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Complete Retail Design and Visual Merchandising Resource

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Paiva

Paiva puts fashionable, 40-ish focus on fitness

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Finish Line thought it had the field covered for action-addicted shoppers with its selection of athletic footwear, apparel and accessories.

But sales stats showed someone on the sidelines was still waiting to be served – the active, more-mature woman.

"Only 18 to 20 percent of Finish Line's business is women's and that woman is a much younger consumer," says Jeff Pofsky, Paiva's vp, general merchandise manager.

So the athletic retailer set out to develop a women's athletic apparel store, called Paiva (pronounced pie-vah), a Scandinavian word, referring to a sun deity, meaning "of the light."

"Paiva is bringing light and inspiration to women by helping them find new energy from within themselves," says Pofsky. "Our collection of activewear gives women more energy when they work out or simply when they wear an item."

So how does a concept that's one part sweat and one part Zen enlighten women through fitness? With generous amounts of lighting, of course.

"The Paiva experience is intended to speak quietly not only of fitness and fashion, but also of energy, growth and personal well-being," says Dwayne Mann, principal-in-charge at Mann & Mann Architects Inc. (Austin, Texas), which has been designing for the Finish Line for more than 10 years. "We communicate this by using light as a



metaphor for energy and layering textures to soften the inherent complexity of the space."



A light and open storefront supports the brand's notion of energy. Like-minded mannequins don fashionable fitness wear from top to bottom.

At the storefront, simple glass vitrines detailed with stainless-steel spider fittings beckon shoppers to the store. Once inside, indirect cove and accent lighting creates a luminous energy.

The ceiling is divided into two levels, with a higher level running around the perimeter and a lower level down the center of the store. Large elliptical shapes, cut into the lower ceiling at rotating angles,

house cove lighting, providing indirect illumination and drawing shoppers through the space. Additional cove lighting runs around the perimeter and behind wall displays, while adjustable ceramic metal halide accent lamps recessed in the ceiling spotlight displays and feature merchandise.

"In an understated way, we are suggesting energy, movement and grace with continuous horizontal design elements and dimensional wavy wall surfaces," says Mann.

That ambience continues in the fitting room area at the back of the store, where more direct and indirect lighting creates an intimate and comfortable environment,

complemented by large-sized rooms, oversized upholstered bench seating and several full-length mirrors.



Merchandise is presented by activity and arranged along the perimeter walls using a variety of display systems.

To spotlight the fashion aspect of the brand – which includes collections by Nike, adidas, Puma, adidas by Stella McCartney, Prana and others – custom mannequins in store windows and throughout the space are outfitted from head to toe in fitness wear.

On the store floor, merchandise is divided into two sections: performance (such as running or tennis) and lifestyle (including yoga and dance). Items within each area are organized by activity/sport as well as by brand. The rear of the store houses the footwear salon, complete with ottoman-style seating, and a Paiva essentials department for such items as tank tops, tees and workout pants. The store also offers intimate apparel from a variety of brands.

To keep the atmosphere light and airy, subtle signage cues are delivered through product presentations and rotating lifestyle imagery, including photographs of women in action.

Another softer design cue is the layering of merchandise on the perimeter walls using a variety of display systems. A simple recessed standards system accepts a variety of flexible hardware, pegs and shelving. Layered in front are 10-foot-tall, linen-covered, mobile wall units

mounted to a rail system that allows them to slide along the perimeter. Mirrored storage units that keep back stock close to the sales floor add the final layer. All three systems can be rearranged to accommodate seasonal promotions and product features.

The final touch in this playing field of light is the store's color palette, which shifts from dark to lighter tones as one's eye moves up from the caramel-colored bamboo flooring to the white, glowing ceiling.

"The flooring and fixture finishes are about warmth and permanence, evolving to lighter colors and a sense of transparency and light above," says Mann.

Finish Line plans to roll out 15 Paiva stores in the first year, including locations in Austin, Seattle, Dallas, Orlando, Chicago, Annapolis, Md., Bloomington, Minn., Natick, Mass., and King of Prussia, Pa.

Finish Line's new brand, Paiva, brings together fashion and fitness for mature women. Designers infused the stores with ample plays on light to create an energizing atmosphere



A footwear salon in the back of the store features ottoman-style seating and open displays. Large lifestyle imagery adds a subtle reminder of the brand's target customer.