



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Think of a sombrero with the crown off center and you'll have a good idea of the basic design of the Ford Motor Company pavilion at HemisFair'68 in San Antonio.

The rotunda-shaped pavilion was designed by Gunnar Birkerts and Associates of Birmingham, Michigan.

"We had no pre-conceived ideas about the design when we began work on it," Mr. Birkerts said. "We knew that Ford had a tradition of using rotunda-type buildings at fairs and wanted to continue that tradition; and we knew that the building was to be temporary, so it had to be easy to erect and to dismantle. Otherwise, we had complete freedom of design.

"Inasmuch as we were to be working with a rotunda-type structure, it became relatively easy to carry out the theme of the HemisFair'68 symbol. The symbol depicts the confluence, or coming together, of civilizations in the Americas. It begins with a circle, depicting the world, moves to the Western Hemisphere, then shows the merging of the old and the new.

"At the Ford Pavilion, visitors from all over the world will move from an eastern entrance to mingle in a circular theater."

The result of the design is a very light cylindrical steel shell in the center, surrounded by a ring of steel columns. The two rings are connected by a floating wood and vinyl parasol suspended by steel cables.

"In effect, the pavilion was put up like a structure made from an Erector Set, and it can be taken down just as easily when the fair closes," Mr. Birkerts said. "Meanwhile, it will house the Ford exhibit in an air-conditioned enclosure, and provide shaded ante-room service where visitors can inspect Ford Motor Company products before they enter the main show.

"The shaded area also will act as a temperature transition zone. It will reduce the shock to visitors who will be leaving San Antonio's summer heat to enter the 70-degree air-conditioned comfort of the rotunda."

The Ford Pavilion is located in a grove of trees near the HemisFair'68 artificial lake.

"We were very fortunate to have trees on the site," Mr. Birkerts said. "We were very careful to protect the trees and were able to locate the pavilion in the middle of the grove with the removal of only one."

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