



This award-winning shoe store has generated a lot of foot traffic.

A STORE WITH SOLE



The colorful panels behind the shoe displays change color regularly, adding to the nightclub vibe and creating visual excitement.

Where do the well-heeled congregate in St. Louis? They beat a path to the door of R.sole, a retail store that sells Nike and other high-end brands, plus special-edition sneakers and custom-made shoes.

Appearing more like an urban nightclub than a conventional shoe store, the dark rectangular 1,972-sq.-ft. space creatively displays collectible sneakers as if they were pieces in

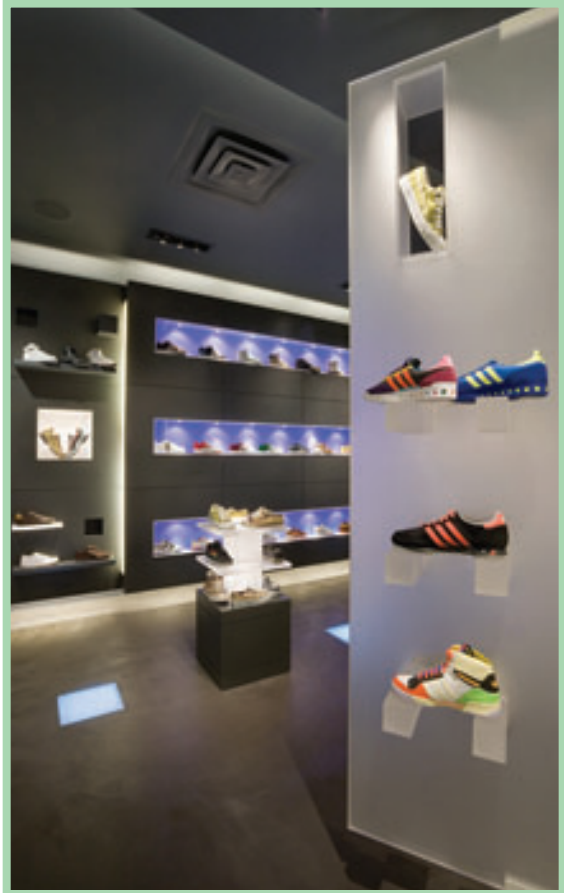
a hip gallery. Niche wall units are backlit by color-changing LED lighting fixtures that enhance and highlight the special attributes of each shoe. The ever-changing hues deliberately showcase a series of strategically placed, rotating merchandise display panels and recessed LED floor tiles that direct customers to specific areas where accessories, toys, and other merchandise categories are located.

This visually pleasing magic was accomplished by the New York City-based architecture/interior design firm Tobin+Parnes Design Enterprises.

“The collaboration between Tobin+Parnes and R.sole owner Barry Perner, resulted in a dynamic synergy of ideas and concepts [that] enabled us to take risks in architecture, design, and materials,” recalls Carol Tobin, a principal of Tobin+Parnes. “Ultimately,



Industrial chic meets retail at this unique and upscale purveyor of footwear.



Individual shoes are showcased as if in an art gallery.

our combined efforts created a store that dramatically synchronizes an artistic and urban gallery-inspired aesthetic with a high-end selling environment."

The R.sole project – which received a 2006 AIA/St. Louis Design Award – also brought together the Perner family of retailers, best known for the successful Harold Perner Man of Fashion chain throughout the Midwest, and Nike, one of the country's leading sporting goods manufacturer.

"The overall effect is exciting and memorable. It creates a selling atmosphere where our customers feel invited to interact and experience the merchandise," comments Barry Perner. "Executives from Nike are excited about the completed design and know it will ensure the success of the R.sole project. The response from Nike and our customers in regard to the design, look, and feel of our store has been incredible and extremely rewarding."

Consistent with the overall aesthetic, Tobin+Parnes' designers covered the front windows in translucent vinyl with geometric cut-outs, allowing passersby

only a glimpse of the interior. "Although it was risky, our team decided to use a non-sell, selling strategy because it would appeal to serious collectors and also act as a lure for other customers," remarks Vlad Zadneprianski of Tobin+Parnes. "Collecting high-end sneakers is similar to being a member of a private club and that theme begins at the storefront and is carried throughout the entire interior space."

Dark gray finishes are used on the millwork, the floor, ceiling and walls, imparting the attitude of an exclusive nightclub. The cash-wrap area was designed to be easily converted into a DJ station for parties and community events.

Plans are already in the works for additional R.sole stores. In December, a Memphis location debuted, and other Midwest markets will follow. Tobin+Parnes' design team is working closely with the Perner family to continue the black box prototype that was pervasive in the St. Louis store but adding new, exciting design elements to underscore the introduction of a clothing line and expanded merchandise. ❖

RESOURCES:

Client: R.sole, headquartered in Kansas City, Mo. owners: Barry Perner, David Perner, Sammy Salky R. sole project location — St. Louis

Design Team: Tobin+Parnes Design Enterprises, New York City — Carol Tobin, Robert M. Parnes /principals; Vlad Zadneprianski, Alex Hirsig, Gerard Orozco, and Dorothy Dejanovic

Consultants:

General Contractor: GM Northrup

Lighting: Design One

A/V: Audio Unlimited

Photographer: Ruggiero Vanni

Graphic Designer: Nadia Zadneprianska

Video: Vlad Zadneprianski

Lighting:

Con-Tech – Ceiling-mounted concealed adjustable downlights

W.A.C. – Miniature recessed lights in display niches

Jesco – Sleek Plus linkable fluorescents behind display boxes

Bartco – Linear fluorescents, cove lighting

Color-Changing Lighting

Coemar – RegoLED linear fixtures, display niches

LightWild – Ultimate architectural floor tiles

Millwork

Nevamar plastic laminate translucent acrylic display boxes

Flooring

Bomanite micro-top colored concrete topping

Storefront Window Film

3M Scotchcal