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ECO-FRIENDLY MEETS OPULENCE

AN APARTMENT COMPLEX GOES GREEN WITHOUT SACRIFICING LUXURY

BY SABY REYES-KULKARNI

Jennifer A. Banks, owner of Chicago-based Bella Maison Interior Design, realized she'd fallen into the perfect partnership when she was hired by M&R Development to custom-make all the furniture and casegoods for a luxury apartment building in Evanston, Illinois. "Tony Rossi Sr. and Tony Rossi Jr. of M&R are committed to progressive design," she says. "They have an appreciation and dedication to elegant urban residences that is unparalleled in the Midwest."

FEATURED COMPANY
BELLA MAISON
INTERIOR DESIGN

LOCATION
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

PROJECT TYPE
APARTMENTS

PROJECT NAME
CENTRAL STATION
LUXURY APARTMENTS

Such is seen through the project's use of high-end finishes like Italian mosaic tile in the cyber café, a French chandelier in the lobby, and custom furniture upholstered in mohair and silk fabric throughout the first floor. "Central Station," Banks points out, "is not only an eco-friendly, energy-efficient green building, but it also features refined use of materials, high-end finishes, sophistication of color, and strong silhouettes"—all of which suit the culturally refined personality of the surrounding community (which is home to Northwestern University).

Throughout her career, Banks has focused mainly on commercial properties because, as she explains, she is drawn to "the challenge of meshing together the complexity involved with large-scale projects." At 80 units, and with common areas such as the cyber café, fitness room, and 10,000 square feet of commercial space on the first floor, the four-story Central Station certainly fit that challenge. The fact that her tastes aligned with the Rossis served as an added bonus.

"At Central Station," Banks says, "we wanted to establish both comfort and opulence." She points back to the cyber café's Italian mosaic tile as most emblematic of the overall design aesthetic that she and the Rossis were aiming for. With its "juxtaposition of polished marble, honed granite, and glass—coupled with its unique shape—the tile sets the tone for the progressive design character of the entire building." **wZ**



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Though the typical construction project can be "filled with logistical nightmares," as Willow Electric manager Mark Matoga says, Central Station Luxury Apartments was completed without a hitch. "From a standpoint of an electrical distributor, it is very refreshing to work with a designer with such commitment, perfection, and style," he says. "Jennifer Banks [of Bella Maison] also has an easygoing nature that made this project fun." Matoga's favorite element is the modern lighting design. "Jennifer and her design studio moved apartment living into a whole new level," he says. "The modern and functional design is a breath of fresh air."

