

Commercial BUILDING PRODUCTS

SERVING ARCHITECTS, CONTRACTORS, AND OWNERS IN LOW- AND MID-RISE CONSTRUCTION

Hospitality Focus

- Please Guests, Save Money
- Green Design Overhead
- Drafts Can't Spoil View

Heated windows
from Thermique
keep diners
warm as they
enjoy the view.

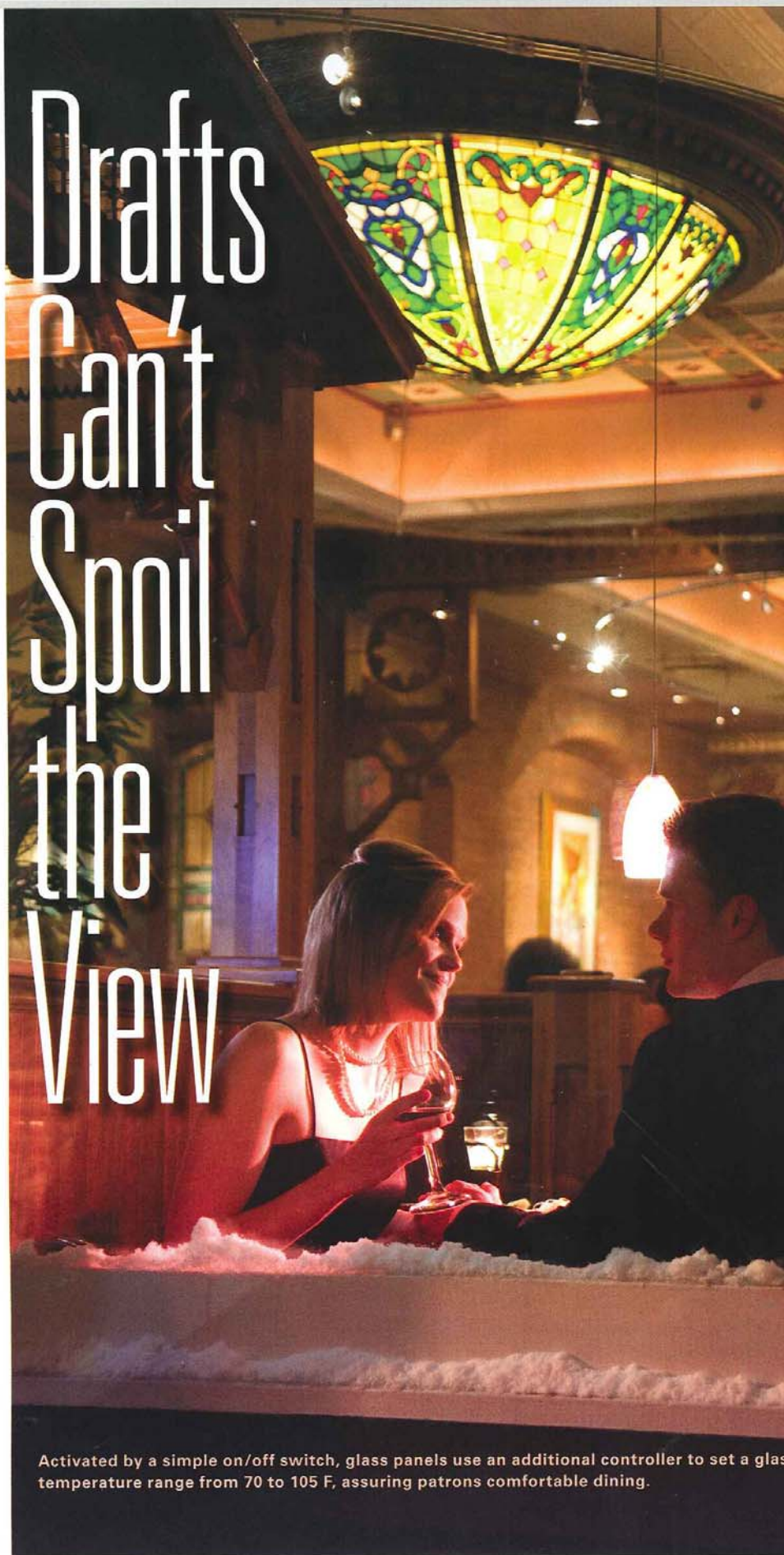
As the Mahogany Grille staff can attest, when it comes to upscale dining, patrons are often more interested in their comfort than the view. This premier downtown dining establishment in Durango, CO's historic Strater Hotel offers diners exquisite seasonal menus, live jazz entertainment, an opulent Victorian bar, and a spectacular view.

