

Paris, 30 September 2024

## Press release

# Prix Versailles 2024: The World's Most Beautiful Airports

The Prix Versailles is unveiling the World's Most Beautiful Airports List for 2024: six newly opened or renovated airports and terminals that have left extraordinary imprints on their environments.

They will all be competing for three 2024 World Titles – Prix Versailles, Interior and Exterior – whose laureates will be announced at UNESCO Headquarters on 2 December 2024.

“Infrastructure for air travel is evolving, with an increasing awareness of the eminently cultural role that it plays. Because airports are responsible for visitors’ first impressions, each one is a poster child for its destination. By showcasing cultural assets, an airport’s design and layout can foster a form of tourism in which travellers are encouraged to be respectful and attentive. Preserving a territory’s heritage resources – natural, cultural and social – is vital to developing sustainable tourism. It is commendable that airport communities are at the heart of these changes”, notes Jérôme Gouadain, Secretary General of the Prix Versailles.



## PRIX VERSAILLES

---

### WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL AIRPORTS LIST 2024

#### **Zayed International Airport**

*Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*

#### **Felipe Ángeles International Airport**

*Zumpango, Mexico*

#### **Changi Airport**

**Terminal 2**

*Changi, Singapore*

#### **Suvarnabhumi Airport**

**Midfield Satellite 1**

*Bangkok, Thailand*

#### **Logan International Airport**

**Terminal E**

*Boston, United States*

#### **Kansas City International Airport**

*Kansas City, United States*

*The Laureates are listed in the alphabetical order of the countries they represent  
(based on their two-letter ISO 3166 country codes).*



## **PRIX VERSAILLES**

---

PRESENTATION OF THE LAUREATES

# Zayed International Airport

*Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*

Zayed International Airport, which was renamed in February 2024 after Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the UAE, is a jewel of modern architecture and advanced technology.

Laid out in the shape of an X, following plans developed by Kohn Pederson Fox that recreate themes relating to the desert, the sea, cities and oases, it can handle continuous streams of up to 11,000 passengers per hour, whilst delivering a most enjoyable airport experience.

In order to represent the emirate and the city of Abu Dhabi, the design seeks to reflect the natural and cultural environment, namely by means of its geometric shapes.

*Sana Al Nour*, a unique glass sculpture with a diameter of 30 metres which is completely integrated with the building, redirects daylight from the departures area to the arrivals hall. It also helps with low-energy airflow management, epitomising the potential for combining art with functionality.

Lastly, the airport distinguishes itself in its choice of materials, with a large proportion of recycled steel and wood. In other words, this site seems to be characterised by virtuous self-sufficiency, providing a habitat more than 1,100 native trees and other plants in a landscape that appears destined to thrive, not to mention 7,500 solar panels generating 3 MW of power. Simply monumental.



© Abu Dhabi Airports



© Abu Dhabi Airports



© Abu Dhabi Airports



# Felipe Ángeles International Airport

*Zumpango, Mexico*

With its control tower reminiscent of an Aztec *macuahuitl*, the new airport to the northeast of Mexico City sets the tone in a brotherly tribute to the country's different states.

For example, the sun stone installed in the middle of the terminal features carefully designed iconography, inspired by culture and tradition.

The interior staging showcases Mexico's rich historical heritage and invites passengers to explore the different museums and thematic toilet facilities as part of a voyage that is as aesthetically pleasing as it is original.

Here, roots and creativity have been put to work on an ambitious project entrusted to architect Francisco González-Pulido.

Spanning a total area of nearly 21 km<sup>2</sup>, the airport possesses two of Mexico's longest runways.

The terminal – which contains 18 separate modules and 1,316 columns, each one mounted on special pendulum isolators for earthquake protection – is the biggest building in the Americas to be fitted with this technology.

The site also skilfully maximises the attention given to its natural setting by optimising its boarding gates' exposure to natural light and arranging a 4,300 m<sup>2</sup> central garden plus many more green areas, all great places for activities or relaxation.

Its unique landscape makes this project the perfect fit for its environment.



© Aeropuerto Internacional Felipe Ángeles



© Aeropuerto Internacional Felipe Ángeles



© Aeropuerto Internacional Felipe Ángeles

# Changi Airport Terminal 2

*Changi, Singapore*

Singapore is a garden city that is as comfortable with its green jungles as it is with the concrete jungle of its megastructures, such as the Oasia Hotel and Pan Pacific Orchard (which is also a laureate this year), not to mention the National Stadium (featuring the world's largest free-spanning dome), all of which have redefined 21st-century architecture for humid tropical environments.

Springing from the imaginations of Boiffils Architectures in collaboration with the artist Patrick Blanc, the extension of Terminal 2 adopts that same stance, in this case by redefining the passenger experience. The star of the project is The Wonderfall, an enormous digital waterfall cascading down between lush green walls. For its part, Dreamscape was also designed to conceal technical components behind screens whilst effortlessly guiding passengers through the space. A magnificent, immersive indoor garden, Dreamscape offers that most elusive of features in an airport: a sense of communion. A digital sky mimics the actual weather in real time – the paradox of harmonious interactions between contemporary technology and stylised nature.

Spacious and panoramic, the new T2 has unveiled a fantastical, enchanting nature.



