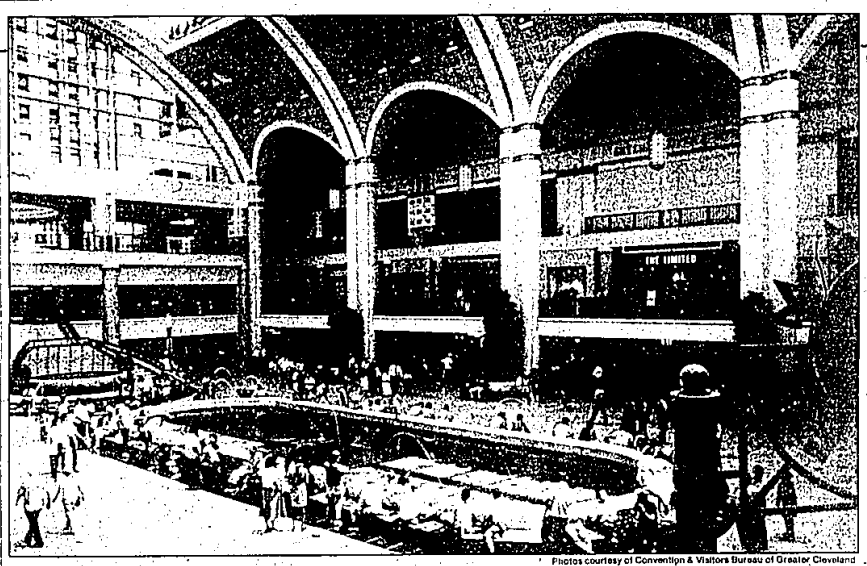
The Observer & Eccentric® Newspapers

TRAVEL

Tower City breathes life into downtown



Photos courtesy of Convention & Visitors Bureau of Greater Cleveland

Tower City Center in Cleveland is a 34-acre, $400 million renovation project – built to bring people downtown.

By Jennifer Stoffel
New York Times Syndicate

Not unlike a number of cities, Cleveland has been waging an ambitious campaign to keep people and businesses downtown. And, despite the pull of the suburbs, it has in many ways succeeded.

A walk through the $400 million renovation of the landmark Tower City complex covering 34 acres in the center of the city will challenge any visitor who imagines this downtown is dead.

The central commuter rail station has been completely renovated and the interior of the 62-year-old Terminal Tower now includes a four-level retail mall elegant enough to lure the likes of Gucci, Barney New York and Bally of Switzerland.

In the works for nearly a decade, the Tower City complex opened at Christmas 1990 to nearly as much skepticism as acclaim. Yet it has brought people back downtown — to dine, shop, see a movie or just take a ride up to the top of the 52-story tower, with its view of the city, the river and Lake Erie.

A few blocks away the lavishly restored Art Deco Playhouse Square theaters regularly draw crowds for opera, ballet and traveling performances.

Built to house vaudeville in the 1920s, the Palace, State and Ohio Theaters have been renovated and revived. And night clubs and restaurants line the Cuyahoga River.

Ground is being cleared for a new open-air stadium and indoor arena just blocks from Tower City. The 22-acre site will provide a new home for the Cleveland Indians baseball and Cavaliers basketball teams.

The site is expected to draw two million people downtown each year and be completed in 1994. (The Browns football team remains committed to the 60-year-old lakeside Municipal Stadium.)

Among projects planned for the Lake Erie waterfront is the construction of a rock 'n' roll hall of fame with a 165-foot tower. The project, which has been subject to delays, site changes and some difficulties in raising money, is now scheduled to begin this fall.

Just five miles east of downtown, University Circle, the city's cultural center, continues to thrive. A longstanding magnet for visitors, the neighborhood is centered on Wade Lagoon in the Fine Arts Garden.

Within a one-mile radius of the lagoon are the campus of Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Severance Hall concert auditorium, the Cleveland Children's Museum and several other cultural institutions.

Within blocks is the city's Little Italy, home to a number of small galleries and artists' studios.

EVENTS

The Cleveland Museum of Art, at 11150 East Blvd., has one of the country's leading collections of Asian and medieval European art. It is presenting "Picasso and Things: The Still Lifes of Picasso." The exhibition of nearly 150 works in a variety of media, organized by the museum, will run to May 3.

