

Project Name: Sky Azure Small Plates & Cocktails
Project Location: BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, Baltimore, MD 21240
Project Category: Interior Architecture



Project Synopsis:

Project Area: 925 SF
Bar/Dining Area 785 SF
Prep/Storage 485 SF
Construction Cost: \$280,000

During construction of the new B-C Connector at Baltimore-Washington Thurgood Marshall International Airport, the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) developed a plan to revitalize the dated Observation Gallery. Once an outdoor deck of the original Friendship Airport, the space was enclosed with a space frame during the 1979 passenger terminal expansion. The 2013 effort included a full renovation of the Maryland Aviation exhibit and the addition of an upscale, light-fare restaurant/bar concept.

Not long after opening, Sky Azure Small Plates and Cocktails, once a dark, neglected corner of the prized exhibit space became its best kept secret. While aviation inspired, the design of the space represents a departure from literality of the adjacent museum. Sleek, contemporary materials and custom fabricated elements incite a fresh take on the light-fare experience. As one customer put it, “[It’s] probably the most ‘non-airport’ bar/restaurant in BWI; an aesthetically beautiful addition to the Observation Deck.”

To the casual eye, the space boasts dramatic LED lighting with color-change capability to complement the natural hues of the setting sun. Stylized liquor displays allude to the passenger windows of a jet fuselage, while the semi-transparent bar top floats like a cloud. Surprisingly, one of the more inconspicuous elements is the bar itself. Custom designed and field fabricated using rivet-like hardware, the bar not only curves in the x-axis, but also the y-axis simultaneously. The complicated geometry was developed beautifully by the fabricator and the transitions are practically seamless.

Hidden behind the visual ambiance are the noted challenges of working in a retrofitted mid-century structure. Located at the intersection of the original airport and the 1979 addition, the Observation Gallery and its lower level have a complex infrastructure of varying structural and mechanical systems. In order to protect the existing ceiling and systems above, a floating steel grid of cables, tubes and perforated panels fill the void above the bar space. At just 785 SF, careful planning and coordination among the airport’s architect, facilities department and multiple general contractors was essential to making the build-out a success.



Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Photograph



Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Photograph



Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Photograph



Before

Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Before & After Photograph



Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Before & After Photograph



Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Photograph



Sky Azure – Small Plates & Cocktails
Concept Rendering



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Concept Rendering