© Boiffils Architectures



© Boiffils Architectures



© Boiffils Architectures

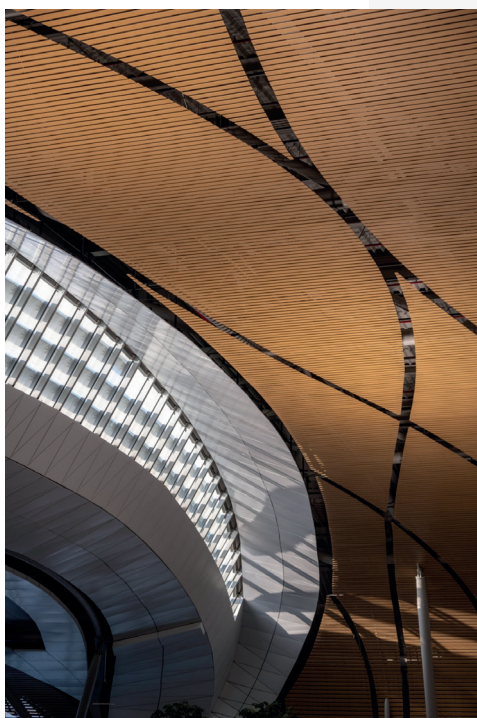


# Suvarnabhumi Airport Midfield Satellite 1

*Bangkok, Thailand*



© Airports of Thailand



© Airports of Thailand

Suvarnabhumi Airport's Satellite Concourse 1 was designed as a natural extension of the existing terminal, in the middle of the site, delivering both youthfulness and maturity to the whole.

It is a large four-level building with 28 boarding gates and a new, automated, high-performance underground people mover and baggage handling system connected to the main terminal.

At the same time, the structure shines for its airiness and its innovative design, its gorgeous greenery and its natural light.

Another noteworthy feature is the concourse's contemporary interior, balanced with subtle cultural references. The diamond-patterned ceiling, with its crisscrossing arched ribs in-filled with timber-coloured slats, recalls Thailand's traditional silk cloth patterns and regional basket weaving textures. Lastly, interior gardens remind travellers of the nation's tropical landscape.

This exemplary project was devised by the firm HOK for Bangkok's biggest airport, which was inaugurated in 2006 with a name that is Sanskrit for "land of gold".



© Airports of Thailand

# Logan International Airport Terminal E

*Boston, United States*



© AECOM / Ema Peter Photography

At first glance, the new face of Boston's Logan International is something of a surprise. Terminal E, which extends 410 metres in length, does not go unnoticed, whether you're on the ground or in the air. Its extraordinary horizontal red wave seems to set Downtown Boston ablaze whenever the sun shines upon it.

Its appearance is no accident. Instead, it stems from a bold contextual concept: Boston's oldest neighbourhoods are largely made of red brick, which lent its name to the colour Boston Red, also a rallying symbol for the city's famous baseball team, the Red Sox.

The roof of the terminal features is delicately curvy, emblematic and energetic, dazzling and prismatic, thanks to its shape aligned with the path of the sun, meaning the entire façade shifts from purple to orange over the course of the day.

In addition, it treats travellers to views of the bustling city and oceanfront on the horizon. This new icon from AECOM and Luis Vidal + architects brings fresh excitement to Boston's skyline.



© AECOM / Ema Peter Photography



© AECOM / Ema Peter Photography



# Kansas City International Airport

*Kansas City, United States*

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), a collective that primarily builds skyscrapers, is one of the world's most prestigious architecture and design firms.

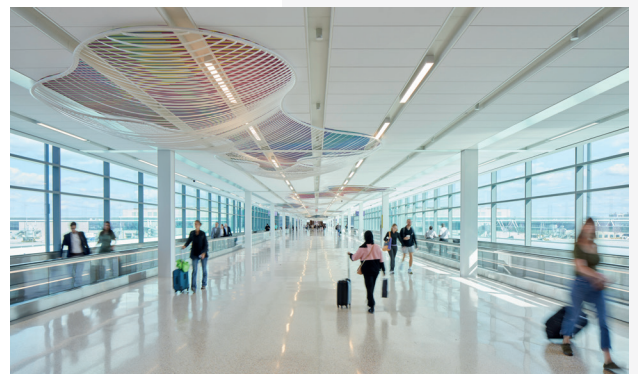
Founded in 1936, it has supported the evolution of civil aviation nearly from the start. This longstanding experience enabled SOM to adapt to today's requirements for Kansas City International Airport in Missouri, especially since the city – the client – had resolved that the airport should be “the most accessible in the world”.

As a result, in addition to speed and safety, inclusivity became the guiding principle for the design, as witnessed by the dozens of community meetings held with local residents. And doesn't making the journey easier for people with reduced mobility mean creating an easier journey for all passengers? This universality, which can be seen in the very structure of the new terminal – built on just two levels – and in its light, warm interior architecture that is welcoming to all.

Mission very much accomplished for this, the biggest infrastructure project in the history of Kansas City, and one that puts on a real aesthetic display at every turn.



© Kansas City Aviation



© Kansas City Aviation



© Kansas City Aviation



## PRIX VERSAILLES

---