

FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION'S WE-KO-PA CASINO

Fort McDowell, Arizona



Rippe Associates was tasked with the foodservice design scope for the renovation at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort, an AAA Four Diamond hotel in Arizona. The renovation project, which began in 2020, was aimed at enhancing the quality of the casino's foodservice operations, creating a more seamless and efficient workflow, and to offer an elevated dining experience to patrons and enhance the overall guest experience, meeting the needs of modern-day travelers.

To achieve this, Rippe Associates worked closely with the casino's management to evaluate the existing operations and identify opportunities for improvement. Based on their findings, they developed a comprehensive plan to redesign the flow of the foodservice facilities, improve kitchen efficiency, and upgrade the overall dining experience.

The scope of work included the renovation of the casino's main restaurant, Ember, which received the Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence for three consecutive years since 2019. Ember's impressive wine selection encompasses 22 countries with 800 wines by the bottle and 26 wines by the glass. These include 32 wines that scored a perfect 100 points on Wine Spectator's world's best wine lists. Rippe Associates prioritized functionality by designing the kitchen with efficiency in mind, ensuring that chefs could prepare meals quickly without any delays.

Details

Opening Date: October 2020
Equipment Cost: \$4,000,000

166,341 SF total
246 hotel rooms
25,000 SF meeting space

Scope

FOH: High-end steakhouse, casual grill, sports bar, coffee shop, outdoor bar and lounge.

BOH: Kitchen, dishwashing area, Banquet kitchen, and food storage facilities

The new bar and lounge area was designed to offer patrons a more relaxed and informal atmosphere while taking advantage of the surrounding scenic views. Featuring a spacious outdoor patio, the new area provides ample space for guests to enjoy a drink while taking in the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape.

In addition to Ember, the renovated casino also features a variety of other food and beverage offerings, including the Ahnala Mesquite Room, which serves a wide range of Southwestern cuisine, and the Buffet, which offers an extensive selection of international dishes. The casino also features a coffee shop, plus a sports bar, with a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere in mind. The design of the sports bar incorporated modern touches with a focus on creating an engaging environment where guests can enjoy their favorite sports game while dining.

In addition to the dining facilities, Rippe Associates also redesigned the back-of-house operations, including the kitchen, dishwashing areas, banquet kitchen supporting a 25,000-foot space, and food storage facilities. The new kitchen layout allowed for a more streamlined operational flow, minimizing travel distance for kitchen staff, and optimizing the overall kitchen productivity. By introducing new or updated technology and equipment, they increased the kitchen's efficiency while enhancing the quality and consistency of the food.

Rippe Associates' foodservice design scope for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort's dining area was well-executed, creating unique and functional spaces that appeal to a diverse range of guests and their needs. The redesign of the foodservice facilities aligns with the Resort's broader renovation and is an excellent reflection of the focus on modern aesthetics and efficiency. Its successful design can be seen in the continued recognition received by Wine Spectator and the positive reviews among customers visiting the updated space.

