



Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Convention Center



The Challenge

The ownership of Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort wanted the look and feel of its new hotel and convention center to be reflective of the culture and history of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. Taking cues from the tribal narrative and surrounding natural landscape of the Great Smoky Mountains, interior designers at the BLUR Workshop envisioned spaces with a natural earthy color and strategic lighting to showcase a visual storytelling experience. The design concept for the 2,600-square-foot grand lobby

featured a warm and distinctive multiplane, herringbone walnut-wood ceiling with a sweeping light fixture of hand-blown glass birds inspired by tribal stories on the Earth's creation. To transform the 32,000-square-foot ballroom into a visual storytelling experience, the design team wanted an abstract water-spider shape created in glass-fiber reinforced gypsum (GRG) ceiling panels and to strategically integrate raking lighting to provide depth and dimensionality to the images.

Case Study

Location: Cherokee, NC

Product: WoodWorks® Linear Veneered Open, CastWorks™ GRG Panels

Architect: BLUR Workshop

The Solution

To achieve their desired aesthetic in the lobby, the designers chose WoodWorks® Linear Veneered Open with custom installation in natural walnut. Collaborating on the detailing, Armstrong Ceiling & Wall Solutions and the installation contractor devised a solution to execute five separate eight-inch elevation changes within a multi-dimensional zigzag linear ceiling.

Prior to the installation, the team from ProjectWorks®, the complimentary design and pre-construction service from Armstrong, developed shop drawings specifying every point of suspension. Starting from the perimeter and working across, the contractor mitered the six-inch-wide wood plank and snapped the pieces into the heavy-duty

linear carrier with integral clips supplied by Armstrong. After pausing at the center point for the electrician to align the recessed lighting, the installer completed the final center section of the ceiling.

"This was an extremely challenging installation due to continuously changing angles, heights, and directions, as well as laying out all the recessed lights and sculptured glass support cables," said Bob Hevel, senior project manager at Acousti Engineering Company of Florida. "We relied on a template to plot every point and used a laser system to transfer precise locations from the floor up to the ceiling for cutting all the perforations."



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The Expansive Ballroom

Work got underway on the voluminous ballroom with a 3D modeling of the water spider by the interior designers, and the image and light fixture were sent to the CastWorks™ GRG plant for producing mockups and testing the integrated lighting. This involved a very precise and collaborative effort to achieve the desired lighting effect. The CastWorks support team then prepared detailed shop drawings, finalized the casting molds, and produced 80 panels to complete all four GRG sections of the ceiling. Each 44' x 20' CastWorks GRG section consists of four 8' x 8' corners and 16 4' x 4' panels running in between. Working on a scissor lift at a height of 24 feet, the contractor started at one corner and worked around in

securing the panels with hanger wires to a suspension system off a subceiling. Other building trades then worked around the suspension wires to install the overhead electrical systems, sprinkler heads, and other mechanical components.

“The beautiful ornate GRG ceiling panels turned out exactly how we envisioned them, and the resort owners loved the outstanding finished outcome,” said Debbie Wong, the project’s lead designer at the BLUR Workshop. “It took a tremendous amount of collaboration and dedication by everyone on the project team to ensure our design vision for the ceilings in the grand lobby and expansive ballroom was brought to life in an intriguing and beautiful way.”



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