

Project Profile



An Exciting Point of Departure

Application/Building Type:

Transportation Facilities

Project Name:

Disney Cruise Line Terminal

Location:

Coral Gables, Florida

Architect:

Bruno-Elias & Associates

General Contractor:

Doug Wilson Enterprises

Featured Products:

DONN® Brand DX® Suspension System

SANDRIFT™ Ceiling Panels

COMPASSO™ Suspension Trim

GRIDWARE™ Suspension System

PANZ™ Metal Ceiling Panels



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This 70,000-square-foot, bi-level cruise terminal was designed by architectural firm Bruno-Elias & Associates of Coral Gables, Fla., with ease and entertainment in mind. Construction was completed with the oversight of general contractor Doug Wilson Enterprises of Cape Canaveral.

“The most important factor governing the terminal space was traffic flow,” said John Colao, the project’s architect from Bruno-Elias, which has designed a number of other cruise terminals in Florida. “It functions much like an airport terminal and is designed to easily lead passengers where they need to go, all in a relaxing, maritime-themed environment.”

Gently undulating lines like waves are a design motif found throughout the space, from the decorative detail on the walls to the ceiling. The facility’s 325-foot-long main hall is a spacious, light-filled space dominated by three-story columns and wide expanses of arching glass windows. It is anchored by the building’s entrance, a five-story glass and steel tower resembling that of a building from the art deco period, which the facility’s architecture recalls. In fact, the cruise line’s theme architects, Arquitectonica International (of Miami), carried the classic look of art deco from the ship to the terminal to the customized motor coaches that transport guests to various locations.

“Consistent with our corporate philosophy, we wanted to create visual excitement and a landmark presence for the terminal,” said Wing Chao, executive vice president of master planning/architecture and design for Walt Disney Imagineering. “One way the design team accomplished this was by placing the terminal perpendicular—rather than the customary parallel—to the ship. This provides a better and more dramatic way to showcase the ship at its dock.”

The idea of a carefully executed vacation experience is reflected in many of the materials chosen for the terminal’s construction. In many cases, they had to reflect the maritime theme, yet on a massive scale. From the main-level terrazzo floor, which depicts a map of Florida and the western Caribbean, are columns topped with capitals lit from behind metal grid like ship’s lanterns. The grid pattern is repeated in the ceiling, which is lowered on both long sides of the entrance hall to resemble a 2-level soffit and finished with 24,000 square feet of sky blue SANDRIFT™ ceiling panels and DONN® brand DX® suspension system, both from USG. The SANDRIFT panel texture resembles that of windblown sand.

“To achieve a flowing, wavy line along the edge of the lower ceiling section that contains the SANDRIFT panels, we used COMPASSO™ suspension trim,” Colao said. The firm took advantage of this trim’s free-form capability and stackability to create different heights. It had to be carefully designed ahead of time so that the high point and low point of the waves corresponded perfectly with the placement of the columns.

“USG’s Technical Services staff, who did the shop drawings, made the job come out absolutely flawlessly,” said Bob Grube, acoustical contractor with Acousti Engineering Company of Rockledge, Fla. “The columns vary in spacing, from 22 to 32 feet. So, the COMPASSO trim had to fit perfectly with these variations down the 325-foot length of the hall. When we installed it, each corresponding wave was centered perfectly with a column. It was incredible.”

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Grube and his foreman, Sam Smiling, had another challenge: They needed to suspend the lower ceiling from the upper ceiling grid using a material that would be invisible from down below, yet strong enough to support the weight of the ceiling and the lighting that was laid on top of the second level to illuminate the wavy edge.

“My foreman discovered that 500-pound-test steel fishing line would do the job,” he said. “We drilled a hole in the top grid, ran the wire down to the second level, and used crimps that normally attach the fishing line to a lure as a way to finish it off. You can’t see the line from the ground and it’s strong.”

Also in the entry hall, running along the long walls up near the ceiling is a frieze-like strip of palm tree and roofline silhouettes cut from [USG SHEETROCK® brand gypsum panels](#) and painted a light blue. [SHEETROCK brand gypsum panels](#) and joint finishing products and [DUROCK® brand cement board](#) also were used throughout the terminal, including the use of [SHEETROCK panels](#) on the 3-level ceiling of the entry tower. [DONN DX](#) grid finished the ceilings in the walkway that runs from the ticketing area to the gangway and in non-public areas, including offices.

The baggage claim area has a ceiling that was made lower—while maintaining a spacious feeling—by suspending 24,000 square feet of sky blue, 2-foot-by-2-foot [GRIDWARE™ suspension system](#). Fluorescent lighting hung above shines through the [GRIDWARE](#) suspension system.

Centered in the ceiling in this area is a huge rendition of the Disney Cruise Line logo, a stylized design of Mickey Mouse’s head against a background of waves. Colao specified custom-designed 8-inch [COMPASSO](#) trim to define the curving shapes and attached 900 square feet of 1/16-inch perforated [PANZ™ metal ceiling panels](#) to its lower edge to “fill in” the logo. The [PANZ](#) panels were painted in the field to fulfill the graphic specifications of the logo, as those colors had not yet been determined when the ceiling materials were ordered. In total, the project used 2,200 lineal feet of [COMPASSO](#) throughout.

According to Colao, he specified a wide range of USG products because of the company’s reputation and his familiarity with USG sales representatives. “The company had the colors and designs we were looking for. The product designs definitely contributed to the job, especially the [SANDRIFT](#) panels and [COMPASSO](#) trim, which gave us the ability to create the shapes we needed,” he said.

On working with Disney, Colao notes that they are very careful about what the ultimate product looks like. “That created a challenge for us in trying to make sure that everything turned out to their satisfaction,” he said.

“Nothing was standard in the building,” Grube added. “The many wavy and non-flat configurations made this a unique job.”