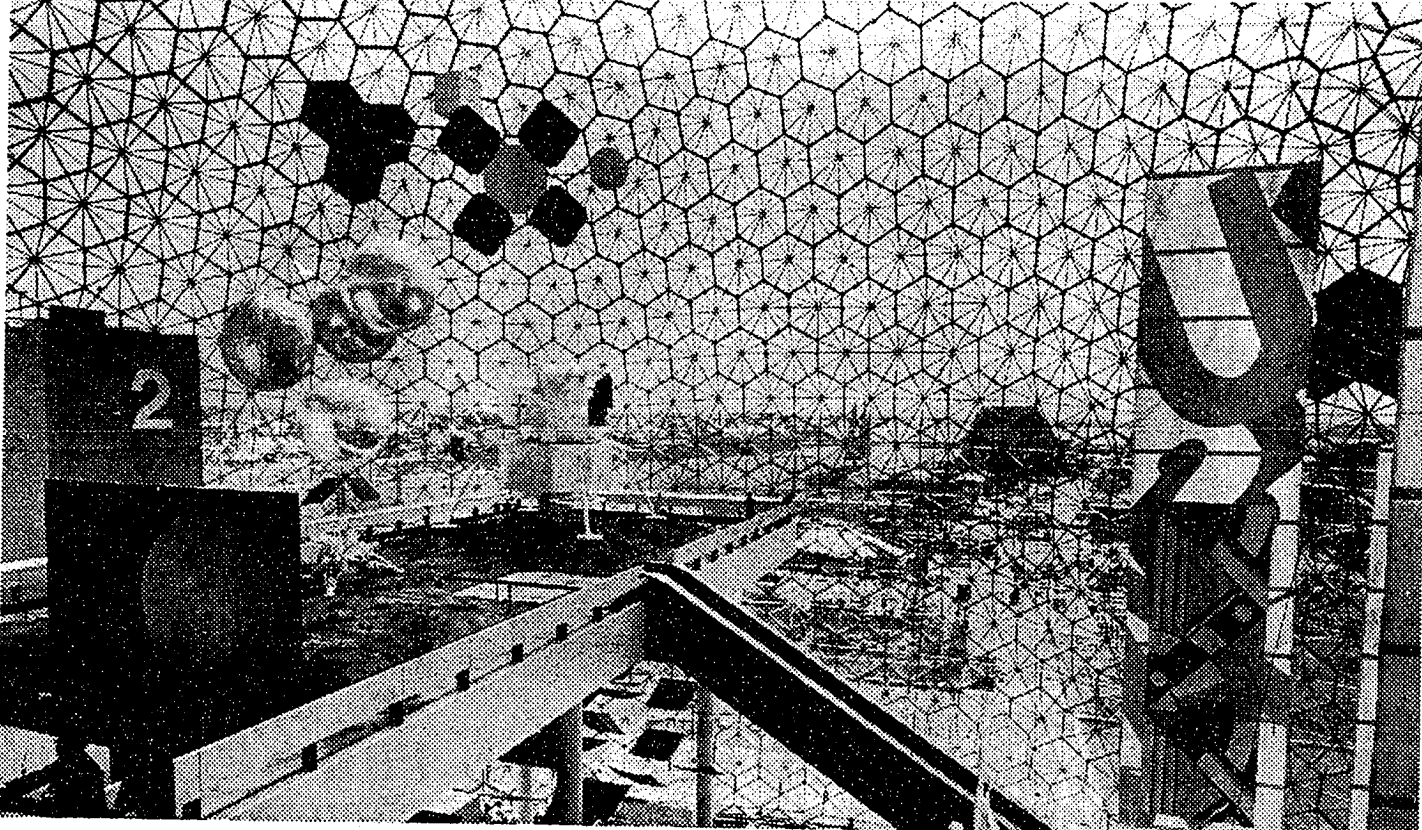
