

## High Rollers: Allegiant Stadium makes a bold statement for the Raiders

Throughout the Raiders' 60-year history, the franchise never had its own home. Whether at Oakland Coliseum or Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, the Raiders were always tenants. Allegiant Stadium is the Raiders' first home they can truly call their own, and it was created in the team's new Las Vegas image, appearing as a gleaming black and silver alien spacecraft on the south end of the Vegas Strip.

The story of the Raiders' \$1.98 billion, 65,000-seat home started when the Chargers threw their lot in with the Rams' move to Los Angeles and NFL owners approved Stan Kroenke's SoFi Stadium and its mixed-used development in Inglewood, Calif.

"In 2014-2015, we were invited to participate in a design competition for a new NFL stadium in Los Angeles in Carson, Calif., which was hosted by the San Diego Chargers," said Manica architect Keith Robinson, who led the design team for Allegiant Stadium. "As part of their design critique [the Chargers] said we needed to develop a building that could accommodate two teams; it wasn't clear if that was another NFL franchise or a college team."

### By the numbers

**\$1.98 billion** cost to build

**65,000** capacity (expandable to 100,000)

**8,000** club seats

**88** loge boxes

**127** suites

**19 million pounds** eight of the retractable grass tray

**1.75 million square feet** stadium footprint

**7,865 feet** white light ribbon encircling the exterior

**7,400** glass and metal panels on the exterior

**2,200** Vs

**1,800** Wi-Fi access points

Source: SBJ research

Shortly afterward, Manica was informed it had won the competition and was asked to render out the proposed stadium and change the seat colors to black and silver. "And meet us in Alameda because the Raiders and the Chargers are going to pursue their relocation to Los Angeles jointly," Robinson added.

But after NFL owners approved SoFi, the Raiders informed Manica in late 2015 that they would need help with their new home.

"That's when [Raiders President] Marc Badain called us and said, 'We're not moving to L.A., we're moving to Las Vegas and we need your help to evaluate some sites to make sure we find the perfect site for our new building,'" Robinson said. "That's really where it started; they liked what we did."

To finance the construction of Allegiant Stadium, the Raiders contributed \$1.02 billion through a combination of an equity loan from Bank of America and a sold-out personal seat license campaign headed by Legends that brought in \$549 million. Clark County kicked in \$750 million from bond sales and a room tax on Las Vegas hotel rooms. The remaining \$200 million came from the NFL's stadium loan program.

Dubbed by the Raiders and NFL fans as the “Death Star,” a reference to a planet-destroying space station in the “Star Wars” movie franchise, or the “Roomba,” a popular robot vacuum cleaner, the Raiders used paints and coatings from Ohio-based PPG to give Allegiant Stadium its distinctive black and silver finish.

“When we went to Vegas, we decided we would show it to them in all black and part of that is related to their brand,” Robinson said. “We felt that decision had enough to stand its own ground in that city. But the inspiration for the design was a sports car.”

#### *Honoring Al Davis*

*The Las Vegas Raiders Al Davis Memorial Torch commemorates the late franchise owner’s life and may be the world’s largest 3D-printed object. Kansas City-based Dimensional Innovations designed and built the 93-foot, or nine-story, torch. The firm spent 50,000 hours developing, creating and installing the structure, which rises above the main concourse at Allegiant Stadium.*

*Dimensional Innovations used 225 3D-printed blocks made of carbon fiber, each weighing approximately 350 pounds. Over 100,000 pounds of raw material were used to print the blocks. The monument also has 1,148 surface panels, made from over 35,000 pounds of raw aluminum, that make up its reflective surface. The high-tech final touch involved Dimensional Innovations using a robot to paint the surface panels.*

It was also very important to the Raiders that they played on grass, so Manica looked to how the Arizona Cardinals installed the team’s roll-in natural grass field at State Farm Stadium, Robinson said.

Manica’s design of Allegiant Stadium also incorporates three video boards instead of following the trend of installing one giant video board, such as the center-hung structure in venues like AT&T Stadium or the video board rings that encircle the field at Mercedes-Benz Stadium and now SoFi Stadium. For Allegiant Stadium, Manica found the perfect mix of LED screens that would give the venue a tight and compact atmosphere, Robinson said.

“Once it’s filled with 65,000 people, which we all hope is sooner than later, it will feel absolutely incredible,” Robinson said. (The Raiders have already said they will not host any fans in the stadium’s inaugural season because of the pandemic, but UNLV planned to hold at least two home games there starting on Halloween with up to 3% of stadium capacity.)

Manica worked with HNTB, the architect of record on the project, and Daktronics to get the video boards designed and installed.

