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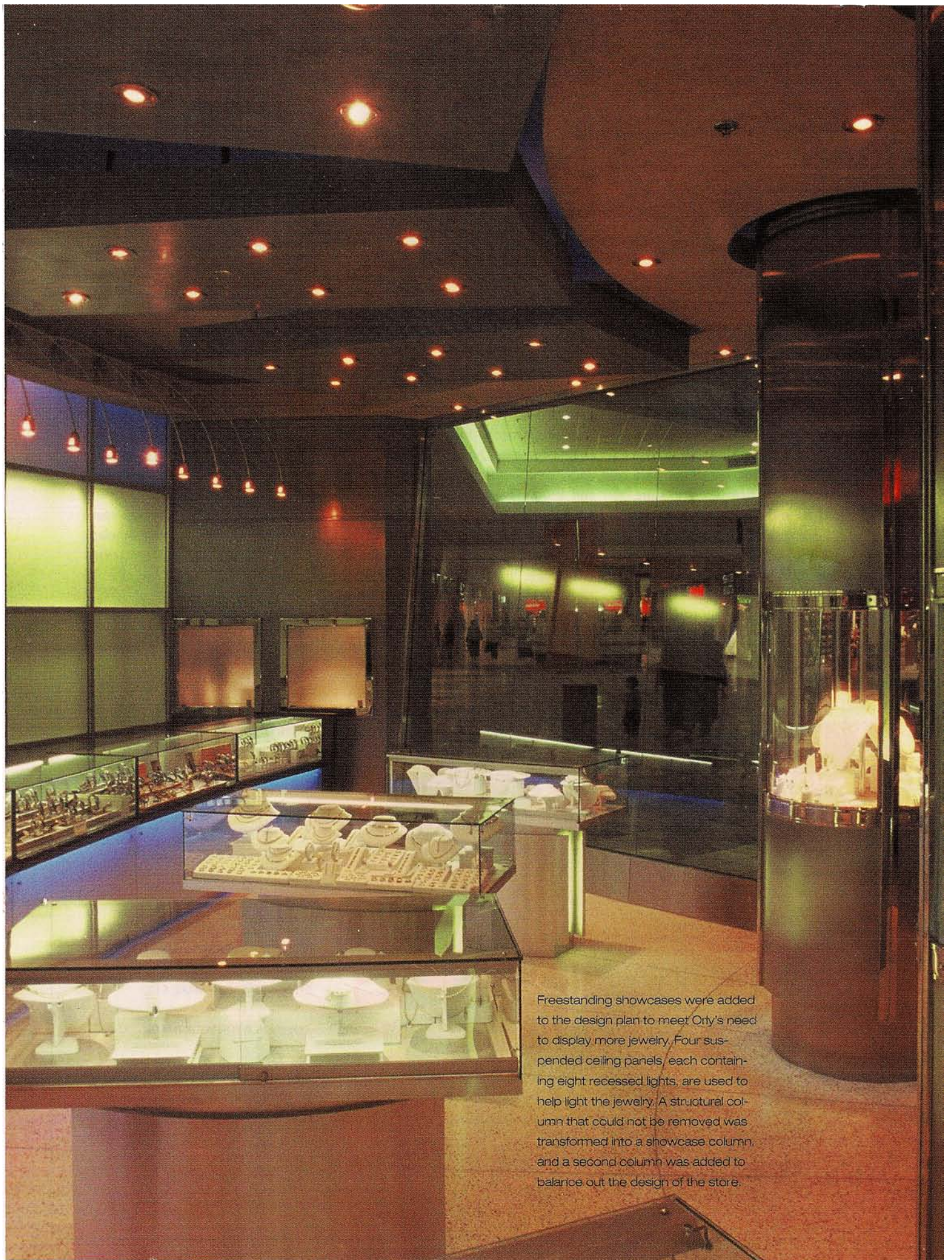
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SAFE AND SECURE

BIG IDEAS FOR
SMALL SPACES

BUYING BETTER
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DIAMONDS:
THE FASHION,
THE SCIENCE,
THE FUTURE



Freestanding showcases were added to the design plan to meet Orly's need to display more jewelry. Four suspended ceiling panels, each containing eight recessed lights, are used to help light the jewelry. A structural column that could not be removed was transformed into a showcase column, and a second column was added to balance out the design of the store.



The curved back wall, which stands nearly 12 feet high and rises above the store's ceiling, is made of sandblasted glass illuminated from the rear. Above the wall, 24 lights extend outward on individual coils to light the showcases below.

says. "We treated it as a diamond shape. That diamond shape became very evident in the beginning."

And that shape dictated much of the design process.

"We were thinking of diamonds and the different cuts of diamonds, and we incorporated the design elements—jewelry counters, lighting, and treatments—with the same line of thought and direction as the diamond shape," he says.

According to Gianfagna, Orly is a midrange to high-end jeweler. The store specializes in European designed jewelry and brand-name watch lines such as Baume & Mercier, TAG Heuer, and Omega. Its lowest-end watch lines are Gucci and Tissot, he says.

