

SGIA Imaging In Action



Adding a Color Zest to Interior Spaces

When a Mexican restaurant was slated to open in a trendy shopping village in Denver, Colorado, interior designers wanted to add spicy colors and unique designs that reflected a Mexican point of view without using tired clichés. They also wanted cost-effective substrates to pull off the effect.

To achieve saturated colors that would contribute to a warm and authentic atmosphere, the design group chose among its many materials acrylic panels — a popular substrate in today's interior decorating market. Acrylic panels give an appearance and effect similar to glass but at a lower material cost, with fewer handling and printing issues.

The broker who worked with the design team turned to a digital print shop in Golden, Colorado to print various color patterns on the panels. The shop, and SGIA member, would need to print roughly eight vibrant colors on more than 225 clear acrylic panels that were .63-cm (.25-inch) thick. These panels would later be strategically installed throughout the restaurant.

Before printing, the shop workers did several rounds of color profiling in order to match colors on the substrate with the design team's specifications. These colors included lime green, orange, red, yellow and orange.

The panels — ranging from 15-cm-by-30-cm (6-inch-by-12-inch) to 1.2-m-by-2.4-m (4-foot-by-8-foot) — were then placed on a flatbed printer using UV inks, and printed with a reverse color pattern. The process allowed parts of the panel to remain clear so that light could pass through and highlight graphics, such as butterflies and birds.

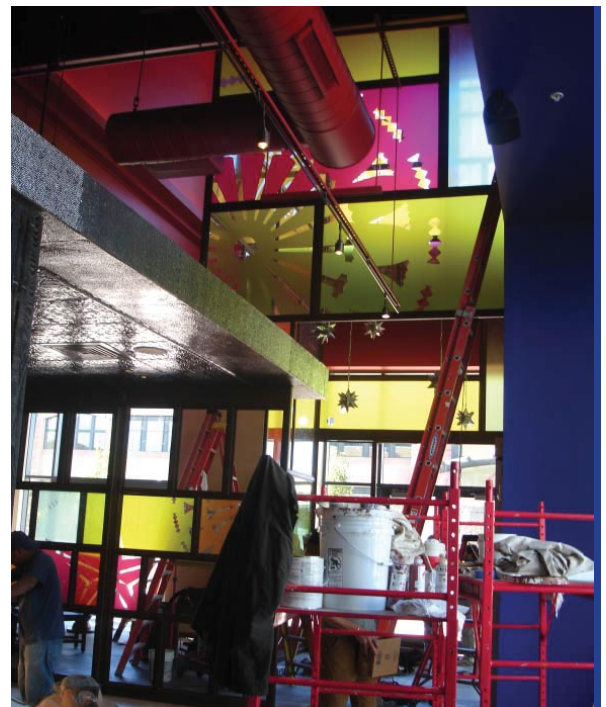
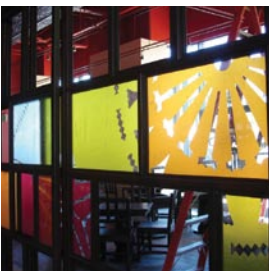
While the printing procedure went smoothly, there were several variables in the project that kept the print shop staff on their toes. Because of the job's high material volume, the shop worked in a "just-in-time" mode. The workers accepted the acrylic material only right before each print job because the facility didn't have the space to store the entire volume of substrates ahead of time.

Once a panel was printed, it was immediately sent to the restaurant for installation. The "just-in-time" mode required the print shop to be flexible in its schedule and allow for glitches that would come up, which included late deliveries from the panel supplier.

Those glitches in turn meant the restaurant would have to alter its schedule as well. To keep the client on track, the print shop devoted most of its time, effort and resources toward the project for a solid two weeks, with constant communication going between the broker, shop and restaurant.

Additionally, installers had to juggle their work around construction crews who were working nonstop to finish before the grand opening. At two weeks before the open date, as many as 50 construction workers and installers worked alongside each other. It's a common situation for specialty imagers who provide interior services for new buildings.

Despite the material handling challenges, the final outcome of the panels was a bright and holistic color scheme that could only be achieved with new digital imaging technology.



SGIA member New Vista Image (Golden, Colorado), a digital print facility, provided the acrylic printing for La Sandia Mexican Kitchen and Tequila Bar in Denver through Brand ID, a broker also located in the Denver area. For more information about the company, visit New Vista's Web site at www.newvistaimage.com, or call 303.216.1549.

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