



## **ACM Panels Shape Winning Image For New PA Gaming Complex**

When SOSH Architects embarked on creating a design concept that would help build traffic at new Harrah's new racetrack and casino complex in Chester, Pa., they felt that contemporary lines coupled with materials inspired by the industrial nature of the surrounding site would be a safe bet.

So the design team opted for contemporary cladding materials with a metallic finish that, when combined with the adjacent stucco finishes and polychromatic concrete blocks, create a palette of materials that harkens back to Chester's industrial hey day.

The centerpiece of the cladding scheme – representing approximately 50 percent of the casino exterior – is some 100,000 square feet of aluminum composite panels in a bright, silver finish. The 6mm-thick ACM panels are complemented by 100,000 square feet of glass, masonry and stucco. The mélange of materials creates a dynamic that is both eclectic and modern, paying homage to architectural styles of the past and present, suggests Jeffrey Wynkoop AIA, SOSH's project manager.

### **Built on shipbuilding site**

The slots parlor, which opened last January and is expected to draw upwards of 3 million gamblers a year, is located on the site of a former shipbuilding yard along the Delaware River, south of Philadelphia International Airport. The four-level building was once the fabrication facility for the Sun Shipbuilding Company, which operated on the site from 1916 to 1985. The re-design effort has maintained the integrity of the existing structure while accommodating the building's new functions.

A central porte-cochere welcomes both casino and racing patrons, many of whom utilize a new, eight-level garage that can accommodate up to 2,640 vehicles. The main building boasts centralized lobby areas at the ground, racing and casino levels to welcome guests arriving via the porte-cochere or the self-park garage. The consolidated lobby areas rely on escalators and elevators to move guests vertically through the building to their destination.

### **2,735 slot machines**

The gaming center on the third level features 2,735 slot machines and leads to the top level of the clubhouse, which incorporates a feature bar and lounge seating. The clubhouse, consisting of tiered seating platforms, connects the racing and casino levels. The clubhouse is centered on the racetrack finish line and offers superb views of the live racing events.

At the end of the racing day, the clubhouse is converted into a fine dining restaurant that often doubles as a comedy club, function room or other entertainment venue. Food and beverage outlets on the gaming floor include a diner, an all-you-can-eat buffet, a sports bar, a café-style deli and a central casino bar with entertainment.

The casino's interior offers all the amenities one would expect of a worldclass gaming facility. Yet, it's the building's striking exterior that hints at what's in store for visitors seeking a memorable entertainment experience, suggests Wynkoop. "The sleek metallic look is a real eye-catcher," he says. "And it contrasts effectively with the other materials."

While Wynkoop says upfront costs were factored into the decision to make ACM panels the dominant exterior cladding, it's the projected long-term savings in maintenance that will have the biggest impact on the bottom line. "With a metal system, we don't anticipate any significant maintenance expenses for the foreseeable future," Wynkoop said. "An annual power cleaning should do the job."

#### **Case History**

Building	Harrah's Chester Casino & Racetrack
Location	Chester, Pa
Owner	Harrah's Entertainment Division
Designer	Sosh Architects

### **Specifications**

Wall Panel Type	Aluminum Composite Panels
Size	6mm Thick
Profile	Smooth
Color	Bright Silver