“The team actually came together originally in Carson, Calif., when both HNTB and Manica interviewed with the Chargers,” said Lanson Nichols, vice president of sports architecture at HNTB. “When [the Raiders] weren’t selected for the L.A. market, things went quiet for a while but discussions ramped up pretty quickly over in Vegas and we all kind of re-competed and were selected there,” Nichols said. “We got a trial run in L.A. and finished it off in Vegas.”

HNTB designed the Raiders’ locker room and the Raiderettes Lounge.

“We worked with the Raiderettes, and [Raiders owner Mark] Davis very much wants that to be a part of the tour and it’s a part of the history of the team,” Nichols said. “Football’s Fabulous Females is their tagline. There’s even kind of a miniature hall of fame — we call it story in style in the entry area — that goes through the history of the team and shows the different outfits and pictures.”

As far as premium inventory, Allegiant Stadium features 8,000 club seats, 127 suites, eight premium clubs and 88 four-person loge boxes on the sidelines.

### The companies behind Allegiant Stadium

#### Project Leads

- Architects: HNTB, Manica Architecture
- Project Manager: CAA ICON
- General Contractor: Mortenson and McCarthy (joint venture)
- Concessionaire: Levy Restaurants
- Operations Contractor: ASM Global

#### Key Partners

- Allegiant Air (naming rights)
- America First Credit Union
- Aristocrat Technologies
- Caesars Entertainment
- Coors Light
- Cox
- Credit One Bank
- Ford
- Intermountain Healthcare
- Modelo
- MGM Resorts
- Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling
- San Manuel Casino
- Twitch

Inspiration for the loge seats came from business-class seats on a long-haul flight, Robinson said. “They have their own private floor and they share it with another luxury suite level. The concept is they’re ergonomic and all of what you need is right at your fingertips, everything from pre-chilled drinks that are from a cooler that is pre-stocked with your preferences for you when you show up, your own TV screen right in front of you on a dashboard, integrated phone chargers, power storage, you name it.”

Then there’s the north end zone field club, which will essentially become a nightclub, Robinson said. The Raiders had space in the building that was going to be used for bunker suites but they found there was a lot of interest from casinos in that valuable real estate, so they used the space for the nightclub concept instead, Robinson said.

Few details about the club have been released, but Robinson offered Sports Business Journal a description: “You can stand in the end zone, and right behind where people are standing, there are tiered luxury booths, like VIP bottle service booths. You can pay for a booth for 10 to 12 people and sit right in the end zone. It’s going to be an absolutely incredible experience.”

On the food and beverage front, the Raiders teamed up with Levy Restaurants to create Silver and Black Hospitality to handle concessions. Allegiant Stadium’s food and beverage concepts will be a mix of new and old local offerings from Las Vegas’ culinary scene. They will include: Guy Fieri, Michael Mina, BBQ Mexicana from Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken, Holsteins, Fukuburger, Rollin Smoke, Ferraro’s, Capriotti’s Sandwich Shop, Pizza Rock by Tony Gemignani, Evel Pie and Battle Born Burgers.

The Raiders polled their fans in Oakland and Las Vegas to see what they expected in a food and beverage experience, said Jim Kohler, president of Levy West. “We incorporated really a two-market approach, so you’ve got local Las Vegas — kind of old-school Vegas and new-school Vegas — is how we looked at it, and we incorporated restaurant partners that had a long-standing homegrown tradition here in Vegas, like Ferraro’s Restaurant, which has been around for three decades, but also tying it to some of the cool new homegrown partners like Fukuburger,” Kohler said.

“Then also mindful of why visitors come to Las Vegas, that it’s a world-class destination for food and entertainment in general outside of gaming, so we incorporated nationally known partners like Guy Fieri, who is also a huge Raiders fan, along with Michael Mina and our local mixologist Tony Abou-Ganim, who really created the term.”

The Raiders wanted to weave in every demographic and price point at Allegiant Stadium to provide experiences that range from all-inclusive premium clubs, suites and fine-dining to traditional stadium fare, Kohler said. In a nod to Las Vegas casino lingo, “House Deals” will feature \$3 items including hot dogs, nachos and pretzels.

Since fans won’t be allowed this season, the Raiders and Levy launched a preview of Allegiant Stadium’s offerings called Gameday to Go. Food and merchandise packages for season-ticket holders range in price from \$50 to \$200. Raiders fans can order the packages via the team’s mobile app and pick them up at Allegiant Stadium. Gameday To Go has averaged more than 100 orders per week since launching with a limited offering for Week 2 of the NFL season.

When Levy was brought on board to handle food and beverage at Allegiant, the company had the opportunity to interview the Raiders to understand what they expected, said Levy Chief Creative Officer Alison Weber.

“They said the goal was to create and design signature experiences for all our guests, that includes families to diehards to internationals and high rollers, that they can all come together in a state-of-the-art stadium,” Weber said.