

Las Vegas Dream Team: Designer+Fabricator+Material Redefine Design

3D laminates deliver stunning visuals without breaking the budget.

By Kenn Busch

Designer meets fabricator. Discovers new material. Dreams up revolutionary designs. Creates stunning interiors (even by Las Vegas standards). Meets tight budgets. Wins national awards. Lands big fun jobs. Repeats.

This is the story of Lori Taplett, or part of it, at least. Well established in Las Vegas as a senior designer of her own firm, Zócalos Interiors, Taplett is now also sharing her unbridled design enthusiasm with Foliot Furniture as that company increases its appeal to the high-end hospitality market.

Her slate of recent projects is truly a list of who's who: MGM Grand, Planet Hollywood's Miracle Mile stores, Grand Crown Resorts, the new Edgewater Hotel and Casino, the Stratosphere update, etc.

What's her secret?

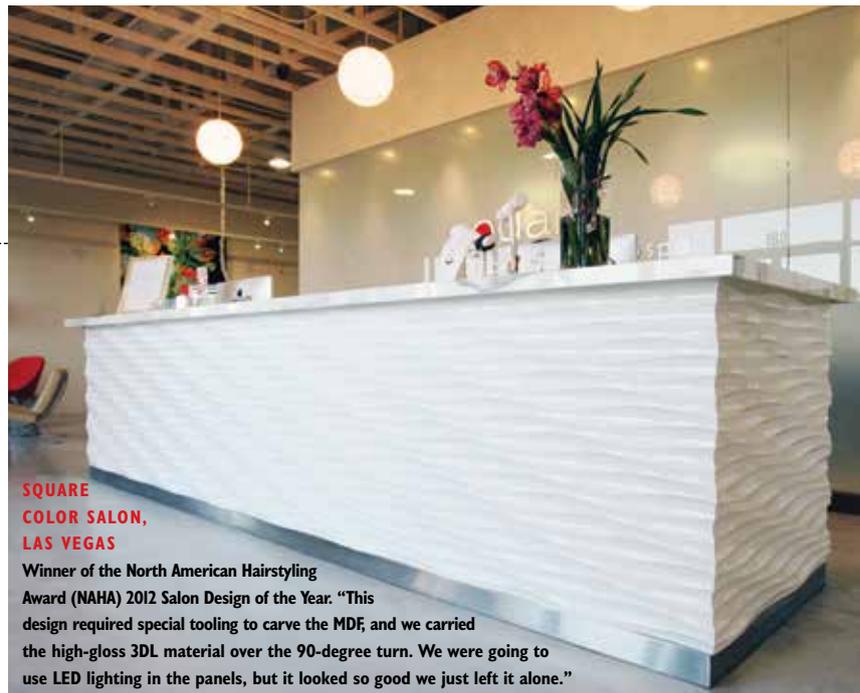
"I was approached eight or nine years ago by a fabricator who created 3D laminated panels and components out of intricately carved MDF, and I just flipped out over the possibilities. It was such a leap forward for the industry—deeply textured panels with such durable, vibrant surfaces.

"I started integrating them into many of my projects because no one else was working with them. They gave my clients stunning visuals and easy maintenance without breaking the budget."

Over the years, Taplett inspired the fabricator, Soelberg Industries in Orem, Utah, to push the limits by carving ever bolder designs into the MDF panel cores. Soelberg, in turn, worked closely with 3DL supplier SSI North America to source materials in ground-

RIGHT LAS VEGAS CHOCOLATE SHOP, PLANET HOLLYWOOD'S MIRACLE MILE STORES

"We really wanted to theme it out, so the cash wrap looks like a huge chocolate bar with the little rectangles, and the storefront looks like chocolate is melting off of it."



SQUARE COLOR SALON, LAS VEGAS

Winner of the North American Hairstyling Award (NAHA) 2012 Salon Design of the Year. "This design required special tooling to carve the MDF, and we carried the high-gloss 3DL material over the 90-degree turn. We were going to use LED lighting in the panels, but it looked so good we just left it alone."

breaking colors, woodgrains, and gloss levels.

"We produce to order, building to the designer's specifications, so there doesn't have to be any fabrication on site," says Steve Soelberg. "SSI is a great resource for us because they offer a wide variety of colors and designs in small, quick-ship quantities. This helps us better work with designers like Lori because we can keep pricing and lead times down."

"Contractors win these projects by having the lowest bids," says Taplett. "Sadly, the budget for the interior is what always gets compromised. But that doesn't mean it has to look that way. I've earned the title VE [value-engineering] queen, because I find ways to make the project great within budget. And people love the texture!

"For price and quality, you can't touch Soelberg," Taplett notes. "Until now, they've been my best-kept secret. We haven't had a single complaint; the durability has been incredible. And their willingness to invest in their processes to realize my ideas makes us a great team."

The designs shown in this feature were realized with SSI's Pentadecor® 3D laminates, which are increasingly found in commercial, retail and healthcare environments.

For more information, visit www.ssinorthamerica.com.