The exhibition is open Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 9:45 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. It is closed Monday.

Admission is free to the museum and to the Picasso exhibition on Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Admission to the Picasso exhibition at other times is $5; $4 for students and seniors. Tickets are available through Advantix, (216) 241-6000 or (800)492-6048, or at the museum, (216) 421-7340.

The Cleveland Orchestra will give 17 performances through March at Severance Hall, at 11001 Euclid Ave. A program of Shostakovich and Prokofiev, with Joshua Bell playing violin and Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting, will be offered March 12 to March 14. Ticket prices are from $18 to $42. For more information call (216) 231-1111 or (800) 686-1141.

The works of Beatrix Potter, the English author and illustrator of children's works, will be presented through May 4 at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, at 1 Wade Oval, University Circle. For more information call (216) 231-4600.

The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Wednesday until 10 p.m. Admission is $4; $2 for children 5 to 17, students and seniors.

The Great Lakes Theater Festival's "Ohio State Murders" will be presented from March 6 to March 28 at the Ohio Theater in Playhouse Square. Tickets range from $17 to $25 and are available through Advantix or at the theater. For more information call (216) 241-6000.

"The Heidi Chronicles" will be performed at the Cleveland Play House through March 15. Tickets are $21 and $29. For more information call (216) 795-7000.

SIGHTSEEING

A free self-guided walking tour published by the Convention and Visitors Bureau takes visitors through downtown and the adjacent Warehouse District and nearby riverfront Flats.

The tour includes a number of architectural gems, including the 102-year-old, glass-covered Arcade, at 401 Euclid Ave., the city's first shopping center. For more information call (216) 621-4110 or (800) 321-1001.

For a view of the city's landmark buildings and historic neighborhoods try Lolly the Trolley. The trackless, motorized fleet offers regularly scheduled tours all year round as well as group tours of the city's ethnic markets, the museums of University Circle or the art galleries and restaurants that flourish in Little Italy.

The trolleys offer one-hour and two-hour tours, $6 and $9 per person, respectively, on various days and at various hours, depending on the time of year. Reservations are required. For more information call (216) 771-4484 or (800) 848-0173.

At this time of the year many residents will be out sampling Ohio-made maple syrup. Northeast Ohio has a substantial maple sugar industry.

Through March, celebrations of the season abound with educational tours and pancake breakfasts. On weekends through March 8, Cleveland Metroparks, the city's parks agency, will offer guided hikes tracing the history of the maple-sugar industry, ending with syrup tasting, plus silver-dollar pancakes on the weekend. For more information call (216) 734-6660.

WHERE TO STAY

After a major push by civic leaders for an increase in the number of hotel rooms downtown, visitors can choose from a number of top-rated places.

Among the newest hotels, the year-old Ritz-Carlton Cleveland, at 1515 West Third St., is also the most luxurious, with 208 rooms and amenities that include a fitness center with indoor pool and spa. Standard doubles start at $160; club-floor rooms are $235.

Next door to the Ritz-Carlton is the 174-year-old, 491-room Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel, at 24 Public Square, which recently completed a $37 million renovation of the rooms and lobby. Standard rates for two begin at $154; $89 on the weekend. For more information call (216) 696-5600.

A few blocks away, the 400-room Marriott Society Center Hotel, opened in 1991, offers the standard comforts along with a health club with exercise equipment. Rooms for two begin at $140; a "Two for Breakfast" weekend package starts at $89. For more information call (216) 696-9200.

The Glidden House, at 1901 Ford Drive, University Circle, is the city's most well-known bed-and-breakfast establishment. Built in 1910 for the son of the founder of the Glidden Paint Co., the mansion has been made into eight elegant suites.

In a connected wing are 52 standard rooms attractively furnished in white pine and lace. Rates for two range from $99 to $145, with breakfast. For more information call (216) 231-8900.

