



Innovative Tile and Stone
Installation Systems

Stan Musial Plaza at Busch Stadium

Project Spotlight: August 2008



LOCATION:
Busch Stadium, St. Louis, Missouri

OWNER:
The St. Louis Cardinals

ARTIST DESIGNER:
HOK Planning Group, Kansas City, Missouri

TILE CONTRACTOR:
John Smith Masonry Company, St. Louis, Missouri

TILE SUPPLIER:
Trends in Tile, Bridgeton, Missouri

TILE INSTALLATION SYSTEM:
LATICRETE International, Inc., Bethany, CT

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By Eric Carson



The city of St. Louis has long had a love affair with the game of baseball. Charter members of the Senior Circuit, the hometown St. Louis Cardinals have won a National League record 10 World Series championships since their inception in 1900. For over 50 years, the Cardinals remained the only Major League Baseball franchise west of the Mississippi, developing a far reaching fan base that still exists today.

Like any proud franchise, the Cardinals have their share of immortal heroes from yesteryear, but one player in particular stands tall above the rest. In the summer of 1941, a 20-year-old lefthander named Stan Musial arrived at old Sportsman's Park and forever altered the course of Cardinal baseball. For the next 22 seasons, St. Louis fans would stand and applaud as a skinny kid from a Pennsylvania steel-mill town hit, ran, and willed his team to three World Series championships. When his career had finally come to an end in September of 1963, "Stan the Man" had left an indelible mark on the history books of America's game. Musial banded out 3,630 hits, posted a lifetime batting average of .331 with 725 doubles, 1,951 RBI, and a still Cardinal record 475 home runs. For his efforts, Musial took home three National League Most Valuable Player Awards, finished second four other times, and was a first-ballot inductee into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

During the second half of Musial's career, August "Gussie" Busch purchased the Cardinals and Sportsman's Park and renamed it Busch Stadium. Not long after he tore it down and built Busch Memorial Stadium on the very same parcel of land. And just five years after Musial retired the Cardinals had already erected a beautiful life-sized statue outside the park in the stunning likeness of "Stan the Man."

However, Busch Stadium II was not long for this world, and by 2006 the Cardinals were playing in a new state-of-the-art facility in line with baseball's latest trend of building shiny new ballparks to pack in the fans and capitalize on revenue streams. But even in today's big business of baseball, the Cardinals organization has not forgotten Stan Musial.

Although his bronze statue still stands at the Gate 3 entrance to Busch Stadium III, in 2008 the

organization hired The HOK Planning Group to design a plaza to recognize Musial's contributions to the Cardinals. HOK worked with Creative Edge Mastershop, John Smith Masonry and LATICRETE during the design process to develop the concept and details. Measuring 75 feet in diameter, Musial Plaza is a beautifully designed walkway filled with brick and granite pavers that surround the original statue.

The center section of the Musial Plaza features a giant baseball with Musial's signature inlaid in the center. Surrounding his signature are granite pavers with the name of each member of his family. On the top and bottom of the baseball there are granite pavers featuring many of Musial's impressive career statistics. The stitches of the baseball are uniquely cut personalized pavers fabricated by Creative Edge, a leading water-jet fabrication and design firm, which fans can purchase and include their own engraved message on. The baseball itself is surrounded by 111 personalized granite pavers, and 3,630 additional pavers, one for each of Musial's hits, spread out from the baseball around the plaza.

The brick pavers range in size from 4" x 8" to 8" x 8", and the granite pavers are in two sizes, 4" x 18" and 8" x 8". Fans who purchased personalized pavers can engrave from three to six lines on each piece of stone, depending on the size and material of the pavers. LATICRETE, a global leader in the manufacturing of innovative systems for the installation of tile and stone, supplied all of the materials used to install nearly 4,000 pavers that collectively represent the new Musial Plaza at Busch Stadium.

The LATICRETE® System was locally provided by Joel and Barbara Tully from Trends in Tile in Bridgeton, Missouri, conveniently located just 20 miles from Busch Stadium. "We've been selling LATICRETE at Trends in Tile for 12 years now," said Joel Tully, owner of Trends in Tile. "We have always believed in their products, they are excellent. The mural is right there in front of the main entrance where all of the taverns are. There are a lot of people who stand on it everyday. A very high percent of the fans enter the stadium through that gate."