Unfortunately, the windows that should have provided a benefit to customers did the opposite. The windows were not able to keep the restaurant warm and comfortable, especially in winter. In fact, customers regularly requested a table away from the windows, despite the view. Even away from the windows, the cold air would permeate the space. "We had a real problem with drafts," said Rod Barker, owner of the Strater Hotel and Mahogany Grille.

Founded in 1887, the Strater Hotel is the city's most prominent downtown landmark. Featuring 93 Victorian rooms filled with beautiful walnut antiques and period wallpaper, the hotel is steeped in history and elegance. The Strater is one of 10 founding members of Historic Hotels of America, an organization that now includes 250 hotels from coast to coast.

To maintain the building's historic flavor and make the restaurant more comfortable, Barker installed two windows with heated glass from Chicago's Thermique Technologies LLC at the front of the restaurant. Barker originally was skeptical that heated glass could solve draft and chilly air problems, but soon realized the windows were a complete success.

Drafts Can't Spoil the View



Activated by a simple on/off switch, glass panels use an additional controller to set a glass temperature range from 70 to 105 F, assuring patrons comfortable dining.

"Initially, I wasn't sure the heated windows would produce enough benefits to make it worthwhile, but it definitely has," he said.

Make a negative positive

The Mahogany Grille is reported to be the first restaurant in North America to adopt heated-glass technology for windows. Installation was completed in a single morning before the restaurant opened for the day.

In addition to keeping customers warm, the heated glass offers the benefit of condensation control. The restaurant's front windows will never fog up or frost over while the heat is on, so guests will always experience a clear view through the glass. Today, instead of opting for tables away from the windows, patrons are requesting them. In fact, the most requested seat in the house is Table 10, right next to the heated glass. "We've taken a negative and turned it into a positive. Our customers are eager to sit near the window and enjoy the view," Barker said.

Restaurant staff also has benefited. The hostess station is located directly behind one of the two heated windows. Previously the location was very chilly, leading to many complaints from the shivering hostesses, who typically wear short-sleeved or sleeveless dresses. Now, all complaints have disappeared. The staff even takes pride in showing off the windows to new customers.