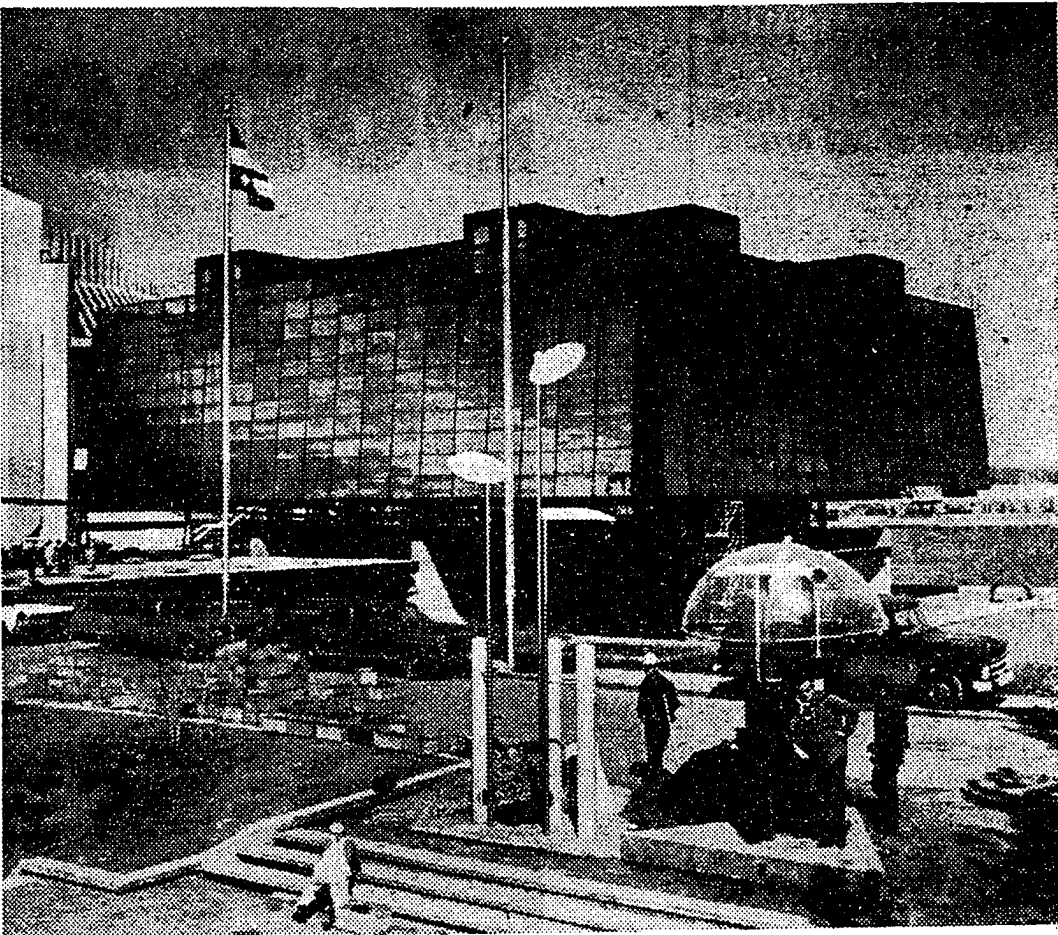


