



MICHAEL GRAVES  
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN



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## **USTA AND MICHAEL GRAVES ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN UNVEIL NEW COURT FURNITURE FOR US OPEN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

***Redesigned “courtscape” celebrates the US Open’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
with a fresh look to future***

**QUEENS, N.Y., AND PRINCETON, N.J., Aug. 20, 2018** — Today, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and renowned design firm Michael Graves Architecture & Design (MGA&D) unveiled a new collection of courtscape furniture for the US Open Tennis Championship, scheduled this year from Aug. 27 through Sept. 9 at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadow, Queens.

The USTA selected Michael Graves Architecture & Design in December 2017 to re-imagine the courtside furniture for this year’s celebration of the US Open’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to help launch America’s Grand Slam toward the next 50 years. The new furniture, which features a cleaner, more contemporary look, along with improved functionality and ease-of-use, is designed to enhance the US Open experience for players, officials and fans alike. It was manufactured by Landscape Forms, the industry leader in beautifully designed furniture for outdoor spaces.

The new furniture is part of the US Open’s rebranding effort. The goal was to create a modern, well-organized courtscape that would be iconic to the US Open and its New York location, while keeping the main focus on the action on the court, the true star of the tournament. The collection includes new seating for the players, umpires and line judges, a “cooler corral” for the players, plus other accessories.

MGA&D specializes in humanistic design that is not only beautiful, but serves its purpose in an artful way. To help inform the ultimate design of the furniture, MGA&D’s design team met with various US Open stakeholders, including players, officials, fans, sponsors and broadcast partners, as well as the USTA’s facilities and maintenance, sponsorship and marketing, broadcast and technology crews. MGA&D then distilled the research into a design brief to create the furniture based on three guiding principles: visibility, usability and functionality.

The furniture evokes elements of the New York City landscape. For example, the new players’ seating was inspired by the city’s park benches and serves as a metaphor for a body at rest, which is what research showed is important for the players. The player seating is sponsored by Ralph Lauren Polo.

The umpire stand features a cantilevered design, reminiscent of cantilevered details on buildings in the city, while providing open site lines for fans to see the court. It also utilizes the idea of forced perspective to further reference the soaring skyscrapers of New York City. The stand is designed to be comfortable, incorporate the latest technology and provide sufficient support for the umpire to quickly ascend or descend. In addition, all pieces in the collection are easy to clean, and allow for quick-and-easy installation and removal by facilities crews.

To deliver the new furniture for this year’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary tournament, the project schedule was aggressive. MGA&D utilized virtual reality to enable the USTA to envision each design concept. The technology allowed the wide team of stakeholders to make well-informed decisions from each of their perspectives.

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“The new furniture is beautiful and truly captures the high performance of the US Open,” said Stacey Allaster, USTA chief executive, professional tennis. “The tournament is of New York, and the new courtscape is a perfect expression of the Grandest Slam.”

“I am passionate about furniture design, and this has been one of the most satisfying projects I’ve worked on during my 35-year product design career,” said Donald Strum, MGA&D’s principal, product design. “Seating should express utility, be comfortable and carry a beautiful personality as well. The various performance requirements of this collection made the project endlessly fascinating.”

“Working with the expert team from Michael Graves Architecture & Design on this complex and fast-track project was critical,” says Landscape Forms Executive Vice President of Development Robb Smalldon. “They know product design inside and out, and we know engineering and manufacturing. Our teams coordinated well and developed a fluid back-and-forth that culminated in a beautiful, functional product for a high-visibility venue. We are honored to work with leading design thinkers like Michael Graves Architecture & Design and a great end-client like the USTA.”

#### **About the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA)**

The USTA is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S. and the leader in promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level — from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. A not-for-profit organization with more than 655,000 members, it invests 100% of its proceeds in growing the game. It owns and operates the US Open, one of the highest-attended annual sporting events in the world, and launched the US Open Series, linking seven summer WTA and ATP World Tour tournaments to the US Open. In addition, it owns approximately 90 Pro Circuit events throughout the U.S. and selects the teams for the Davis Cup, Fed Cup, Olympic and Paralympic Games. The USTA’s philanthropic entity, the USTA Foundation, provides grants and scholarships in addition to supporting tennis and education programs nationwide to benefit under-resourced youth through the National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) network. For more information about the USTA, go to [USTA.com](http://USTA.com) or follow the official accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat.

#### **About Michael Graves Architecture & Design (MGA&D)**

Founded in 1964 by legendary designer Michael Graves, MGA&D is a leading multidisciplinary design practice rooted in the values of humanism. Over the past 50-plus years, MGA&D has created iconic works of design and architecture, including the Alessi teakettle, the Michael Graves Design housewares collection for Target, and the Disney Swan and Dolphin hotels. Today, the MGA&D team has expanded its creative influence to include helping companies develop strategies for entering new markets, utilizing design to transform workplace culture, designing the largest statue in the world and even working to change the conversation on aging. MGA&D services include design research and strategy consulting, product design, branding and graphic design, as well as architecture, master planning, feasibility studies and interior design. This breadth of expertise enables a holistic, collaborative approach that leads to transformative results for clients and consumers. MGA&D is a widely recognized design leader including being listed by *Fast Company* as one of “The world’s top 10 most innovative companies in design.” For more information, visit [www.michaelgraves.com](http://www.michaelgraves.com).

#### **About Landscape Forms**

Landscape Forms is the industry leader in integrated collections of high-design site furniture and advanced LED lighting. Since its founding in 1969, Landscape Forms has earned a reputation for excellent design, high-quality products and exceptional service. The Landscape Forms U.S. headquarters and manufacturing facility is located in Kalamazoo, Mich., with sales representatives throughout North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and Asia.

Landscape Forms collaborates with renowned industrial designers and consultancies, landscape architects, and architects to design and develop integrated collections of products that address emerging needs and help create a sense of place. Additionally, the company has formed global marketing partnerships with select companies that share its commitment to design. Landscape Forms has an installed base of products around the world. Clients include municipalities, transit centers, corporate, college and health care campuses, sites such as Orange County Great Park; and familiar brand leaders such as Boeing, Cisco Systems, Disney, Sprint, American Airlines, Herman Miller and Nike.

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