

# Expo 67

Canada and the United States both have hits in Expo 67, which opened in Montreal yesterday. The fair bids to be one of the great international shows of the century, and the United States Pavilion is a standout—a joyous distillation of the best American art, science and culture, no less profound for its easy wit and beauty.

A world's fair, of course, should be all fun, or at least painless instruction. But there are serious lessons to be learned in Montreal. These lessons are pertinent because several cities are already vying for the international exhibition to mark the United States bicentennial in 1976. After New York's sad fair of two years ago, Expo 67 is sheer delight.

The facts of fairs, as demonstrated in Montreal, are going to be hard for American cities to grasp, since most of them consider it gospel, as New York did, that all money invested must be returned at a conventional percentage, and the national culture is best symbolized by massive doses of chrome-plated commercialism.

Expo expects no profits. It is a frankly deficit operation. The money is 50 per cent federal, 37½ per cent provincial and 12½ per cent municipal. The book-keeping is considered fully balanced in terms of visitors and business attracted, municipal improvements completed, and luster added to the Canadian reputation. Commercialism is rigidly controlled, under the bureau's explicit rules. The 62 national pavilions are there as "ambassadors," according to a fair official, "not as hucksters."

Expo is a designed fair. Every element, starting with the basic site plan, has been controlled by the fair's chief architect and staff. Every pavilion was subject to review. Even with controls, the variety of form, shape and style is stupendous and exhilarating, and the whole is woven together with theme buildings, services and public spaces of a design quality that would permanently grace any city in the world.

The demonstration is clear. Expo is in the tradition of great world fairs. Each country is making the most striking and extravagant statements possible of its architecture, arts and sciences. Fortunately, the United States has finally recognized, in its glittering Buckminster Fuller "skybreak bubble," that its best cultural exports are its dynamic young talent and its innovative masters. The combination steals the scene.

There are more lessons in the shining new subway that combines art and function, on the ride back to Montreal, and in the city, where massive skyscraper blocks are being joined underground by efficient and elegant multilevel planning. There are more good new buildings in the heart of Montreal than in almost any equivalent acreage in Manhattan. New York can learn about other things than fairs from this Canadian jewel city.