

Custom Seating Stars at The Hollywood Bowl



Project: Hollywood Bowl
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Year of Installation: 2013

Product Used: Custom variations of Hudson and Duo Benches and custom tables/ tabletops; Universal Receptacles
Architect: Rios Clementi Hale Studios

The Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, CA, is a legendary amphitheater known for its distinctive concentric arched shell set against the backdrop of the Hollywood Hills and the iconic Hollywood sign. Primarily used for musical performances and concerts, its name refers to the fact that it sits within a concave “bowl” carved into the hillside. Built in the early 1920s, the Hollywood Bowl is the largest natural outdoor amphitheater in the United States and is a state-of-the-art showplace for the world’s hottest musicians.

Additionally, the Hollywood Bowl is a Los Angeles County public park, which means that when there is not a concert going on, the public is free to walk about and explore. On the weekends, the Hollywood Star Tour buses stop at the Bowl so tourists from around the world can take photos of the famous spot.

Concert-goers historically picnic at the Bowl before each show, but the venue lacked unified site furniture, and much of the existing furniture was mismatched or in disrepair. And, there was simply not enough seating to meet the demands of the space, which has 15 picnic areas and four major promenades.

Also, due to the unique topography of the site, much of the existing seating consisted of flat benches that had been set on a significant slope. This was rather uncomfortable and precarious for patrons, and a lack of table tops meant that most picnickers had to eat off their laps.

For these reasons, the Hollywood Bowl commissioned Rios Clementi Hale Studios to design picnic furnishings that were more

efficient and inviting by working with, rather than against, the site’s naturally sloping corridors. At the same time, they had to incorporate more seating, add ADA accessible seating, and meet the design guidelines of the Hollywood Bowl.



Custom backless and backed Hudson Benches with powdercoated table and frames, and FSC 100% Ipé hardwood slats



Duo Benches and custom Duo Tables with powdercoated frames and FSC 100% Ipé hardwood slats

The Show Must Go On

Architects and designers from the firm walked the site before a show, to see where people were naturally congregating and the different requirements that would need to be met. They noticed many people perched on walls, sitting around trees, waiting by the box office, and struggling to balance plates of food or drinks.

Jason Neufeld, Designer for Rios Clementi Hale Studios, said, “We wanted to offer a visual range of different seating configurations to appeal to different groups.”

Two Forms+Surfaces benches, Hudson and Duo, turned out to be an ideal starting point.

“We were looking for products that would look at home in an outdoor environment, but also would be solidly built,” said Neufeld. “We liked the Ipé wood and powdercoated stainless steel because they are both very durable and low maintenance. The hardwood is also a nice match to the natural setting of the Bowl.”

FSC 100% Ipé is the hardest and most durable of the woods that Forms+Surfaces offers, and provides superior resistance to moisture, insects, fire, vandalism and decay.

“Additionally,” Neufeld said, “the Bowl has specific aesthetic guidelines – bold shapes, geometric forms, and clean lines. We felt that the Forms+Surfaces designs were an excellent fit.”

Neufeld said they selected the Hudson and Duo Benches because they were so close to their design vision, and then modified them as they went along. “It was a big time saver over reinventing everything,” he said.

Variety Act

From those two standard benches, Rios Clementi Hale Studios worked with Forms+Surfaces to create more than a dozen configurations of outdoor furniture to meet the various needs at the Bowl.

Seating was integrated onto the tops of existing walls to maximize the space in the corridors, and innovative circular benches surround trees near the box office, where people can meet up with friends. Picnic tables were added for full meals, and benches with built-in side tables and armrests provide the perfect spot for a snack or a pre-show drink.

Benches on the various slopes were stepped, so people have a level surface on which to sit and eat. All told, the final design



Custom Duo Café Tables with powdercoated frames and table tops and FSC 100% Ipé hardwood slats

incorporates backed seating, backless seating, seating with and without arms, and seating with and without tables –just about every seating scenario you can think of.

Neufeld said they also wanted their new cohesive design to be fun, so they added a pop of bright color. The vibrant green accents are not only playful, but they make it easy for people to spot an open seat, and also serve as a branding element.

A Seated Ovation

The new furnishings made their debut to rave reviews during the Bowl's 2013 summer season.

Neufeld said, "The client really likes the new furniture and we've gotten a lot of great feedback from the patrons of the Bowl. The furniture has held up really well too, and we've just ordered additional pieces."

"At every show, the new seating is being fully utilized," he said.

Chris Kelley, Forms+Surfaces Field Sales Manager for Los Angeles, said, "People love the site furniture and are using it as we had hoped. I always see people sitting on the benches and using the tabletops for wine and cheese."



Custom Hudson backless and backed Benches with powdercoated tables and frames and FSC 100% Ipé hardwood slats

Neufeld said, "Forms+Surfaces immediately understood what we were looking for and put it together under a very tight deadline. It was a really good collaboration. Everyone on our team was really happy as to how it all came out."

Forms+Surfaces is very pleased to have been involved in this landmark project, and to help visitors enjoy their experience at Hollywood Bowl. For more information on the products we've mentioned here, or to find out how we can help with your next project, visit www.forms-surfaces.com.

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Rios Clementi Hale Studios has earned an international reputation for its collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach, establishing an award-winning tradition across an unprecedented range of design arenas. Since 1985, the architects, landscape architects, planners, and urban, interior, exhibit, graphic, and product designers at Rios Clementi Hale Studios have been creating buildings, places, and products that are thoughtful, effective, and beautiful.



Custom curved backed and backless Duo Benches with powdercoated frames and FSC 100% Ipé hardwood slats



Custom backed Hudson Bench with armrests with powdercoated frame and FSC 100% Ipé hardwood slats