

Color Correction

BY JAMES MARTIN

A complete community makeover can be overkill. Finessing of some existing elements can solidify a community's brand and save time and money.

Although dramatic makeovers are a popular subject, simply tweaking existing colors can be enough to improve the look of a community. Many communities' appearances are generally well received, making it unnecessary for management companies to undertake complete overhauls.

Instead, they must identify what currently works and address subtle points for change, such as refocusing architecture and revisiting the color palette, or simply changing the placement of certain colors.

Harbor Group International Construction Manager Veronica Marquez knew something was lacking at her Texas property, The Brazos. As a fairly new community, Brazos had two distinct issues to address:

1. Create a more distinguished community look, and
2. Differentiate the community from its less attractive "step-sister" next door—practically a carbon copy of The Brazos, operated under different ownership.

The Brazos already had an attractive clubhouse and graphic elements on the apartment buildings and signs. The lead for the new scheme came from the colors of those graphics—fashion-forward, trendy and appealing to a higher-end demographic—which were ideal for setting the right marketing tone for the community.

The design began with breaking up building forms using distinctive warm, rich tones, as opposed to its neighbor's cold green-grey look. Fundamental to the design was painting the base and the bays in dark colors and the upper building, including balcony interiors, in lighter colors.

Garage doors received the darker colored paint, giving the

A Pleasing Palate

The Subject: The Brazos, a Texas apartment community that needed to be distinguished from its neighbors.

The Process: Use warm, rich tones to break up building forms, darker paint around the buildings' bases and rich, cream trim around windows.

The Result: An appealing and distinctive look that attracts The Brazos' target trendy demographic.



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buildings strong bases. The designer also maximized the use of the lighter paint color by putting it in all interior areas to convey feelings of brightness and vibrancy. Darkly colored hallways must be avoided—they often make residents feel uncomfortable. Residents will not want to renew their leases if community hallways make them feel insecure.

The new design brought attention to community windows, which were trimmed in a rich cream color. The new look brought the unrealized visual potential of the windows to the forefront. The Brazos' windows are now noteworthy features, making the buildings feel much more open and airy.

Strong and Distinguished

A dark, deep, earthy green color was used to punctuate fascias, gutters and wrought-iron elements, creating a strong and distinguished look that is not loud or overly showy. The trim and punch colors were inspired by the community's signage.

The olive green of the lattice and brackets was used to add emphasis to entry structures where residents access stairs and hallways. The tomato red from the signage was recalled on the entry doors in a high gloss finish to make coming home a special occasion.

Finally, the stained timbers only needed to be oiled with a clear preservative instead of being repainted with a semitransparent stain. This decision created richer elements more evocative of a homey lodge.

The new look is up-to-date and high-end. With a lighter and friendlier feel than its darker neighbor across the street, and a more upscale and richer look than its former clone next door, The Brazos now appears distinctive and distinguished.

The response from both the public and the residents has been overwhelmingly supportive. Marquez said the new, "finessed" look allows prospective residents to appreciate the hands-on yet subtle approach her company and her staff use to meet the needs of their residents. ■

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