

Architects'
GuideTM
TO GLASS & METAL

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Living in Glass Houses





Living La Vida Bella

Bella Luna brings elegance
to life at Orange Beach

The 14-story Bella Luna condominium project boasts sweeping curves and sparkling glass from the ground up.

The Bella Luna condominium project is situated on the sunny shores of the Gulf of Mexico, with oversized terraces and a sundeck overlooking the shimmering Ole River in Orange Beach, Fla. This luxurious, 14-story showpiece boasts sweeping curves and sparkling glass from the ground up.

Its sky-lit, semi-enclosed atrium features a large porte-cochere entrance to the glass elevator lobby. Immense floor plans include wide, curvilinear gallery halls, plus dramatic nine-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling tinted windows and glass doors.

Such a project, with an outstanding location and extraordinary design potential, naturally provided its architects a wealth of exciting opportunities—but with them came some unique challenges.

Elegant Curves

Any project slated for a southern coastal location requires careful provision for meeting the threat of tropical storms and hurricanes. This threat was one of the reasons the designers, Henry Norris Architects of Pensacola, Fla., developed Bella Luna's elegant curves in the first place.

"Our primary concern was the visual design—to do something out of the box," explained Henry Norris, who led the project's design. "Along with being visually pleasing, another benefit with the curvilinear surfaces is they will allow the winds to pass with less resistance."

As the Bella Luna concept took shape, designers began working on how to integrate its glass-backed elevators with the curved exterior walls. That's when the architects enlisted assistance from EFCO Corp., the supplier of archi-



tectural glass and metal products.

"There's hardly a straight surface on the building," said Norris. "The biggest challenge was to make the elevators blend with the fluid design of the glass walls. Working with representatives and engineering staff from EFCO, we found a way to integrate the elevators using curtainwall."

EFCO representative Bob Vannerson of Bassett & Co. Inc. facilitated the work that brought Norris designers together with EFCO staff to study the elevator integration and how best to achieve it.

High Performance

The curtainwall solution was the company's System 5600, which is designed to meet high-performance criteria and address aesthetic concerns. Mullions can be offset tongue, center tongue and structural glazed for monolithic or insulated glaz-



ing units. This curtainwall system provides opportunities for customization by offering face covers from 2 to 6 inches wide and 1/4 to 8 inches deep in several profiles.

The project also utilized its Series 3015 and 3005 sliding glass doors, Series 2900 projected windows, and Series D300 swing entrance doors. All the supplier's products used in the structure were confirmed to meet the impact-resistance requirements of the Standard Building Code, 1997 Edition, to which the project was designed to comply.

"Bella Luna provided a tremendous opportunity for us to show what we can achieve when we work through these challenges with architects," said Vannerson. "We had the experience their firm needed to feel confident that their design would turn out the way they wanted it, and that it would meet the very demanding performance requirements. With the exemplary work of the contractors, we're very pleased with the way it all came together."

"As the Bella Luna project was getting started," Robert Smith, president of Glass Inc., explained, "Hurricane Ivan came through, and the eye went right over that stretch of beach. We had five other condo projects there either completed or near completion—all with similar EFCO products installed. We didn't have a single failure in any of them. We were really sold after seeing how they performed during that storm."

Womack Construction, in a joint venture with Trustmark Builders, served as the project's general contractor. Glass Inc. of Orange Beach handled the glass installation. Bella Luna stands as a strong example of how beautiful beachfront living can be when innovative design meets experienced support. AG

The building's curvilinear surfaces offer less resistance to high wind, important in its coastal location.