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LIGHTING DESIGN and APPLICATION

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## Good as Gold

Chase Center Arena - Home of the Warriors

# GOLDEN TICKET

A hierarchy of light-filled destinations define the Chase Center arena in San Francisco

By Samantha Schwirck

Photos: Jason O'Rear/Chase Center







The NBA's Golden State Warriors have an arena as buzzworthy as the team itself. Designed by Gensler, the new, 18,000-seat Chase Center opened in the fall of 2019 in San Francisco and contains an array of space types, including suites, clubs and public areas, that blend high-end luxury with athletic energy.

Interior lighting by First Circle Design (Costa Mesa, CA)—in conjunction with exterior illumination by Sean O'Connor Lighting and office tower lighting by Pritchard Peck—was central to creating the desired atmosphere and establishing the arena as a “destination” for guests. “3000K 90 CRI, which



is atypical for sports venues, was selected to meet ownership's objective to create a hospitality destination for their patrons," explains Matt Levesque, founding principal at First Circle Design. "Aside from the contribution of a warm color temperature selection, which supports the intended mood, the lighting reveals the hierarchy of the interior of the building."

**T**he macro end of the hierarchy can be found in the four-story lobby, where a custom color-changing chandelier (Targetti) and theatrical color cove lighting (AXIS Lighting) represent the team's blue and gold colors. "The atmosphere is expected to amaze and astound each guest upon arrival, as well as from a distance," Levesque says. For the cove lighting, a specific LED tape was selected for its ability to achieve the Warriors' two hues, as well as a base white that matches the surrounding architectural lighting. Downlights (Intense Lighting) supplement the chandelier and coves with additional 3000K general illumination.

Outside the lobby, transitional areas, including the multi-level concourse, were lit to "embody comfort and remain unpretentious to increase enticement to the public and private areas of the arena," Levesque says. In the main concourse, angled linear fixtures (AXIS Lighting) supplement general illumination. In the upper-level concourse, simple, clean lines of light balance open ceilings with exposed conduit, industrial décor and task luminaires.

**A**tmospheres of each club, lounge and bar are meant to provide unique, individual visual experiences. The Chase Center Owner's Club, for one, exudes luxury through layered integrated lighting consisting of downlights (Intense Lighting) and cove, millwork and behind-banquet lighting (Targetti Duralamp). For a heightened sense of exclusiveness, the lamps in the owner's club use 2700K sources, revealing another layer of warmth.

Independent scene controls give lounges their own identities, unified through color temperature (3000K) and lighting details. Broad strokes of linear lighting, for example, were used to visually connect upper- and lower-level lounges with one contemporary aesthetic. In the two lower-level club lounges, Levesque explains, "the barrel-shaped ceiling has integrated linear lighting with accents lights. The linear light supports and helps to bring forth visually the shape of the ceiling. They also provide general, soft ambient lighting, while the accent lights provide the desired pop of sharp light to define the seat-





**Top left:**  
The main lobby contains a four-story atrium with theatrical cove lighting representing team colors.

**Top right:**  
Fixtures with 2700K sources result in an extra layer of exclusivity and warmth in the Owner's Club.

**Left:**  
Decorative luminaires provide a sense of arrival in lounges.

ing and dining areas below." Additional integrated linear lighting along the buffet countertops and millwork (also by Targetti) supports the overall linear look and affords task lighting.

For the two upper-level club lounges, decorative luminaires supplement the linear lighting and provide a sense of arrival and scale. Also on the upper level, the theater lounge incorporates color-changing technology across the bar's ceiling and back wall, while uplighting behind banquettes (Ecosense) and integrated bar fascia lighting (Targetti Dura-lamp) create a vibrant and welcoming environment.

Finally, the court-side suites reflect the luxury and comfort of the local Napa Valley wine country, as seen in design elements inspired by a wine barrel. A variety of layered lighting and complementary color temperatures highlight bright white and dark wood accents and shelving, creating a warm and inviting environment with a linear suspended pendant (Vode Lighting) serving as a focal point.

**E**ven as each suite and club dazzle, "we ensure the sanctuary experience of the team locker room remains highly profound, and that the marvel of the basketball court remains the most amazing feature of the arena."





### At A Glance

- The interior lighting design took approximately three years to complete.
- Using 100% LED technology helped achieve LEED Gold certification.
- The project received a 2020 IES Illumination Award of Merit.

The locker room offers a serene, relaxing environment for the team to get focused on the evening’s game. The dome light in the center (Pinnacle Lighting) unifies the ceiling elements above the team emblem in the floor, while a perimeter cove highlights the wood-slatted ceiling. Perimeter downlighting at seating areas and integrated downlighting within the lockers provide task lighting for players.

A controls system—by ETC for the court and Lutron throughout the rest of the arena—ties the project together, catering to both facility and court needs. “There is a wireless iPad designated to each level of the arena,” Levesque says, “so the operations team can walk through any space on a level with the iPad and override the lighting sequences or check levels in detail.”

The locker room’s central dome light draws attention to the team emblem below.

Furthermore, manual override preset button stations—per quadrant and level of the arena, and in club, lounges and bar areas—enable arena staff to make simple live edits without calling a technician. “All of the private lounges and suites also have individual override controls to adjust the individual space as per that specific patron’s personal taste,” Levesque adds.

Levesque likens the ETC system used for the court to a “parent” system that sends predetermined sequences to the Lutron “children” systems for daily and game-day events. “At the push of a virtual button from the main arena control system, a signal is sent to the Lutron network that turns off all of the areas facing the court for a blackout look. Another virtual button sends another trigger to the system and those areas completely restore to their preset look. This allows the operator to pull the patron’s attention to the center court in an instant.”

The control system helped the design adhere to Title 24 code requirements and, combined with 100% LED technology, achieve LEED Gold certification. Just the right color for the home team. ©

**THE DESIGNER** | Matt Levesque is founding principal at First Circle Design in Costa Mesa, CA.