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THE MAGAZINE OF RECORD FOR ARCHITECTURAL GLASS INDUSTRY LEADERS

VOLUME 51, ISSUE 6 JUNE 2016

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Glass “Feature Wall” Has Big Impact on High-End Residential Beach Home

It was the perfect marriage.

The glass fabricator needed a prime location to showcase its product. The building owner and builder wanted a unique solution that provided maximum views while maintaining strict standards.

And that’s how this 750-square-foot glass feature wall at a high-end Vanderbilt Beach home in Naples, Fla., was born.

“It just so happens that we were seeking a showcase project on the West Coast in Naples at the time they were building this,” says Angelo Rivera, vice president and general manager of Faour Glass Technologies in Tampa. “So we got together, and it was kind of a perfect installation. They said they would open up their home for us to get [photos], and they got the beautiful view they needed.”

A Clear Choice

Naples, Fla.-based builder Damon Custom Structures Inc. (DCS) pushed to get Faour’s frameless impact window system Slimpack into the design. The project, designed by R.G. Designs of Bonita Springs, Fla., was a key home for the custom builder. In fact, Damon Warfel, president of DCS, says the feature wall was the biggest opening he’s ever done.

The structural-glazed system, which Faour patented in 2015, uses no exposed metal to maximize views while still meeting Florida’s large-missile impact requirements.

Warfel says the architect originally drew up a large bowed window for the feature wall, though the project team had a difficult time meeting impact codes. According to Rivera, the next solution was to implement a typical curtainwall overlooking the Gulf Coast

water, but the builder and homeowner were seeking a more seamless solution.

“They just didn’t want to break up that wall in the way that [a standard curtainwall] would have,” says Rivera. “So when they discovered we had an impact-approved system with no metal and no mullions, it fit perfectly with what they were looking for.”

From the Inside

The glazing choice was the easy part. The installation was another story.

According to Rivera, the most challenging aspect of the project was getting the 750-pound lites in the proper location so they could be installed.

Faour typically uses all-terrain vehicles with lifts and suction cups to install the panels from the exterior. However, because the lot lines to this house were so tight, the installers couldn’t approach this project the same way.

Instead, they worked from the interior to set in the 15 10-by-5-foot lites. “We had to bring everything in and use winches to maneuver the glass in place from inside the house,” says Rivera.

He adds that the Slimpack product inherently requires special care due to a heightened attention on aesthetics.

“Everything we do is concealed so that there’s no metal ever seen, even around the perimeter,” says Rivera. “The system is designed to bring the outside into the living structure. . . . The details to get to that can get pretty hairy depending on the design.”

The installation took approximately three weeks with four men on the job. It was challenging, but ultimately worth the effort, says Warfel.

“It came out spectacular,” he says. “That house is kind of the pinnacle on that beach with this opening. It gets all

The Impact of Slimpack

Faour Glass Technologies has installed Slimpack in more than 50 projects since its first version was introduced to the market in 2012. Angelo Rivera, vice president and general manager of Faour, says the idea of the product goes back to Hurricane Andrew, when South Florida started implementing stringent hurricane codes.

“The codes changed to a point where the only people who could comply right away were the metal suppliers—they could provide their product with laminated glass and test and meet the code quickly,” says Rivera. “The problem with that is for architects, it really minimized what they wanted to do with glass and really reduced their view. . . . so we listened to that for years and developed some concepts.”

While it took some time, Faour eventually came up with the right glass combination that could provide the required strength with just 3/8 inches of structural silicone joint between the lites.

The first version of Slimpack could be used anywhere on the Florida coastline aside from High Velocity Hurricane Code (HVHC) and Miami Dade code areas. Once demand grew from architects, the company developed its HVHC version.

kinds of attention. Even the inspectors couldn't believe we were able to do what we did there."

For the Turtles

In addition to meeting stringent impact standards, the glass in the project had to follow "Turtle Code" requirements to accommodate hatchling sea turtles. Under the Turtle Code, no more than 45 percent of visual light can come from inside the building to the outside.

"The whole idea is that during hatching season, the turtles go to the light of the moon," says Rivera. "... But if you have internal lights in a home that go out to the beach, it could signal them to go the wrong way."

The glass consisted of a quarter-inch clear with low-E, a 3/8-inch grey and a 3/8-inch clear, triple-laminated with SentryGlas to meet the impact and Turtle Code standards.

Faour only handled the feature wall glazing, as the rest of the doors and windows—manufactured by Andersen and WinDoor—were installed by Raymond Building Supply.

—Nick St. Denis ■



A 750-square-foot glass "feature wall" at a high-end residential beach home in Naples, Fla., provides maximum views for the homeowner while meeting stringent building codes.