

# Architecture SOUTH

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER TWO SUMMER 1994 SEVEN-FIFTY



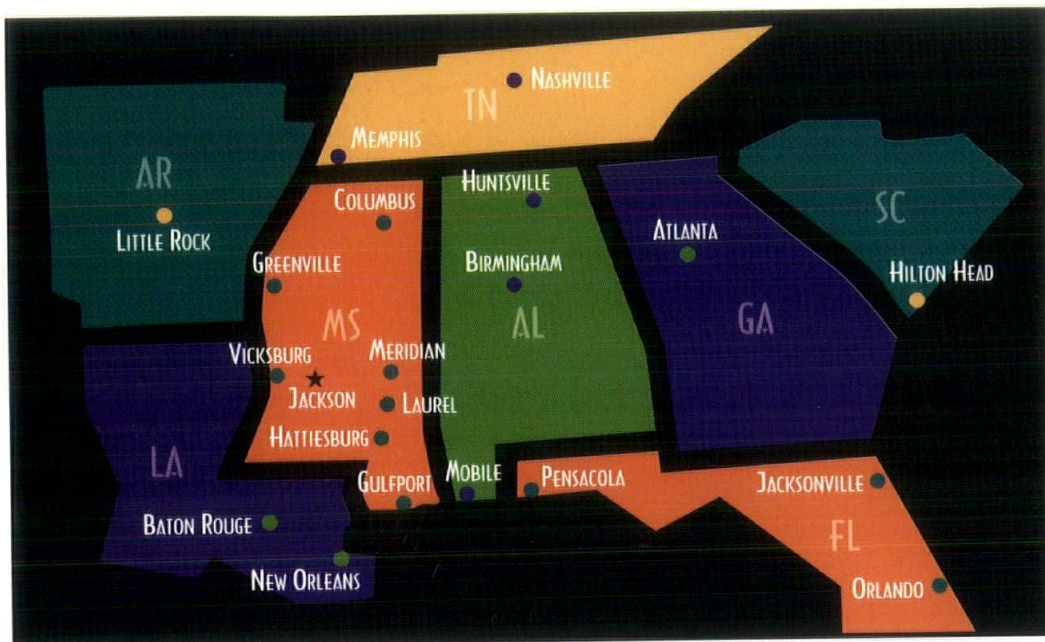
## ARCHITECTURE FOR TOURISM

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THE GARVAN PAVILION • OLD AND NEW AUDITORIA IN NASHVILLE  
CASINO ARCHITECTURE • CAPITAL ACCOMMODATIONS  
A TALE OF TWO MUSEUMS



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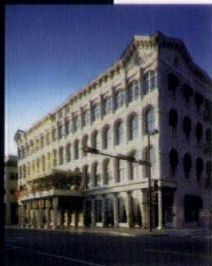
## ArchitectureSOUTH

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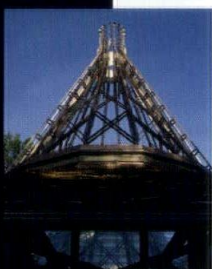
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Cover: Little Rock's Capital Hotel. Photo by Gary Stone.





## FROM THE EDITOR

### AS REAL AS A BISCUIT

Southern hospitality is as real as a biscuit, as comforting as eiderdown. Although trampled into caricature by Madison Avenue and vitiated by marauders, in a world hell-bent on self-preservation, southern culture remains devoted to "the kindness of strangers." Black, white, yellow, or red, we all practice it, each with a different style.

Perhaps we recognize ourselves in the faces of others: the words "host" and "guest" all come from the same ancient root. Perhaps this fierce landscape—bug-infested, crawling with gators and cotton-mouths, thunder-banked, clicking and screaming in the summer night—demands it.

Hospitality also pays the bills. Ever since Miss Scarlett kissed Tara good-bye and bought a calculator, southerners have mined their good manners, groaning tables, and inexhaustible smiles for tourist gold. Beginning with the 1932 Natchez pilgrimage to antebellum homes, southern architecture has been the setting for economic transformation. Contemporary southern architects, acting as midwives, have changed empty mansions to bed-and-break-

fasts and have outfitted sleek new hotels and casinos for a generation of cash-rich carpetbaggers.

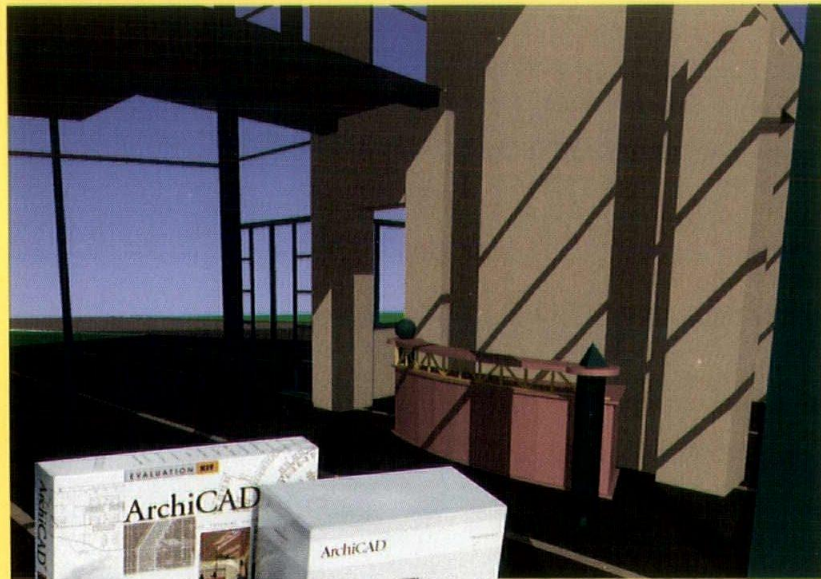
In this issue of *ArchitectureSouth*, we salute the South's newest cash crop as tourists ourselves. Included in our journey are great and small towns, museums, and a national cultural icon, Ryman Auditorium. A new pavilion in Twentieth Century Gardens near Hot Springs by Fay Jones + Maurice Jennings Architects offers peace, not hype. And Little Rock's Capital Hotel, beautifully restored by architect Ed Cromwell, FAIA, tucks this issue to bed.

Since our maiden voyage, you, the reader, have been remarkably supportive. Letters, calls, subscriptions, and inquiries of help have been pouring in. Your persistent interest is proof that this magazine's mission is worthwhile, that the South, our own home, deserves the effort. In the process, you have transformed Blanche DuBois's strangers into friends. Read and enjoy our southern hospitality.

