

# Merchandising and lighting create colorful visual impact

By Dave Goodell

In the atrium mall of Seattle's tallest office building, Columbia Seafirst Center, office workers can't resist stopping to look into the floor-to-ceiling windows of AMPHORA, a unique store filled with a colorful array of natural body care products and gifts. Dramatically lit displays beckon shoppers. Many come inside "just because it's so beautiful" and are surprised to discover the retailer's customized "scenting" service (at affordable prices) for made-to-order soaps, lotions, shampoos, perfumes, candles, and aromatherapy products.

"We knew that lighting would be an essential ingredient in our merchandise presentation," says Rob Klengler, president of AMPHORA. "We wanted well-designed lighting to create an upscale look and comply with the state energy code."

## The energy code challenge

In the state of Washington, retail store lighting is governed by strict regulations: "No more than one-and-a-half watts per square foot shall be allowed for lighting a retail space." To promote the use of efficient lamp sources, there is an exception to this rule: "Adjustable tungsten halogen and HID (High Intensity Discharge) merchandise display illuminaires are exempt."



Dave Goodell of HARVCO Co. is a representative for Juno Lighting and has more than 20 years of lighting specification experience.

## A creative solution

After an exhaustive search for the "right lighting and someone who would work with us," Klengler and partners Paul Cardoza and Rod DeJong selected a miniature, low-voltage system: Trac 12 from Juno Lighting Inc.

A quick comparison of the miniature track system versus traditional 120-volt track indicated that the small track could handle the lighting needs of the entire 750-square-foot store — including both merchandise displays and service areas.

Because the Trac 12 low-voltage system accepts only halogen and other low-energy lamps (no incandescent lamps), it is exempt

from the code. The energy code calculates standard 120-volt track at 50 watts per linear foot no matter what spotlights you attach to it.

Unlike 120-volt track lighting (which uses a transformer mounted at the base of each spotlight), an entire circuit of Trac 12 is powered by just one transformer hid-

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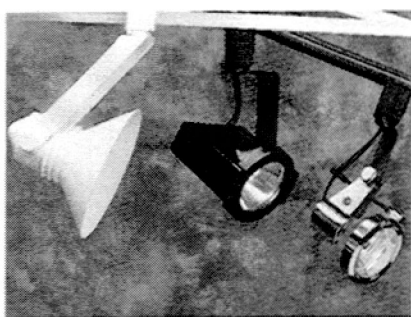


Seattle's AMPHORA uses miniature spotlights focused on merchandise to create a look of calm and elegance.



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Juno's miniature track lighting, the versatile Trac 12 low-voltage lighting system, is used to highlight custom displays and illuminate the customer service areas throughout the AMPHORA store.

den from sight above the ceiling. Small spotlights available for the system can be snapped into the track — and repositioned easily to highlight changing displays.

Last, but not least, the miniature 12-volt track lighting is about half the cost of regular track and less expensive to operate. Without transformers attached to each spotlight, less heat is emitted. This helps keep the store cool, an important consideration for the scented oils.

#### Specification details

The concise store layout and unique display cabinets designed by architect Robert Edson Swain called for a detailed, integrated lighting plan. Working from blueprints and product samples, the store owners and a specification specialist from Juno determined the location of each track and the transformer loads to be used.

Next came the selection of 63 miniature MR16 spotlights and the appropriate beam spread and wattage for each one. This attention to detail resulted in highly focused lighting that accents merchandise displays as well as the graceful, curved service counter of natural



Black miniature track lights cantilever off the top of display cabinets and tiny halogen spots provide highly focused light and beautiful color renditions.

## AMPHORA — Aromatherapy for the '90s

When you step into AMPHORA, a world of fresh, natural scents greets you. It is a timeless place of sweet aromas, calm and renewal. A rainbow array of soaps stands beside aromatherapy candles, essential oils and artfully designed perfume bottles.

So, what is it all about? Natural body care products custom-scented to suit and soothe your senses.

At AMPHORA, the customer is aided in choosing a scent which can then be incorporated into body care products such as lotion, bubble bath, shampoo, moisturizers and perfume. If you have a favorite scent, they will do their best to develop a similar one just for you and keep track of the formula on their computer.

The image of the store is high-end, but the prices aren't. Gift box combinations of scented soaps, lotions, loofahs, brushes, eye pillows and other natural body care products retail from \$10 to \$45. Art glass perfume bottles range from \$18 to \$65.

Is it a risky business? Not according to the three entrepreneurs who brought together their varied business experience and expertise. Rob Klengler has a high-tech background in computers at Kodak. He makes sure all store management details are computerized. Rod DeJong has a degree from a leading New York school of design, and creates product packaging and displays. Paul Cardoza comes from a retail background in the perfume and essential oil trade. He creates the store's custom and premixed scents. All three participate in polishing the store concept and share the American Dream of building their own business.

According to AMPHORA's well-researched business plan, the store, which opened last February, is exceeding sales projections and has been "running in the black" since the first month of operation.

From the start, AMPHORA's visual presentation is credited with jump-starting the business. Even before the grand opening promotion, the engaging windows and merchandise displays acted like a visual magnet to the 900 people per hour who pass by the store.

With a large potential customer base of "people who take care of their bodies," AMPHORA is creating its own specialty retailing niche.

—Ruth McNitt

wood. The look is clean and uncluttered.

Most Trac 12 components specified were in stock at Seattle Lighting, a well-known lighting distributor in the area. Within three weeks, the Trac 12 system was designed, delivered, installed and ready for business.

Each track section operates on a separate transformer, which is individually switched. This allows flexibility in lighting the store attractively at night when the store is closed but people are still in the mall.

"We're extremely pleased with the lighting. We can move the spotlights so easily. It's a vital part of the AMPHORA store image," concludes Klengler. □

*Editor's Note: AMPHORA is located at Columbia Seafirst Center, 701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 303, Seattle, Wash. 98104, phone (206)623-9480. Visit it on its internet home page at <http://www.amphora.com/>*