For a limited time this spring many hotels have joined with area attractions, Continental Airlines and Thrifty car rentals for one- and two-night "Cultural Getaway Weekend" packages. For more information call the Cleveland Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Cleveland comes alive

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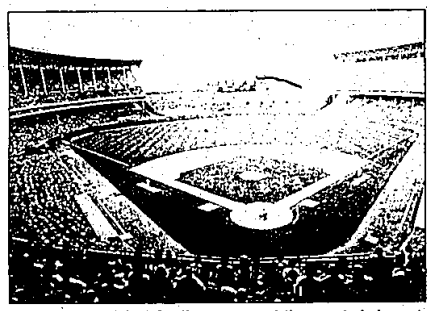

Cleveland Municipal Stadium — one of the country's largest stadiums — is home to the Cleveland Browns football team and the Cleveland Indians baseball team.

Tubac visitors get a hands-on history lesson

By Doniso Mourges
New York Times Syndicate

Spanish colonial history comes alive in the tiny community of Tubac, Ariz. Here, the Spanish colonizers built a fortress to protect their conquests three centuries ago.

Tubac, situated in the vast Santa Cruz Valley about 45 minutes from Tucson, surprisingly was once Arizona's largest town. With a population today of only about 600 it is now best known for being the home of the first state park in Arizona.

Park visitors can see the ruins of the Spanish garrison, including the first commandant's home, and the presidio, or fort, which is under excavation, as well as the remnants of a Spanish mission three miles south of the village.

The grounds of Tubac Presidio State Historic Park are set on 10 acres that begin in the southeastern corner of the village.

The community's five main streets, with low, sand-colored adobe buildings, some housing Tubac's many art galleries and shops, cover a little more than a mile, and both the park and village can be seen in a day.

Artifacts at the park illustrate the contributions of Indians, Spaniards, Mexicans and Anglo-Americans to Arizona's development.

'From 1752 until almost 1890, Tubac was in a constant state of mayhem.'

— Jack Williams
director
archeology center

The visitor center promotes hands-on experience: After signing the guest registry with a turkey quill-feather pen, one can grind corn with a pestle or plane wood with an adze.

The ruins of the first presidio were discovered about five years ago just west of the visitor center, and visitors can watch archaeologists and volunteers from the Center for Spanish Colonial Archeology in Tubac at work.

Using garden tools, the volunteers are patiently removing the soil from the wind-and-water-eroded silt adobe walls and the foundation of a 1760 home in the south barrio, a 14-acre site — 400 feet south of the park — that contains the ruins of 50 buildings dating to Spanish Colonial and Mexican territorial times.

The first Spanish settlers rode north from Mexico into Tubac, following the Jesuit missionary Father Kino, who in 1691 journeyed ahead to allay the fears of Indian tribes such as the Pima, farmers and hunter-gatherers who had made their homes in this fertile valley for centuries.

In 1752, after putting down a bloody Piman rebellion, Spanish troops built a presidio. A garrison of 50 soldiers, accompanied by wives and children, was left to protect the small visitas — a community served by the church but without a resident priest — from future uprisings by the Pima, who were tired of Spanish domination.

Spanish defenses proved less successful against the fierce Apache, whose raiding parties descended until as late as 1890 from the shadowed foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains, a range that stretches, notched like a giant key, across Tubac's eastern horizon.

Recently discovered relics can be examined in the visitor-center lab, a large trailer set up in the south barrio. The lab's pottery shards give one a glimpse of the town's sometimes violent history.

A high percentage of relics found have been munitions, ranging from arrowheads and an Apache stone war club to unfired cartridges from the Civil War. Samuel Colt, the gunmaker, supervised a Tubac mining company in the 1850s.

"From 1752 until almost 1890, Tubac was in a constant state of mayhem," said Jack Williams, director of the archeology center. "It was very much like the situation that's been going on in Lebanon: an open war zone.

"Both the European and Native American people were trying to control the area," he said. "People lived their daily lives, of course, but they clearly lived in the shadow of that conflict."

In its early years the colonizers of Tubac centered their economic exchange with Mexico, or New Spain as it was called until it became a republic in 1821. After 1835 the trade was reoriented toward Britain. Artifacts include lead seals used to bind bolts of cloth that were exported on Spanish galleons from England to Mexico, then transported by mule hundreds of miles overland to Tubac.

But to the surprise of the archaeologists, 90 percent of what has been found, especially stone tools, was made either by Indians or by Spanish settlers using similar equipment.

Tubac was also the site of the first Spanish land grant in Arizona, given in 1789 to Toribio Otero, whose descendants still live in the area.