



Theatre and interior design concepts created by Cirque du Soleil®

modification could boost retail sales in the store by 25%. This will also help facilitate clearing the house between performances which, as I mentioned, has a 90-minute window. Unfortunately, there are two potential drawbacks with this solution. The first is that additional ushers will obviously be required to monitor this area and prevent patrons without tickets from coming back into the theater between shows. The second is that Nevada tax law requires an additional 10% tax be levied on all goods sold after the point at which the ushers collect the patron's ticket. By creating a direct link between the theater lobby and the retail area, this could have implications regarding the interpretation of that tax law, and create unwanted additional tax liabilities.

An important facet of previous Cirque performances has been that of audience participation and interaction. Usually this has been in the form of one or more patrons being invited on stage to join the artistes and letting them share the limelight for a few minutes. This concept will be further enhanced in the new show. The interior of the lobby and theater will be designed to create a rich, organic, sensual and inviting environment that encourages the audience to participate from the moment they walk through the main lobby doors. Exploring the environment, making use of all five senses, the architecture will envelop the audience, with straight lines and right angles being minimized wherever possible. These will be replaced with flowing curves and organically inspired shapes. As the design process develops it's going to be very interesting to see how this interface between the interior lobby concept and the external food court, with its New York theme, develops.

As I mentioned earlier, this show will be Cirque's reinvention of the cabaret, designed for an adult audience, which will combine dance, acrobatics and multimedia elements. The show will follow in the footsteps of famous cabarets such as the *Crazy Horse* and *Folies Bergères* in Paris, although with its own unique Cirque style. As such, it will be a new challenge for Cirque, which has up till now been focused on more family-oriented performances, although some people have thought that some of our shows have been relatively dark and adult-oriented in the past. The theater style will be a fusion of the Nouveau, Parisian Salon, Erno Escher. In addition, in various parts throughout the theater, a series of images or erotic images will be integrated into the architecture. Ideas include using style saké glasses with lenses at the bottom, so you can see an image at the bottom of your drink, or the images might be built into the bar or counter top so that if you set the glass down you can magnify whatever has been printed there; perhaps with different glasses for ladies and men!

The moldings between different surface finishes and the frames around artwork may also have custom-sculpted details. It was even suggested that the toilet paper might be printed with different images from the *Kama Sutra*! If that's the case it will probably make great retail item – but we're worried that it might be hard to get guests out of the toilets. One initial idea in order to reinforce the motion of curves was to install a giant spiral staircase in the lobby to provide access to the elevated rear stalls and balcony. Unfortunately building codes in Las Vegas do not allow this, and a curved escalator was not feasible. So the design team fell back on to a pair of curved grand staircases, each leading to one of the levels

*Plans of the stalls and balcony of the new theatre showing the large thrust stage.*

*In his keynote address, Don MacLean covers many aspects of Cirque du Soleil's approach to management; the way they plan their new venues, policy on engineering matters and on the handling of their audiences*