

## Great Lakes Opens Great Lobby

Photos courtesy of WB Brawley Co.

The newly renovated lobby at The Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) at NS Great Lakes in Illinois, has a couple of firsts going for it. Not only is it the first NGIS renovation completed in 2013, but it is also the first project to utilize one of the new interior design schemes developed by the NGIS lodging team.

NGIS General Manager Jerome Zlomke chose the design scheme “Eclectic Fun” to update the lobby and provide for a more modern feel throughout. According to NGIS, the Eclectic Fun design scheme consists of these elements:

- Modern meets traditional
- Fun meets relaxing
- A hint of whimsy
- Brushed chrome fixtures and accessories
- Warm wood tones
- Modern styling

“All of the basic schemes have certain colors that are incorporated, and the eclectic fun scheme has blackberry colors, browns, tans and creams, and very rich furniture,” said Lauren Brown, interior designer with WB Brawley Co., who worked on the project with NGIS Interior Designer Jana Joplin.

The decision to renovate the lobby was made in 2010 when the front desk was relocated. “The upgrade was required to the overall material condition of furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) within the lobby, carpet, window treatments, etc.,” said

Zlomke. “We wanted to create a more modern and up-to-date setting for the guests.”

The more than \$72,000 in renovations entailed replacement of sofas, chairs, end tables and window coverings. “In addition, the seating and tables for the continental breakfast were changed and provided the site with increased seating capacity to serve our customers,” he said. “Chicago artwork and decorative table vases were included to set a theme for our local area. The carpet was previously replaced by NAVFAC [Navy Facilities Engineering Command].”

For Brown, the changes really enhanced the way the lobby looks — and the view it offers guests. “We turned two communal tables in the center, which both have electric going into them, to make the lobby more inviting and more of a ‘hang-out’ area,” she said. “They used to have these 1.5-inch-thick, really dark wooden blinds. We took those out and put in nice airy sheer curtains. It just opens up the space. You can see the beautiful landscaping outside. It looks amazing. It just opened up the space and made it more inviting. We put the two communal tables right there in the center so people can catch up on their emails, study or get some homework done.”

The reaction to the renovation from guests and staff has been great. “Feedback has been nothing but positive,” said Zlomke. “Guests enjoy being able to relax within the lobby and take in the view of Lake Michigan.”

Brown saw the reaction firsthand. “You could tell that the people who work there were just thankful to work in a different space, an entirely different work environment as well,” she said. “The people who had stayed there previously who were walking into the lobby as we were setting things up, you could see they were thinking, ‘Wow! This is an NGIS?’”

NGIS Great Lakes provides Visitor Quarters lodging for military and other Department of Defense travelers on official orders, as well as authorized leisure travelers on a space available basis. NGIS has single rooms with a private bath and no kitchenette; one-room suites with private bath and kitchenette; and two-room and VIP suites with private bath and kitchenette.

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