  
Robert A. Ivy, FAIA, Editor

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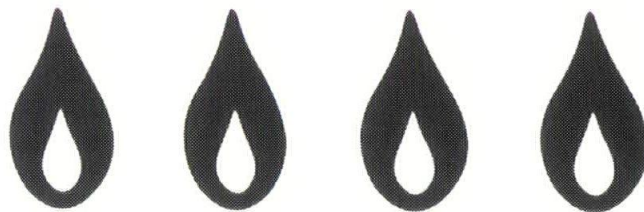
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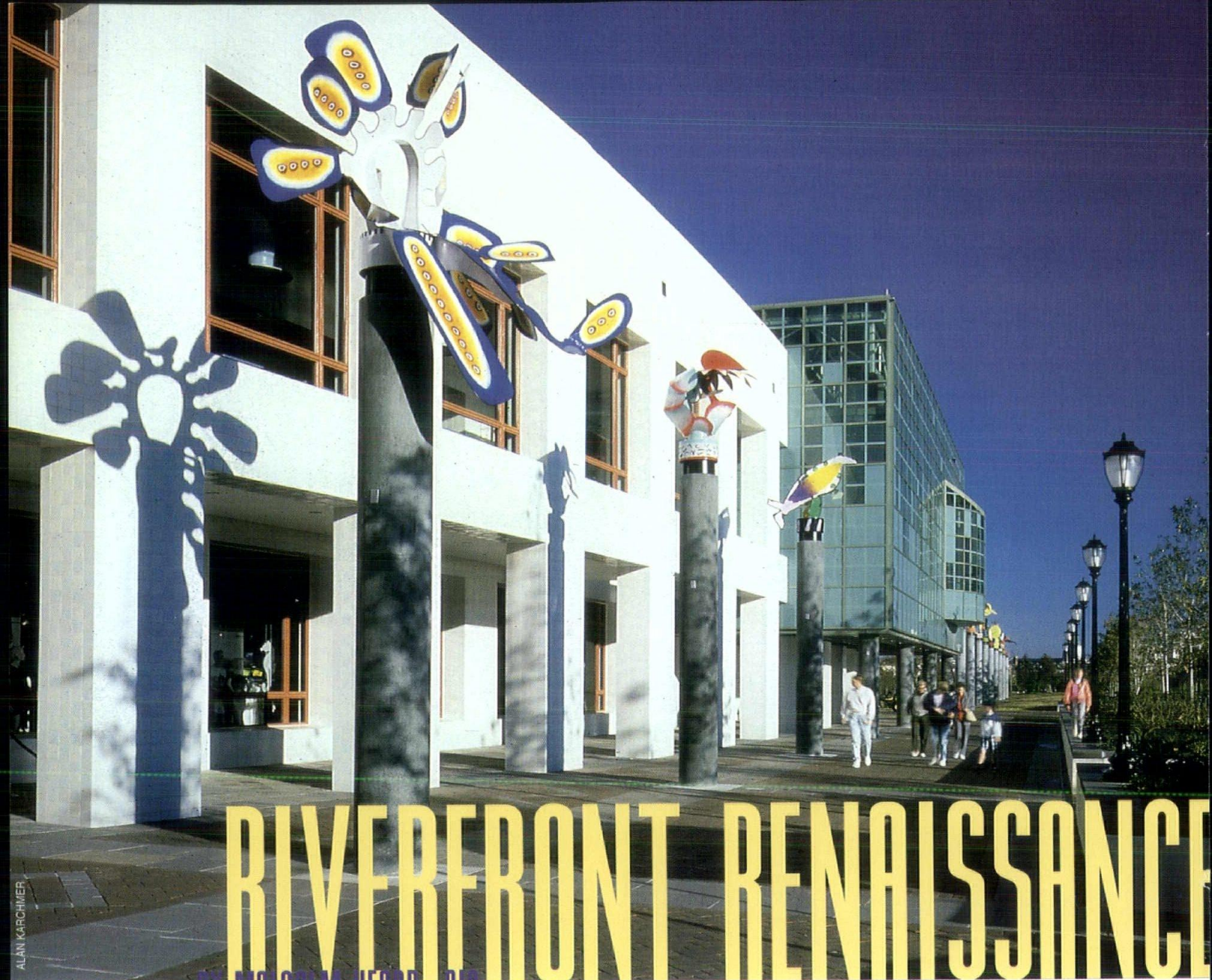
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ALAN KARCHNER

# RIVERFRONT RENAISSANCE

BY MALCOLM HEARD, AIA

In the normal life of a New Orleanian, actual views of the Mississippi River are rare. But on one principal stretch of riverfront, walled off from the city for well over a century, these conditions have changed dramatically in recent years.

Close to two miles of prime river frontage, its maritime use restricted, is being developed for culture, recreation, commerce, and tourism. This transformed stretch extends along a sharp bend in the Mississippi, following the southern edge of the French Quarter, the city's historic core, upriver to the Crescent City Connection, the only bridge across the river within the city proper. It includes the site of the 1984 World's Fair, a spur for much of the current change.

Two streetcars now parallel the river's curve, carrying tourists from the Convention Center to the French Quarter along a track retired from use by the Public Belt Railroad. The Canal Street Ferry pulls away from near the center of the newly opened stretch of river frontage—downriver is the French Quarter; upriver, the Warehouse District.

Looking back toward the city from the ferry, one is struck first by the twentieth century skyline, dominated by the vertical shafts of office and hotel towers and the strange counter-curve of the Superdome. In the immediate foreground, just downriver from the ferry terminal, is the slick green and white mass of the Aquarium of the Americas. Designed by a local consortium of architects known as the Bienville Group, it has become a major tourist

destination in New Orleans since its opening in 1990. Enlivened by a row of brightly-colored sculptural totems by artist Ida Kohlmeier, it stands at the foot of Canal Street and at the beginning of Woldenberg Park. Plans for an addition to the popular attraction by architects Eskew/Filson and Billes/Manning are on the drawing boards.

As the ferry moves out into the heavy current of the river, a look to the right reveals the three steeples of St. Louis Cathedral sitting behind Jackson Square, the French Quarter's center of gravity. The cathedral is visible from the river because of the Moonwalk, a promenade along the levee built in the 1970s where wharf sheds which had previously blocked the square from the water.

Just to the left of the cathedral is the newly restored Cabildo, built by



the Spanish as the seat of city government in the 1790s. After a serious 1988 fire, the Cabildo underwent painstaking renovation prepared and overseen by Koch and Wilson Architects. As a result, it is now the centerpiece of the Louisiana State Museum's collection of important French Quarter structures. Also undergoing renovation as planned by William Sizeler and Associates is the Upper Pontalba building, one of two 1850s blocks facing each other across the square, still maintaining the normal French Quarter pattern of commercial uses on the ground floor and residences above. Nearer the river stands the castellated hulk of the Jax Brewery, an 1891 structure, revitalized in the 1980s by Concordia Architects with stores and restaurants.

Downriver from Jackson Square, the venerable French Market structures extend to the rear of the old U.S. Mint, a major Greek Revival landmark sitting on a full square block of land facing Esplanade Avenue. The Mint was renovated in the late 1970s for museum use. Current plans for the riverfront in this lower part of the Quarter call for the extension of park space downriver from Jackson Square and the construction of an Insectarium,



ALAN KARCHMER

a museum for the display and study of insects, at the Esplanade Avenue Wharf. The removal of large wharf sheds at the Esplanade Avenue and Gov. Nicholls Street wharfs will complete the opening of the levee for the entire length of the French Quarter.

