



SERVING UP A GREAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

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Innovation in Light™



An exterior LED display enhances a very unique restaurant venue.



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Photo: Hilton Displays

A restaurant's brand is no longer only about food. According to a recent Deloitte study titled "Through Guests' Eyes," restaurant companies that are able to pull ahead of the pack are the ones that have committed to innovation in customer experience—changes that go beyond

good service and focus on establishing connections with guests.

The creators of FR8yard had all of this in mind when they looked at a 1/3-acre parcel of land located between two buildings in downtown Spartanburg, South Carolina, which had sat vacant for decades.

Spartanburg-based Johnson Development Associates and Hub City Hospitality Group saw the land's potential. They knew that, to attract patrons, they needed a unique concept that would create an exciting customer experience.

Similar to establishments like Dallas' Truck Yard and the backyard of Chica-



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go's Parson's Chicken and Fish, they envisioned an entirely outdoor restaurant, a first in the Carolinas.

The budding concept—part beer garden, part family tailgate—garners a near cult-like following at the previously mentioned establishments.

Retaining McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture, the team created FR8yard, a vibrant beer garden with ample outdoor seating, delicious cuisine, and live music. The name FR8yard gives a nod to Spartanburg's history as a major railroad hub.

FR8yard's menu consists of a variety of house-made sausages, street meats, pretzels, loaded fries, salads, hummus, and more, along with a selection of craft and canned beer, wine, and house-made tapped cocktails.

The new, cash-free hybrid outdoor eatery and entertainment venue, made up of re-purposed shipping containers that have been connected and turned into a full commercial kitchen and bar as well as restroom areas, opened this past December.

FR8yard has a variety of seating areas, including tables with benches, wooden drinking rails, and "rooftop" seating above the shipping containers.

Patrons can order drinks and food from within the old shipping containers while playing bocce ball, hanging out by the fire pit, or watching sports on a massive LED digital screen.

Initially the plan was to have a giant projection screen to show sporting events and movies. However Hub City Hospitality Group Partner Richard Heatly said they instead decided on a large LED digital screen after commercial display systems integrator Hilton Displays of Greenville, South Carolina counseled them that this technology would better meet all of the venue's needs.

"We wanted something that would enable us to show big-time events outside during the day, as well as in the evening," said Heatly. "Whether it's sports or other types of live entertainment, we'll be able to show it."

Hilton Displays turned to its long-time display partner California-based Optec Displays, Inc., to find just the



right solution. “The company is innovative in solving unique installation challenges,” said Hilton Displays Director of Sales Scott Andrews.

The 16-by-10-foot, 6.667mm pitch INFINITY-SMD™ LED display can be seen from a 160-degree horizontal viewing angle, which is important for this outdoor venue.

And because much of the programming featured on it will be sporting events, the INFINITY-SMD’s 60fps and fast refresh rate provide smooth video playback, as if the viewers were watching on a stadium’s Jumbotron.

The exterior display has weather-proof features, including water-proof modules that are certified IP65/IP54, making it resistant to harsh external elements like rain, strong winds, dust, and direct sun.

Optec Displays’ software is used to set up the video scaler that then pushes content to the LED display. The software also offers on-demand brightness timing, which allows the LED display to adjust its brightness based on the exterior light.

What will make FR8yard successful will be the energy generated in an open-air venue with high-quality food, beverages and unique recreation components, such as the large-scale LED digital display.

“To our knowledge, this is one of the first container constructions for hospitality in South Carolina, and certainly in Spartanburg,” said Eric Holman, a partner of Hub City Hospitality. “It’s really a family-friendly, dog-friendly social hub.”

By installing this anti-glare, anti-reflective dynamic display, a unique venue becomes an even more vibrant and high-tech atmosphere that is quickly turning into a popular community gathering place.

FR8yard patrons may watch college football and basketball games, premier sporting events (such as the Kentucky Derby®), or unique entertainment programming (like the Academy Awards®).

This large outdoor LED display provides the perfect viewing opportunity for accommodating the venue’s 350-guest capacity. ■



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