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# BOGOTA'S BRIGHT STAR

## MOVISTAR ARENA LURES BIG NAMES IN ENTERTAINMENT, SPONSORSHIP TO COLOMBIA

BY TIM NEWCOMB

Movistar Arena is celebrating its first anniversary after a total re-build. (Courtesy Movistar Arena)

**O**NE-YEAR-OLD MOVISTAR ARENA is not only bringing big names to Bogotá — it's bringing Colombia into the big time.

In fact, the arena, like the nation, has been reconstructed and reinvented to shine a positive light on the capital city in a country whose reputation and economy are also recovering from years of drug-related violence inflicted by cartels such as the one run by the notorious Pablo Escobar.

Movistar Arena General Manager Luise “Luigi” Guillermo, who previously worked for big, multinational brands Sony and Whirlpool, notes that security and safety are much improved these days and that the city is booming. “There are more multinational companies in Bogotá now, tourism is increasing and that helps our venue,” he said. “We’ve had people come to our shows from Ecuador, Central America, Peru, it’s a big buzz in South America.”

The World Bank reports that in 2018 Co-

lombia’s GDP had doubled over the past dozen years and that direct foreign investment last year reached \$11.35 billion, jumping some 80% from its level in 2010.

The glitzy Movistar Arena celebrates its first anniversary in October. While it sits on the same location as its predecessor, the Coliseo Cubierto El Campín, the two venues share little in common.

Movistar Arena officials point out that the reborn facility is nearly 90% new, including the façade, roof, chairs, lights, acoustics, dressing rooms, bathrooms as well as up-graded food and beverage, expanded loading docks, additional parking, and more. Arena officials say the project took 18 months and finished six months ahead of schedule, with a final tally of \$35 million that officials say that was 20% more than expected.

A concert featuring local and international artists Juanes, Miguel Bosé, and Sebastián Yatra opened the venue on October 3, 2018. And while

local artists are a big part of the bookings, the venue set its sights on some global names, some of whom have never visited Colombia.

“In Colombia there is no venue like this,” Guillermo said. “We want to be part of the circuit. If an artist comes to Mexico and is going to Chile, now they can stop in Bogotá because we have the right venue. We are opening the market to artists and shows that haven’t tried Bogotá.”

Indeed, Movistar Arena has hosted the Bogotá debuts of a number of household names, including Lenny Kravitz and André Rieu, who played four straight sold-out shows. The venue has also hosted a diverse group of other luminaries such as former U.S. President Barack Obama, Il Divo and Sting, who played there Oct. 21.

“Sting a year ago didn’t have any place to perform in Colombia, but now we have excellent facilities and acoustics (at Movistar

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 32**



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# THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR FIRST YEAR



## UP COMING EVENTS



OCT  
10



NOV  
09



NOV  
19



NOV  
22



NOV  
28-30



DIC  
02



FEB  
02



MAR  
1-2

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Arena) and it's on another level," says veteran Bogota concert promoter Catalina Amador, business director with TBL Live-Bizarro. She adds, "Movistar Arena is an international-level venue that has all the facilities you find in any arena around the world. Now that artists, managers, and promoters know it, they are asking to perform in the arena."

Movistar Arena will have hosted 52 public shows and 16 private shows in its inaugural year. Guillermo says the target for year two is 75 to 90 shows. The lineup for year two kicks off with Daddy Yankee's concert for the Oct. 3 anniversary show and continues with appearances by Norah Jones, Interpol and the Backstreet Boys during the next six months. Popular local acts Morat and Carlos Vives are also booked.

ular in the Eastern part of Colombia. "What we did this year for the first time was gather the most important artists of this genre and present them in Movistar Arena," she said. "It was a huge success, more than six thousand people buying tickets for a genre that had never performed in a venue like this."

Amador added, "Movistar Arena has become an icon of the city now. ... It's becoming a center of the development of a national scene."

### FRESH SEATS, SUITES, AND SUSHI

The overhaul has created a more international menu for patrons. According to Guillermo, in addition to such standard concert fare as hot dogs and hamburgers, there are local options as well as vegetables, sushi and more. The arena executive adds that there are a variety of bars serving beer, whiskey, and gin and

tice upgrades from the time they load in until they strike the stage. "There are five loading docks with a big area where almost 20 containers can stand (and) the technical grill we built is very important because productions can work easily with new audio and light systems, LEDs, and it hangs almost 90 tons at the same time, so any show can come from Cirque du Soleil to complex concerts," Guillermo said.

Movistar Arena is hosting more than concerts, including WWE's first visit. "It sold out," said Guillermo, who laughed as he added, "There were 12,000 people cheering for these guys hitting each other."

Roger Federer is scheduled to play a tennis exhibition at Movistar Arena in November along with Colombia's own Wimbledon doubles champions, Juan Sebastián Cabal and Robert Farah.

### LIVE AT LEEDS

After its renovation, Movistar Arena received LEED Silver certification.

Diego Prada, founder and CEO of Green Factory, consulted the facility in its bid to become certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. He says many of the LEED requirements bring almost immediate returns on investment. "For example, if you want to recycle rainwater it costs you a bit more but after two years you recover that investment."

Eighty percent of the facility's rainwater is recycled and the new lighting system is much more efficient than expected, according to Prada. He says the biggest hurdle was creating a natural

ventilation system in the arena.

The sustainability expert adds that this project, a public-private partnership with the local district government that controls the land, is unique compared to the 200 office buildings that have been LEED certified in Colombia: "This project is one of a kind—it's an important building that's historic in the city and taking it to international standards, it's a challenge working with the public organizations, bringing people together is not easy. But it shows you can do it, because the way this building has been functioning proves you can be successful doing it; it has been an amazing success so far." ■



**Movistar Arena's colorful exterior features lighted panels and a LED display. (Courtesy Movistar Arena)**

Amador says the local artists are more than a niche market. "Our company has identified gaps in the market for Latin acts and family shows," she said. "With Movistar Arena, acts that sold X tickets now sell twice as many because we have the new venue."

She points to the success of booking a Joropo show, a musical and dance style that is pop-

tonics. The venue also caters special offerings for the 21 VIP lounge suites, which hold some 450 people. Movistar Arena has sold year-long passes for all but one of the suites and 16 of the 20 boxes, according to Guillermo.

Big brands are taking an interest in the venue including naming-rights partner Movistar, a Spanish telecom firm that also has its name on an arena in Santiago, Chile. Anheuser-Busch InBev and Coca-Cola are in-venue beverage partners.

While fans appreciate upgraded seats and suites and more cosmopolitan food and beverage options, artists and their management no-




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**CONTACT INFO:**

 **(57) 316 875 59 25/ Bogotá - Colombia**

**ANGELICA ZULUAGA V.**

**Commercial Manager**

 **angelica.zuluaga@cde.co.com**