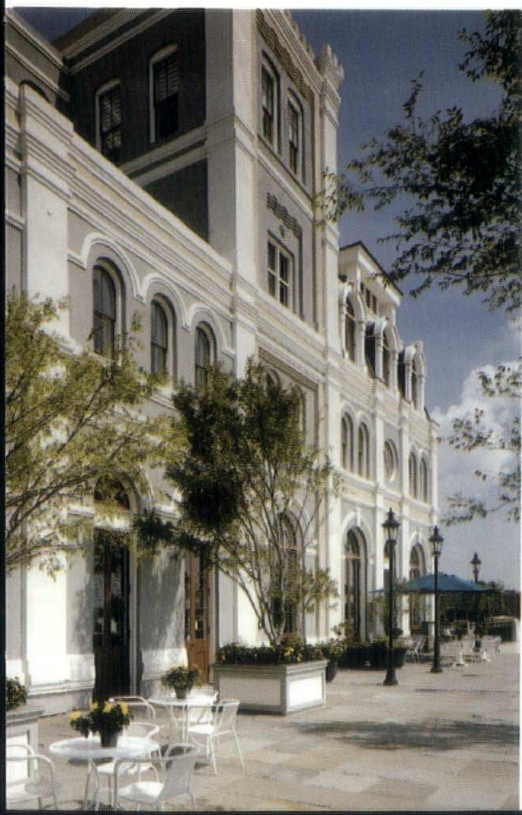
Downriver from the French Quarter, plans are afoot for a cruise ship terminal for the Faubourg Marigny. A few blocks beyond it, the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, an outstanding public high school, has purchased nineteenth century warehouses for conversion to the studios, classrooms, and performance spaces it needs.

Canal Street, the French Quarter's upper boundary, meets the river at the Spanish Plaza. Behind the Plaza is New Orleans' World Trade Center, and beyond it (for the time being, at least), the sinuous concrete curves of the Rivergate, built as a Convention Center in 1968 and now slated for demo-

lition to make way for the world's largest gambling casino.

Just upstream from the Spanish Plaza, the Riverwalk attracts tourists and conventioners. A "festival marketplace" like Boston's Quincy Market near Faneuil Hall and South Street Seaport in lower Manhattan, it edges the river with its long, low mass. Built on wharf structures remaining from the 1983 World's Fair, the Riverwalk

*continued on page six*



ROBERT J. CANGELOSI, JR.

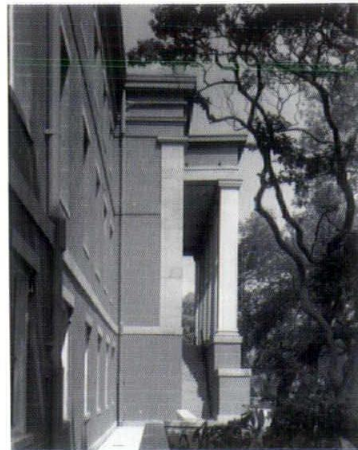
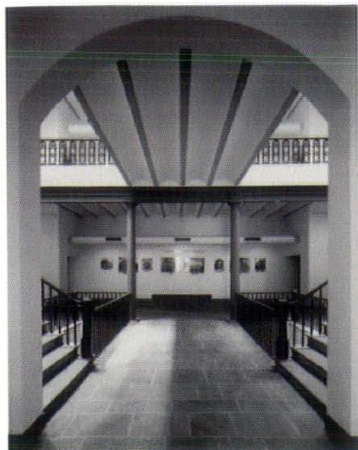
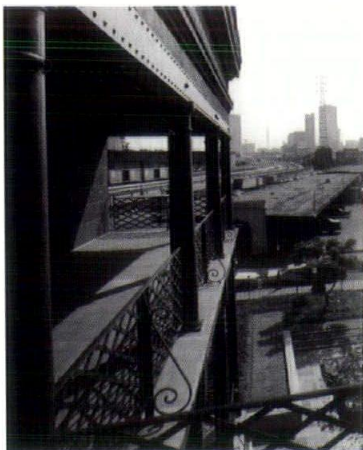
## TWO TRANSFORMED MILES

*New and old blend to bring fresh vitality to the New Orleans waterfront. Clockwise from top left: the Aquarium of the Americas; newly-accessible riverfront with Jax Brewery (foreground) and St. Louis cathedral; the Cabildo; and renovated Jax Brewery.*



# THREE VIEWS OF THE MINT

Former U.S. Mint,  
as renovated by  
E. Egan McNaughton  
Architects.  
Views toward French  
Market (left) and  
Esplanade Avenue  
(right). Interior  
(center) features grand  
stair, museum space.



ALAN KARCHMER (3)

arranges its retail and restaurant tenants on two levels along a central spine, occasionally broken by open decks.

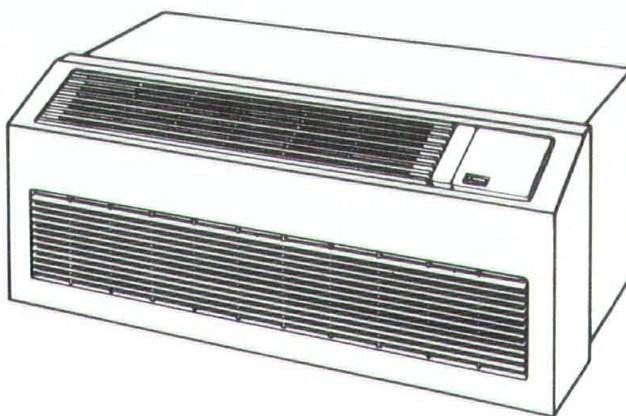
Stacked above the Riverwalk are a random scattering of hotel rooms and One River Place, a fifteen story tower of expensive condominiums with river views. The Queen of New Orleans, the first of several gambling boats projected for the New Orleans riverfront, is docked along the edge of the riverwalk, connecting through it to the adjacent Hilton Hotel.

Closing the view upriver is the enormous and startling mass of the bridge, long enough to cross one of the world's great rivers and high enough to allow the passage of giant ocean-going vessels. Riverfront development will continue underneath and beyond its slithering access ramps. A few blocks from the river's edge, the blocks-long Morial Convention Center awaits an addition to extend it under the bridge and make it one of the largest facilities of its kind.

The riverfront transformation of the last twenty years plays a lively counterpoint to the leisurely pace of change elsewhere in the city. In its emphasis on tourism, in its intensity of commercial activity, in its provision of riverfront park space and cultural facilities, the transformation signals a shift in the character of New Orleans, a city conscious of its ancestry, but dancing to the tricky rhythms of late-twentieth-century culture.

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# THE TRAVELLING ARCHITECT



## VERMILIONVILLE, LOUISIANA

Vermilionville, Louisiana's premier living history attraction, showcases the unique history, culture, and folklife of south Louisiana's Cajun and Creole communities. Nestled among the stately oaks along the Vermilion River in Lafayette, Louisiana, Vermilionville exhibits a half-dozen restored, historic structures dating from the 1790s through 1880 as well as numerous historical replicas depicting churches, barns, schoolhouses, detached kitchens, slave quarters, and overseers' houses.

The Fausse Pointe House, constructed ca. 1790 by Acadian exile Amand Broussard, is the centerpiece of the assembled buildings. These structures collectively recount the area's historical development through their architecture. The buildings accurately reflect the economic standing, agrarian lifestyles, and the climatic adaptations of the people who designed, built, and used them.

Their unique architecture reflects climatic and cultural traditions: gabled roofs, undercut porches with slender colonnettes, exterior stairs, and chaste lines.

The traditions of the buildings' occupants are brought to life by Vermilionville's living history interpreters and artisans who demonstrate and explain a variety of local arts and crafts. Garbed in period costumes, presenters spin and weave locally produced fibers, including brown cotton, into traditional textiles. Other artisans create braided rugs, or demonstrate crocheting and tatting, along with rosary making. Blacksmiths fashion wrought-iron objects in the Vermilionville smithy. Woodworkers craft toys, furniture, and musical instruments.

