



Interview with the general manager of Unnic ▶ Ivan Armengod reviews the most important projects



EL PERIÒDIC  
Ivan Armengod  
in his office.

## Ivan Armengod

Director General of Unnic

«We have all the staff of the game part hired and we are already opening the catering offers»

EL PERIÒDIC  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

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Ivan Armengod has recently been appointed general manager of Unnic, the new leisure center that will open in Prat de la Creu Street next March. He then reviews the current state of the facilities, explains what this new proposal will consist of and what it will mean for the country.

**– About a month ago you announced that you expect to open Unnic on March 4th. Will it be possible to finish everything for this day?**

–We are working to make this date real. We meet with the construction teams every day to go over the tasks at hand and, in principle, we held a meeting and we can say that we are within the deadlines to be able to open on March 4th. It is our hope.

**–How are the works developing?**

–Due to the current market situation there have been delays. At the moment, there are more than 80 operators working continuously, and I think the work is going at a very advanced pace. All the hard part is over, and now the beautification begins. I think that in a matter of a month we will see many parts

finished.

**–What are the areas you are working with at the moment?**

–We have almost completed the casino floors and there is little left. The lighting has started to be installed, all the walls are finished, and we also have the furniture. At the entrance, we will soon lay the carpet and we will already have this area closed to be able to furnish it. At the same time, we have different teams working in each of the areas of the building, and we believe that by early or mid-January we will have the casino floors finished.

**–How will Unnic be organized by floors?**

–Each of them has double height and there are lofts. Therefore, the zero floor and the first floor are the ones intended for the game, and it is where the machines and the casino part will be located. Then we would have the third floor, where all the show dinner and the disco bar will be located, which are spaces where we will do shows and there will be live music. On the top floor, which would be the fourth, we would have the restaurant, which will be open with a terrace facing Prat de la Creu

Street, but also has an interior area. Everyone can access the restaurant on the top floor because it is open to the public. However, Unnic has its own restaurants inside the casino, which cannot be accessed by under 18 years old.

**–Unnic, initially, wanted to open this autumn, but problems such as the lack of labor have delayed the opening...**

–I believe that the workforce problem in Andorra, not only in construction, but in many sectors, remains latent. Today, we have the necessary workers to finish the work on the dates we have set. Why wasn't it finished in the fall of this year? It was probably a combination of many things. There has been a shortage of all materials, from cement to electrical panels, which added to the delay that has existed since the beginning has not allowed to be there. I think the best date is March, pressing, because the operators are working from Monday to Saturday to finish it.

**– Will Unnic have more than one entry?**

–Yes. We will have access through Prat de la Creu Street, but from the

fifth floor it will also be possible to enter either through Plaça del Poble, via some stairs, or through a footbridge that will link the building with the Meritxell Avenue. In fact, last Wednesday they started placing the beams that will support the footbridge that will connect the facilities with the center.

**–You are happy to be able to join Unnic with Meritxell avenue...**

–The truth is, yes, because it earns a lot. This is also a commitment we reached with the community and with all the owners in these spaces, who we must thank for helping us make it a reality.

**–How has the Municipality of Andorra la Vella seen the construction of Unnic and a casino in its parish?**

–I think very well. First, the municipality sees that Unnic can be another engine for the country, just like Caldea, the commerce, the banking sector, the hotel industry or skiing. The fact that it is located in the parish of Andorra la Vella will be a very important traffic generator for the parish, since it not only creates jobs for the complex itself, but also generates adjacent jobs for many companies or people who serve Unnic. At

the same time, apart from the three floors of our own parking, we will also dedicate an entire floor with the communal parking and, therefore, in some way it is helping us to try to have a reference space and provide a very good service, whether you come for lunch, a drink, a show or a game.

**–And, entering the field of restoration, they explained that there would be a Michelin star in Unnic. Can you tell who it will be?**

–Unnic has partners in Andorra and also a Spanish partner, which is Grupo Orenes. Since we are working on the restaurant with them, we have the possibility of having a renowned chef with a Michelin star such as Nazario Cano. He will be the one who can organize and assemble the entire menu, although this does not mean that we do not have our own or local chefs to, in some way, Andorranize the menu that they can offer us, in this case, from Murcia. I think the cuisine we will offer will be of a very good gastronomic standard, open to all audiences, and we will also have different types of dishes and menus that we will adapt with local chefs from the country, of which we have very good ones.



**- Will the indoor restaurants be your own?**

-In principle, all premises will be owned. We will have the centralized kitchen and then, in these spaces we will have a different kitchen. For example, the sports bar will offer hamburgers, sandwiches... A cuisine more suited to watching a sporting event. In addition, we will have another kitchen, perhaps not as complex as the one in the restaurant. Everything is nourished by the same space, that is to say, they are three different concepts, but they come from the same heart.

**-The audience you want to welcome to the casino will cover all kinds of profiles, but there will be a VIP area. Who is it aimed at, how can it be accessed and what will it look like?**

- Both in the restaurant and in the game or show area, we have different rather reserved spaces, which can be accessed by anyone who wants an intimate space for whatever reason. We will rent them and maybe have a different kitchen. This will be both in the restaurant and in event areas, where maybe someone wants to be dining and at the same time watching the show in a more private atmosphere.