Smolens described three challenges that his firm faced when designing the store:

- The first problem was the small store/large storefront combination. The challenge was to make the store secure using design elements to limit customer access, while still giving it an inviting but "more exclusive look," Smolens says.

- The second problem was dealing with the unusual ceiling heights of 14,

15, and 20 feet while trying to match the interior architecture of the mall—including the mall tenant design criteria that demanded very high storefronts. "We had to conceive a storefront that was going to marry the architecture," he says.

- Third, Orly wanted to have a private area for customers that doubled as an office.

Another criterion was that the mall store should have the same overall look and feel as the Orly store in downtown Montreal, even though their footprints are entirely different. Finally, the design had to stand out among the other stores in the mall.

Fanning out. The five-person design team immediately focused on what Smolens described as "the power of the corner location." They created a fan-like layout and used lighting, metals, and other design elements to establish what he called "the rhythm of the design." The pivotal focal point is an Art Deco-style angled corner column with a display window, crowned with a Baume & Mercier clock.

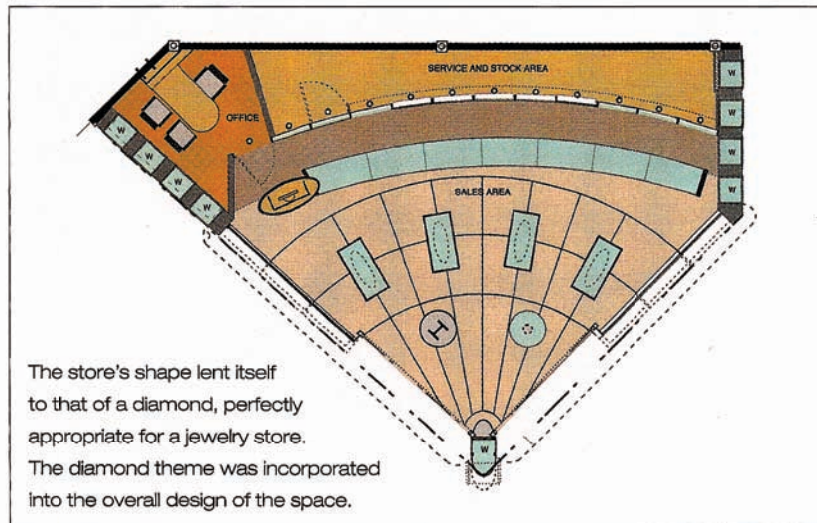
"Every store element branches off that corner column point, from the radiating lines of the terrazzo floor pattern, to the positioning of the floor

display units, to the lines separating each counter at the back and reaching each of the aluminum mullions of the curved, back-lit, sandblasted glass wall," he says. "The suspended ceiling elements and lighting follow the layout pattern exactly."

The center column sits in the middle of the entrance. On each side of the entrance is a ceiling-high clear glass wall, filtered by 5% to minimize the reflection of the other mall stores. The glass wall gives way to two metal-cast walls with eight small display windows (four on each side) housing jewelry exclusive to Orly stores.

The Orly sign on the façade above the two sides of the store is made of metal and backlit with white light behind glass. The effect resembles a movie marquee.

"The Orly sign is not lit, but the backdrop is," Gianfagna says. "That



The store's shape lent itself to that of a diamond, perfectly appropriate for a jewelry store. The diamond theme was incorporated into the overall design of the space.

was an amazing achievement of Dimitri and his team."

Less is more. Few materials and finishes were chosen for the project. Everything in the store was custom-

made. Terrazzo flooring was used because it accentuated the diamond-shaped entrance. Each floor line coincided with individual counter units. The remaining materials were limited to clear and sandblasted glass, stainless steel, and African wenge wood, which resembles walnut.

The curved back wall, which stands nearly 12 feet high and rises above the store's ceiling, is made of sandblasted glass illuminated from the rear. The wall is sectioned off in squares, and some of the squares are used for advertisements.

Gianfagna explains that Orly likes to place a lot of its jewelry out in the showcases so customers have a variety from which to select. "When the client looks inside the counter, he is overjoyed at the pieces of jewelry everywhere," he says. "Like toys for adults."

To accommodate this, two types of custom-built showcases were used. One group of seven showcases runs just in front of the illuminated back wall with the same curve as the wall. In addition, there are four freestanding showcases.

"It was challenging, but we had to have a minimum amount of display merchandise," Smolens says. "That's why we added the floor units."

The staff at Orly is trained to sell



from in front of the counter, and the design had to take this into consideration. "Greeting people from behind the counter is a little bit cold," says Gianfagna. "Greeting people from in front of the counter is friendlier and not as aggressive. We did some studies, and our clients like that a lot."

Smolens adds, "They become more like consultants and less like salespeople. It makes the atmosphere a little more relaxed."

The design team dealt with the structural column by incorporating it as part of the overall design and making it a decorative display column just like the pivotal column.

"The column in the middle of the store holds the junction of the existing section of the roof and the newly expanded roof—we had to leave this. Plus, we had this rain-water spout. What we did was design a decorative column that was large enough to contain both of them."

