

Digitally Printed Door Design Draws in Moviegoers

A Hollywood movie theatre offers some cultural enlightenment with custom printed laminates.

By Lisa Whitcomb

Begun in 2001, the \$615-million-dollar Hollywood and Highland project is a unique entertainment complex built adjacent to the renowned Grauman's Chinese theatre. The project is a major undertaking, conducted in an effort to revamp Hollywood and make it the mecca for movie studios, starlets and tourists that it once was.

AUDITORIUM 1

ICE AGE



Custom print laminate designs like the doors shown above convey the appearance of inlays.
Photo courtesy of Heliphoto.



The VIP lounge utilizes the soothing circular design as well.
Photo courtesy of Heliphoto.

The Zen-like graphic appears throughout the theatre.
Photo courtesy of Heliphoto.



The new complex houses the 3,500-seat Kodak Theatre — the new permanent home of the Academy Awards, a 640-room Renaissance hotel, a 25,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom, multiple restaurants, designer shops and the new Mann's Chinese 6 theatre.

Behr Browsers Architects of Westlake Village, CA, designed the new Mann's Chinese 6, as well as the renovations that were completed next door at Grauman's Chinese theatre. The new theatre is "very upscale and its design was driven by Grauman's Chinese themes," says Andrew Althaus, AIA who is the project architect and director of operations at Behr Browsers.

"It was a really special project, one that required us to bring the interior up a level from what we would normally put in a theatre," he says. "Since the Academy Awards will take place in a theatre right next door, the owner of Mann's asked that we make the interior more elegant. To do this we used a lot of brass, glass and granite."

In keeping with the Asian influences from Grauman's, the architectural firm came up with a circular design for the interior auditorium doors that is indicative of a Zen-like symbol. However, Behr Browsers soon found that bringing its design to fruition was not going to be as easy as it first thought.

Althaus says Behr Browsers was looking to use a higher-end custom-cut material. "Our initial concept was to use multiple laminates that were laser cut, routed and inlaid. We thought about doing an inlay with two different types of laminate, plastic for the door skin and metal for the circular design," he says.

But the general contractor said he had concerns and could not warranty the doors. His misgivings were based on the assumption that the doors would receive high usage and they stood a good chance of delaminating under the accelerated wear and tear of a movie theatre door, Althaus adds. "So we started investigating alternatives and that is when I remembered that we had received a presentation from Nevamar on its new custom laminate program. I remembered that the program could do things like logos and graphics," he recalls.

So Behr Browsers approached Nevamar with the door design request and Nevamar took on the challenge. It worked with the architects to create the appearance of an inlaid, intricate design. Working with Behr Browsers' color schemes, Nevamar came up with custom colors for the design, so it would match the deep red and brass tones found throughout the theater.

Digital print technology is used on the high-pressure laminates to reproduce a photographic image, logo or geometric design onto a single sheet. According to Linda Kerechek, Nevamar Brand Manager, "Custom laminates are visually appealing and can provide designers with a way to customize an interior space in a cost-effective manner." In addition to door skins, laminates can be used as wall cladding, signage tabletops, displays, seating and more, she adds.

Althaus says his firm uses laminates a lot when it does multiplex theatres because of the high abuse to the surfaces. "We wanted to maintain durability and that is why we went with a laminate," notes Althaus. "That was one thing we were looking for when we were constructing the doors."

The custom printed laminates were laid up on a solid wood core, and the pattern was applied to both sides of the auditorium doors. All six auditoriums have the doors, two have double doors with the Zen-like circular design complete, and the others have single doors with the circular design halved, Althaus says. **FX**

PROJECT NOTES

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Door Fabricator: Whittier Wood Products
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KEY SOURCE

Custom Printed HPL:
Nevamar Company
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(800) 638-4380
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