**-All the machinery that will be offered will be new. What products will you incorporate?**

-Within the game part we will have around 150 machines, and it will be a completely new option in Andorra, because there is no space that has roulette, blackjack, or poker. On the other hand, it is true that the Bingo already has a couple of machines, but the casino will have many more, with the latest technology and from different suppliers.

**-Is the percentage of winners limited in the casino?**

-With gaming machines there is a very important return from what you play to what you win for the customer. As one goes playing it has a very relevant recurrence of recovering it. Since it is chance that wins, the return can even be all or nothing, because at some point you can play Russian Roulette, bet on the number three that comes your way and win it all. But it's also possible that you don't touch and lose everything.

**-Although they want to promote res-**

**ponsible gambling consumption, some people blame casinos for generating gambling addiction. To what extent do you have responsibility and how do you act to prevent it from happening?**

-The gaming sector, as everyone knows, has people for and against. We, in the casino part, will have controls that will surely be the highest in the gaming sector. The problem is in other aspects such as the online game, since you can connect with 12 years and on any web page, or the rooms that have a more permissive use of the casino. But all these are aspects that we do not touch, because we have very high access controls. In other countries, the regulations are perhaps laxer, but in Andorra I think that the system is very protectionist for everyone, and regardless of that, we will do what is necessary and more so that it is very well controlled.

**-How do you rate the collaboration with the Police?**

-The collaboration both with the Police and with public bodies or private companies is very good. What we try with the Police is to be comprehensible with the actions we have to take, and we will follow their guidelines. In fact, not only with the Police but also with the ministries related to our activity we are continuously collaborating to try to help and propose new measures that promote responsible gambling.

**-On the other hand, to guarantee the security of the casino, you have introduced facelock technology for facial recognition. How will it work?**

-To enter a casino, everyone must register for the protection of the people who access it, who cannot be under 18 years of age and cannot appear on any previous list to preserve aspects such as gambling addiction. The facelock is a tool that gives us double security because the person not only registers with their passport or ID to gain access, but also has facial recognition and authorizes them to enter the space. There is a double control.

**-How will all this data be protected?**

-We have a company contracted to provide us with service in this matter, since we have a lot of data and we must preserve it according to current law, and the same with facial recognition. Our intention is to



►► Ivan Armengod and Games advisor, Marc Martos, in Unnic.



«There is the possibility of having a renowned chef with a Michelin star like Nazario Cano, who will set up the menu»

cover everything that the Data Protection Act says, as it cannot be otherwise.

**- Can a customer be banned from entering the facilities?**

-Yes, lists will be received daily that, either for their own reasons, do not want to enter a space, or that are in some way blocked from being able to access due to some case of gambling addiction. We will be very careful in this because our intention is to promote responsible gaming.

**-Has the croupier training already**

**ended?**

-We have almost completed the training. In January we will send a group of people from Spain to do the last part in a casino with real customers and it is the last part of the training. We started with a group of people who have gone through different stages, processes and tests to ensure that they have the right level, and now, the people who have already been selected are those who have just been trained in Spain.

**-Of the people who enrolled, how many will graduate?**

-Approximately, there was a filter of 25 or 30% that either could not continue or did not pass the verification processes. When we finish the process, there may be some people who will not continue either, but between those we are training and those we have already trained, in principle we have a well-covered staff.

**-The initial purpose was that the vast majority, if not all, of the workers were Andorrans. Has it been achieved?**

-We have had a good response with

this. When opening a casino from scratch, there must always be between 25 and 30% of the staff who already have casino experience. Therefore, in some way we already had to count that 30% would come from other places. Thus, we have more or less, a staff of around 75 people, 30% of whom come from casinos such as Madrid or Barcelona, with a great deal of experience, and the rest are those who come from school and are residents of Andorra.

**-How are the personnel selection processes going?**

-We, as we mentioned recently, are working to bring all the teams to Unnic, and we are now opening the selection processes. We've got the entire gaming side locked down with the hired staff, and we're starting to open up sales on the catering side. This is our focus for late September and early January. Specifically, we are starting to recruit chefs, maîtres... And when we have everything closed, we will land the part of the waiters, kitchen and this whole group. We have to think we need to hire about 100 people, and we're at that point now. Just this week we are posting some ads on our website, and we are getting about 100 resumes a day.

**-Have you set any financial goals?**

-We've been working with budgets since the first year, but the start of any project has more complex beginnings, because you have to regulate spending well, control all the investments that have been made... But yes, we have a four-five year plan with significant returns on investment and we hope it goes well. We think it will start strong, but we will see the point of maturity of the business towards the third year, which is when we expect to have the levels that we are visualizing that we can have from this business.

**-What would you say to the people who are against the construction of Unnic?**

-When a public tender came out to award a casino license, many companies came forward. I believe that we must see Unnic as a project that will serve as a revitalizing for the country, that will not only serve to have one more restaurant or leisure space, but also a complex that does not exist many kilometers around. ≡

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(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

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