



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

ParisLongchamp: Fluid motion

Movement and transparency as the guiding principles of the new icon of horse racing

With ParisLongchamp, the most important horse race in the world has found a new backdrop, while Paris has gained another versatile and enticing leisure attraction. Following a two-year construction period, the racecourse in the Bois de Boulogne park has a new face as a very special event venue. French star architect Dominique Perrault replaced the previous stands with a new four-floor building and thereby created an ambiance that organically connects the landscape, stands, and horses with one another. In the redesign of the emblematic course, he once again relied on metal fabric from GKD – Gebr. Kufferath AG.

The *Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe* is considered the world championship of horse racing. Every year on the first Sunday in October, it attracts 60,000 keen spectators to the ParisLongchamp racecourse in the prestigious 16th District of Paris. With prize money of €5 million on offer, it ranks among the most lucrative horse races in the world and is broadcast in more than 200 countries. In 2011, Perrault won the international architecture competition to redesign the traditional hippodrome and thereby added yet another illustrious institution to the list of his successful sporting venues. Beside the Velodrome and the Olympic Swimming Stadium in Berlin, the Sports Arena in Rouen and the Tennis Center in Madrid both also bear his signature – and he is also responsible for designing the Olympic Village for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.



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In harmony with nature

The origins of the Longchamp racecourse date back to the 19th century. However, numerous remodeling and extension projects have led to a rather non-transparent network of buildings and areas. Perrault therefore proposed tearing down the existing stands, as well as multiple buildings spread across the site, to create space for a new grandstand and pavilions that would secure the infrastructure required at a horse racing venue. Various historic buildings – including the administration building, stables and totalizator – were also renovated and extended in line with his concept. Perrault's design is characterized by reserved elegance and minimalistic design language, linking the racecourse's past and present with echoing references. Thanks to its shelf-like design – with open front and rear side – the newly constructed four-floor stand offers up a 360° view of the stables, parade ring, racecourse, and the surrounding Bois de Boulogne park. As a core element of the new cult facility, it not only offers 10,000 seats, but also a comprehensive range of gastronomic delights with a brasserie, various bars, and a restaurant with roof terrace. In addition to this, it encompasses media and hospitality areas, 17 suites and 12 VIP lounges. The stand is therefore equally well equipped to handle the huge *Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe*, as well as smaller races and other open-air events – which was a central requirement of the client to ensure that the racetrack would attract a broad and young public. In keeping with this concept, just as much emphasis was placed on convenience and sustainability as the desire for identity-creating architecture that respects the venue's illustrious history. Perrault lends the architectural elements of ParisLongchamp a sense of uniqueness by consistently integrating and transforming the surrounding landscape of the Bois de Boulogne.



Play of light and boundlessness

Perrault's key design principles of *movement and transparency* give the 160-meter-long grandstand a sense of visual lightness and subtle kinetics. The interaction between the open, slightly offset, and twin-angled floors leads to an approximately 20-meter-long overhang toward the finish line. As such, the shape of the grandstand is reminiscent of a galloping racehorse's movement. A wooden boulevard, known as *Planches*, runs at a height of 4.5 meters in parallel to the first overground floor on the parade ring side. This 5.5-kilometer-long, tree-lined promenade connects all facilities with one another, such as the pavilion for the award ceremony, the tunnel access to the course, the restaurant, the parade ring, and the gardens. The boulevard can also be used as a event venue for temporary events. With this circumferential 'lifeline', Perrault harks back to the earlier importance of the racecourse as an attractive meeting place and location for strolling among the greenery. The colors selected for the buildings – natural tones such as ochre and brown – as well as the wooden-clad spectator terraces help the huge building structure blend in with its environment. When designing the façades, Perrault once again put his faith in the various metallic fabrics offered by GKD. Their multifaceted aesthetics and versatile functionality has been fascinating him since his first major success story at the start of the 1990s, the new building of the French National Library. For the horizontally movable, full-height solar protection elements of the grandstand and pavilions that flank the representative stairway up to the main entrance of ParisLongchamp, he selected golden stainless steel fabric of the type ESCALE 7x1.5. It's spirals create interesting light effects throughout the seasons. When closed the panels, which measure more than three meters in height and 1.70 meters in width, protect the stand from becoming uncomfortably hot, thereby supporting the building's sophisticated energy concept. The structure, like all of the hippodrome's other new buildings,



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complies with the HQE standard (Haute Qualité Environnementale). At the same time, the open fabric structure gently filters daylight and allows it into the rooms, creating bright and pleasant spaces. Thanks to their unrestricted outward views, the solar protection panels also meet the explicit aim of transparency. At night, interior lighting grants views into the building from the outside through the metallic membrane. During daylight hours, the shimmering membrane engages in a delicate dialog with the natural environment and lends the stand a sense of Mediterranean lightness thanks to its warm shade of gold. Perrault also picks up on this color effect in the five-meter-high stylized parasols on the walkway, the handrails on the stairways, and the screen-printed glass balustrades.

Everything is possible, but nothing is mandatory

Perrault also relied on the exceptional characteristics of GKD metal fabric for the interior design. Used as acoustically effective ceilings, decorative suspended objects, as well as large-format wall hangings, the fabric elements show off further facets of their potential in ParisLongchamp. CMP fabric lends the ceilings in the corridors their monolithic effect. At the same time, the 2.4-meter-long and 0.9-meter-wide ceiling elements made of aluminum fabric improve both the acoustic comfort and speech intelligibility in the rooms otherwise characterized by reverberant concrete and glass areas. For visual structuring of the spacious floors, Perrault positioned vertically suspended fabric panels made of gold-anodized ESCALE 7x1, which create both an elegant and sublime atmosphere in interaction with huge chandeliers made of illuminated tubes and sweeping cables. This effect is supported by four-meter-high wall hangings made of the same fabric type. Their textile structure lends the *Salon Présidentiel* a dash of elegant coziness. Everything is possible, but nothing is mandatory: with his concept of maximum flexibility-of-use and freedom-of-choice of meetings with horses,



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athletes, horse enthusiasts and the general public, Perrault is responding to the challenges of the future in the world of horse racing. ParisLongchamp therefore breaks away the old pattern of classic racecourses and instead focuses on networking the poles of sports and events, nature and prestige, innovation and tradition to create a unique world of experiences that can more than hold its own in international comparisons.

8.049 characters incl. spaces

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