though the flash may dazzle, it also shows some real architectural confidence. Tiffany, for instance, opens to a huge stone and glass staircase, lit from beneath, emphasizing the curve of the stairs that shines through the 85-foot-tall glass façade. Marni's smooth, grey-painted curved walls suggest mid-century modern envisioned by a modern day fabricator.

They have been given a randomly convex and concave "bubble" relief pattern; backlit, they create shadows and a playful graphic composition of textures while occasionally showcasing accessories. The central display consists of a twisted metallic tube seemingly suspended in midair, called the "lasso," that encircles the boutique.

While Crystals is still the most architecturally adventurous retail group in Las Vegas, the newest kid on the Strip is the Cosmopolitan next door. That establishment, too, focuses on design, but to portray a slightly younger, edgier, and more hedonistic charm. Stores are slightly less expensive, and emphasize a breezy, light, and

modern aesthetic. But they still don't shy away from the "gotcha" design element that captures the imagination. Droog, a contemporary furniture store that also considers itself a gallery, utilizes uplit glass floors to show off its wares; All Saints Spitalfields put hundreds of antique Singer sewing machines in its window displays; Beckley shows off sexy white curves like its neighbor at Louis Vuitton, but without the high priced materials. Despite the cheaper price tags here (versus Crystals, where a matchbox car will cost you \$90), design is front and center, not cowering in the background. Is Vegas regaining the influential design edge it had in its Rat Pack glory

Clockwise from left: Paul Smith's patterned entry; Inside Prada's controlled slick look; Stella McCartney's layered facade; Louis Vuitton's logo-inspired chandelier hanging in the stairwell; All Saints Spitalfields' hundreds of Singer sewing machines at the Cosmopolitan.

days? The whole city seems to be on hold now so we don't know. But give it another year and we'll see if this is the new Vegas or just a blip on the city's notoriously ADD radar.

SAM LUBELL IS THE WEST COAST EDITOR OF THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER.



RESTAURANTS

In addition to promoting high-end retail architecture, City Center's master planners wanted to promote what David Rockwell calls a "climate-controlled, sustainable, fantasyland where people can shop, sleep, dine, and play." So naturally he imported impressive talent for the restaurant design. And they didn't skimp on the architectural details, or the energy. Without a doubt the highlight is Aria's Bar Masa, designed by New York designer Richard Bloch, who also designed Bar Masa inside New York's Time Warner Center. The lofty Japanese restaurant has a giant stepped structural concrete roof (executed with the help of Aria designer Cesar Pelli) reminiscent of a floating staircase. Bloch tempered the "heroic" scale of the roof with a 90-foot-long aluminum-framed fabric structure—lit with upward-facing LEDs—that echoes that staircase and creates what Bloch calls a "ceiling within a ceiling." This insertion—offset with concrete floors and large curtains of glass—makes the space feel cavernous, well defined, and somehow comfortable all at the same time. Just next door (and across a small indoor pond), is Shaboo, also designed

by Bloch; a much more intimate version of Bar Masa. It's all about contrasts: grey tubular aluminum chandeliers hanging over bright yellow chairs; a warm wood wall across from a large purple wall and an adjacent glass wall. What sounds garish looks surprisingly subtle and refined on site. Just down the hall is Lemongrass, a Thai restaurant designed by New York design stars AvroKo, reminiscent of a Thai silk factory with a combination of dark woods, raw fibers, and textured fabrics creating a rhythmic and sometimes distracting backdrop. Yes, it's a little over the top but also elegant and with a touch of craft that contrasts nicely with corporate spaces nearby. Meanwhile a stand-out inside Crystals is KAA Design Group's Mastro's Ocean Club. That space features curving white leather booths, chairs covered in ochre leather, and banquettes enveloped by the tree's curving timber beams. Adding a finishing touch to the dining space are glittering circular chandeliers made up of jewel-like, irregular glass shapes. Did we mention it was perched inside a three-story tree? Yes, this is still Las Vegas. **SL**



Clockwise from top left: Bar Masa, the Deuce, Lemongrass, Shaboo, Mastro's Ocean Club; Jean Georges Steakhouse.