Musicians perform traditional Cajun ballads and Zydeco music in the Performance Center, supplemented by storytelling sessions, dance demonstrations, lectures, and seminars.

La Cuisine de Maman, a restaurant located in a recreated overseer's house, and the Vermilionville food court provides visitors a more palpable "taste" of Cajun and Creole life. Here guests can sample such distinctive local delicacies as jambalaya, boudin, gumbo, and pralines. Visitors wanting to know more about south Louisiana cuisine can attend Vermilionville's Cooking School. ●

— Carl Brasseaux, Ph.D.  
USL Center for Louisiana Studies



EDDIE CAZAYOUX, AIA (3)

### VENERABLE VERMILIONVILLE

Vermilionville mixes historic Acadian structures with careful replications.

Top: L'Eglise des Attakapas, based on eighteenth century churches.

Middle: Beau Bassin, ca. 1840. A half-timbered house.

Bottom: La Maison Buller, ca. 1807. A hip-roofed Creole house.

#### WHAT TO DO

Vermilionville's location in Lafayette allows tourists to attend two of the nation's best folk festivals, the Festivals Acadiens (September) and the Festival International (April).

#### WHERE TO STAY

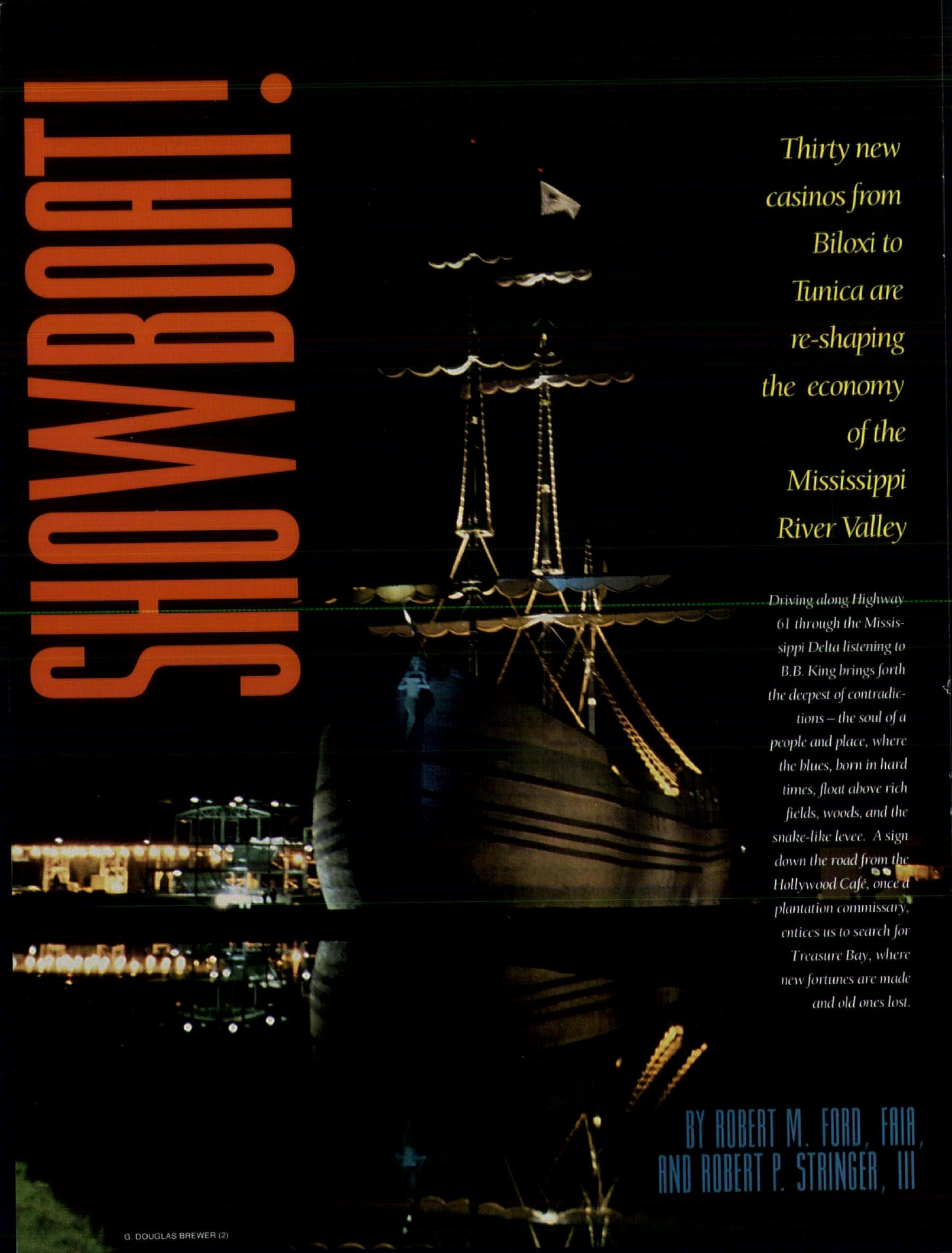
Lafayette offers three full-service hotels (Lafayette Hilton and Towers, Acadiana, and Holiday Inn Central/Holidome) and boasts 3,500 rooms city-wide. 20 bed-and-breakfasts and assorted campgrounds beckon visitors to the area.

#### HOW TO GET THERE

Conveniently located at the intersection of I-10 and I-49, Lafayette is only a 2 1/2 hour drive from New Orleans. The Lafayette Regional Airport hosts over 60 flights daily.



# SHOWBOAT!



*Thirty new  
casinos from  
Biloxi to  
Tunica are  
re-shaping  
the economy  
of the  
Mississippi  
River Valley*

*Driving along Highway  
61 through the Missis-  
sippi Delta listening to  
B.B. King brings forth  
the deepest of contradic-  
tions – the soul of a  
people and place, where  
the blues, born in hard  
times, float above rich  
fields, woods, and the  
snake-like levee. A sign  
down the road from the  
Hollywood Café, once a  
plantation commissary,  
entices us to search for  
Treasure Bay, where  
new fortunes are made  
and old ones lost.*

BY ROBERT M. FORD, FAIA,  
AND ROBERT P. STRINGER, III



The three masts of Treasure Bay Casino rise high above the Mississippi Delta near Tunica, just off Highway 61. Their startling presence announces that Mississippi riverboat gambling of the 1800s has been resurrected, a dynamic tourist offering formerly relegated to the smoke-filled back room and the raised eyebrow. Today, wide-open gambling and respectable tourist dollars have spawned a wealth of construction in historically poor counties and altered the state's economy, perhaps forever.

Money talks. In a relapse into its open and promiscuous history as a riverboat gambling center of the mid-1800s, Mississippi, in 1992, voted to allow floating gambling casinos along the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast. Cautious voters recognized that if promised revenues did not materialize, the moorings could be cut. But only two years after the vote, with \$125 million dollars per month of casino revenue generating \$10 million dollars in new state tax revenue monthly, taxpayers may opt for bigger anchors.

A flotilla of gaming ships like Treasure Bay lies at anchor in Tunica County, Mississippi, once known as the poorest county in the United States, notorious to millions of television viewers as the site of "sugar ditch." In two short years, Tunica has seen new investment of hundreds of millions of dollars. Located less than 30 miles south of Memphis, Tunica's casino sites at Mhoon Landing, River Bend, and Robinsonville have become a mecca for casino development.

