

# Spirit of St Louis



➤ LAMBERT-ST LOUIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HAS BEGUN THE FIRST PHASE OF A \$105 MILLION RENOVATION OF ITS HISTORIC MAIN TERMINAL AND SEVERAL CONCOURSES. THE AIRPORT'S JEFF LEA WATCHES THE SPIRIT OF ST LOUIS RISE AGAIN.

## KEY FACTS

- Lambert's Main Terminal, built in 1956, is being restored as part of a \$105-million airport renovation programme.
- The airport will begin replacing its Main Terminal baggage-handling system in 2009.
- A separate \$16 million restaurant renovation program is also underway at Lambert.

Lambert-St Louis International Airport's Main Terminal was completed in 1956 and the iconic and futuristic domed design became a showcase for architect Minoru Yamasaki to entrench his reputation. His domes became the inspirational template for designs at JFK and Charles de Gaulle Airports.

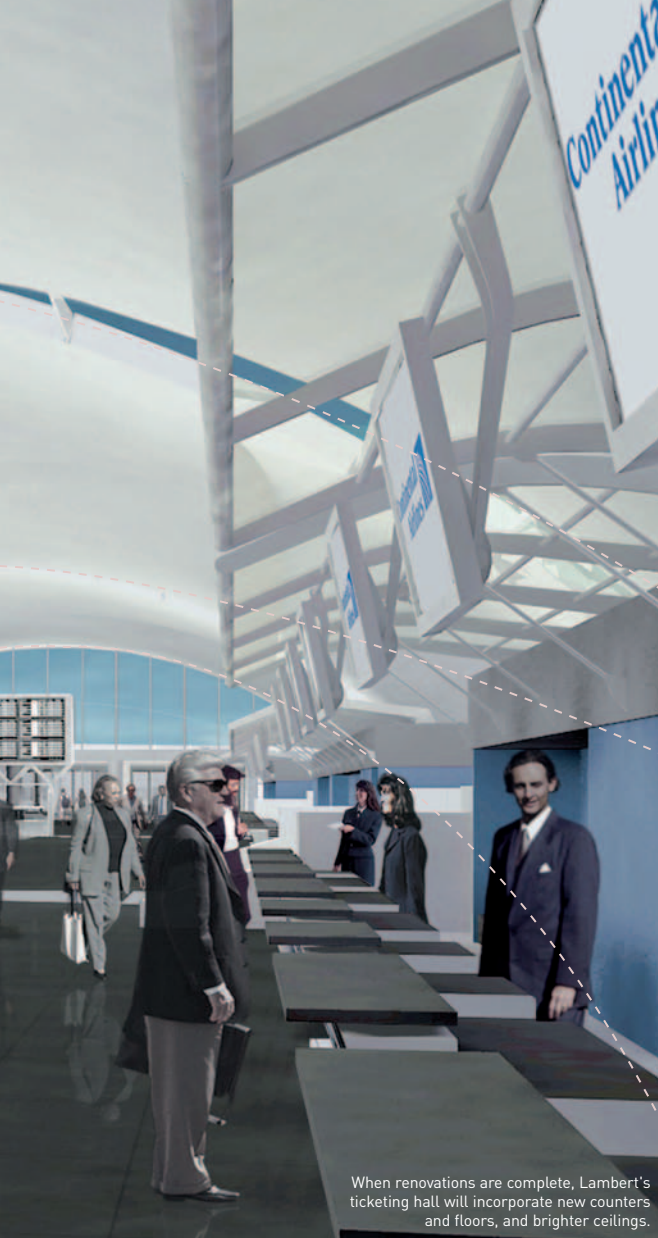
Lambert's 15.3 million passengers are now seeing the first stages of the \$105 million renovation programme that includes a restoration project to bring the interior of Yamasaki's domes back to life. The open expanse, arching floor-to-ceiling windows and futuristic design highlighted the excitement at the dawn of jet travel.

While the jet-set age has moved from glamour to mass transit, time and stress has dulled the lustre of airport architecture in some areas. Lambert is, like many airports, trying to preserve its historical identity while at the same time meeting the ever-changing demands of the modern aviation industry.

The renovation programme was announced in 2007. 'The momentum has been building for years,' said St Louis Mayor Francis Slay. 'There is tremendous support for this project across the St Louis area. I'm excited this is no longer a dream, but a working reality to transform our historic facility into an attractive, modern gateway.'

**'Lambert is trying to preserve its historical identity while at the same time meeting the ever-changing demands of the aviation industry'.**

The first project is the interior restoration of those historic domes. Crews are now resurfacing the domes and the restoration will be brought up to date with improved skylights and lighting.



When renovations are complete, Lambert's ticketing hall will incorporate new counters and floors, and brighter ceilings.

Lambert's original futuristic design highlighted the excitement at the dawn of jet travel.



'We realised early on in this process that we had to bring about fundamental changes in helping our millions of users get where they need to go more easily,' said Richard Hrabko, who is the director of the airport. 'We are making this project a priority for completion because it's a matter of safety and the new signage will instantly improve the experience of our users – before they even step inside the airport.'



Lambert's roof has become a signature of St Louis.

Within a year, designers and engineers are expected to unveil blueprints for the next phases of the renovation program to improve the Main Terminal and concourses. The goals include new ticketing counters, new flooring, brighter ceilings and wall coverings, and new restrooms. Lambert is also

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'This is an iconic building because of its design,' said David Mason, The Kwame Building Group's design manager for the project. 'The roof structure is unique. It has become a signature of St Louis.'

The second project is more about function than beauty but is highly anticipated. It will tackle a long-standing source of passenger frustration. By January 2009, Lambert will begin replacing its decades-old inbound luggage-handling system in the Main Terminal – including everything between the airline baggage tugs and the passengers.

The third project stretches beyond Lambert's front door and affects all airport passengers and visitors. Beginning in early 2009, the airport will overhaul the roadway signs that now direct airport traffic from Interstate 70 to Lambert's terminals, parking lots and other airport-related facilities. Lambert currently suffers from inconsistent, cluttered signage, which causes confusion, especially for out-of-town travellers. The programme will create concise and consistent directional information with an overall look that is designed to improve the airport's image.

hoping to improve the airport's busiest security checkpoint, allowing for the current atrium location to be expanded with more airside restaurants and shops. By moving the security checkpoint, the team hopes to redesign exit paths of Lambert's concourses to funnel most of the Main Terminal passengers into a common arrivals area.

A separate \$16 million restaurant renovation program is also underway at Lambert. By early 2009, three new restaurants will open in the Main Terminal. More are planned for airside.

As Hrabko concludes, the bottom line is that passengers want and deserve a more pleasant airport experience with access to more amenities. The airlines and other users alike need better facilities and systems. ○