



Orange-Kissed

Amid the interactive and high-tech environment of the **Mall of Millenia** in Orlando are groves of orange topiaries. Not to be mistaken for the orange-juice-making kind, these one-of-a-kind steel art trees were created by NatureMaker (Carlsbad, Calif.).

"It was the perfect application because Orlando was once the orange capital of the world," says Gary Hanick, co-founder and president of NatureMaker, which has designed and installed its steel works in places such as Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, Chasen's Restaurant in Beverly Hills and the Los Angeles Airport.

Tapped by JPRA Architects (Farmington Hills, Mich.) for the mall project, Hanick's team of artists created 16 9-foot trees for a winter garden in the mall's rotunda and a dozen 12-foot trees for the food court. Each tree sits atop a pedestal and is carefully designed not to obstruct signage and lighting elements inside the mall.

Hanick says designers took more than a year to complete the mall project, starting by creating the steel structures, applying a proprietary medium that bonds to the frames, and then relying on artists to sculpt, paint and scenically age the structures. Oranges and foliage were also created to complete the Floridian arboretum.

Hanick says bringing the outdoors inside to a place like Mall of Millenia helps humanize the environment and give shoppers a respite from the hustle and bustle of the mall.

"It creates part of the identity for the shopping center," Hanick says. "Most shoppers just walk by thinking the trees grew there naturally." ☺

Client: The Forbes Co., Southfield, Mich. - Nate Forbes, Sid Forbes, owners; Rob Peters, director of store planning

Design: JPRA Architects, Farmington Hills, Mich. - Greg Tysowski, Eileen Devine, senior design associates