

Bringing the Hits to Busch

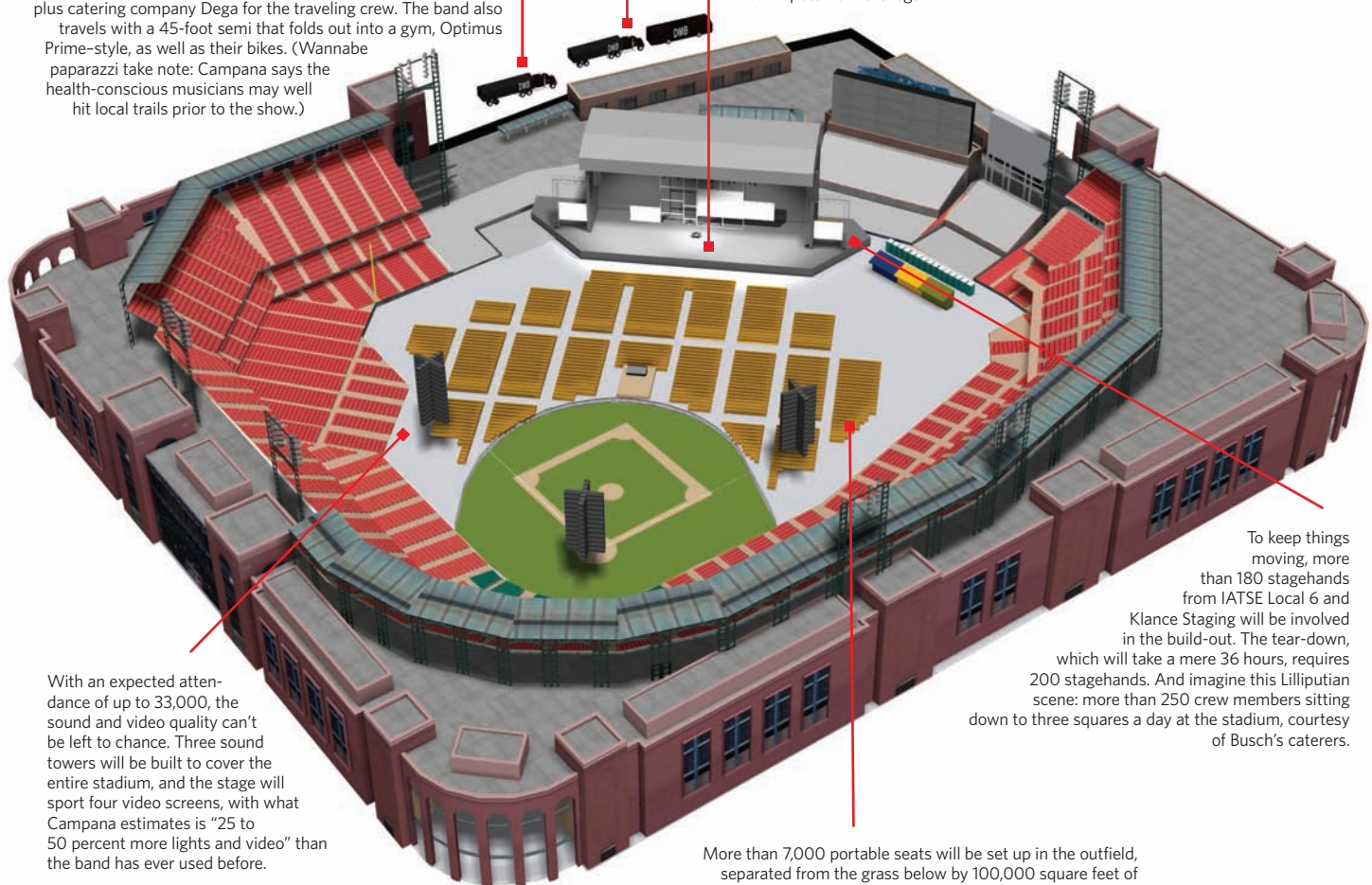
When the Cards are away, Dave Matthews and the Black Crowes will play

Our hometown hitters take to the road for 10 days starting June 3—but those fans in need of a hit fix will have no trouble getting it. On Saturday, June 7, after more than a year of planning, the Dave Matthews Band and the Black Crowes will be the first to take the stage in new Busch's center field. We talked to Live Nation's Midwest music president, Mark Campana, to find out how it'll all come together. —Margaret Bauer

The minute the team's off the field Monday, crews will stream in to begin setup. On Wednesday, the first of more than 28 semi trucks (ultimately, eight flatbeds for the stage, 10 for the sound and lighting equipment and 10 for the flooring and chairs) will arrive.

But when the tour rolls in from Chicago Saturday morning, Dave & Co. won't be joining the multitudes—the band has its own chef, plus catering company Dega for the traveling crew. The band also travels with a 45-foot semi that folds out into a gym, Optimus Prime-style, as well as their bikes. (Wannabe paparazzi take note: Campana says the health-conscious musicians may well hit local trails prior to the show.)

Inside the stadium, a temporary road atop the warning track will allow the 30-ton crane and five 3-ton forklifts to hoist components into place "like an Erector set," Campana says. The 84- by 56-foot stage, previously used for DMB's 2006 Fenway Park show, stands on legs 12 to 15 inches in diameter, spaced at 8-foot intervals. The only damage to the grass should be a series of small brown spots from the legs.



With an expected attendance of up to 33,000, the sound and video quality can't be left to chance. Three sound towers will be built to cover the entire stadium, and the stage will sport four video screens, with what Campana estimates is "25 to 50 percent more lights and video" than the band has ever used before.

To keep things moving, more than 180 stagehands from IATSE Local 6 and Klance Staging will be involved in the build-out. The tear-down, which will take a mere 36 hours, requires 200 stagehands. And imagine this Lilliputian scene: more than 250 crew members sitting down to three squares a day at the stadium, courtesy of Busch's caterers.

More than 7,000 portable seats will be set up in the outfield, separated from the grass below by 100,000 square feet of interlocking polyethylene covering called Terraplas. It'll take 10 hours to cover the field; although the covering is porous, allowing rain and UV light through, seats will only go up after sundown Friday to minimize the amount of time the field bakes under plastic. The hallowed ground of the infield, however, will be completely fenced off.

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF GRUNEWALD