

# Ball Band Biergarten at Robert C. Beutter Riverfront Park

Mishawaka, IN

## Studio 431 Elements:

Custom Benches, Custom Communal Tables

## Landscape Forms Elements:

Upfit Structure, Upfit Post Beams, Parallel 42 Benches, Carousel Tables, Solstice Umbrellas, Chase Park Litters, Plexus Benches, Plexus Litters, Emerson Bike Racks

## Design Partners:

Context Design

Located on the St. Joseph River in Mishawaka, IN, a town of 50,000 near South Bend, Robert C. Beutter Riverfront Park was built in the early 2000s. Initial plans called for a phased approach to adding amenities to the 10-acre park, including a future event center, ice rink, and café. Recently, one of the amenities was completed. Ball Band Biergarten, a European-style garden in the middle of the park, opened in the summer of 2020. The garden includes a rich mix of custom and standard Landscape Forms products, including long communal tables, benches, and Upfit structures.

Joe Mayes, Senior Associate with Indianapolis-based Context Design, worked closely with city leaders and with Landscape Forms' Studio 431 to create a vibrant and sophisticated design. "We liked the idea of a smaller linear space and café within the park," says Mayes. "The Biergarten is situated near an area where fireworks shows and concerts are held, so it's a prime location."

Mayes has worked with Studio 431 before and knew they could produce custom products with a consistently high-quality fit and finish, but Mayes was also confident that the blend of custom and standard products would share a design aesthetic. "It all feels like a family," he explains.

Mayes took a small group from the City of Mishawaka to see firsthand the custom studio and manufacturing facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan. "My clients were concerned about issues of durability and maintenance with the furnishings," he explains. The visit allayed their concerns. It was also perfectly timed. Upfit structure had just been launched, and Mayes' clients loved the product and sensor roof. "They felt a shaded structure was a nice amenity for park goers," says Mayes.

A novel application of Upfit elements are its custom-sized posts. The design of the Biergarten required a lot of wiring and conduit to power security cameras, café lighting, and speakers and to display flags and banners.



“The Upfit team designed the posts with larger interiors to carry the electrical cables. We also designed the posts with welded top caps for attaching the café lights,” explains Landscape Forms Structure Sales Engineer Shannon Zemlick. Even the Upfit structure was a custom size. In total, there are six 12’x12’x10’ Upfit zones offering 864 square feet of covered space and 28 6”x6 x10’ Upfit posts. “My clients were attracted to the flexibility Upfit offered,” says Mayes.

“The long rectangular tables and the Upfit structure over them also provided a visual cue that this is a main gathering area,” says Mayes. One of Mayes’ design goals for the space was to create different user experiences within the site. He wanted the space to be scalable to different numbers of people and types of activities. The site furnishings he selected help to achieve his goals. The communal tables accommodate larger numbers of people, whether in one group or several smaller ones. It’s a place for community. The round Carousel tables fit smaller groups, perhaps for those sharing a meal. The Parallel 42 benches placed along the perimeter of the Biergarten offer a quieter spot to sit, away from the activities in the center of the garden. “I wanted to be flexible as a designer,” says Mayes. “Mixing up the types and the geometries of the seating made the space feel more flexible and less grounded, even though the furniture is non-moveable.”

Mayes’ choice of materials and palette pays tribute to the history of the area, which had been a hub of the iron industry. “The black finish on Upfit are reminiscent of metal I-beams, and the stainless steel structure on the communal tables and benches and silver paint finish on the Carousel tables also add an industrial-modern feel to the space, while the ipe wood surfaces warm the space.” The Parallel 42 benches also have stainless steel structures and ipe surfaces. Solstice Umbrellas and Chase Park Litters round out the Landscape Forms elements.

The relationship between Context Design and Studio 431 was a highly collaborative one. Both have worked together and are familiar with each other’s strengths. Mayes provided Studio 431 with inspirational images to get the conversation started. From there, they developed the details, which gave Studio 431 the information it needed to deliver ballpark planning and pricing early on, which, says Mayes, turned out to be “spot on, accurate pricing. Studio 431’s project management and pricing quotes were a big help for us in making decisions about the site elements and aligning our expectations and the city’s budget.”

Studio 431’s Mark Haase says of the Ball Band Biergarten, “This was a project with a beautiful design executed properly. It features a nice mix of custom and standard products that share a design aesthetic and fit and finish that together look like a family of products. This project reflects the quality and attention to detail that Landscape Forms practices with standard and custom products.”

And the results? “The city loves it,” says Mayes. “The residents have said they are surprised to have an amenity like this in Mishawaka. The space has a high-quality design in both its site elements and landscaping. Everyone loves the level of detail.”



