

MULTI-HOUSING NEWS

 PRINT THIS

Powered by  Clickability

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Q&A with Adrienne Faulkner: Multifamily Properties Sell with Design-Driven Marketing *Published: June 12, 2008*

Adrienne Faulkner (*pictured*) is the founder of Dallas-based Faulkner Design Group. Her passion for design is rightly inherited – her grandfather, architect George L. Dahl, FAIA, was the creator of Dallas' famed 1936 Fair Park Centennial Expo. She is also the president of Architectural – Images, an art company showcasing Dahl's artwork.

Faulkner has completed work on more than 600 projects since 1991, and currently works on 40 projects annually from Manhattan and the Canadian provinces to Santa Monica and Los Angeles.

She is a registered interior designer with the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners and an Allied Member of the American Society of Interior Designers.

Faulkner talks to MHN's Online News Editor Anuradha Kher about multifamily design trends, the changes she's seen and whether her grandfather's legacy has been good or bad for her career.

MHN: How have multifamily design trends evolved since 1991?

Faulkner: Since 1991, we have seen a complete transformation with regards to design, due to technology, the Internet, and access by the masses to designer products. This has been most notably recognized in the evolution of large retail chains carrying designer fixtures. Brands like Kohler have bought up specialty designer brands like Ann Sacks Tile & Stone. Home Depot Expo and Restoration Hardware are outlets found across the United States that give the consumer access to all the names that used to be only found through the use of a designer. Target has Phillippe Starck designing teapots among many other items for sale to the masses.

Today's consumers care about design, from multifamily residential units to luxury bedding offered by four- and five-star hotel chains to the labels they wear.

MHN: What are the most prominent multifamily design trends right now?

Faulkner: Gaming rooms (with Wii and X-Box) regardless of the demographics, wireless Internet access throughout the property, and touch screen kiosks for information in leasing/sales areas. For units, we have been pushing 36-in. continuous countertops in kitchens and opening up the kitchen to living areas.



Flexibility in living spaces is key, with many people working out of their homes having a variety of different needs and uses for their personal space. Continuous hard-surface flooring throughout the living areas and sometimes even in bedrooms is happening all over, as is the trend away from mini blinds/verticals to solar shades especially in more urban-type buildings. The hard-surface flooring is driven by the trend to want “clean living space”. Sustainability is here to stay as well, so the drive to build and design buildings that are right and tight will be driven more by the consumer than the developers, especially as costs for electricity and water continue to rise.

MHN: What is the importance of designs in multifamily buildings?

Faulkner: Design-driven marketing sells. From the moment a consumer sees the elevation to the moment they open the front door, we want them to want to be there and stay there. We want to exceed their expectations and continue to deliver. So, even more than the aesthetics of a beautiful building, lush landscaping, and gorgeous finishes (these are the obvious surface items), there must be good, tight architecture and construction, functionality and flow in public areas as well as in units, and maintenance needs to be consistent.

MHN: How do you get inspiration while working on designs for multifamily buildings?

Faulkner: I get inspiration from all around me&hellipfrom restaurants to hotels to gardens to homes. I have traveled extensively around the world since I was 15 and have been inspired by our ultimate creator in the jungles of Africa and the islands of the Caribbean. Yet, I am brought to tears by the man-made wonders as well&hellipAngkor Wat, Taj Mahal and the architecture in Paris.

MHN: What do you dislike about designing a multifamily project?

Faulkner: I dislike that we don’t typically have the budget to do some of the details I would like. I strongly feel that if more attention was given by the developer to drive team work in the pre-planning phase, we would accomplish proper budgeting parameters and team value engineering decisions could be made before a project starts construction. There is also a tendency for the general contractors to pay attention to design drawings late in the game. Lead times are longer today and when these are not paid attention to, it puts undue stress and strain on the design team. Typically there are inadequate allowances available for these finish items that are installed toward the end of the project.

MHN: Is your grandfather’s legacy good or bad for you professionally?

Faulkner: Actually, for the first 10 years that I was in business I did not disclose who my grandfather was. I believed that it was important for me to make my start on my own merits, rather than garnering business or attention based on his accomplishments. In the last six years, as I have become more and more involved and interested in the work that he did, I find that his passion and dedication continue to inspire me in the work that I do, and the relationships I cultivate.

Links referenced within this article

Find this article at:

http://www.multihousingnews.com/multihousing/content_display/industry-news/e3iaba831a787b1157974d6b2aea24b83eb



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Uncheck the box to remove the list of links referenced in the article.

© 2008 VNU eMedia Inc. All rights reserved.