



The big picture

As rental markets continue to tighten, multihousing operators are on a constant search for **the** break-away marketing concept that will differentiate their community from the rest of the pack. One developer believes that ultimate value still lies in a beautiful space.

“Multifamily has become commoditized,” says Hiro Isogai, principal of WDG Interior Architecture of Washington, D.C. “Market pressures have caused developers and designers to make cost-based decisions in developing apartment space. Such sacrifice usually affects the livability of a space negatively, and ultimately, its rentability.”

Isogai sees an apartment as a resident’s home and “lifestyle commentary.” For his part, he assures that the architectural design

is respectful of the future resident’s lifestyle. Case in point: Siena Park Apartments on Columbia Pike in Arlington, Va., part of a mixed-use project including 188 apartments over 32,000 sq. ft. of retail and 14,000 sq. ft. of office space. One mile from the Pentagon and I-395, the brick and pre-cast project is set to open this Fall. The community will offer condominium-caliber design in a contemporary-style building, crowned by an extensive rooftop deck.

“Memory point” marketing is the core of any successful project says Isogai. Good design builds retention and this includes curb, lobby, building, and marketing campaign. Each should exude a continuum of energy and excitement that remains with the visitor long after their visit.

Margaret Smith Ford of Woodfield Investments couldn’t agree more. The community’s developer, elaborates, “We’ve considered the prospective resident’s lifestyle throughout Siena Park. For example, the property is entirely pedestrian-oriented. Our residents will be central to over 100,000 sq. ft. of retail coming online in the next months and all within walking distance of the community.”

The architectural design for Siena Park intentionally makes the structure appear as though it’s a series of smaller, multiple buildings. Every 60 feet the facade changes with a different color brick and detail, breaking up the elongation of the building and lending itself to the Main Street feel envisioned by the County.

Ford adds that her company had been planning Siena Park for some time. “We



have long believed that the Columbia Pike corridor desperately needs high-end apartments and retail. The Pike is close to every major transportation artery in the metro area, and will naturally draw from a thriving metropolis.”

The community’s target demographic is the urban professional and technical governmental employee. While some find this a difficult consumer to impress, Woodfield made a point of bringing together only the best minds to create a product perfectly suited for the urban lifestyle.

“The architect, WDG has an extraordinary reputation in the area. They are extremely knowledgeable about Arlington County which established the design parameters for the Pike,” says Ford. “There was only one choice for management,” she continues. “Local experience and stellar operation made Bozzuto Management a no-brainer for lease-up and management. Rounding out the team is Ellipse Communications for marketing.”

Lisa Benson of Ellipse launched the first salvo in differentiating the property by bringing in Dallas-based artist, J.D. Miller,

to create a customized work of art as the community’s focal point. Miller was commissioned to create a 5’ by 8’, oil-on-canvas, multi-level painting to be placed in the lobby seating area.

Miller elaborates, “The minimalist lobby design adds impact to this piece. My intention is to bring the outdoors in and illicit excitement with the robust colors. The explosion of color is even more significant against this subdued backdrop.”

Miller’s work of art will set recessed into the wall of the lobby, and will be the last visible checkpoint on egress from the property.”

Community marketing will highlight the artist’s affiliation to the project and its cultural value to that area. Miller will perform live at the community grand opening, expected after the first of the year, creating a smaller version of the same piece to be donated to a charity or museum in the area.

Referencing the tight credit markets of today, Ford provides insight into the investment value delivered by a project of this magnitude. “Woodfield financed Siena two years ago before the recession; however, it

JD Miller, local artist to Dallas, Texas, creates his work of art for the lobby of Sienna Park Apartments, a new 188-unit community set to open this Fall.

was still extremely difficult because it is an \$88 million project to be syndicated. As a result we have three construction lenders — Bank of America, Key Bank and US Bank.”

Appreciating the short term gains for construction management, she goes on to explain the vision for the future, “Bozzuto brings to the table invaluable input on the thousands of development issues we face every day from security to signage to apartment finishes. Their team is critical to the marketing, lease-up, and management of the project.”

Tom Bozzuto, president of the management company, adds “We’re delighted to be part of this great community. It’s been created from high-level vision. Siena Park will also fill a void for the community, and provide a superior and well-rounded product that will serve Arlington well.” ■