

Spirit of Louisiana Takes Flight at Louis Armstrong Airport



Project: Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY)
Location: Kenner, Louisiana
Year of Installation: 2019
Products Used: ViviSpectra Spectrum glass, Fused Metal, Stainless Steel, InForm Flight Information Displays, Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacles

Architect: Atkins North America Inc., Leo A Daly
General Contractor: HGBM Hunt Gibbs Boh Metro
Photographer: Lana Gramlich
Terminal Design Team: Crescent City Aviation Team, a joint venture of Atkins and Leo A Daly

Completed in 2019, Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY) serves 16 airlines with three concourses and 35 gates. Replacing a 60-year-old facility, the \$1 billion reconstruction project accommodates the rapidly growing airport and elevates the arrival and departure experience.

Shaped by gentle arcs, the terminal's architectural form takes inspiration from the geography of Louisiana's Delta region and the Mississippi River. Curving glass walls and glinting terrazzo floors carry the theme throughout the interior. However, additional elements were needed to bring the area's storied cultural heritage to the ultra-modern environment.

Creating a Nurturing Space

Sense of place is the central concept that Atkins and Leo A Daly explored to enrich the 927,000-square-foot space with the spirit of New Orleans. "We were trying to create a feeling that people experience here. That there's a strong sense of culture in the city," Daniel Taylor, Atkins Senior Architect explained.

Working on a budget, the designers looked for ways to deliver nuanced high-end design without the high price tag. "We like to pride ourselves on being able to approach budget issues by coming up with solutions that enhance the design intent," Taylor

added. "Forms+Surfaces was willing to go the extra mile to participate and be innovative with us."

Establishing Roots

From the start of the design development phase, the team was drawn to a photo of trees draped in fog taken by local artist Lana Gramlich. "We stumbled across it during an Internet search," Taylor noted. "It turned out to be the ideal photo we were looking for. It is one of the most essential images of the city that gives it its character and romance."



Feature wall: ViviSpectra Spectrum glass with custom image interlayer

He explained, “In New Orleans, there’s a unique atmospheric condition that occurs in the late winter and early spring. In the morning, when the sunlight hits the fog it creates a sepia-like tone throughout the city.”

Wanting to bring the quintessential look to a monumental feature wall, the designers needed to figure out how to work with the size limitations of the 150 DPI 3-foot x 5-foot image. “When we got closer to having to build the design, we were concerned that we didn’t have an image with enough resolution,” Taylor said.



Feature wall: *ViviSpectra Spectrum glass with custom image interlayer*

John Wafford, Forms+Surfaces Regional Vice President, met with Atkins to discuss ways of using our VividGlass to achieve the effect that was desired. “As a material, we knew it would give us the creative freedom needed to bring the photography to a large-scale application,” he noted.

The design team chose our ViviSpectra Spectrum glass, a line that incorporates continuous tone color imagery, for the impressive 31-foot-wide x 52-foot-tall focal point.

Drawing on our highly specialized image manipulation techniques—honed through the expertise gained with our ViviSpectra VEKTR and Zoom glass programs—and using our state-of-the-art equipment, we were able to manipulate the photo and build the glass to achieve the desired end results. Laminated between a lite of finely etched glass and reflective glass backer, the design imparts a dynamic visual effect that evokes the sultry Louisiana atmosphere.



Feature wall: *ViviSpectra Spectrum glass with custom image interlayer*

The transparency of the composition lends an incredible sense of depth while channeling movement and light. “The glass looks 3D—It’s a very fascinating optical illusion that has been created,” Taylor remarked.

In addition to the aesthetic qualities of the glass, other key benefits included the ease of installation. “We were able to provide a complete system for the glass,” Wafford explained. Designed in conjunction with 3M, the mounting solution made it quick and easy to apply the 48-panel wall to the backside of the terminal’s elevator bank.

In keeping with the theme, ViviSpectra Spectrum glass was also selected to bring the nature inspired look inside the elevators where accent panels displaying live oaks connect passengers to the feeling of traveling through the trees.



