

GOLDEN AGE

A lively mix of old and new converge
in Atria's NuLu Support Center

Written by Patti Bailey / Photography by Andrew Kung



Detail from a custom Bittners-made table

While his polished perspective is often requested by discerning clients, the number of interior design projects Douglas Riddle, President and COO of Bittners personally accepts for the firm is limited, with the majority of these high-profile commissions lying outside the lines of Louisville. When Riddle's friend and Bittners client John Moore, CEO of Atria Senior Living, approached him about designing the first floor of the company's Support Center in NuLu, Riddle was intrigued, and spent time getting to know the company before delving in.

"What drew me to personally design the Atria space is my appreciation of how Atria respects aging," explained Riddle. "I toured the company's properties in New York and was so impressed that what they are about is continued living. Their residents are involved in life...I think that is how all of us would like to continue as we age."



Made by Bittners, a pair of accent tables were designed by Riddle and inspired by photographs of mid-century pieces.



To dampen sound in the tall-ceilinged space, Riddle selected a rug with colors that mimic the existing stained concrete flooring.



Chad Welch, Atria's Director of Culinary Development in the bar, which can be concealed behind walnut veneer pocket doors.



The Bittners-made banquet table is made with wood reclaimed from nearby Whisky Row and designed to be easily disassembled.



The black-and-white portrait of an Atria client was taken by photographer Mark Seliger.

Riddle was tasked with creating a chic and modern look and feel that casually represents Atria in an upscale way and also gives a nod to tradition. Working in tandem with Bittners designer with Chad Cobb, Riddle embraced the commercial vernacular by employing judicious use of color, tactual fabrics, and heirloom-quality Bittners-made tables.

The L-shaped space is used in myriad ways, from corporate training to community events, so Riddle designed furnishings and architectural elements that allow for deft transformations. Ingeniously concealed behind custom walnut veneer pocket doors is a bar and test kitchen, the domain of chef Chad Welch, Atria's Director of Culinary Development. Apropos subway tiles that line the bar back lend a bistro feel.

In order to express the requested nod to tradition, Riddle worked with the master craftsmen in the Bittners woodworking shop to fashion modular tables from poplar wood reclaimed from nearby Whisky Row. Able to be easily disassembled, the handsome pieces have made appearances at charity events supported by Atria, including the Waterfront Botanical Gardens. Smaller side tables, also custom crafted by Bittners, were designed by Riddle and inspired by photographs of mid-century pieces culled from his design archives.

To dampen sound in the tall-ceilinged space, Riddle added rugs in colors that mimic the existing stained concrete flooring. Walls of windows provide ample natural light and views of the surrounding cityscape, which is reflected in the color palette of the space's upholstered pieces. Linen, wool, and velvet fabrics were chosen for their comforting tactile qualities.

Aesthetically engaging, the multi-functioning space is designed to model the hospitality and ingenuity Atria expects staff members to provide for residents at its more than 200 facilities in the United States and Canada. A visual representation of this client-centric commitment is a striking series of oversized black-and-white portraits of Atria residents found throughout the first floor. Atria commissioned acclaimed photographer Mark Seliger, whose work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair* and *GQ*, to capture the vibrancy of each subject. "I love that what you first notice is each person's personality before ever considering their age," said Riddle. ^{sl}