

Light test shows ballpark as work of art

As construction continues, Marlins start picking out furniture

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This is part of an MLB.com/Marlins.com exclusive series with team president David Samson chronicling the progress and developments of the new retractable-roof stadium that is scheduled to open in 2012. Throughout the series, which will run twice monthly, fans are encouraged to e-mail David at D.Samson@Marlins.com with their thoughts.

MIAMI -- By day, the Marlins' new ballpark is emerging as a breathtaking building near downtown Miami. At night, the stadium promises to radiate from the creative lighting system being designed by Daniel Arsham. Arsham, a Miami-born artist, was recently at the ballpark grounds testing some of the lighting that will be featured. The spectacular lighting system projects to attract plenty of attention to those driving near or past the ballpark.

"Daniel Arsham, one of the artists, did his first tests to light tree columns in the West Plaza," Samson said. "He came in the middle of the night, set up his lights, and the art that he had envisioned you saw come to life."

Travelers in Miami on Interstate 95 and State Road 836, especially, will have a nice view of what the 37,000-seat retractable-roof ballpark will look like at night when the building opens in 2012.

"We can light them up in different colors," Samson said. "It's almost like Miami's version of the Empire State Building."

At holidays, specific color patterns can be used to match the season. And throughout the year, the stadium will be displayed under lights.

"For holidays, and all the different things we can do, it will really draw attention to our ballpark site," Samson said. "So that testing has started, which just shows we're getting closer to Opening Day, when all the art and all the baseball activities will begin."

The building in the Little Havana section of Miami is closing in on being 45 percent complete. All stages of development can be viewed via the [new ballpark webcam](#). During the daytime, there is plenty of activity taking place. The number of workers on site is closing in on 750, and should soon top 800. Nearly a dozen workers are spending their days constructing the first panel of the retractable roof.

"The retractable roof is being built on the left side of the building," Samson said. "When you drive by, you will see the actual first piece -- the first retractable roof panel that will be rolled along the columns is being built right now."

Additionally, columns are rising on the east side of the building that will hold the operable wall, which will help support the roof.

"If you go online, you see white cylindrical, huge, six story columns that will frame the operable wall," Samson said. "You are starting to see the steel that will support that wall is going up right now. There are 18 of these columns, and the first four are up right now."

Construction began on July 1, 2009, and the project has reached the point where all the concrete should be poured in the next six to eight weeks. Once that occurs, the entire bowl of seats will be finished.

"So you'll go online and see literally all of the stands," Samson said.

Not visible by the webcam are developments taking place inside the building. The walls are now up in the video coaching room, as well as the batting tunnel and manager's office in the Marlins clubhouse. Basically, a player can trace right now



how he will enter the ballpark and where he will go to get into the clubhouse.

"We started making lists for our furniture and fixtures," Samson said. "We're down to desk chairs in the offices as well as the clubhouse chairs."

Samson recently spoke with Josh Johnson, the 6-foot-7 ace of the pitching staff, to discuss what types of chairs should be in the clubhouse. Players will also have the luxury of electrical outlets in their lockers.

"When you walk through the clubhouse here, you can trip on wires," Samson said of Sun Life Stadium. "Players are charging their phones everywhere. In the new ballpark, they'll get to charge everything in their lockers."

The team is putting together a list of training equipment that will go into the new weight room.

"We're down to the details of everyone's desk chairs, everyone's clubhouse chairs, the training room, the trainer's tables were picked out this week," Samson said. "We're dealing with everything from a macro-standpoint, like building a roof, to a micro-point of picking out chairs. That's what we're doing."