

## Leading a Legacy

### A Modern Take on a Cultural Centerpiece

by Allie Lapporte



Located in Plano, Texas, Legacy West is home to a central fountain designed by Outside the Lines (OTL). The water feature combines colored lighting, synchronized dancing jets and music to please shopping and dining crowds at the mixed-use center. Situated in the central plaza along a main street thoroughfare, OTL's fountain is directly adjacent to luxury apartments, restaurants and retailers in a high traffic, open-air setting, and serves as the central point of the retail entertainment center.

Outside the Lines, Inc. (OTL) is a firm that specifically focuses on creating water features. However, the company specializes in designing and programming architectural show fountains. One such fountain mixes music, lighting and water movement to create exciting shows for the shoppers, diners and residents of the mixed-use site of Legacy West in Plano, Texas.

The site is in the middle of Plano. According to J. Wickham Zimmerman, CEO, it is perfectly located near many of the offices that opened as a result of the many corporate moves made to Texas several years back. The site includes 415,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, a large food hall and more than 1,200 luxury apartment units. The show fountain, located at the center of the area alongside the main thoroughfare, brings a crowd-stopping attraction to the community, making Legacy West a must-visit destination for residents and visitors in this rapidly growing submarket.

#### A Take on Tradition

The Legacy West project was inspired by traditional European villages with a modern style; the idea is that the village spreads out from the central courtyard or piazza just like one would find in Europe. Zimmerman shared that it is very common to have a grand fountain in the center of a piazza, especially in Rome.

This inspired OTL to design the fountain as the central gathering place for the site. Recognizing the long heritage of water features as the center of a town square, the company combined historical precedent with modern architecture and technology with the fountain to create a spectacle at the site.



The surface area of the show fountain is approximately 3,500 square feet with nearly 52,000 gallons of water, 131 nozzles and 398 LED RGB lights capable of producing 2,000,000 colors each.



**While the fountain was originally going to have one large basin, the OTL designers had to break it up into three sections, to enable patrons to pass through to the shops and restaurants. The concrete edges of the fountains make for seating for onlookers.**



**The fountain's three separate concrete basins are interconnected mechanically to one filtration and treatment system.**

### **A Take on Tech**

The fountain uses an energy efficient pump and all LED color-changing lighting, so it maintains very low energy consumption. When a fountain has individually controlled energy efficient pumps, and color-changing LEDs, the next step is the technology to be able to run the different water formations and color-changes, making sure they work together for a beautiful effect.

Zimmerman states that the project is a continued team effort between OTL and the owners. "They have the right music to match the fountain and set up the ambiance for the space, and we choreograph almost like a choreographer for the ballet. It's really a dance of water; the movements with the music, and coming up with whether we do things fast or slow, high or low and so forth." There are a few holiday-themed shows programmed for the fountain, and the computer system has the ability to preprogram everything based on the date. This makes the process easy for the owners, as they do not have to worry about changing things over or switching the programs; it is all automated and built right into the calendar.

### **Water Walkways**

As this project was developed with input from the developers and the owners of the site, the design process was very fluid. The original vision was for a central fountain, but the staging had not yet been figured out. When the developer was looking for tenants like food and beverage shops that would want to have a location in the central courtyard, the determination was made that there needed to be easy access for shoppers to get from the street and the parking over to those shops, so OTL had to make sure the fountain was not impeding their movement. Therefore, the fountain shifted to the side a bit, and the designers created two angular strips right through the middle of the fountain, where people could pass through them and get to the restaurants. According to Zimmerman, that was a real driving factor behind the design, and it ended up being a great place for adults and especially kids to sit and enjoy the fountain show. "Kids absolutely love being able to sit on the seat walls right in the middle of the fountain show; it's a totally different experience from watching it from the side of the fountain."

**Keeping Cool (And Dry)**

An unexpected design aspect that the designers at OTL had to deal with at Legacy West were winds. When this project was being developed, the designers noticed a wind corridor that would blow through the central courtyard. To prevent too much splashing, the fountain ended up with a relatively small basin for the size and height of the nozzles. OTL had multiple anemometers installed to be able to detect that wind ahead of time and adjust the shows so that the fountain was not drenching people with water.

According to OTL, the fountain gets a lot of positive attention. The restaurateurs at Legacy West have reported to the company that people book fountain-side tables weeks in advance to enjoy the shows. The water feature has succeeded at becoming a point of community and wonder in the area.