

Busch Stadium is slice of 'Baseball Heaven'

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Some call the latest Busch Stadium a special, almost magical place.

On April 10, 2006, the St. Louis Cardinals opened the new 46,000-seat retro-style downtown ballpark with a 6-4 win over the Milwaukee Brewers. David Eckstein collected the first Cardinals hit in the new Busch Stadium, and Albert Pujols hit the Redbirds first home run.

The Cardinals also became the first team in almost 100 years to win a World Series Championship in the inaugural season of a new ballpark. The new Busch Stadium held the 80th MLB All-Star Game, in July 2009. The St. Louis Cardinals organization said Busch Stadium is an iconic, unique St. Louis venue and home of one of the most storied franchises in Major League Baseball.

"Located in the heart of downtown St. Louis, Busch Stadium is the pride and joy of the most impassioned baseball fans in the world," said the media relations department for the Cardinals. "The fans lovingly refer to Busch Stadium as 'Baseball Heaven.'"

Recent improvements include the installation in 1997 of a hand-operated scoreboard flanked by flag decks commemorating the club's World Series championships and retired numbers; the return in 1996 to a natural-grass playing surface, which replaced the artificial turf that had been in place since 1970. The opening in 1996 of the Family Pavilion, featured a variety of games and attractions for families and children, and Homer's Landing, a picnic area located above the bullpen in left-center field. The opening also brought the return of a more traditional "ballpark green" color scheme for the outfield fence and stadium trim.

Other improvements include the installation in 1993 of a state-of-the-art sound system and a new large-screen video display, a Diamond Vision MARK III High Contrast system by Mitsubishi Electronics. Prior to the 1995 season, a Plaza of Champions monument display honoring the Cardinals World Championship teams was erected near the Stan Musial statue. The Stadium Club was totally renovated and included the addition of a sports-themed bar.

Busch Stadium's basic structure is concrete. The stadium is basically a two-deck facility with about half its seats in each deck. The seats completely surround the field without posts or columns to obstruct fans' views. The nearly circular structure has an outside diameter of more than 800 feet, covers more than 12 acres and is 130-feet tall, measured from the playing field to the top of the stadium.

The playing field at Busch Stadium is 10 to 30 feet lower than street level. Spectators move from the entrance level either up or down to seating areas. There are eight major entrances.

Busch Stadium capacity is 50,345.

CARDINALS BALLPARKS

1892-1897 - Union Park

1898 - League Park

1899-1920 - Robison Field

1920-1952 - Sportsman's Park

1953-1966 - *Busch Stadium (Grand Ave.)

1966-2005 - Busch Stadium (Stadium Plaza)

Spring of 2006 - New Busch Stadium