Game, set and match
Madrid's new multifunctional tennis centre

The renowned Spanish quality of taking things easy is certainly a scarce commodity in Madrid. As the geographical, cultural and political centre of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain’s vibrant capital is one of Europe's fastest growing major cities. About 6 million people live in the Greater Madrid area, 3.1 million of them in the city itself. By the 90s, this rapid growth rate had led to almost rampant urban expansion and countless new neighbourhoods. The former idyll on the banks of the Manzanares – the narrow river that traverses the city and was, in centuries gone by, the traditional place to head for on light-hearted outings – gave way in the 60s to the M30 inner-city ring road with its daily traffic volume of over 300,000 vehicles. Apart from the noise and pollution it caused, the fact that this motorway also effectively separated old from new Madrid was reason enough for city planners to begin with an ambitious infrastructural programme. In just four years, from 2004 to 2007, the city ring road with all its through traffic was relocated to an underground tunnel system, the Madrid Calle 30. As a result, the city centre and the suburbs are no longer separated from each other and Madrid has been given room for a new "green lung". The distinctive landmark of the Parque del Manzanares is Dominique Perrault's Centro Deportivo Multifuncional del Manzanares, built to bolster Spain’s application to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Integration into the surroundings
A good six-kilometer stretch of the "Madrid Calle 30" runs parallel to the river valley of the Manzanares. Here a carefully staged sequence of parks
was created to revive the city’s tradition of integrating landscape and architecture. One part of these facilities is the 165,000 square meter multifunctional tennis centre designed by Perrault with its 24 differently sized outdoor and indoor courts with room for a total of 22,616 spectators. In addition, there are six training courts, a tennis school, a swimming pool, a press centre, a VIP area, an event centre, restaurants and the club house and headquarters of the Spanish Tennis Federation. The façade of this spectacular structure is clad with 23,000 square meters of GKD woven metal mesh of type Escale. To revitalise the formerly maltreated location, Perrault's concept was to integrate the gigantic structure closely into its surroundings. Nature and building enter into a symbiosis characterised by Perrault's typical "architecture of disappearance". The reflective outer shell reduces the dominance of the sports complex and makes it seem to melt into its surroundings. Instead of a compact building, an extraordinary spatial creation consisting of several separate elements forms the frame for sport or cultural use and new infrastructure.

**Magic Box in a shimmering veil**

The core of the facility is the Caja Magica, the Magic Box, which with its 80,000 square meters provides room for 12,000, 5,000 and 3,000 spectators respectively in three separately operated courts. The Magic Box gets its name from the three-part roof construction which can be tilted or slid as required to transform, as if by magic, the indoor courts into outdoor arenas. The apparently seamless outer cladding of the structure, a special production of the stainless steel spiral mesh type Escale 10.5 x 1.2 by GKD – GEKR. KUFFERATH AG, accentuates the mystical character of the building. A total of 86 mesh panels, each measuring approx. 23 x 7 meters, were firmly attached at the top to the steel construction and tensioned at the bottom with fork terminals. To minimise horizontal deflection of the
panels, this fixation is reinforced by horizontally stretched cables at intervals of 1.5 meters. For the cladding of the façades of the indoor courts, Escale 7 x 1 was chosen. The different viewing distances are reflected in the scales of the specific choices of mesh type: the shorter the distance, the smaller the Escale spirals. But such modularity of scale and the high-tech aesthetics of the woven metallic mesh were not the only reasons for choosing this material. Functional properties like its low-maintenance requirements, robustness and unlimited service life as well as its reliability as safety balustrading also played a significant role. The precisely configured light and air permeability of the spiral membrane protects players and spectators from driving rain and drafts while creating an aesthetic continuity between the outside and the inside of the building.

**Reaching for the stars**

Construction of the multifunctional tennis centre in Manzanares Park started in 2006. Inauguration of the new sports stadium is scheduled for May 2009. From 8 to 17 May 2009 the German Open Rothenbaum, previously held in Hamburg, will take place as the ATP and WTA Masters with a potentially record-breaking prize money of 6.5 million Euro. One major factor in the choice of this new venue was the enormous capacity for 20,000 spectators in the Magic Box. Other events are also planned for the coming year in the Centre Court, for example concerts. But the stars the Madrilenians are reaching for with their new stadium have the distinct shape of five Olympic rings. The city on the Manzanares wants to host the 2016 Summer Olympics. The new tennis centre with its Caja Magica is Madrid’s match ball in the contest with its fiercest competitor, Tokyo.
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![Image](Picture 1.png)

**Picture 1:** A total of 86 panels of Escale mesh, each measuring approx. 3 x 7 meters, were used to clad the building complex.

![Image](Picture 2.png)

**Picture 2:** To revitalise the formerly maltreated location, Perrault's concept was to integrate the gigantic structure closely into its surroundings.

![Image](Picture 3.png)

**Picture 3:** The GKD spiral mesh serves as safety balustrading, is low-maintenance, robust and has an unlimited service life.

![Image](Picture 4.png)

**Picture 4:** The glittering metallic outer cladding of the structure is a special production of the GKD stainless steel spiral mesh type Escale 10.5 x 1.2.

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We will be happy to send you the desired images in printable resolution by e-mail.

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Picture 5: The distinctive landmark of the Parque del Manzanares is Dominique Perrault's Centro Deportivo Multifuncional del Manzanares.

Picture 6: The 165,000 square meter multifunctional building designed by Perrault houses 24 outdoor and indoor courts with room for a total of 22,616 spectators.

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