The Mississippi Delta is not alone in the race for gaming dollars. Coastal areas like Biloxi and Gulfport have already attracted more than twelve casinos valued at some 40 to 70 million dollars each. Vicksburg and Natchez claim four casinos between them. But the most surprising growth is in Tunica County, where eight casinos have been completed, four are soon to open, and another twelve are planned or under construction.

Their architecture varies in taste and quality. The first casinos, with too little professional guidance, simply filled large spaces with slot machines, gaming tables, garish carpet, and neon. Density seemed to be the sole criterion. A second generation, typified by Tunica's Treasure Bay, has defined imaginative themes and boldly created theatrical structures and spaces for the 3,000 or so patrons expected each day. Newer casinos such as Fitzgerald's, Circus Circus, Harrah's and Treasure Bay have employed sensitive site planning to benefit from the marshy bayou landscape.

The projected site plan of Treasure Bay places the gambling ship in a land-locked harbor against a backdrop of Caribbean Port buildings. A 300-room hotel will be added in Phase Two. Patrons arriving by auto will park and then board a motor launch that winds along the bayou to the 512' gambling ship. A 50' tall mermaid graces the bow and the 398' masts disappear overhead into the Delta heat and humidity.

The main ship at Treasure Bay consists of three levels. The

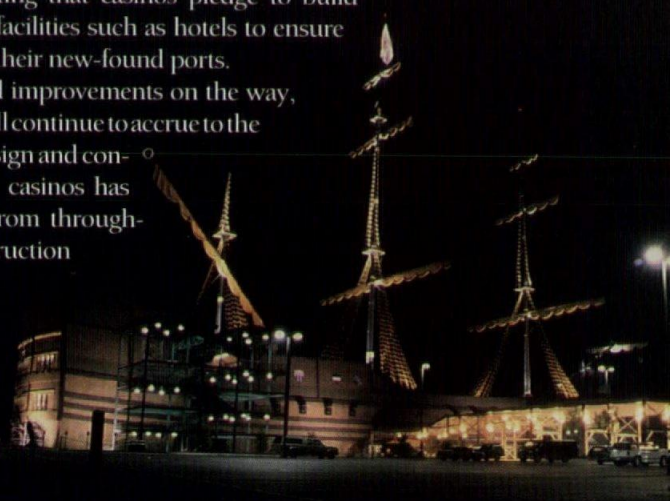
lower two decks provide 1,700 slot machines, 60 table games, a high stakes poker room, a 350 seat buffet restaurant, and a 70 seat poker bar. Overseeing the activities is a 40' full scale replica of a schooner manned with a life-size animated sea captain, a female companion perched atop the highest yardarm, and assorted parrots. These animated figures move, wave, and sing seagoing tunes while patrons play blackjack, roulette or slot machines.

Future development demands strong financing. The State Gaming Commission, while reluctant to formally define their policy, is insisting that casinos pledge to build significant on-shore facilities such as hotels to ensure that ships remain in their new-found ports.

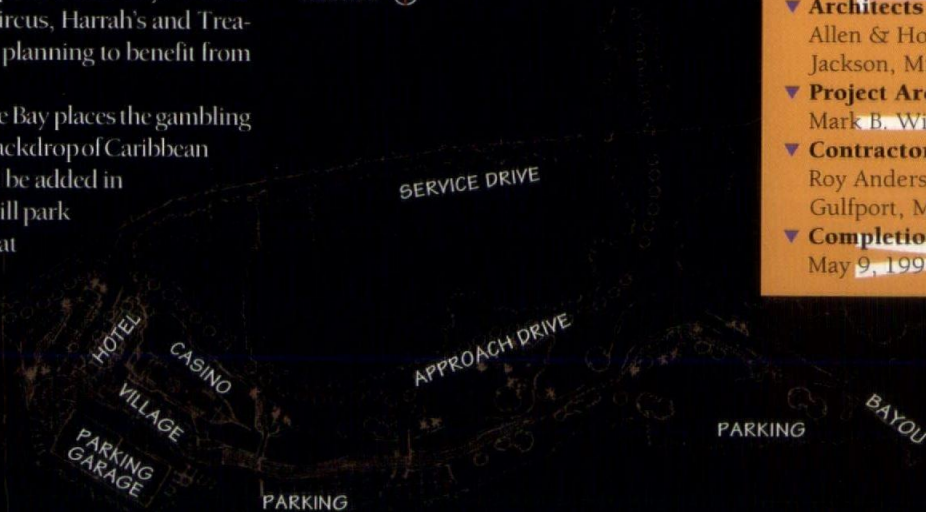
With land-based improvements on the way, long-term benefits will continue to accrue to the county and state. Design and construction of Tunica's casinos has involved architects from throughout the region, construction crews working 'round the clock, and has provided employment to thousands who previously knew only poverty. New construction projects—

from roads and schools to rehabilitation projects—benefit from gaming dollars. The Gaming Commission is being praised for its policy of insisting on land-based commitments as a condition for licensing or relicensing casinos.

For the future, several major non-casino entertainment and recreational developments are being planned for the area to capitalize on the steady stream of customers. Golf courses, tennis centers, theme parks, and a major music entertainment district are in the works. These recreational opportunities will complement the casinos, broadening the base of the tourist market. ○



- ▼ **Project** ..... Treasure Bay Casino
- ▼ **Location** ..... Tunica County, MS
- ▼ **Client** ..... Treasure Bay Corporation
- ▼ **Project Budget** ..... Phase I: \$90,000,000
- ▼ **Gross Square Footage** .. 632,360 square feet
- ▼ **Architects** ..... Allen & Hoshall, Ltd., Jackson, Mississippi
- ▼ **Project Architect** ..... Mark B. Williams, AIA
- ▼ **Contractor** ..... Roy Anderson Corp., Gulfport, Mississippi
- ▼ **Completion date** ..... May 9, 1994



SITE PLAN • TREASURE BAY CASINO

ALLEN & HOSHALL



# RESTORING THE CAPITAL

BY ANGIE KING, AIA

Walking to work can change your life. In the 1950s, while walking daily to the Territorial Restoration, a project memorializing the early Arkansas settlement, architect Edwin Cromwell was prompted to study Little Rock's Capital Hotel. The landmark structure, actually a converted 1870s-era office building, inspired him to plan.

The hotel name emphasized its capital accommodations—proximity to the state capitol was only incidental. Beguiled by history and its potential, Cromwell set about a personal mission.

A developer, civic activist, and historian as well as architect, Edwin Cromwell, FAIA, was determined to improve Little Rock. Born in Manila in 1909, raised in West Point, Mississippi, Cromwell earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Princeton. After working with the federal government in the 1930s, he

moved to Little Rock where he had friends and met his wife. He brought a southerner's relish for history to his new home.

The formerly grand Capital had fallen on lean years. By the 1960s, the Capital, barely surviving, accommodated one-night visitors from all the professions. The state of ruin attacking so many American cities gripped downtown. "There was a bus station and a pawn shop around the corner," describes Jim Pfeifer, project manager on the Capital with Cromwell's office, Cromwell Truemper Levy Thompson Woodsmall Inc.

But when an auditorium nearby became the convention center, just blocks away from the state capitol, the hotel's location rose in value. The human scale of the building's exterior and interior and the turn of the century craftsmanship only added to the draw.



