



TREE-FRIENDLY CANOPY FOR THE BUSIEST RESTAURANT IN TOWN

TITLE	Flying Saucer
DESCRIPTION	Alfresco canopy
LOCATION	Fort Worth, Texas
COMPLETED IN	2010
FABRIC AREA	9,000ft ²
FABRIC TYPE	ETFE – Single layer
ARCHITECT/CLIENT	Structurflex / Sundance Square Development

FLYING SAUCER RESTAURANT FORT WORTH, TEXAS USA

The challenge – design a canopy around 20 fully-mature, protected trees

Flying Saucer is the busiest restaurant and bar in downtown Fort Worth. It has a large outdoor dining courtyard that doubles as a concert venue during spring and summer months. This alfresco zone is graced with more than 20 mature trees, which give Flying Saucer a special point of difference. The trees, which are protected, don't provide sufficient shelter for patrons and the Texas sun is relentless.

Management of Flying Saucer recognised the need for a shade structure to keep patrons comfortable. The position and height of the trees would dictate the shade structure's form, as well as its material. Trees require sunlight for respiration and growth.

The solution – translucent ETFE structure that provides shading without interfering with tree respiration

ETFE film was the choice for this design-to-installation Structurflex project because it allows transmission of UV, which supports plant health and growth. To ensure the comfort of diners, the ETFE is fritted with silver dots to provide a degree of shade. A vent at the top of the structure allows warm air to escape, which pleases both the trees and the patrons.

The shape and spans of the structure were designed around the tree canopy, which is shorter at the street edge of the courtyard, and installation was organised to minimise disruption to patrons and staff. Road closure permits were secured to allow the use of specialised lifting and hoisting equipment.

The outcome is a canopy that looks after everyone's needs – the trees' need for sunlight; staff and patrons' need for relief from the heat and sun.