To install the granite and brick pavers, John Smith Masonry was asked to provide its years of expertise

for this delicate, ultra-high profile installation. Based in St. Louis, John Smith Masonry is one of the United States Top 10 Largest Mason Contractor Firms, as listed in McGraw-Hill's Engineering New Record Magazine.

The LATICRETE® materials specified to install the natural stone at the Musial Plaza included one of the most innovative products ever developed by the Bethany, Connecticut-based firm. For over 40 years, LATICRETE 9235 Waterproofing Membrane has represented the industry standard for installing ceramic tile and stone in wet areas or continuous submersion applications. But LATICRETE has re-invented the category once again, launching LATICRETE Hydro Ban™, a thin, load-bearing liquid applied waterproofing and anti-fracture membrane that does not require the use of fabric in the fields, coves, or corners. LATICRETE Hydro Ban is brush or roller applied, can be flood tested in 24 hours, and bonds directly to a wide variety of substrates including copper, steel, stainless steel and PVC plumbing fixtures. LATICRETE Hydro Ban is a single component, self-curing liquid rubber that forms a flexible, seamless waterproofing/anti-fracture membrane. GREENGUARD certified, LATICRETE Hydro Ban can contribute to projects seeking LEED certification, and it helps fight harmful mold and mildew with antimicrobial protection from Microban®.

"LATICRETE Hydro Ban is a great product," said John Smith Jr., president of John Smith Masonry Company. "This was the first time we have used it. There was some cracking in the concrete beforehand. LATICRETE Hydro Ban was a quick and easy installation. The project looks real good right now."

After LATICRETE Hydro Ban was applied to protect the outdoor installation, the brick and granite pavers were set in a GREENGUARD certified mortar bed from LATICRETE, consisting of LATICRETE 226 Thick Bed Mortar and LATICRETE 3701 Mortar Admix. LATICRETE 226 Thick Bed Mortar is a factory prepared blend of carefully selected raw materials, portland cement and graded aggregates, designed for use with LATICRETE 3701 Mortar Admix to provide a latex modified portland-cement mortar bed with exceptional strength and resistance to weather, frost, thermal and shock.

"We have been using LATICRETE for 25 years now," said Smith Jr. "It's been a great product for us. The mortar additives are important for us in a freeze/

thaw area. If LATICRETE is not included we'll either change out the product or go ahead and add it to the spec. The technical department is excellent. There are other manufacturers out there but we've had great luck with LATICRETE, and Trends in Tile is a great supplier."

John Smith Masonry took one more step to install the granite and brick pavers, troweling on a slurry bond coat of LATICRETE 254 Platinum before setting the tiles in the LATICRETE mortar bed. LATICRETE 254 Platinum is the ultimate one-step, polymer fortified thin-set that provides unsurpassed strength, far exceeding ANSI A118.4. LATICRETE 254 Platinum is ideal for interior and exterior applications of tile and stone on virtually any substrate, and with exceptional workability and a long open time, this GREENGUARD certified premium thin-set will increase productivity and flexibility on the job site. LATICRETE 254 Platinum inhibits the growth of stain-causing mold and mildew with antimicrobial protection from Microban.

To grout the natural stone pavers designed to pay homage to Stan "The Man" Musial at the new Busch Stadium plaza, John Smith Masonry went to work with LATICRETE 1500 Sanded Grout for a dense and durable grout joint when cured. LATICRETE 1500 Sanded Grout is GREENGUARD certified and will minimize shading or blotching caused by minerals and organic particles found in water, while protecting against stain-causing mold and mildew with antimicrobial protection from Microban. The final step for John Smith Masonry at the Musial Plaza at Busch Stadium in St. Louis was to seal the movement joints with LATICRETE Latasil™, a 100 percent silicone sealant designed for use in coves, corners, changes in plane and expansion joints, in interior or exterior applications of tile and stone.

On May 18, 2008, the St. Louis Cardinals organization and its loyal fans dedicated Musial Plaza at Busch Stadium to Stan Musial and his family in a ceremony outside Gate 3. St. Louis officials proclaimed that special Sunday "Stan Musial Day," and announced that the section of 8th Street that runs along the new plaza will now forever be known as Stan Musial Drive. And, the brick and granite pavers installed as part of the new Stan Musial Plaza at Busch Stadium will forever be held in place by an innovative system provided by LATICRETE, materials every bit as strong and durable as "Stan the Man" himself.

