

Shopping Around

A retail-property sign roundup

By [Steve Aust](#) (01-05-2009)

Jones Sign

Jones Sign (Green Bay, WI), which, with an expansion slated at presstime for December completion, operates a more than 200,000-sq.-ft., sign-manufacturing facility in Green Bay, as well as facilities in Indiana, Georgia, Connecticut and Nevada. The company offers design, permitting, fabrication and installation services, among others. According to Todd Patrickus, a Jones executive VP, mall and lifestyle-center signage represented approximately 40% of the company's portfolio in 2008, but he anticipates a significant downturn in 2009.

The company recently completed such a project for the Village of Merrick Park, a tony, mixed-use development in Coral Gables, FL. Opened in 2002, the center spans more than 1 million sq. ft. and features such premium retailers as Neiman-Marcus and Nordstrom, with such high-end, complementary boutiques as Juicy Couture and Gucci.



Green Bay, WI-based Jones Sign Co. fabricated a sign program for Coral Gables, FL's Village of Merrick Park, an upscale shopping development that features Neiman-Marcus, Gucci and other high-end vendors. The 30-sign program comprises formed Lexan® polycarbonate faces encased within waterjet-cut, welded-aluminum fixtures. Todd Patrickus, a Jones project manager, said installing the signs required verifying no utility lines or other surprises lurked underground.

Jones Sign worked directly for General Growth Properties (GGP), Chicago, the property owner. Sussman/Prejza, a Culver City, CA-based EGD firm, developed the design based on Jones' construction specifications. Jones developed construction drawings using SolidWorks® 3-D software and refined Sussman/Prejza's original design intent using CorelDraw® design software.

In keeping with Miami's stature as a U.S. epicenter of art deco architecture in the United States, Jones built the signs with the simulated-wrought-iron frames and other accents that reflect Miami's distinctive style. The shop created a filigree pattern and used a five-axis, Par waterjet cutter to create it on 4 x 10-ft. sheets of 1-in.-thick aluminum.

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To complement its sign program for Merrick Park, Jones also fabricated 70 lantern fixtures. After creating a filigree pattern, the shop used a five-axis, Par waterjet cutter to shape the pieces, which encased incandescent bulbs.

Next, fabricators welded two, waterjet-cut pieces of aluminum together, and then to a CNC-routed, 3/8-in.-thick, flat aluminum bar that serves as the sign's encasement. Jones Sign painted the aluminum pieces with Matthews acrylic-polyurethane paint. Patrickus said the process was very labor-intensive.

For the sign face, Jones Sign capped the 30-sign program with formed Lexan® polycarbonate faces, which ranged in size from 5 x 5 ft. to 6 x 25 ft., that the shop vacuum formed and decorated the plastic with WHAT BRAND? cast vinyl. Jones internally lit the signs with GELcore red LEDs.

To complement the environmental-graphics program, Jones produced 70 lanterns that comprise various geometric shapes. The shop produced them with a waterjet-cutting process similar to how it fabricated the signs, and installed incandescent bulbs to bathe the Village of Merrick Park's walkways with cool-white light.

Though Patrickus found the project very rewarding, it wasn't without challenges. He said, "The most difficult part of the process was working with the Coral Gables permitting authority. "They kept interpreting a sign code inconsistently – the engineer and city officials kept changing the standards. We even had to use a permit-expediting service. "

Also, the sign frames and lantern's ornate patterns required a very exacting fabrication process. And, finally, you never know what underground utilities or other surprises you're going to find when you start digging. We had to work closely with GGP to make sure we built signs in secure areas."