Morning sun warms the cast iron facade of Little Rock's Capital Hotel (left). Restoration was the personal crusade of Edwin Cromwell, FAIA. Columns surrounding atrium lobby mimic marble (below).

The hotel owners, Amelia and Elizabeth Cassinelli, proudly polished the brass railings weekly but were overwhelmed by expenses. The roof leaked inexorably and windows rattled. After more than twenty years romancing the Capital, Cromwell purchased it, closing the hotel in 1977.

Having helped the Cassinellis remove and store details such as a stained glass skylight, windows, and light fixtures, Cromwell vigorously pursued financing. He

masterminded a complicated financial package that linked far-flung investors with Lincoln Properties of Dallas to fund the \$9,700,000 project.

The addition of 24 rooms and dedicated parking made the four-story 123-room hotel viable. Structural renovation presented the most serious challenges. "What a structural mess it was," Cromwell recalls. "The first thing we did was get a roof on this thing," laughs A. Joseph Johnson, AIA, an architect with the firm. The roof pitched steeply but water poured in. "The roof situation was very difficult," says Pfeifer.

Lowering the corridor ceilings accommodated mechanical and fire suppression systems, while maintaining 11'-16' room heights. The cast iron front, originally imported from New York, benefitted from a good cleaning.

The remarkable feature of the lobby is a huge wood-paneled elevator, "big enough for a small dinner party." Having seen one in New York, Cromwell persevered for this primary request, despite protests from hotel management.

Today, the original stained glass has been restored and remounted. The predominant warm yellow color of the grand, yet comfortably-scaled lobby is true to the 1908 renovation. The remaining 1" octagonal floor tiles were supplemented with copies by the original manufacturer.

A small example of scagliola, a finish resembling actual marble, remains on one of the restored columns. While the finish painter came from England, finding skilled plasterers was more difficult. The magic of the Capital convinced two retired plasterers to come out of happy retirement in Hot Springs for one special job.

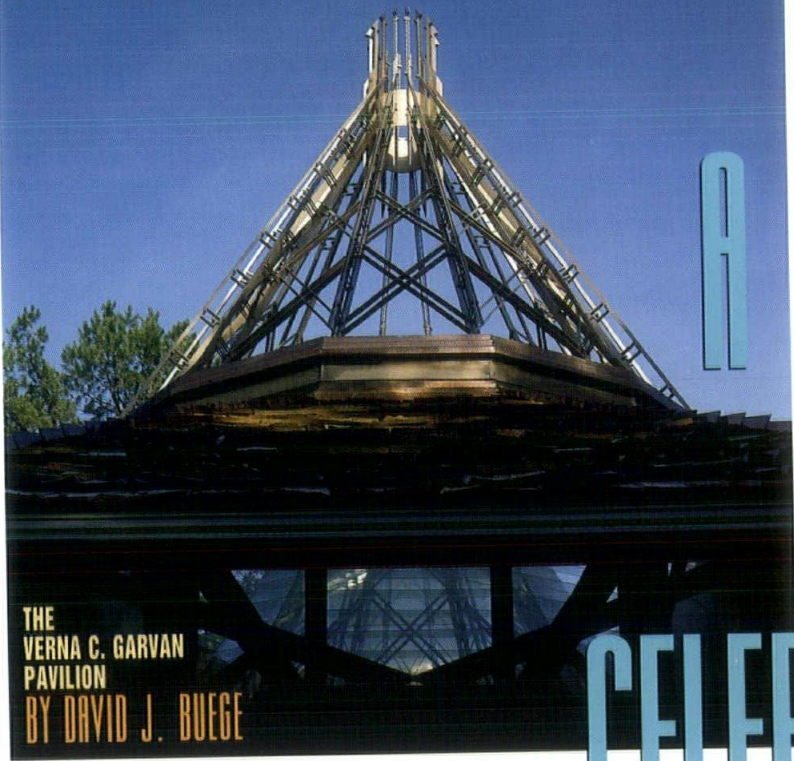
After decades of consideration, Little Rock's Capital Hotel opened to great accolades in 1983. Invariably modest, Cromwell gives credit for the hotel's success to everyone but himself. Everyone else gives credit to him. "It was a wonderful project. The whole state really pulled together," says Jim Pfeifer. "Everyone seemed to feel like they owned a little piece of the Capital Hotel." ●

- ▼ **Project** .....  
The Capital Hotel
- ▼ **Location** .....  
Little Rock, Arkansas
- ▼ **Client** .....  
Edwin Cromwell
- ▼ **Project Budget** .....  
\$9,700,000
- ▼ **Architects** .....  
Cromwell Truemper Levy  
Thompson Woodsmall  
Inc.
- ▼ **Project Architect** .....  
Edwin Cromwell, FAIA
- ▼ **Contractor** .....  
Howell and Jackson, Little  
Rock, AR
- ▼ **Completion date** .....  
1983



GARY STONE (2)





THE  
VERNA C. GARVAN  
PAVILION  
BY DAVID J. BUEGE

# A CIRCLE FOR CELEBRATION

The Verna C. Garvan Pavilion at Twentieth Century Gardens, near Hot Springs, Arkansas, is a significant departure from the earlier chapels and pavilions designed by Fay Jones + Maurice Jennings Architects. In this round pavilion, which recalls the bandstands of American small-town parks and squares, the architects employ familiar themes and materials to expand their formal range.

The Garvan Pavilion's nearest relative in program and setting is Pinecote Pavilion, an open-walled shelter at the Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, Mississippi, but while Pinecote might have been another chapel, the Garvan Pavilion clearly is not. Pinecote, like Jones's Thomcrowne and Cooper chapels, evokes the spirit and form of sacred precedents. The Garvan Pavilion, perhaps intended more for congregation than contemplation, is clearly best as a place for celebration and for large gatherings and as a backdrop for a crowd of people spilling out from the interior space onto the stone-paved apron, as it was at its recent dedication.

The location of the structure within the gardens provides little of the waters-edge drama of Pinecote, or of the other chapels. It does, however, amplify the serenity and integrity of the gardens, especially as reached by boat at the head of a cove on Lake Hamilton. Future plantings as the gardens develop will enhance the promenade of the footpaths that lead from the water to the pavilion.

From a distance, the apparent weight of the round roof contrasts sharply with the delicately articulated structure, the thin, short columns, metal treillage, and the conical glass dome that shelters the oculus (the hollow ring at the center). The experience of the pavilion is most compelling on the interior, with its emphatic center and dramatic light, its skin of wood shingles exposed above, and its integration into the surrounding landscape. ●

*Dramatic round form and massive roof of Garvan Pavilion, near Hot Springs, Arkansas (right). Conical roof crown displays architect Fay Jones's mastery of detail (above).*



RICHARD LEO JOHNSON (2)



# THE GULF STATES AIA HONOR AWARDS



ArchitectureSOUTH is pleased to present the first in a series saluting the honorees in the 1994 AIA Gulf States Awards Program. Out of 83 submissions, a distinguished architectural jury chose to honor 15 projects. Future issues will highlight additional honorees. —Editor