U.S. AND U.S.S.R.: American pavilion, Buckminster Fuller's "skybreak bubble," left, is across arm of St. Lawrence River from Soviet building



SPACIOUSNESS: Inside view of the American pavilion. Escalator, center, leads to display of moon-landing craft.



QUEBEC: The sleeper of the show, with reflecting glass walls on a simple truss frame

## A Fair With Flair

### Expo 67 Shows How to Provide Variety Within a Controlled Plan

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Special to The New York Times

MONTREAL, April 27—The word is Go. Expo 67 is a fun fair, the fairgoers fair, and the professionals fair. It has substance and style. Many of the details will be collected by architects, planners and designers the way wine fanciers savor their vintages. Expo is overwhelming in its sheer size—700 acres. It is a perfect fair site, two islands and a point

An Appraisal in the St. Lawrence River laced with canals and pools, a potential fairyland when those cold Canadian air masses stop massing, the last snow melts on the riverbanks, and the pinched, frozen flowers bloom.

Expo is also overwhelming in quality. The sophisticated standard of excellence maintained in this enormous effort, a six-month miracle, almost defies description.

Every pavilion has been reviewed and every detail planned, designed or coordinated by Expo's architecture and design staff headed by Edouard Fiset, a man of obvious esthetic and diplomatic talents. From site plan to street signs, Expo is exceptional.

Yet, with controls, there is no lack of variety. There is excitement; the genuine, heavy stuff that comes from creativity. This fair has flair.

There are more good buildings, more fine, foolish or fascinating structural experiments, more stunning display tech-

niques and superior graphics, more top-notch exhibits, less phony lath and plaster, less fake world-of-the-futurism, and less commercialism than at any World's Fair of recent memory.

It is necessary to note that New York's late fizzle was not a World's Fair. It was denied that status by the Bureau of International Exhibitions in Paris and was therefore unable to attract the government-sponsored national participation that is an international exhibition's reason for being and a measure of greatness. To put it bluntly and comparatively, the New York effort was dull, dated and shoddy.

Expo, which opened officially today, will have its problems, its successes, failures and controversies. It is already being attacked as overplanned or underplanned.

#### U.S. 'Skybreak Bubble'

The big debate of the opening, however, which promises to continue for the duration, is over the United States Pavilion, Buckminster Fuller's dominating, 20-story "skybreak bubble" with its disarming and delightful displays.

By now everyone knows that a deliberate stroke of psychological as well as physical planning placed the looming constructions of the United States and the Soviet Union virtually side by side. If the effort had been calculated, the two displays could not be more different.

The glass-walled Soviet Pavilion, its huge, swooping roof supported by immense V-trusses, is jam-packed with all of the impressive technological displays that it can hold.

The American exhibition, by a group of young architects called the Cambridge Seven, is a highly selective, airy distillation of the American creative spirit in the arts and sciences. It is suave, witty, sensitive, subtle, artful, elegant and profound. It is also beautiful.

The sense of achievement carried lightly and with élan is the best possible message on the American way of life. Like all skilled performances, this one comes off with deceptively effortless charm and grace.

To those who believe in the "hit 'em with everything you've got" technique, it is a lightweight show. To this observer, it is a solid success.

As if to prove we are a diverse people, the nadir of Expo is reached by another American effort, a pseudo-Colonial bomb by the State of Maine.

#### Tent By West Germany

The handsome West German tent by Rolf Gutbrod and Frei Otto has been well publicized in the usual preopening mythology as one of the more radical stars of the show.

With light filtering softly through the translucent plastic skin lining the steel mesh slung on eight steel masts soaring to 120 feet, it suggests a superb space-age garden party.

Inside, however, steel platforms cut up the luminous, flowing interior, and the content of the exhibits is overwhelmed by the complex didacticism of the display techniques. This is a fault that seems to be an international occupational hazard of installation designers.

There are other stars that a few chaotic preopening days

reveal, in a far from complete accounting. Czechoslovakia and Switzerland make impeccable contributions. Austria offers a small gem of prefabricated, aluminum-framed panels designed by Karl Schwanzer, a structural solution neatly matched to the size and scale of the functional problem.

In the Canadian complex, a Fair in itself, Ontario has lashed a handsome canvas superstructure to steel poles, set in a fantastic romantic landscape of stacked, six-foot, rough granite blocks, probably the most notable, if unportable, sculpture on the grounds. The architects are Fairfield & Dubois.

But the sleeper of the show is Quebec. It stands in an almost invisible elegance; its reflecting glass walls on a simple truss frame seem to be made of moving clouds and sky. It is totally eclipsed by its neighbors, France and Britain, two of the largest and most bombastic of Expo's guests.