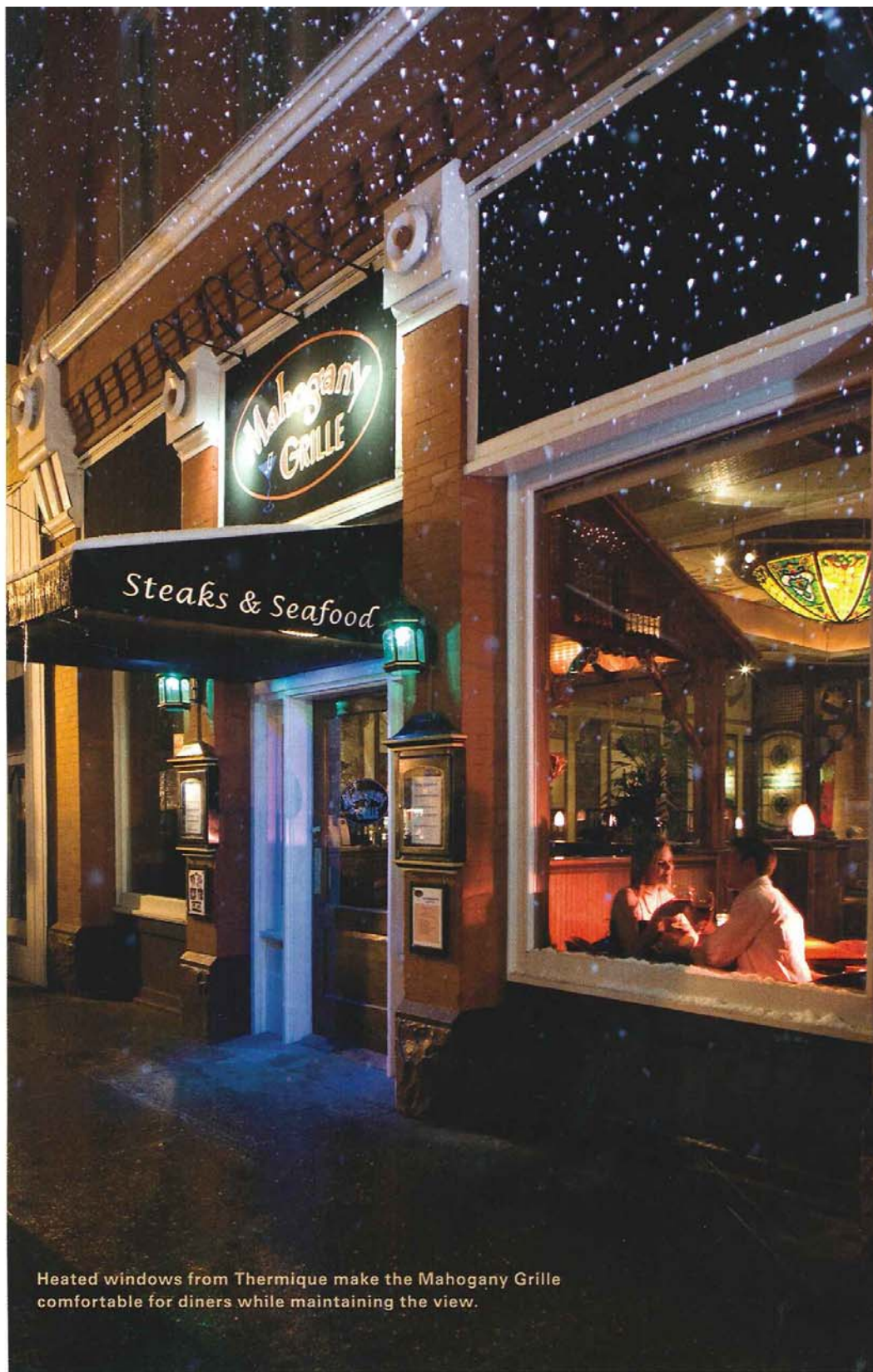
Operating the heated windows is a one-step process. When employees turn on the lights to the restaurant, they also flip on the heated glass with an ordinary wall switch. "Can you train someone to use a light switch?" Barker joked. "It's that simple."

In addition to the on/off switch, there is a Thermique controller hidden behind a small wall panel. Floor managers can use the controller to adjust the temperature of the glass as desired. Based on the controller setting, glass temperature can range from 70 to 105 F.

Quick, but delicate, installation

Since the Mahogany Grille is in a historic building, replacing the windows was a delicate task. The retrofit project could not alter the authentic period appearance of the window or building. Adding fans, motors, or ductwork was not an option. Fortunately, all electrical components in the heated glass are entirely hidden within the window frame.


Preliminary independent testing indicates that a building's overall energy consumption is reduced when Thermique heated glass is installed. This is because traditional heating systems are not constantly struggling against chills and drafts. Advanced testing is currently underway to verify the exact energy savings.



Heated windows from Thermique make the Mahogany Grille comfortable for diners while maintaining the view.

However, Barker is already convinced. "If we didn't have heated windows, we'd have to turn up the heat to the entire restaurant," he said.

Twelve months after installing heated glass at the Mahogany Grille, Barker said it was a wise investment for the restaurant. Eliminating the uncomfortably cold area near the windows has increased the floor space available to customers for dining (and thus

the revenue potential for the restaurant). The problem of cold drafts and cold customers has completely disappeared. "Any new restaurant in a cold climate would be crazy not to plan for it and get it done," Barker said. 

For more information about Thermique's heated windows, circle 7 or visit www.cbpmagazine.com