

SFO Goes Green and Gourmet

Words by *MELISSA JOSUE*

THE GOLDEN ERA OF AIR TRAVEL WHERE YOU could blow kisses to loved-ones from the boarding gate seems so long ago from today's long security lines and almost-ridiculous travel restrictions. Luckily, the skies are clearing in San Francisco.

After four years and a US\$383-million renovation, San Francisco Airport's (SFO) new Terminal 2 recently opened with a vision to create "a new sky life" that makes air travel more enjoyable and eco-friendly.

SFO's Terminal 2 (T2) is the first major airport construction in the United States since September 11, 2001, when the world watched as New York's Twin Towers crumbled in the biggest terrorist attack against the United States. The T2 is the first US airport terminal to obtain a LEED gold status, the nationally accepted benchmark for high-performance green buildings in the United States.

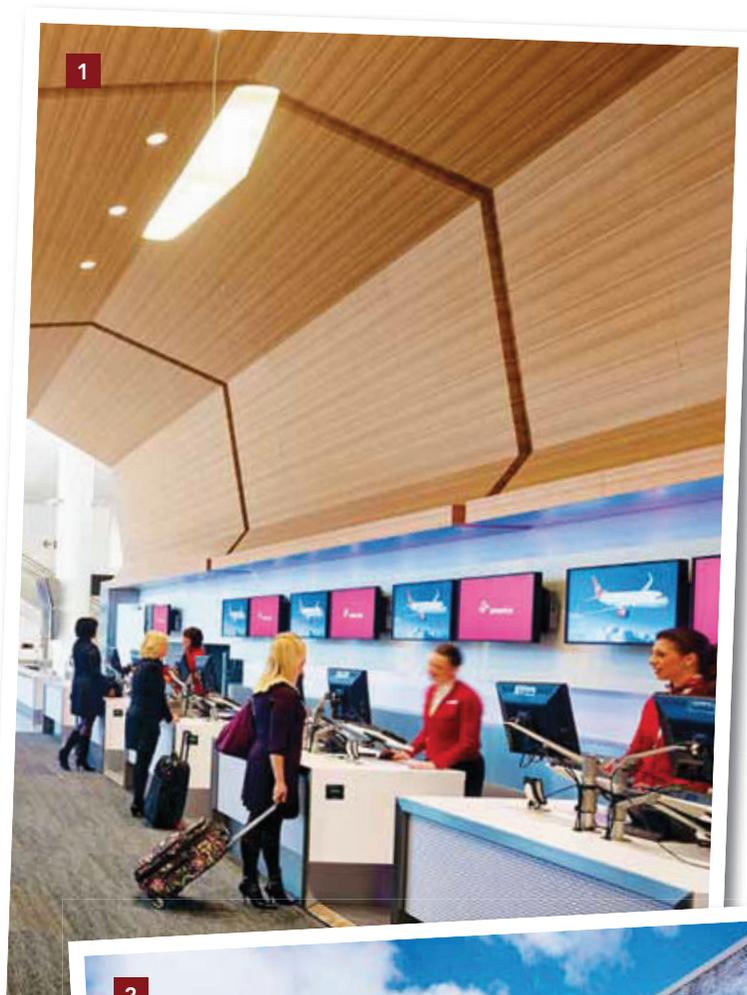
T2 not only features energy-efficient lighting, filtered air ventilation that improves indoor air quality, and carpets made from recycled material, it also personalizes the sustainability experience with elements such as preferential hybrid and electric car parking spaces, paperless ticketing, and hydration stations to refill water bottles.

Upon entering T2 (Note: Only international passengers with connecting flights at T2 can access the new terminal post-security), passengers are greeted with large woven sculptures suspended from interior skylights that brighten the post-security area with color and natural light. Art installations like the bird-themed wooden xylophones and mechanical butterfly wall designed by artists from the Exploratorium, San Francisco's educational science museum, function as play areas for children.

At the T2, you won't find metal benches or steel tables on which to recollect your carry-on items. The new "recompose area" offers comfortable benches, plants and Zen garden-inspired water features to help travelers regroup in a peaceful setting. A gourmet marketplace houses the wine bar *Vino Volo*, *XpresSpa*, and restaurants like the *Napa Farms Market* and *The Plant Café*, where you can decompress and enjoy the local cuisine.

If you're hungry for a little history, feel free to linger at the SFO, the only US airport that's an accredited museum. You can access a self-guided tour featuring interviews with artists and behind-the-scenes information via a Guide by Cell audio tour (accessible by dialing a local number shown next to the art pieces.)

Who says long layovers are such a bad thing? ●



1. Ticketing areas are a mix of natural light, warm finishes and playful lighting. 2. T2's arrivals area features artist Natori Sato's "Air Over Under" installation. Photos by Bruce Damonte/Courtesy of Gensler. 3. The lobby leading to the security area is a breathing space. Photo by Melissa Josue.