France, by J. Faugeron, is an haute architecture creation of swirling fins and panache; we nearly said pastry cream. Hard, chic, supersophisticated and elaborately synthetic, like much of French culture, it has a kind of dazzling superliner luxe.

Britain, by Sir Basil Spence, mock-massive and sludgily symbolic, suggests a stylistic dropout from New York, 1939. Its overbearing pomposity should be enough to recharge Britain's angry young men.

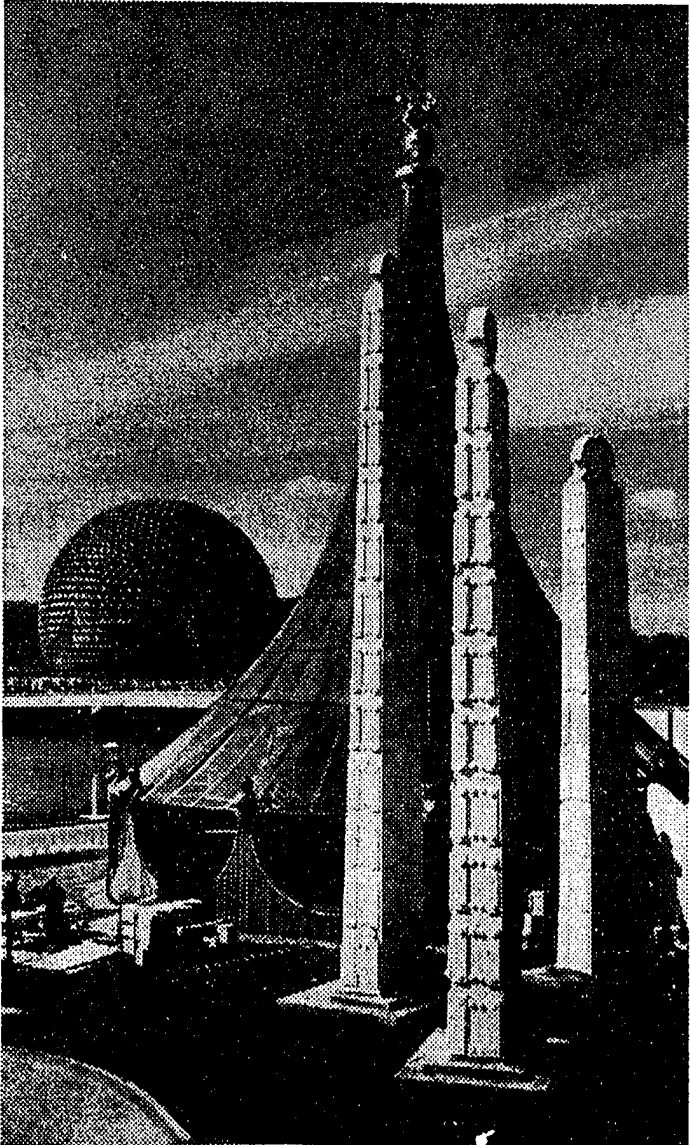
Britain is obviously Establishment, and France is equally obviously a well-preserved gay old girl.

But Quebec is the Barcelona Pavilion of 1967.

The Barcelona Pavilion is the great, classic exhibition building designed by Mies van der Rohe for the Barcelona Fair of 1929. It is still influencing today's architecture and design.

The Quebec Pavilion by Papineau, Gerin Lévesque, LeBlanc & Durand, combines an exceptionally refined and sensitively detailed work of contemporary architecture with an exhibition design that is a three-dimensional sensory abstraction of sight and electronic sound that says, suddenly and stunningly, what a 1967 exhibit should be.

It has been a long way from the famous plaster classical colonnades of the World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893 in Chicago to the space frames of Expo. A long way for the world, and for World's Fairs.



The New York Times (by Edward Hauser)

ETHIOPIA: Tall pillars are the distinguishing feature of the African nation's exhibit at the Montreal fair.