Elevator interior panels: *ViviSpectra Spectrum glass with custom image interlayer*

Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacle: *30-gallon, side opening configuration; body in Stainless Steel with Sandstone finish and Dune impression pattern*

Ahead of The Curve

Just beyond the elevator bank, another statement piece greets travelers with a design that spans the baggage claim area. Pen and ink maps of New Orleans provided the impetus for the scene.

“Within New Orleans there is a large inventory of very old maps, and they’re of exquisite quality,” Taylor described. A standout among them was one reflecting the Mississippi River’s sharp curves which give the city its crescent-shaped geography.

“When Atkins saw how Forms+Surfaces could take an image and apply it to stainless steel in a variety of ways, they realized that we were an ideal fit for the project,” Wafford said.

Collaborating with the team, our in-house designers abstracted the map and translated it into a large-scale continuous graphic. “We decided that we wanted this to look like city lights with the river running through,” Taylor noted.

Drawing on our proprietary manufacturing capabilities, two pattern types were applied including Eco-Etch—a process

that creates beautifully etched designs—and rectangular perforations. The result is a visually intriguing surface that brings the concept to life.

The backlit design creates a glittering effect that looks “like the flyover view of New Orleans at night,” Wafford described.

Incorporated across 58 panels of Fused Metal—our exclusive line of colored stainless steel—the application is durable and low maintenance while reinforcing another regional theme, in this case expressed through the choice materials and finishes.

Taylor explained, “Instead of using materials that one might associate with New Orleans, like wrought iron or brick, we sought a subtler approach to creating a sense of place. We were trying to be emotional and visceral. We were not trying to be literal.”

He added, “We wanted to use rich, saturated materials. We also needed something that could withstand a lot of interaction with the public.”



Pen and ink map of New Orleans provided to Forms+Surfaces by Atkins



Detail of Fused Bronze with custom Eco-Etch and perforation patterns



Feature wall: backlit panels in Fused Nickel Bronze with Satin finish, custom Eco-Etch pattern and custom perforation pattern

In Perfect Harmony

Available in a rich range of colors and high-durability finishes, our Fused Metal and stainless steel surfaces were a fitting choice. Drawing on the collaborative support of F+S engineering and manufacturing teams, custom fabrications using the different materials span a broad range of applications and transform otherwise ordinary places like the ticket counters and restrooms into elegant, functional spaces.

To create a cohesive look, concessionaires were encouraged to continue the material scheme throughout the terminal's three

concourses where restaurants and shops celebrate the city's culinary, cultural and arts heritage.

Design-specific solutions unify the concourses while establishing the terminal as a gateway to one of the most exciting cities in the world.

Dramatic architectural spokes in Fused Metal accentuate the 360-degree bar at Emeril's Table, the open kitchen restaurant from celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse.

Adding to the ambience, our ViviSpectra Spectrum glass beautifully reflects the geographic context of the regionally inspired menu.



Signage frames: Stainless Steel with Seastone finish



Ticket counter: Fused Nickel Silver with Seastone finish and Fused White Gold with Seastone finish



Feature wall: ViviSpectra Spectrum glass with custom image interlayer and framing elements in Fused White Gold with Seastone finish

Prepared for Takeoff

Rounding out the installation, our modular InForm Flight Information Displays update passengers as they're coming and going.

Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacles help keep the look clean and match the setting's New Orleans-inspired design theme with a pattern suggesting the movement of the Mississippi River.

The overall atmosphere is enhanced by live entertainment for passengers to enjoy throughout the day. "Music is central to the city," Taylor said, "In New Orleans, anywhere you go, you're going to hear music wafting through from clubs, courtyards and cars. It's simply everywhere."

"The materiality that F+S participated in, the sense of the culinary culture, and the sense of music really tie the airport together," he concluded.

To learn more about the products used here, and to explore ways we can help you transform your ideas into design-specific solutions, please visit our website or contact us. To see more photos of this project, visit the [Project](#) page on our website.



Signage frame: Stainless Steel with Seastone finish



InForm Flight Information Displays: shown in single-mast, double-sided configuration



Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacle: 30-gallon, side opening configuration; body in Stainless Steel with Sandstone finish and Dune impression pattern



Daniel Taylor, Senior Architect at Atkins who led the design team at MSY

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