

The dome theme continues in the gateway, where the show contestants walk into the facility.

poker players), message boards and neon embellishments.

Through faxes, conversations and e-mails, Chris and I concocted mutually satisfactory solutions. I forged ahead with some hand-rendered inks to present to both Fox and Neonopolis the week of April 24.

By the beginning of May, all parties (mercifully) had blessed the design direction, and I began detailed computer drawings for everything. By mid-May, although I'd completed my drawings, engineering and construction-driven realities were dictating a more reasonable deadline.

But back to the design. In a nutshell, I fashioned an "implied" dome comprising a semi-circular, layered wrap that enveloped the rotunda building's radius wall, directly over the bridge entrance. The layers were red (consistent with Chris' staging-area color), with each layer indirectly illuminated.

To bolster the poker imagery, giant, illuminated face cards (hearts, of course) were "tucked" between the layers. Initially, other cards and chips spilled out from the layers, but Fox wanted less clutter.

Of course, the focus was Mansionpoker.net's identity, and oversized Poker Dome letters were packed with the obligatory, Las Vegas-style, scintillating lamps. Beneath that, the bold, scripted "Challenge!" appeared in neon. To bookend the entire assembly, we added two, vertical, lamp raceways to travel above the roofline, and curve back and out of sight.

The entire display's most difficult facet was achieving the clean, rich detail of the three, Bicycle-brand face cards at that scale. Jason Oberbeck, of our San Francisco office, transformed scanned images into the necessary vector files for Ferrari Color (Salt Lake City), our vinyl-printing service.

The other major fixture, the main entrance into the hallway-leading auditorium, became a theater-style, projecting marquee (albeit one confined within existing walls). The canopy was curved (to imply a "dome"), with a grid of red, illuminated ceiling panels, each containing the ever-present Mansionpoker.net "M" logo. A suspended, curving sign underneath reinforces where you were, where you were going and what to expect. In another concession to Las Vegas, large, marquee-style lamps brightly illuminate the gold front trim.

Other incidental and not-so-

incidental features include wall-mounted (and lamp-surrounded) transparency boxes that feature the winning poker players, message boards, a pattern of ceiling neon, a supergraphic wall-décor extension of the face-card graphics, and, of course, the actual entrance sign, featuring the ever-beckoning queen of hearts, into the auditorium itself.

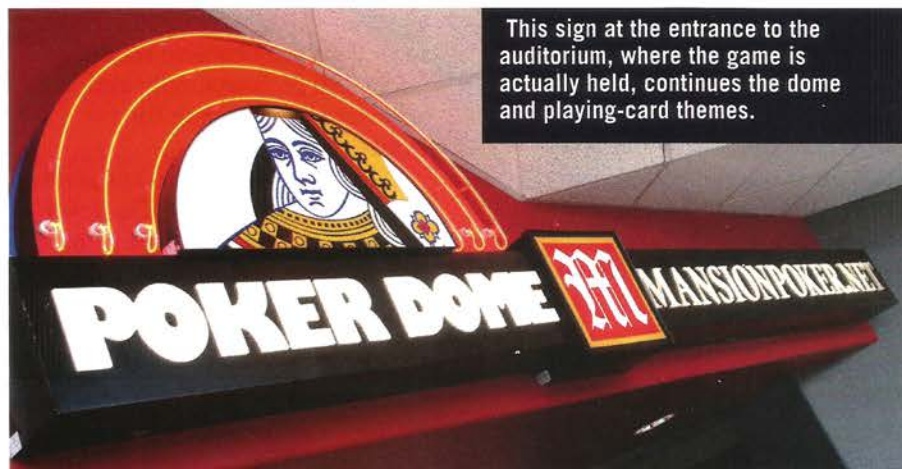
Again, reality eventually overcame fantasy. We soon realized unforeseen engineering improbabilities needed to be rectified; schedules conflicted with other building work, and inevitably, the permitting process invariably took longer than expected. The timeline needed to be modified.

Even Fox realized miracles are appropriated in short supply to poker shows, even one as spectacular as the Poker Dome Challenge. The Poker Dome, in all its eventual glory, flung open its televised doors on July 23, two months beyond the impossibly dreamed deadline, but still the fastest design-to-completion in my memory anywhere, let alone Las Vegas.

The result amply justified the delay. Chris and I were both ecstatic; our sanity remained remarkably intact, and David and Bob were off to conquer other lands, hopefully with far more negotiable deadlines.

To a sign guy, Las Vegas is a town like no other!

*Jack Dubois has been Ad Art's design director for 15 years.*



This sign at the entrance to the auditorium, where the game is actually held, continues the dome and playing-card themes.