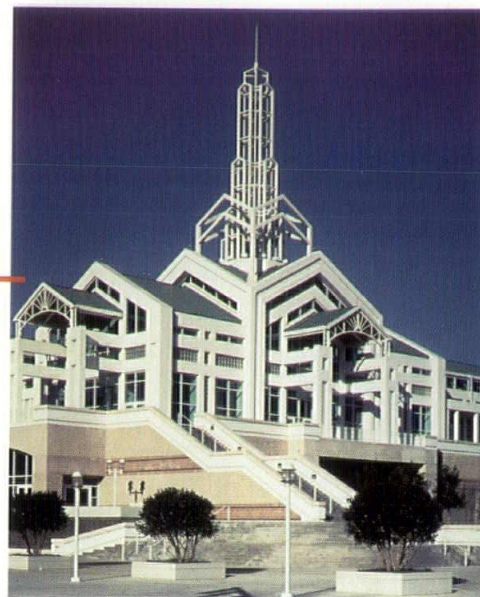
## The Rohm & Haas Office Building Knoxville, Tennessee



BULLOCK, SMITH & PARTNERS

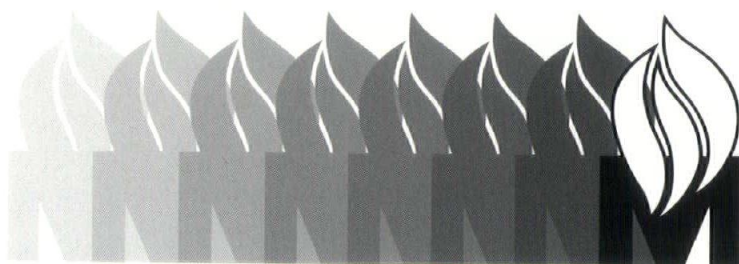
- ▼ **Client** .....  
Rohm & Haas Tennessee, Inc.
- ▼ **Architects** .....  
Bullock, Smith and Partners, Inc.  
Knoxville, Tennessee
- ▼ **Contractor** .....  
Merit Construction, Inc.

## The Mobile Convention Center Mobile, Alabama



BRIAN GASSEL

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City of Mobile
- ▼ **Architects** .....  
Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback  
& Associates, Inc., Atlanta,  
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# REVISITING THE RYMAN



## ...AS NASHVILLE'S NEW ARENA PAYS HOMAGE TO ITS ANCESTOR

The story of the Ryman Auditorium is much like that of downtown Nashville—rest, retreat, demolition, and rejuvenation. Today, many new (and old) projects like Ryman Auditorium are coalescing into a coherent picture of what downtown Nashville is capable of becoming—an active, vibrant people-place.

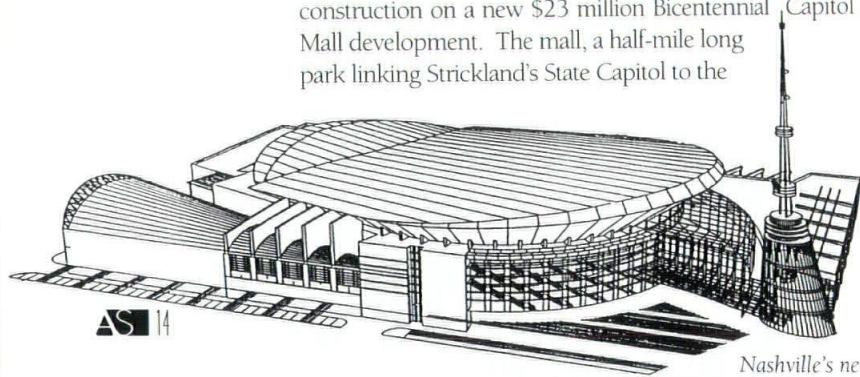
The renovated Ryman, once on the southern edge of downtown, may find itself in the center of an expanding business district. Several changes are responsible. First is the blossoming of The District, a growing entertainment area in the Second Avenue and Broadway historic districts. New additions include an impressive list: a new 20,000 seat arena, a relocated Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and a major corporate headquarters for South Central Bell—all important growth and activity.

To the north, the State of Tennessee is consolidating its hold on existing office space, having recently purchased the American General Tower. The state is also beginning construction on a new \$23 million Bicentennial Capitol Mall development. The mall, a half-mile long park linking Strickland's State Capitol to the

Germantown Historic District, will feature performance space, fountains, landscape emulating the three grand divisions of the state, and a ninety-five bell carillon (one bell for each county), in a grand theatrical landscape venture that portrays the state and its history.

No project has been more symbolic to downtown revitalization than the renaissance of the Ryman Auditorium. The Ryman (originally named the Union Gospel Tabernacle) was designed by Nashville architect Hugh C. Thompson and completed in 1892. Largely financed by Captain Thomas Ryman, a local riverboat operator, its interior was austere, with little decorative treatment, no stage nor balcony; its auditorium seated 1,800. The first renovation added a balcony to accommodate the 1897 convention of the Confederate Veterans of America, increasing seating to nearly 3,000. A stage was added in 1901 to accommodate the Metropolitan Opera.

After the Grand Ole Opry departed in 1974, the auditorium was used principally for "museum" tours and the occasional movie or television special filming. By 1987, the Ryman, though structurally sound, was in serious need of repairs. Fire and building code deficiencies rendered occupancy very difficult. The building had none of the lighting, power, and other electrical systems necessary for even a modest contemporary production.



Nashville's new arena faces the Ryman Auditorium.

BY MICHAEL EMRICK, AIA





MICHAEL EMRICK, AIA

To stabilize the structure, a \$1.1 million exterior stabilization and restoration project was launched in 1988 and completed in 1990. Gaylord Entertainment, the current owner of the building and the other Opryland facilities, began to determine what to do with the facility to best suit their business plans.

In late 1992, off-site events began to influence the destiny of the Ryman. South Central Bell elected to locate its new 30 story office building across the street, historic Second Avenue was beginning to show signs of increasing revitalization, and Metro Nashville decided to locate its new \$100 million civic arena within one block of the Ryman.

Also important was Gaylord's decision to construct a \$100 million addition to Opryland Hotel and to develop the Wild Horse Saloon on historic Second Avenue, instituting water taxi service on the Cumberland River between downtown and Opryland. Everything was in place to encourage the complete interior renovation of the Ryman Auditorium.

Hart-Freeland-Roberts, Inc., Nashville, designed the renovations and R.C. Mathews Co. was the General Contractor. With the help of the Nashville Rehabilitation Committee and the Metropolitan Historical Commission, many code equivalencies were granted which preserved the building's historic character and saved time and dollars.

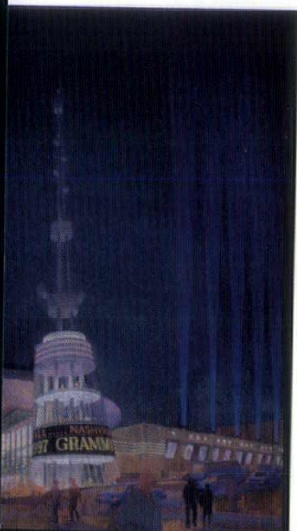
The paint may have been wet when "The Roots of Country Music" aired on CBS on June 25. What greeted an invitation-only crowd and what a nationwide television audience shared was the rebirth of a national icon—the "Mother Church of country Music."

## A TALE OF TWO AUDITORIA

The Ryman Auditorium, birthplace of the Grand Ole Opry, includes grand new museum (above) where Minnie Pearl converses with Roy Acuff (opposite, top). Newly renovated, Ryman's front entrance (below) overlooks the new Nashville Arena (below, left), currently under construction and opening mid-1996. Hart-Freeland-Roberts were architects for arena with HOK Sports Facility Group.



