

St. Louis' Ballpark Village offers a whole new game

Entertainment complex brings another fun dimension to Busch Stadium

STORY AND PHOTOS
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ST. LOUIS — Call it Wrigley South. Rooftop seats overlook the outfield, restaurants and bars fill with fans, people pack the plazas outside the ballpark. But there's little of the gritty urban ambience surrounding Chicago's century-old baseball stadium.

Ballpark Village is brand new. There's nothing else quite like this dining and entertainment complex that opened in March next to Busch Stadium, said Ron Watermon, spokesman for the St. Louis Cardinals. "Chicago would be the closest manifestation." It's the first facility built solely for baseball and for the Cardinals, he said. "It's a game changer for us."

The \$100 million complex is owned jointly by the Cardinals and The Cordish Cos., the real estate development and entertainment management group behind projects such as the Kansas City Power & Light District, Fourth Street Live in Louisville, Ky., the Power Plant & Pier IV in Baltimore and Xfinity Live in Philadelphia.

And it's been a hit since its opening day, not just with locals but with the 40 percent of Cardinals fans who drive 100 miles or more to attend a game and make St. Louis a baseball destination.

Those who remember the former Busch Stadium, where Ballpark Village now stands, will find the original infield in a grassy park on the west end of the complex. Kids chase each other across the pitcher's mound and fans run — or walk — to bases in the exact spot where Cards greats slid to safety. Where home plate once stood, a large video screen shows each game, and the Dugout Bar serves St. Louis' famous Ted Dreyes frozen custard.

On Friday evenings the fun spills onto Clark Street, between Ballpark Village and the stadium. The street is closed for a two-hour festival with free concerts and beer samples.

At the heart of Ballpark Village is Cardinals Nation, topped by two decks with views over the left-center-field stands into home plate. Those 334 ticketed seats on the AT&T Rooftop, with all-inclusive buffet and bar, are sold by the Cardinals in a dynamic pricing structure that changes with the date and the opposing team, just like seats inside Busch Stadium. Expect to pay more when the Cards play an arch-rival like the Cubs.

Cardinals Nation also houses a two-story restaurant and the Cardinals Hall of Fame and Museum, with a collection second in size only to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Want to see a ball autographed by the 1926 World Series-winning team? It's here, along with World Series rings, jerseys, autographed bats and trophies.

Next door the rooftop deck of Budweiser Brew House also has views into the ballpark, with game-day admission ticketed through the Cardinals. Downstairs there's a beer garden, a stage for live music, 11 bars and 239 taps offering a wide variety of beers, not just Bud. Menus in the restaurants suggest best pairings. Purchase a card and you can help yourself to brews from a 21-foot tap wall.

The center atrium of the complex serves as a gathering place under a 100-foot retractable glass roof. Here, Fox Sports Midwest Live dominates with a 40-foot LED TV screen showing Cardinals games and other sporting events. You'll find a bar, restaurant, live concert stage and Tex-Mex fast-food and drink outlets on the main floor. Head up to the second level for the Skybox bar and peer into the FOX Sports Midwest studio, where a window behind the anchor desk overlooks the field.

A mechanical bull named Ozzie, for former Cards shortstop Ozzie Smith, gives patrons a rough ride at PBR St. Louis. The cowboy bar with the Professional Bull Riders theme has a dance floor and live music venue with view of the Gateway Arch and city skyline. Down the hall, dueling pianos reign at Howl at the Moon. St. Louis craft beers and the nightclub's signature 86-ounce buckets of booze should keep you howling.

Fans with a taste for sushi will find one of the city's Drunken Fish restaurants within the Ballpark Village complex. Known for its happy hour, it has an im-



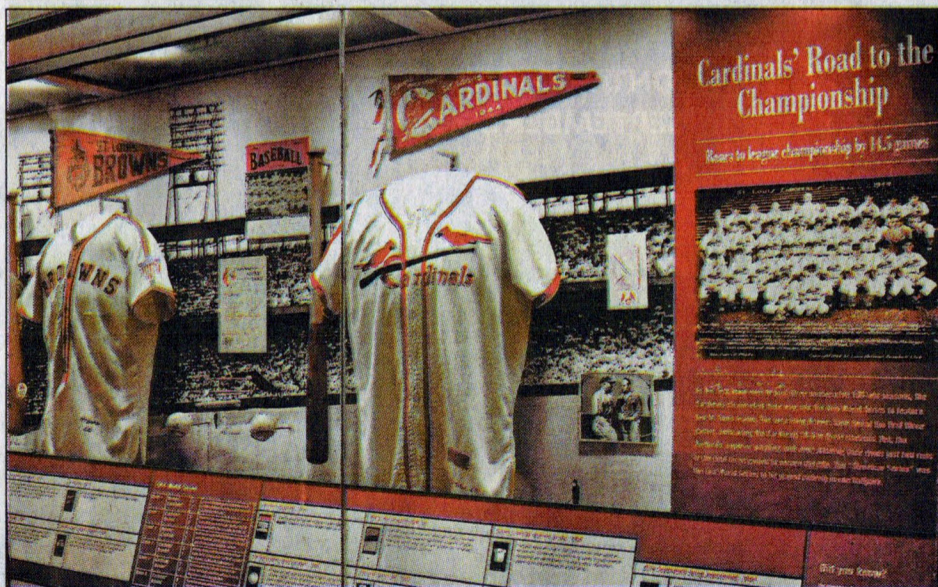
Visitors lounge on the original infield of the old Busch Stadium at Ballpark Village. A screen shows games at the old home plate.



Tickets for seats on the AT&T Rooftop include a buffet and bar. Pricing changes with the date and the opposing team, just like seats inside Busch Stadium.



Ozzie the mechanical bull sits inside PBR St. Louis, a cowboy bar.



A large collection of memorabilia is on display at the Cardinals Hall of Fame and Museum.

pressive list of cocktails, sake, shots, wine and beer.

With so many adult beverages floating around, it's no wonder Ballpark Village is a decidedly grown-up space, especially after 9 p.m., when most venues restrict

access to ages 21 and older.

As part of a code of conduct, some venues have late-night dress codes prohibiting attire such as sagging pants, sleeveless shirts on men, sweatpants, athletic shorts and bandannas. Even

If you go

Game tickets: AT&T Rooftop tickets range from \$75 to \$250, stlouis.cardinals.mlb.com/stl/ticketing/allinclusive.jsp
 Live entertainment: Schedule of events and performers posted at stlballparkvillage.com/entertainment.
 Cardinals Hall of Fame and Museum: Admission to the museum is \$12 adults, \$10 seniors and military, \$8 children. No charge for the Hall of Fame.
 Parking: On nongame days, parking in the Ballpark Village lot is free with validation at lunch and \$2 with validation for dinner. On game days event rates apply. Visitors who park in outlying areas can take the MetroLink light rail to Stadium Station. For more information: stlballparkvillage.com

sports jerseys and hats are prohibited after 9 in PBR and the second floor of Budweiser Brew House, except during sporting events.

No, you can't wear your Cubs jersey and ride Ozzie the bull at midnight — unless it's a game day.

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