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For Immediate Release

New Porte-Cochere Invites, Excites Guests of Empire City Casino

Gambling is a game of chance, but you never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's why the architects and owners of Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway took no chances by selecting Birdair when building its porte-cochere as part of a \$50 million expansion project.

“The entrance to any building, particularly in the entertainment industry, not only has to be inviting, it also has to be exciting.” said David Capezzuto, Director of Business Development, Birdair North America. “Wherever people are going to spend their hard earned dollars, you have to meet their high expectations, and with Studio V Architecture’s design featuring Birdair’s ETFE system, this new porte-cochere delivers in spades.”

Innovative Product Pays Off

Jay Valgora, the principal and founder of STUDIO V Architecture says, “At Empire City Casino, we set out to re-invent the modern casino.” That included “a dramatic porte-cochere utilizing exotic structural systems and innovative materials.” STUDIO V chose Birdair’s next-generation material, ETFE Film (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene), for a variety of reasons including aesthetics, performance and sustainability.

One of the most lightweight and transparent cladding materials available, ETFE is a perfect application for roofing and façade construction, particularly in the 11,000-square-foot application for Empire City Casino. Its design was inspired by the unique landscape of the hill-top track at Yonkers Raceway and required a material that could flow as the landscape did.

The canopy was designed and engineered by FTL Design Engineering Studio, a pioneer of tensile structure design and construction technologies. Described by many as “sculptural,” their innovative port cochere design seems to grow out of the surrounding hillside. LPCiminelli, thanks to its expertise in the gaming, hospitality and entertainment market as well as a reputation for speed, quality and cost-effective construction, helped round out the design-build team and bring the whole project together.

Light This Way

The transparency of the ETFE membrane allows daylight to flow into the space below while providing cover and shade for people as they arrive at the casino. For those who enjoy night-time entertainment, the Empire City Casino installation of ETFE incorporates custom-colored LED lighting, creating a truly energizing and exciting experience for guests. The film is UV transparent. Therefore, exposure to UV won't discolor or structurally weaken the film. In addition, due to the inert nature of its surface, it resists adhesion of airborne pollutants, dust, dirt and chemicals.

ETFE can be a single-, double- or triple-layered application. The Empire City Casino project utilizes a two-layer application, known as a cushion system, where a pneumatic system maintains air between the layers of film that are attached in aluminum extrusions and supported by a lightweight structure. It's these inflated "cushions" that create the unique and dramatic entrance that the architects and owners were looking for—and guests can't miss.

Winner, Winner...

Had the architects wanted to either increase or decrease the transparency of the porte-cochere, Birdair's ETFE has great solar control and shading capability. By incorporating one or more of a number of frit patterns to one or multiple layers of the film, its solar performance can be altered. Similarly, colors ranging from red to violet can be added to the film in the extrusion process, providing a consistent tint across the membrane.

In addition, the lightweight nature of the film itself as well as the structure required to support it made ETFE a very cost-effective solution for the architects and owners...and because it's highly recyclable, it made sense in terms of sustainability as well.

"There were so many benefits to using ETFE," said Capezzuto, from the design-build team, of which Birdair was a critical member, "it was really a great project for all involved."

About Birdair

Birdair, Inc. is the leading specialty contractor of custom tensile structures throughout the world. In addition to pre-construction services such as design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies and project scheduling, Birdair provides design-build solutions in all aspects of project design, fabrication, installation and maintenance. The company offers a selection of architectural fabric membranes, including PTFE fiberglass, ETFE film, PVC and Tensotherm™, an insulated tensioned membrane system. Birdair, based in Buffalo, NY, is a member of the Taiyo Kogyo Group, with operations serving North and South America and other international locations. For more information about Birdair, [like us on Facebook](#), call 1-800-622-2246 or visit www.birdair.com.

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