

DESIGN WORKSHOPS

Wilkes Bashford
Stanford Shopping Center
Palo Alto, Ca 2001

30 right light



Left: A programmed control system balances daylight with artificial illumination to maintain a constant level of approximately 70 footcandles.

Middle: Wilkes Bashford's Palo Alto branch, a freestanding 10,000-sq.-ft. structure within the Stanford Shopping Center site, has full-height windows



Right: Illuminated columns are the store's signature design element.

right light 51



52 right light



Above: In the Wilkes Bashford store in Palo Alto, Calif., a faux clerestory was created by back-lighting frosted glass, rimmed by a track of MR16 fixtures.

Right: Feature lighting on the merchandise and illumination techniques for major architectural elements take the place of a separate ambient lighting system.



Timeless elegance

Wilkes Bashford in Palo Alto glows with an elegant contemporary patina

By Vilma Barr, New York Editor

Wilkes Bashford is a hands-on merchant with an impeccable fashion sense for up-market women's and men's apparel and accessories. His Palo Alto, Calif., branch store exudes a rich, warm patina created by artfully focused display lights and glowing, architecturally integrated columns. Together, they help to create an illusion of elegance and timeless style.

Bashford operates four other stores in the San Francisco and North Bay areas, all located in existing structures. But when the Stanford Shopping Center in Palo Alto, offered a new freestanding 10,000-sq.-ft. building to be constructed in a section of the mall's

surface parking area, he agreed to become the occupant and open his fifth store.

"We never had the opportunity to do a store from scratch," says Bashford, who founded the chain 38 years ago. "We carry the best-quality merchandise. For the store presentation, it is very important for us to present the same level of taste and good solid style," Bashford explains. Sleek, sleek and minimal interior design is not the Bashford image. Rather, he notes, a warm and classically elegant environment reflects the same high level of taste evident in the merchandise selection.

Bashford described the design process for the Palo

Alto store as "a complete collaboration" between the architects, Fee Munson Ebert, San Francisco, lighting designers Auerbach-Glasow, San Francisco, and the store's planning team. Bashford took an active role in the overall decision making. "I place a strong priority on lighting," Bashford asserts. Renovation of an existing space may limit the lighting options, he points out. For Palo Alto, the client and the designers took full advantage of the new construction potentials. "It was top-to-bottom design," Bashford says.

Originally developed by Stanford University, the Stanford Shopping Center has become a successful

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Scope: all built-in millwork, cabinetry, veneered panels and display shelving.

ddi April 2004

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destination center with a consistently high sales-per-sq.-ft. ratio. "There was no room to expand the existing structure, so they decided to erect a freestanding speculative building adjacent to Neiman Marcus that is quite visible from Sand Hill Road," says architect David Ebert of Fee Munson Ebert.

The building is faced with glass on three sides, permitting abundant daylight inside. "Customers love natural light," affirms Bashford. "It makes it easy for them to evaluate colors." Ebert and lighting designer Larry French of Auerbach-Glasow presented the concept for a programmable dimming system to

Bashford. "This was the first time Wilkes had to consider a control system for artificial illumination; his other stores have very little daylighting," Ebert says.

The lighting is controlled by a Strand Premiere System using an astronomic clock for most preset activation. It modifies the lighting level during day, taking into consideration the change of seasons and hours of daylight. The system's control sensors keep the interior level of light constant and can also be adjusted for special events held at the store. Lights go on 45 minutes before opening and turn off an hour after dark. Selected fixtures stay lit through the night.

The architectural plan of the store divides the space into thirds: women's, men's and a center area for the cashwrap. Fabricated of figured maple and topped with etched glass, the cashwrap serves as the visual anchor for the space. All casework and display fixtures were custom designed by the architects.

Full-height illuminated columns are the store's signature design element. They are positioned to frame the central space with glowing shafts. The shafts are opaque glass, accented by narrow horizontal and vertical bands of powder-finish steel.

"We had to solve the problem of getting the entire

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column evenly lit from top to bottom," says French. A solution was found with the application of 3M's CLE film over the inside of the glass. At the base of the column is a 250W PAR 38 spot lamp. To block the heat generated, French specified an Abrisra No. 102 infra-red Hot Mirror blocking filter from Lighting Services Inc. According to French, the system selected is cost efficient and easy to maintain. "It can be easily serviced by removing a panel at the base," he points out. Three-dimensional renderings demonstrate the sought-for effect convinced Bashford to invest in the light column's final development and fabrication.

Adding to the illusionary lighting techniques employed by French and Ebert is a false clerestory at the main entrance. Rather than opening to the outside to admit daylight, this clerestory is created by back lighting panels of lightly frosted glass. It is rimmed by a continuous recessed slot fitted with a customized track housing MR16 fixtures.

Ebert refers to the rectangular columns located around the selling floor as "fins that disappear into a lighted pocket. They act almost as stage elements that move people through the space," he says. Given less

than 6 in. to install illumination at the column top, French chose an Elliptipar fixture with an asymmetric throw, using 100 watt DC-based lamps.

French calls attention to the fact that there is no general ambient lighting in this store. "There is only accent lighting with MR16s on the merchandise, built-in lighting for the display cases, recessed lighting beamed on the cases and racks, and decorative lighting—like the light columns and the clerestory," he observes. An average of 70 vertical footcandles best complements the merchandise and the interior environment. Background materials within the store are in soft, classic colors; flooring flows from limestone to gray carpet.

French's reflective ceiling plan keeps the pattern of luminaires lined up in organized groups. "We didn't want the ceiling to be a mass of fixtures," he says.

Both French and Ebert characterize Bashford as a terrific client who respects new ideas. "He's a very savvy owner," Larry French adds. "He went into this project expecting a certain level of design and finishes, and he got the high-end approach he asked for." The client concurred: "We got the best store we were able to do." **ddi**

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project file

Wilkes Bashford
Stanford Shopping Center
Palo Alto, Calif.

OWNERS

Wilkes Bashford
375 Sutter Street
San Francisco

IN-HOUSE TEAM

Wilkes Bashford, CEO
Ross Hunter, director of merchandising

ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

Fee Munson Ebert
San Francisco
David Ebert, principal

LIGHTING DESIGN

Auerbach-Glasow
San Francisco
Larry French, principal in charge
Minda Morrison, designer and project manager
Kristin Tilley, assistant designer

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Hathaway-Dinwiddie
San Francisco

FLOORING

Tile West
San Rafael, Calif.

Constantine
Calhoun, Ga.

FURNITURE

Woodtech
Oakland, Calif.

LIGHTING

C.J. Lighting
Plainview, N.Y.

Con Tech Lighting
Northbrook, Ill.

Elliptipar
West Haven, Conn.

Flos
Ballerup, Denmark

HessAmerica
Gaffney, S.C.

Lighting Services Inc.
Stony Point, N.Y.

Lithonia
Coryers, Ga.

Modular
Pittsburg, Pa.

Starfire
Wood-Ridge, N.J.

Kurt Versen
Westwood, N.J.

Osram Sylvania
Danvers, Mass.

LIGHTING CONTROLS

Strand
Cypress, Calif.

Lutron
Clarksburg, Pa.

METALS, GLASS & SPECIAL FINISHES

De Vincenzi Metal
Brisbane, Calif.

MILLWORK

Design Workshops
Oakland, Calif.

PLASTIC LAMINATES

Nevamar
Odenton, Md.

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