

Orchard Supply Hardware's prototype store shows the way with signage and graphics

ORIGINALLY FOUNDED as a grower's cooperative in 1931, the San Jose, Calif.-based Orchard Supply Hardware now operates more than 80 stores in California. The chain's latest prototype received two awards in A.R.E.'s 2010 Design Awards—an outstanding merit in the specialty store category and a special award for best in-store communication.

A collaborative team including Southfield, Mich.-based design and brand strategy firm JGA, OSH's in-house design team, and D|Fab, a décor and graphics design and fabrication company based in Madison Heights, Mich., was responsible for the new prototype design.

To make it easier for customers to navigate the 48,000-square-foot store and find what they are looking for, the JGA designers organized the store in a series of "neighborhoods," zones focused on Indoors, Outdoors, and Hardware & Tools.

The zones are reinforced through décor, color blocking, finishes, and clusters of fixtures anchored by 15-foot-tall pylon elements. Painted bead board materials and golden colors are used throughout the Indoors area, while galvanized and corrugated metals and a leafy green palette identify the garden area. Brick-red details and raw, construction-grade OSB set apart the Hardware & Tools zone.

GRAPHICS SHOW THE WAY

D|Fab was brought in at an early stage to further develop JGA's design concepts, along with engineering and fabrication of the store's décor and graphic elements, including departmental graphics, wayfinding and directory signage, and sculptural elements that both communicate and evoke a sense of OSH's history and heritage.

The pylons, tall partition elements positioned near endcaps throughout the store, serve as beacons in OSH's different "neighborhoods." Because the stores are located in California, structural elements, such as



Focus on Elements

- A classic truck, reminiscent of those owned by the original co-op members, serves as an entry promotional area merchandising prop for seasonal displays, with orchard crates used as merchandising tools.
- Lozier Corp., based in Omaha, Neb., manufactured raw steel fixtures with a clear powdercoat finish for a natural, authentic feel within the space.
- Centiva, based in Florence, Ala., provided a rustic oak plank flooring pattern in three colorations; a random stripe pattern helps define the focal or gathering areas of the store.
- Wilsonart laminates, which are sold in the store, were specified to further illustrate the versatility of the product.

the tall pylons, were engineered to meet seismic codes and are attached to both floor and ceiling.

Large, iconic four-sided department signs incorporate what JGA calls "stay-mobiles," which were brought to life by OSH's visual team using actual pieces of hardware, tools, and garden supplies hung artistically within metal frame structures. The Tool Box sign, for example, includes ladders and saws, and paint-can lids are suspended in the paint desk area.



Another artistic element conceived by JGA, the backlit shovel checkout lights, proved more challenging than expected. Tony Camilletti, executive vice president of D|Fab, notes that finding the perfect shovel for the job required three months of research and design, testing, and sampling. "Not only did the shovel have to be the right scale and angle, but it had to be able to stand up to waterjet cutting and have a blade area flat enough that we could cut the number out of it," he says. A supporting lightbox mounted behind the inverted shovel provides the light source and also allows the checkout number to be seen from the side.

The goal was to create an updated store that represented OSH's brand in an artistic way, but could be replicated for a rollout. Two additional stores opened in 2010. 🌈

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