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Architect, contractor honored for showroom

By Brian Sodoma

Special Publications writer

Designing and building the Arlen Ness Motorcycle Showroom requires more than attention to detail. It takes a love for the product too.

And that's clearly what Carpenter Sellers Architects Principal Rick Sellers has for Arlen Ness' "chopper" motorcycles. "You don't want to try to take away from them (the motorcycles being sold)," said Sellers. "You want to complement them, not overshadow them (with the building's design)."

The \$2 million building at 4020 Boulder Highway in Las Vegas uses a basic butler-building concept, where its core steel frame structure is prefabricated elsewhere, then put together on-site. It allows the architect to then add touches to it after the basic building is constructed, said Sellers.

"It (the butler building approach) saves you money and you can still do something interesting with it," he said. "We've done butler stuff, but never something this dramatic."

Arlen Ness, who is considered the godfather of the chopper motorcycle, was not heavily involved in the project, said Sellers, but he still felt obliged to make sure the building was not getting in the way of the bikes. But he still wanted it to stand out from its neighbors, as the site is situated almost directly across the street from Boulder Station.

One of the key features of the building is its large galvalume metal front canopy that helps to capture light, reflect colors and enhance the look of the bikes, said Sellers. Beyond that, the large glass panes in the front of the building offer a generous glimpse of the elaborate chopper motorcycles inside, along with Arlen Ness' neon purple and turquoise colorings used for the interior.

Also figuring into the design was making space for Arlen Ness' traveling crew. The bicycle designer is known for pulling up a semi trailer to his shops and having a barbecue event for bikers in the area.

"We wanted to have space so they can barbecue and hold events," Sellers said. "Bikers become like family and you

have to do that from time to time."

Completed in February, the 17,000 square-foot building has been great for both the architect's and contractor's resumes. The showroom recently won the 2005 "Best Steel Project" award from Southwest Contractor magazine. It has also won recognition from Metal Architecture, an architecture industry trade publication.

Larry Monkarsh, manager of LM Construction LLC, which was the contractor on the job, brought the project to CSA because of the owner's desire to have a large canopy.

"I had a customer (Arlen Ness) who required a canopy and since I saw what they (CSA) did with the Sedona (restaurant, in the west valley, which also has a large canopy), I knew they could do it," he said.

Monkarsh is also putting a focus on doing more butler building projects in the future.

"Butler buildings, in the old days, looked like a tin shack. There are some misconceptions about them ... but they can be anything you want them to be," he said. **cre**

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