

PRODUCT NEWS & DESIGN SOLUTIONS FOR STORE PLANNING & VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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Making living essential

Canyon Ranch floats into the wellness market with Living Essentials flagship store

By Alison Embrey

In the midst of dry sands and an arid desert climate, the Canyon Ranch Spa Club at The Venetian Resort in Las Vegas offers patrons a cool and serene atmosphere. Canyon Ranch, a world-class provider of health resort services, now has a growing new market. The resort group has taken its brand a step further by launching the company's first foray into the retail market as a companion to the spa and fitness center. Living Essentials, Canyon Ranch's flagship health and beauty boutique located inside the Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian, captures the mind, body and spirit with its placid elegance and clean design.

"We saw an opportunity to expose our brand through retail," says Gary Milner, Canyon Ranch project director for Living Essentials. "Las Vegas brings in a lot of foot traffic and exposure to potential clients. We just reacted to a prime retail opportunity." The 1200-sq.-ft. boutique offers Canyon Ranch products and educational tools that reflect the philosophy of the Canyon Ranch Spa Club, while simultaneously creating an identity of its own. "We laid out a very brief vision of the project, and the design team came in and created an entire brand. We bought the entire concept and are now in the process of applying the brand corporate-wide," Milner says.

MOVK, the New York-based architecture and design firm chosen for the project, wanted to create a strong identity for the boutique because Canyon Ranch had not previously taken an approach toward branding, says Mark Oller, AIA, principal of MOVK. "We wanted to act on the spa's holistic approach to wellness. A botanical motif emerged as an etched abstraction of an aloe plant, known for its restorative and healing properties, and we developed it as a simple icon that was reinforced in the packaging and brand products," Oller says. The aloe plant is also etched into frosted glass panels that form the door handles at the entrance to the store.

The Canyon Ranch Living Essentials store welcomes customers with an open, inviting environment with color schemes, materials and textures evocative of the Southwest desert. Wood, stone and water combine with white and sage tones to immerse customers in a sense of naturalism. "We wanted to speak through simplicity with a juxtaposition of sensuality and tactile feeling—and respect the horizon line of the desert at the same time," Oller says. "We used the desert as a metaphor for balance and life. We wanted the simplicity of the store to be antithetical to the glitzy glamour of Las Vegas."

Oller and team took Canyon Ranch's basic wellness approach of mind, body and spirit and evolved them into three brand attributes—reflection, sensuality and light. Reflection emphasizes the importance of the mind; sensuality is a positive reaction of the body; and light corresponds to the spirit, Oller says. MOVK took great care translating the three aspects into the store through visual cues, even down to fresh flower petals, mohair pillows and stone clothing hooks in fitting rooms.

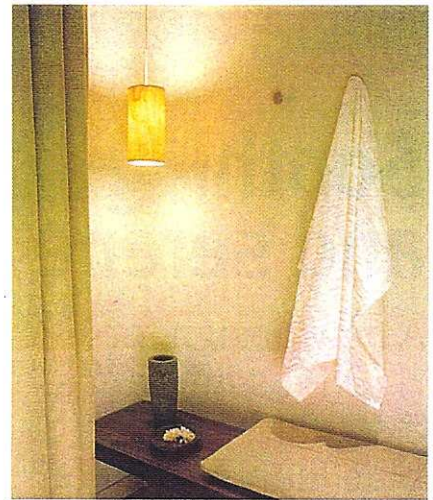
The store appears to have a floating effect, as the

linear cabinetry lining the perimeter of the space hovers a few inches above a bed of softly lit river stones that outline the edge of the floor. "The river stones give an ephemeral, floating quality to the store," says Oller. "The stones provide a minimal modernism that pays respect to Japanese design elements and speaks to the natural quality of the brand and products as well."

The lighting reflects the open, tranquil setting that defines the Canyon Ranch brand. Quaint, Japanese-style hanging lanterns decorate the fitting rooms. The ceiling flows through the space illuminated by gentle, pocketed lighting. "Lighting is by no means a dominant element in the space, but without much direct light, we managed to create some drama around the edge of the store," says Oller. "The lighting had to be subtle, because it essentially evokes the brand's calming spiritual aspects that we wanted the store to emit."

The exquisite architectural millwork and fixtures combine rectilinear patterns and natural wooden texture to add to the organic feel of the space. Las Vegas-based Collings Inc. manufactured and installed all of the Living Essentials interior work. "We brought MOVK's creative design to life," says David Collings, president and CEO of Collings Inc. "What was something beautiful on paper became something you could touch, feel and see—we just followed the lead and brought the final pieces of the puzzle together."

In the rear of the store, a circular wall containing a 13-ft.-high waterfall marks the "Zen" area—the visual magnet that pulls customers through the store. The learning center, where customers can buy educational health and wellness tools, and wood-paneled cash-wrap flank the Zen area on either side. The area is centered below a lit dome in the ceiling that narrates the space as a central feature. "The waterfall brings in both a tranquil sound and a natural texture into the space," Oller says. "Water coincides with restoration and peacefulness—it defines the Zen area as the heart of the store, both thematically and physically." ■■



Photos: Michael Pyle, Springdale, Utah

Top: The wellness approach follows customers into the fitting rooms, where flower petals augment the sensual look of charming lanterns and natural stone clothing hooks. Bottom: Wood-paneled wall coverings maintain the au natural theme of the wellness boutique.

PROJECT FILE

CANYON RANCH LIVING ESSENTIALS AT THE VENETIAN RESORT
Grand Canal Shoppes
Las Vegas

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ELECTRICAL ENGINEER

MSA Engineering
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GLASS

Bendhelm Architectural
Glass
New York

FABRICS

Donghia
New York

FLOORING

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Cartersville, Ga.

LIGHTING

Lightoller (display)
Fall River, Mass.

REGGIANI (display)

Milano, Italy
Architectural Cathode
Lighting Inc. (cold cathode)
Huntington Park, Calif.

MILLWORK

Collings Inc.
Las Vegas

UPHOLSTERY

Ann Baderlan Ltd.
New York

WALL PANELING

PermaGrain
Newtown Square, Pa.

WATERFALL

Harmonic Environments
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Information in the Project File is provided by the design firm and/or retailer.

Opposite: The "Zen" area features a circular, wood-paneled cashwrap, lit ceiling dome and 13-ft. wall-inset waterfall designed to attract customers to the rear of the store.

