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CLOSER LOOK:

St. Louis'

Ballpark Village

BY KATHERINE RODEGHIER

For a baseball fan, it's a goosebumps moment: standing on the pitcher's mound where Cardinal's hall-of-famer Bruce Sutter stared down the Milwaukee Brewers in Game 7 of the 1982 World Series. Is that the roar of the crowd as Sutter saves the Card's win in the top of the ninth?

No, those are the squeals of kids running the bases on the original Busch II diamond at Ballpark Village, a \$100 million dining, retail and entertainment complex.

Rising From the Rubble

When the current Busch Stadium opened in 2006, the former ballpark next door, Busch II, was torn down. The ball club envisioned using the empty lot—for a facility with retail, bars, restaurants and rooftop seating overlooking the stadium, similar to buildings around Chicago's Wrigley Field. A year ago in March, that dream became reality.

Ballpark Village is jointly owned by the Cardinals and The Cordish Cos., the



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mastermind behind other reimagined developments, including Kansas City, Mo.'s, Power & Light District and Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The company has partnered with other sports teams, but this is its first in baseball, said Chase Martin, Cordish's development director. The Cardinals organization is "one of the best franchises in all of sports," he said, and it's exciting to work with a 10-acre parcel of land next to a stadium that gets 3.5-plus million visitors a year, 40 percent from outside the region.

Major League Dining and Entertainment

Among nine venues within the complex is Cardinals Nation, which "is unlike anything else in baseball," said Ron Watermon, Cardinals' vice president of communications. Its AT&T Rooftop has 334 seats with views over the left-field wall. Inside, there's a two-story restaurant with

lighting mimicking the seams of a baseball and ceiling fans made of bats. And more than 1,000 items of a 22,000-plus-item collection are on display in its seven-gallery Hall of Fame & Museum, the largest collection outside Cooperstown.

More views into Busch Stadium can be had from the roof of the Budweiser Brew House, a three-level section of Ballpark Village containing indoor and outdoor dining and 11 bars with 239 taps. There's an expansive beer and bourbon menu at PBR St. Louis. Patrons get into the cowboy theme aboard Ozzie, a mechanical bull with moves named after Card's shortstop Ozzie Smith.

Tying everything together is Fox Sports Midwest Live!, a central gathering spot under a 100-foot-long retractable glass roof that helps make Ballpark Village a year-round destination. Patrons watch sports on a 40-foot-wide LED screen or

take in a show on one of the complex's five live performance stages.

As it built the new, the Cardinals preserved the old on the west end of Ballpark Village. Nostalgia buffs cherish the turf infield on the exact footprint of the Busch II stadium, where the Cards played from 1966 to 2005. While visitors picnic on the grass or gaze at an oversize video screen resembling a scoreboard, Grandpa can take a child in hand to walk the bases and tell stories about players who made the Cardinals great.

For more information, check with Ballpark Village, www.stlballparkvillage.com, and the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission, www.explorestlouis.com. Plan your trip with a local AAA agent or AAA.com/travel. **H&A**

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Writer's Picks

Busch Stadium Tours

Year-round tours take visitors through the 47,000-seat ballpark next to Ballpark Village. Visitors have access to the broadcast booth, dugout and infield. In the Champions Club, they see World Series trophies enshrined behind glass. At the Musial Bridge, they look down upon the Stan The Man statue and plaza with 3,630 bricks, one for each of his career hits.

Delmar Loop

This once-fashionable neighborhood built around the former Loop trolley line fell on hard times but began to turn around in the 1970s after Blueberry Hill restaurant and nightclub opened. Chuck Berry, called the Father of Rock 'n' Roll by many, still performs in the Duck Room once a month. Redevelopment has been steadily earning the six-block stretch of Delmar Boulevard a place on the American Planning Association's list of America's 10 Great Streets.

Along with the 1929 Tivoli movie theater, Pageant nightclub, Pin-Up Bowl martini lounge and bowling alley, Peacock Loop Diner and the boutique Moonrise Hotel (with retro Space-Age theme), there are nearly 200 shops with emphasis on the offbeat. Brass stars in the sidewalk honor famous St. Louis residents, including Yogi Berra, Eugene Field, Shelley Winters and Josephine Baker.

Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis

Called the "new cathedral," though it dates from 1907, this Romanesque structure contains one of the Western Hemisphere's largest mosaic collections, including works from Tiffany & Co. and the Gorham Co. Docents point out the rose windows, central dome and chapels, all showcasing 83,000 square feet of mosaics. The Mosaic Museum is housed in the basement.



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