MICHAEL EMRICK, AIA





THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART  
BY RICK DAVIDSON RIA  
WITH ALICE BOWSER

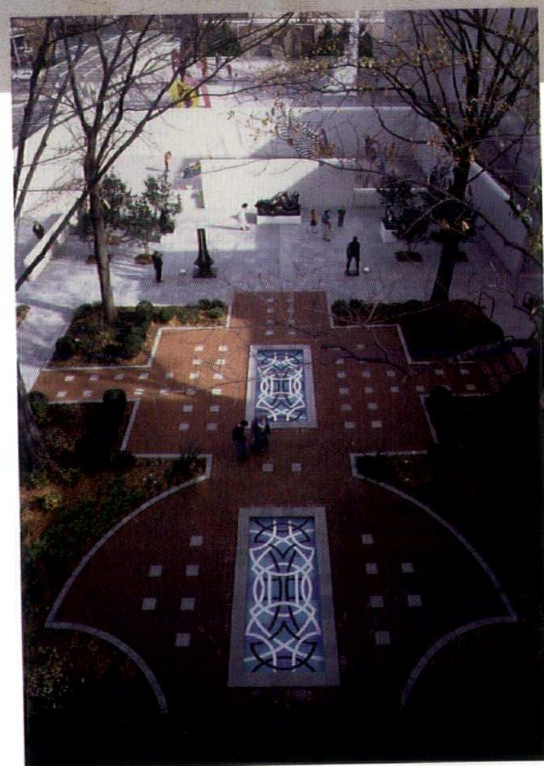
# A TALE OF TWO MUSEUMS

The Birmingham Museum of Art, once crammed-full and aloof, has suddenly become a good neighbor. In a major expansion and remodeling program, the museum not only gained greater space and improved technical systems, but also defined a more active relationship with the community.

Birmingham's original museum buildings, approached by a long flight of stairs, with few exterior penetrations other than doors, presented a very "closed" facade to the public. Warren, Knight & Davis, long one of Birmingham's prominent architectural firms, had designed the imposing structure in the late 1950s to house the city's collection. The monolithic marble building expressed importance, permanence, and the curatorial conviction that art objects are best protected from natural light.

As the collection grew, with significant expansion in its American, Asian, African, contemporary, and decorative arts holdings, the museum expanded three times, generally echoing its original design. By the late 1980s, however, with a nationally recognized permanent collection of some 15,000 works of art, museum leaders began planning a major expansion to create a facility equal to the stature of its collections.

In seeking an open and elegant space for viewing art, with the latest in lighting and climate control systems, they called for bold measures to change the image of the museum. Award winning Birmingham architects KPS Group, Inc., of Birmingham were employed as architects of record, together with design architect Edward Larrabee Barnes/John M.Y. Lee of New York, veterans of other successful museum transformations.



Top: Graceful stair set in clear glass wall overlooks sculpture garden (bottom) at the Birmingham Museum of Art.  
Opposite, top: Lighting and technical systems were upgraded for expanding collections.



The Birmingham building was "opened" in a variety of ways. On the exterior, the original second-level entrance was lowered to ground level, extending a new welcome to the public. Large windows overlooking the trees in Linn Park (the city's municipal center) were uncovered, and huge new ones added. They now provide views of the soothing new sculpture garden and the City Garden Wall, a pedestrian corridor running between the heart of downtown and the civic/convention center.

The most obvious new architectural feature is clear as glass—the new west wing is anchored by a monumental elliptical stair that follows the curve of a huge two-and-a-half-story bowed glass wall. Like a transparent lantern, the stair acts as a public circulation "knuckle," giving access to major new public spaces.

Interior remodeling included reorganizing gallery vistas and entry openings to achieve a greater sense of spaciousness. This new openness encourages visitors to move through the museum by providing inviting glimpses of art in more distant galleries.

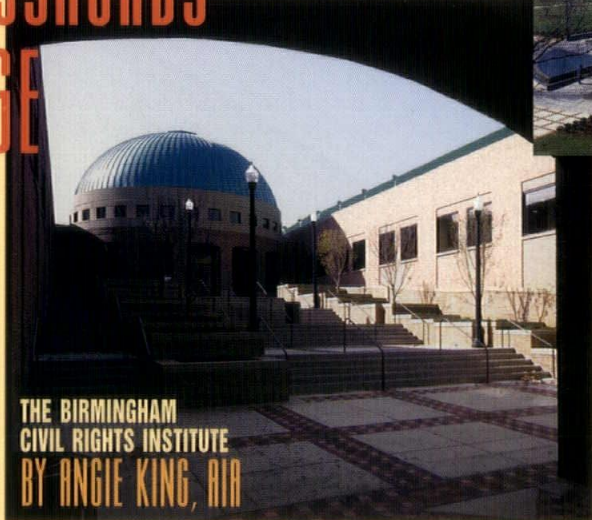
Cool water, trees, and interspersed sculpture coalesce in a new sculpture garden that is a work of art itself. Named for major donor Charles W. Ireland, the garden was designed by environmental sculptor Elyn Zimmerman of New York. Her scheme for the 30,000 square foot area organizes spaces on three different levels. On the first, expansion of the museum's original, intimate



garden features smaller scale sculpture. The second level consists of a sunken outdoor gallery for temporary installations, and the third contains an upper plaza intended for large-scale sculpture. ●

## THE CROSSROADS OF CHANGE

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute sits at a crossroads of the civil rights movement. The building's corner is set back to respect its neighbor, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where four young girls died in a 1963 bombing. Directly



THE BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE  
BY ANGIE KING, AIA

opposite is Kelly Ingram Park, a gathering place for marches during the 1960s. Its presence marks a progressive step in Birmingham, Alabama's quest to move forward.

Planning began twenty years ago. In the late 1970s, former mayor Richard Arrington, Jr., began to discuss a civil rights district. The area had long been the business and entertainment district for the rich culture of the local African-American community.

Selecting an architect was an important first step. Impressed by his work on the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Non-violent Social Change in Atlanta, Mayor Arrington and his task force chose Max Bond, AIA, of New York's Bond Ryder architectural firm to design the 58,000 square foot building. The project architect working with Bond on the \$13 million



MARK GOOCH (2)

Above: Kelly Ingram Park in foreground and Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (far right) flank new BCRI. Left: Broad steps lead to entrance dome at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

structure was RL Brown & Associates, Decatur, Georgia. Development and construction was funded solely by the city with no private donors or bond offerings.

The Institute was completed in 1992 after 18 months construction time. Purposefully constructed of native masonry, the low-rise mass with standing seam roof reflects the industrial character of Birmingham, a city which sprang into business after the Civil War. An African-weave motif inspired the multi-colored brick paving used in the park, around the BCRI and the church. A wide flight of steps in the courtyard signifies and celebrates the struggles of the civil rights movement.

The pathway continues through the central lobby's landmark dome and on to the realistic exhibits. The exhibits, a series of strong experiences drawn from real life, were designed by Joseph A. Wetzel Associates of Boston.

Complimenting the museum is the park across the street, where life-like sculptures elicit second glances from passersby. The landscape design of the district, integral both to the museum and park themes, was executed by Grover Harrison Harrison of Birmingham in association with Grover Mouton of New Orleans. ●



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