

# Yankee Stadium: Food, shopping and baseball, too

NEW YORK (AP) — Unlike the Babe and the House he Built, these New York Yankees and their palatial new stadium were given a practice run.

The Hard Rock Cafe in right field was packed at game time Friday night, a birthday party was going on in NYY Steak above it, and the carpeted corridors outside the \$850,000-a-year luxury suites were busy as people picked up drinks in the lounge.

There were few lines at the sushi stand for \$15 rainbow rolls, but much longer ones for Mike's Arthur Avenue Italian Deli and the Latin Corner. An amused crowd watched through glass behind third base, finding it hard to believe a butcher from Lobel's was carving a huge rack of ribs.

Tommy Bahama's martini bar one level up behind home plate was filled with fans, and Mohegan Sun Sports Bar in center field was packed with spectators looking at the field through the smoked glass. In the Legends Suites Club, people sipped from oversized Chardonnay glasses at tables topped with white tablecloths while dozens of chefs in tall toques stood by carving stations.

Oh, baseball was played, too.

In the first game at a \$1.5 billion stadium, Robinson

Cano and Hideki Matsui hit two-run homers, and Cody Ransom hit a three-run shot to lead the Yankees to a 7-4 exhibition victory over the Chicago Cubs before 48,402.

From the granite-and-limestone exterior to an art gallery, memorabilia store and three team shops, the stadium oozes an "If you've got it, flaunt it" style of mon-eyed Old New York updated to the 21st Century.

"The visiting clubhouse. It's wonderful. It's got every imaginable amenity that you would want. In fact, you wonder if the players will be ready to play ball at 7:05," Cubs manager Lou Piniella said before the game. "About the only thing that I missed was the old coffee pot. I messed around and fiddled around trying to get a cup of coffee about one of those new technological machines for about a half-hour."

On a drizzly night, both New York teams tried out their new ballparks. Over in Queens, the Mets played the Boston Red Sox before a crowd of 37,652 at \$800 million Citi Field.

In the Bronx, the Yankees built a stadium like no other. The field has the same dimensions the old stadium just across 161st Street used last year. But after playing in baseball's most famous park from 1923 and winning 26 World Series titles, the

Yankees wanted the revenue boost of a new stadium.

While tickets cost up to \$2,625 during the regular season, this weekend's two-game exhibition series was capped at \$50. Grandstand seats cost \$1.10 and bleacher tickets were 25 cents — matching the prices for the 4-1 victory over Boston that opened the original stadium on April 18, 1923, when Ruth christened America's first three-deck ballpark with a home run.

The new stadium restored many of the elements stripped from the original during the 1974-75 renovation, including the famous frieze hanging from the roof and manual scoreboards on the fences.

Much is modern, including a 59 feet by 101 feet color video board above the Bleachers Cafe and a 3 by 1,279-foot ribbon board at the front of the terrace level. Fans bought food and merchandise under the translucent ceiling of the 31,000-square-foot Great Hall on their way in, then came out to view a field lit by far brighter lights than at the old ballpark.

Players drove right into the stadium, without having to interact with fans. The Yankees' clubhouse stretches from home plate to right field and including a swimming pool, SwimEx spa, din-

ing area and lounge.

"I can go see our manager, our manager can call a player into his office and you guys would never know about it," general manager Brian Cashman said to a reporter. "You guys can't

look into our trainer's room now. And you wouldn't know about — hey, this guy is icing his knee or icing his shoulder. So we're much more efficient in terms of doing business.