To balance out the look, the design team added a third showcase column inside the store. The front pivotal column and the two columns inside the store are consistent with the triangular or diamond-shaped footprint.

Creating sparkle. Like the jewelry, the diamond-shaped store had to sparkle, which led to some innovative lighting designs and techniques. Above the illuminated back wall, 24 lights extend outward on individual coils and bend down toward the showcases below. To create the desired effect while making sure the showcases below were properly lit, full-scale models were created, then prototypes. For the individual fixtures, MR-16 50W halogen lights were chosen.

The back wall is lit horizontally with three different shades of lights, beginning with blue at the top, a yellowish light in the center, and then a green shade near the bottom. The showcase stands are lit from behind with the same blue tint seen on the top of the wall.

Four suspended ceiling panels are used to provide light for the four freestanding showcases, and each panel has eight recessed lights. It was a compromise solution, Smolens says.

"We didn't put the lighting exactly where we wanted it," he says. "We increased the lighting intensity of the bulbs. Normally we would place three lights in a center position. Instead, we put eight lights in a different formation [rows of two] to give them an equal look."

Recessed lighting also is used throughout the store to complement the design, and fluorescent lighting is used inside the cases.

Security. The entryways between the pivotal column and the clear glass walls on either side are somewhat narrower than they could have been, but this design was deliberate: It was intended to limit the flow of traffic while still giving the store an inviting, open appearance. However, after the store

opened, the designers had to rethink that particular idea—some customers were bumping into the exterior glass walls thinking they were part of the entrance. The solution: Sandblast the "Orly" name into the glass, just large enough for people to notice that it *is* glass.

Orly specified that 75% of the jewelry in the showcases had to be stored each night, and the work had to be completed (by three to five employees) within 45 minutes of the store's closing time. To make closing and storage as efficient as possible, the design team bolted the showcases to the floor and provided secure drawer space beneath the showcases.

The store vault is situated behind the illuminated back wall. Because a single wall separates two stores from the Orly store, the design team had to reinforce that wall so the store—and vault—would be less vulnerable to entry from the adjacent stores. The showcase windows on the sides of the store are made of solid steel and chrome-plated, bulletproof glass. Hidden cameras record everyone who looks at the window displays.

"The idea was to make the store look very approachable while making it secure," Smolens says.

With the little bit of space that remained in the back of the store, the design team, at Orly's request, put in a private area for their best customers to view merchandise. This area doubles as an office as well as a small repair area; major repairs are outsourced. The store also has a small, modern reception podium in one corner in front of the illuminated wall.

In the end, the project achieved many of its original goals: being an identifiable space, taking advantage of traffic, combining an inviting feeling with an aura of exclusivity, making the store inviting yet secure, and properly enhancing the growing Orly brand. A "top of mind" survey shows Orly as one of the top three identifiable stores in the mall.

The store design also received raves from DSD group design peers in the design and architecture industries, winning an "Award of Merit" at the 2003 ISP/VM+SD International Competition in the category of "specialty store under 1,500 sq. ft." The store also received a 2003 Canadian Shopping Center Award in the category of "retail stores under 1,500 sq. ft."

But most importantly, the design helps to attract the right clientele.

"We wanted something that had a good punch to it but wasn't overpowering, something that would be recognizable at every angle," Gianfagna says. "We wanted something subdued, yet eye catching. It is a little bit of a trick to do something like that ... and Dimitri had the eye to do it." ♦

ate a beautiful, efficient, secure, and inviting retail environment.

Location wins out. The store's location is its greatest asset in terms of attracting mall customers. Situated right at the spot where the mall expanded, it's central to two of the mall's main entrances and sits at the edge of a large atrium space that was built as part of the mall's expansion. It's the one central area the majority of shoppers pass through. Orly could have chosen from a number of other sites, but none had the same potential to attract pedestrians.

"We had two or three areas that were available, but we liked this because it's the first jewelry store between us and the new area," says Fabio Gianfagna, regional operations director of Orly. "The grand opening was done in front of our store. People



A small reception podium offers aesthetic appeal as well as functionality.

coming into the mall would actually be starting in our section. They will have to pass by our store."

"This particular mall is one of the largest malls in Quebec (in fact, it is considered the largest in the province) and also the most important as far as sales per square foot generated," adds Dimitri Smolens, president of DSD groupe design, which designed the Orly space. "It had expanded with 60

to 80 more stores ... and they made a huge central court skylight the size of a football field. You almost cannot visit this huge mall of 300 stores without passing by [Orly]."

Transforming the triangle. But what made the site ideal for customer traffic made it a challenge in terms of design. Its triangular shape and its position at the exact spot where the original mall ends and the addition begins presented some problems. The ceiling has three different heights. A structural column, with a rainwater drainpipe, is located near the store's center. And while the overall space—just 992 sq. ft.—is small, it has 80 linear feet of frontage.

The triangular shape of the space was one of the first items that Smolens and his team tackled. "It is a corner location with the back cut off," he

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