



ECADI/OPFC

MANICA Architecture

The Shanghai Arena

Far out: Creating a memorable experience for guests was the primary aim in designing Shanghai's 'Flying Saucer'

Dubbed the 'Flying Saucer' because of its iconic shape, the new Shanghai Arena is set to be one of the 2010 World Expo's most important buildings. Located on the bank of the Huangpu River to the south of the world famous Bund and shining new financial centre in Pudong, the arena is one of the four permanent major pavilions on the 5.28km² expo site. It will be a key venue for the 184-day mega event that is anticipated to host over 70 million visitors. As a legacy venue for Shanghai, it has been carefully designed to endure as the home for entertainment to the city's 18 million plus residents.

The design of the multipurpose arena was selected from among 27 submissions, and is scheduled for completion in early 2010. The building has been engineered for a wide variety of sport and entertainment events such as basketball, ice skating, and concerts of various capacities. It will be the first indoor multipurpose facility in Shanghai to accommodate more than 10,000 people.

But what makes its design truly unique is the wide variety of additional programme elements and amenities that it has to offer its guests and users. The building's owner, the Oriental Pearl Group, has paid particular

attention to ensuring the new arena will provide an interesting and enjoyable experience for the entire city. As a result, the 126,000m² building also includes an integrated music club, expansive retail and dining areas, a public skating rink, VIP parking, and even a small Cineplex with six movie theatres.

"We have created a one-of-a-kind, flexible seating arena that will accommodate nearly any live entertainment event, thus allowing Shanghai to further solidify its position as one of the world's premier destinations for the highest quality live entertainment," says Niu Weiping, president of Shanghai Oriental Pearl Group.

Designed by the East China Architecture and Design Institute (ECADI), in collaboration with MANICA Architecture, the building is designed to meet the needs of all its various users. The integration of the various different programme elements created a difficult challenge for the design team. Arena facilities are typically dedicated to controlled and ticketed guests only – making the security and access control reasonably easy to facilitate. However, in the Shanghai facility, each floor provides amenities for

both ticketed and non-ticketed guests, as well as a variety of operators and back-of-house support personnel that must circulate simultaneously every day of the year. The result is a complicated three-dimensional network of vertical and horizontal pathways to ensure all guests can reach their destination quickly and efficiently – without compromising the security requirements of the arena's primary ticketed functions.

Bowled over

Extending the concept of the flying saucer, and inspired by the feeling of deep space, the seating bowl was custom designed by MANICA to create a special experience for guests. The computer-activated hanging 'star' lights, LED halo light ring, custom scoreboard, and slightly varied seat colours are all used to create a memorable experience for spectators and create an easily recognised and iconic image for the building on all television broadcasts.

"For most people, the seating bowls of these buildings all look the exactly the same," says David Manica, president of MANICA Architecture. "As the primary space in any sports venue, it's critical that the seating bowl be envisioned as an environment that is instantly memorable and recognisable. That way, when people come back, or see an event at the building on television, they can say, 'I know that building! I've been there, and it was something I will never forget.' Of course the building must function in all other aspects too, but giving the guests a memorable and unique experience is what will set it apart from the competition."

MANICA Architecture

+1 816 421 8890

info@manicaarchitecture.com

www.manicaarchitecture.com

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