

Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia.

- Charles M. Schulz

A CITY WITHIN A CITY



We were privileged to attend the Las Vegas Chapter of AIA's January meeting which included a tour of City Center by Gensler. City Center Las Vegas is one of Gensler's largest projects in the world. They worked with MGM Mirage to create a sustainable "city within a city" to redefine Las Vegas. USGBC has awarded six distinct LEED Gold certifications to ARIA Resort & Casino's hotel tower, convention center and showroom; as well as Vdara Hotel & Spa, Mandarin Oriental, Crystals, and Veer Towers.

Our tour took place during an unusually rainy week in Las Vegas. Over 200 people braved the cold and wet to participate in what turned out to be a wonderful tour of a beautiful property. Our guides were extremely knowledgeable. They pointed out special

materials and small details, told us the secrets behind them and how the LEED certifications were achieved. We were able to experience most of the open properties. We started at the convention center in Aria and made our way through the conference areas, retail, spa and casino to Vdara, and to Crystals. It was beautiful.

One thing we found fascinating was the amount of art accessible to the public just by visiting the buildings. City Center has brought the concept of public art to a definite forefront. Distinct artistic pieces are displayed everywhere, on the wall, in the fixtures, sometimes the stairs themselves are the art piece. Maya Lin's 133-foot interpretation of the Colorado River, which is suspended above the reception area in ARIA, uses reclaimed silver to keep with the commitment to sustainability, and pays homage to Nevada's standing as the "Silver State." It was fascinating to see how art, architecture and sustainable concepts can become so intertwined. It truly is a spectacularly well executed "city within a city."

REUNION TRAILS PARK

With the start of this design involving a variety of limitations, this unique MC Escher inspired park was developed into a spectacular destination for neighboring communities and residents of the City of Henderson. The ten acre open space sector, owned by Clark County School District, was designed to connect inner trails to the existing Amargosa trail system. The outskirts of the park are comprised of native revegetation which corresponds well with indigenous surroundings. This section of the park features a jogging trail, dog park, and large expanse of turf providing an end destination for trail users.



In addition to the ten acres, four acres of design amenities provide an awe-inspiring attraction to the park. Playground areas are comprised of electronic programmable activities. The immense splash pad feature contains water, earth, and air sections designed for the use of children of all ages. Imbedded within the hardscapes and in the plant layout are optical illusions, whimsical patterns, and labyrinths. The materials used for structures, walkways, and artistic elements contain the same themes, allowing visitors to experience the diversity and imagination of MC Escher.

FAVORITE FLORA:

EREMOPHILA MASCULATA VAR. BREVIFOLIA - VALENTINE BUSH



Unique to the plant palette of the desert southwest the Valentine Bush (*Eremophila maculata*) is a favorite of many as its blooms seem to start off the spring season of color. This Australian native was introduced to the southwest desert due to its frost and drought tolerance along with its unusual bright seasonal color.

The small, evergreen shrub can grow 4-5 feet wide and up to 4 feet tall and has rounded green leaves which may turn a slight reddish color during the winter months. After

establishment, it requires little water but looks more lush and green when watered regularly. Blooming begins in January, reaching the peak near Valentine's Day and is most appropriately a lipstick red. Plant in full sun and prune in March to encourage bushiness and to provide more stems for the next seasons flowers.

Due to its showy winter flowers, this plant can fill in when winter color is a priority. Most commonly it can be seen around the Las Vegas Valley in streetscapes, on the golf course or in other commercial applications.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



DEVIL'S POSTPILE
MAMMOTH, CA
CAROLINE HICKS