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El Chorro Lodge Improvements



photo courtesy of DSC; Photo by Mark Boisclair

Paradise Valley, Arizona - Originally constructed in 1934, El Chorro Lodge in Paradise Valley, Ariz., served as a school for girls before it was converted in 1937 to a lodge and restaurant. Recent improvements were made to the property to enhance the fine-dining experience for visitors.


According to Candelaria Design Associates, the project's architect, the outdoor dining spaces and private dining areas were expanded, and the property was updated with the latest technologies, including new entertainment sound systems and Wi-Fi. "The goal of the multifaceted renovation was to retain the history and character of this legacy property while upgrading it and exceeding today's energy and operational standards," said Jerry Meek, president of Desert Star Construction, the project's general contractor.

"Prior to the renovation, El Chorro was technologically obsolete. It was showing significant physical wear and was operationally inefficient. Today, El Chorro is being considered for LEED® [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] gold certification and is acknowledged for its intelligent reuse of existing resources, energy efficiency and use of renewable energy to minimize consumption."


In addition to the expanded dining areas and upgraded technology, the project included



photos courtesy of DSC; Photo by Mark Boisclair



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a 6,500-square-foot event lawn, outdoor fireplace nooks, bocce ball courts, a new organic garden and more, according to Meek. "The main dining area seats approximately 125 [people], and the exterior patio seats an additional 160," he added. "Layout and furnishings were carefully considering to ensure the property would adapt to restaurant as well as a host of special event and community uses (educational, business, presentations, etc.). The Casa Paloma event facility accommodates up to 200 guests for a cocktail party, sit-down dinner or gathering with a stage and dance floor."

Some of the project's sustainable initiatives include energy-efficient heating and cooling systems; solar water heaters; on-site recycling of paper, cardboard, plastics, glass and metal; recycling of construction waste; the use of regional building materials when feasible; energy-efficient doors and windows; and restored and protected landscape habitat with native vegetation, according to Candelaria. The project also features three carports topped with solar panels, which deliver energy savings equal to more than 5.3 million 100-watt light bulbs, according to Meek. "This allows El Chorro to offset more than half of its total annual energy," he said. "High-efficiency fixtures and LED [light-emitting diode] lights also minimize light power densities whenever possible, and occupant-lighting controls and programming lighting allow employees to adjust light use based on needs and periods of use."

Special care was taken in every project detail, and each team member made an important contribution. "AVAI designed and delivered the technology for the project, including audiovisual, data networks and the public presentation of the energy-production information," said Rand Arnold, president of AVAI Ventures, Inc.



photo courtesy of DSC; Photo by Mark Boisclair

"The El Chorro Lodge renovation gave Accent Design & Manufacturing the opportunity to meld our old-world craftsmanship and modern technological abilities as displayed in the decorative iron work and gates at the site," added Murray Herron, general manager of Accent Design & Manufacturing.

Distinctive Roofing LLC completed all the shingles, tile, foam, copper fascia and copper gutters on the project.

"We are proud to have been a part of this fast-paced and high-energy project," said Daniel Grifford III of Distinctive Roofing.

Levake Concrete, Inc. was also proud to be involved in the project. "Levake Concrete provided all the exterior finished concrete at the patios, walks and curbs and all interior finished, scored, colored concrete," said Rod Levake, president of Levake Concrete.

El Chorro's unique tile statements, including the front entry fountain and the tile accents on the outdoor

FACTS & FIGURES

- Owner: SANTOR Ventures, LLC
- Type of Project: Improvements to a restaurant and lodge
- Size: 21,084 square feet (total size of facilities after improvements, not including exterior covered areas)
- Construction Time: September 2009 - February 2010
- The Need: To retain the history and character of this legacy property while upgrading it and exceeding today's energy and operational standards
- The Challenge: Modernizing the property without compromising its old-world look and feel, staying on a fast-track schedule and budget, maintaining the finest quality craftsmanship possible, and dealing with unexpected elements on the site

The Building of America Network Team Members

- Candelaria Design Associates Architect
- Desert Star Construction General Contractor
- Golka Electric, Inc. Electrical Contractor
- Distinctive Roofing LLC Roofing Contractors
- Accent Design & Manufacturing Specialty Contractors
- Zee Engineering Group Electrical Engineers
- Sexton Pest Control Pest Control
- Levake Concrete, Inc. Concrete Contractors/Decorative Concrete
- Eklor Flames West Fire Features
- Jake's Custom Framing, Inc. Carpentry Contractors
- Picasso Tile & Stonework Tile & Stone Contractors
- Sienna Custom Window & Door

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fireplaces, were completed by Picasso Tile & Stonework. "Our contribution to the project can also be seen in the beautiful bar tops and counters that we fabricated and installed," added Michele Kalec of Picasso Tile & Stonework.

Eiklor Flames West focused on exceptional creativity and unmatched attention to detail with all the fire features installed at El Chorro, according to Steve Eiklor, owner of El Chorro. "Everything was done to give the client complete satisfaction," he said.



photo courtesy of DSC; Photo by Mark Boisclair

Quail Plumbing Inc. also contributed to the fire features. "Quail was responsible for the installation of all aspects of the plumbing system, including providing gas to the incredible fire features," said Tim Harris, president of Quail.

Meanwhile, Sienna Custom Window & Door was responsible for providing and installing the Architectural Traditions wood windows and doors on the project. "The handcrafted look and feel of the product added to a great feel and finished look to the overall project," said Greg Lucas of Sienna Custom Window & Door.

Zee Engineering Group, which was responsible for the electrical design and engineering on this project, worked hard to overcome project obstacles. "Our challenge was to modernize the electrical infrastructure of this historic building to meet current building codes without compromising the old-world look and feel of this iconic Arizona landmark," said Shyamuk Sidhwa, PE, principal for Zee Engineering Group. "The design team also collaborated on achieving the green initiatives on this remodel that helped significantly reduce El Chorro's environmental footprint."

Golka Electric, Inc. encountered and overcame similar issues. "Our greatest challenge on this project was to install a news power and lighting system for the entire property while keeping much of the character and portions of the structures intact," said Gary Golka, president of Golka Electric. "The project owner has a vision for a sustainable building that preserved the atmosphere of the past, and seeing this become a reality was particularly rewarding."

Other challenges included staying on a fast-track schedule and budget, maintaining the finest quality craftsmanship possible, and dealing with unexpected elements on the site. "We found walls with dirt footings, electrical wires with no insulation (bare wires exposed), patio walls two feet below existing slabs that were removed, sewer lines that were deteriorated and the list goes on," said Meek.

Despite these issues, all the team members came together with a collaborative spirit to ensure the improvements were successfully completed, allowing El Chorro Lodge to continue its legacy, which has long been a part of Paradise Valley. "The renovation of El Chorro allows it to remain a local landmark with deep roots," said Meek. "It harkens guests back to their childhood."



photo courtesy of DSC; Photo by Mark Boisclair

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