

WALKING THE GREEN WALK

JGA creates an eco-friendly retail environment for Nature's Northwest



Nature's Northwest's flagship store in Portland, Ore., incorporates natural finishes on recycled and recyclable fixtures to create an earth-friendly, yet sophisticated retail environment.

Health and wellness may seem to be buzzwords of the 90s, but Nature's Northwest's flagship store in Portland, Ore., is putting its money where its mouth is. To create an eclectic, visually stimulating environment expressing Nature's Northwest's live-well philosophy, Southfield, Mich.-based JGA incorporated recycled and recyclable materials in an open-air market atmosphere that allows shoppers to find their individual paths to wellness.

The 42,000-square-foot facility houses on two floors just about everything one needs to live well: a food store, a pharmacy, a hair salon, a spa, an exercise and health education center, a floral shop, a gift store, home accessories and a deli-

cafe. Designing an environment for this diverse mix of products, however, was a challenge. To evoke a sense of community, the market hall entrance of the store presents "shops along a street," which allows customers to linger and explore. And the departments relying on convenient shopping patterns are grouped together and organized with structural elements. Throughout the facility, a varied palette of environmental graphics, such as murals, posters and slide projection, reinforces Nature's green philosophy.

According to Ken Nisch, JGA's president, the key to Nature's Northwest's design concept was that it wasn't just corporate positioning, it was a passion for everyone involved. He says, "They see the store as a pulpit from which to communicate to con-

sumers ways to walk more lightly on the earth." As such, the store doesn't just *try* to look environmentally friendly, it really *is*. Nisch adds, "We all agreed on the aesthetics and then found the greenest way possible to execute them."

For example, the flooring material is recycled wood; the tabletops are fabricated from recycled diapers and plastics; and the metal fixturing is lacquered rather than painted, making it 100 percent recyclable.

Additionally, the store's main structural columns are formed from compressed post-consumer wood, which means there is no use of endangered woods or rain-forest depletion. And most of the structural materials are left in their natural state, with no secondary finish. However,

Nisch notes it was sometimes difficult to find unfinished materials. "The industry is not completely set up to satisfy the needs of eco-friendly projects," he says.

To highlight the products, the lighting system employs a mix of halogens, HID lighting and natural lighting. Low ambient lighting focuses on certain products, while skylights allow plenty of natural light to shine through.

And, rather than including "decor for decor's sake," multimedia, demonstration areas and environmental graphics are used to talk about tree planting, water reclamation and other earth-friendly issues. Bulletin boards in the entrance allow visitors to suggest ways to improve the store.

Although the natural-food chain is currently completing three similar, smaller versions of the flagship store in the Portland area, plans for a roll-out are on hold, as Nature's Northwest was recently sold to Denver-based Wild Oats. But so far, shoppers are embracing the store concept, and Nisch says sales have exceeded the company's expectations.

Is this store setting the tone for future retail? Nisch says, "I think it's a trend-setting project. People have three criteria for choosing brands: the mythical element, the ethical element and the emotional exchange. They want to feel that the company is on their side, that they're getting back what they give." And for those searching for a balance between the good life and the healthy life, Nature's Northwest delivers.

DESIGN: Jon Greenberg & Associates (JGA Inc.), Southfield, Mich. — Ken Nisch, chairman; Julie Sabourin, director of client strategy; Kathi McWilliams, creative director; Brian Hurtienne, project manager; Mike Benencasa, senior designer; Susan Morgowicz, designer; Vicki Gilbertson, senior draftsman; Renae Hawley, color and material manager

STORE PLANNING: Marco Design Group, Northville, Mich. — Nicholas Giammarco, president; Julie Dugas, senior designer

VISUAL AND DECOR: Nature's Northwest

CLIENT: Nature's Northwest, Portland, Ore. Concept team: Stan Amy, president; Marcia Maynes, design/project manager; Lori Vollmer, environmental and visual brand expression; Irina Lorenzi, product brand manager; Cheryl Bottger, wellness manager; Tim O'Conner, food service and grocery merchandiser

ARCHITECTS: Robert Edson Swain & Associates, Seattle — Robert Swain and Kevin Richards (design architecture); Group Mackenzie, Portland, Ore. (architect of record/interior design) — Jeff Reaves,

principal; Celeste Warren, architect; Jason Miller and Wendell Mueller, associates

BRAND CONSULTANTS: Cato Consulting, London

ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION: Heery Intl., Portland, Ore. (construction management); Interface Engineering, Milwaukie, Ore. (engineering); R&H Construction, Portland, Ore. (general contractor); Group Mackenzie (structural engineering)

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS: Grey Matter Design, Portland; Commercial Design Systems, Wilsonville, Ore.

FIXTURES: Boden Store Fixtures, Portland (custom store fixtures); Kalberer Food Service Equipment, Portland (food service equipment); Kysor Warren, Calhoun, Ga. (refrigerated cases); Design Manufacturing, Vancouver (millwork); Wilsonart, Temple, Texas; Pionite Decorative Laminates, Auburn, Maine; Formica Corp., Cincinnati (plastic laminates); Plyboo, San Francisco; Smith and Fong Co., San Francisco (wood tops); Madix Store Fixtures, Terrell, Texas (gondola shelving)

FLOORING: Ardex, Coraopolis, Pa. (stained concrete); Pride Building Services, La Grande, Ore. (stain installation); Natural Cork Ltd. Co., Atlanta (cork); D-Lux Hardwood Floors, Portland (hardwood and cork installation); PermaGrain Products Inc., Newtown Square, Pa. (plank flooring); Patcraft Commercial, Dalton, Ga. and Lees Commercial Carpets, Greensboro, N.C. (carpet); Floor Factors, Portland (carpet installation); Ann Sacks, Portland, Pratt and Larsen, Portland and Dal Tile, Dallas (tile); Schonert & Associates, Portland (tile installation)

LANDSCAPING: Greenworks, Portland, Ore.

WALL TREATMENTS: Maharam, Hauppauge, N.Y. (wall covering); Don Rhyne Painting Co., Boring, Ore. (wall covering and paint installation); Northwest Window Works, Lynnwood, Wash. (windows)



Natural flooring coupled with an open-air market layout allows shoppers to pave their individual paths to wellness.