

Mermet USA Brews Up Sun Control Solutions for Sierra Nevada Mills River Brewery



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Situated above the French Broad River just 20 minutes outside of Asheville, NC, the Sierra Nevada Mills River Brewery features a warehouse and bottling facility, taproom and restaurant, gift shop, amphitheater, and an indoor music venue, making it a “temple to craft beer in an area where beer has become a way of life.”

Sierra Nevada Mills
Mills River, North Carolina

Installer
D.F. Sarno Enterprises Inc.
Franklin, North Carolina

Architect
R.G.A.
Chico, California

M Screen Deco
Hazelnut

In terms of sunlight control, thermal performance, and occupant comfort, Mermet’s shade fabric, M Screen Deco 5%, was a well-crafted solution for the extensive Sierra Nevada Mills River Brewery project.

To increase brewing capacity, Sierra Nevada decided to open an East Coast facility—their second brewery—in North Carolina. Longtime collaborator, R.G.A. in Chico, CA, was selected to serve as the principal design firm for the 320,000-square-foot project.

“Having worked with Sierra Nevada on their Chico brewery gave us a working knowledge of project needs as well as the company’s goals,” said Matt Gallaway, A.I.A., LEED, principal architect for R.G.A. “Starting the Mills River project from scratch allowed us to really work on juxtaposing form with function. We wanted to create a very linear building as brewing is a linear process.”

The project began with the warehouse and bottling facility, which were completed in 2013. The taproom and restaurant were added two years later. Ensuring a consistent look throughout each space was key. To help keep a consistent look on the interior, the shade fabric was installed in the main dining area, exterior patio, bakery, gift shop and main offices. Additionally, R.G.A., the design team at Sierra Nevada, and Glen Walters

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Landscape Architecture, worked to create an entrance that would showcase the customer experience separately from the product-development portion of the property. Comfort, daylighting, and solar heat gain control were integral to the design, and shades would play a role in meeting all of these needs.

“We realized the brewery was getting too much sun, so the incorporation of the shades was necessary,” said Gallaway. “Several solar studies had been conducted, and there were some unanticipated lighting challenges that the shades helped mitigate.”

Built with sustainability and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) in mind, Sierra Nevada worked to ensure the specified glass achieved energy efficiency needs while the shades provided additional performance—or the “icing on the cake” according to Gallaway. The brewery was able to reduce the building’s Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) from .227 to .221 by adding M Screen Deco shade fabric. That is a 20.2% SHGC improvement – a noticeable impact that glazing alone could not have achieved. Sierra Nevada Mills River Brewery was awarded LEED® Platinum in 2016, making it the first production brewery in the country to earn the certification.

Manufactured with high-quality yarn comprised of fiberglass and vinyl, M Screen Deco is a designer fabric featuring a unique rib weave and bi-colored yarn that adds rustic elegance to the space through its texturized appearance. The shades, which were specified at 5% openness, block approximately 95% of UV rays and transmit only 7% of total solar energy.

With a visual transmission of only 7%, M Screen Deco 5% in Hazelnut substantially reduces glare in multiple spaces throughout the brewery while retaining crisp, clear view through. Reduced glare on screens not only affects office workers, but also provides better viewing experiences for patrons watching any of the TVs on the property. Comfort is an essential part of the brewery experience, and the usage of M Screen Deco prevents guests from having unwanted sunlight while they enjoy a cold beverage or delicious meal.

“The use of Mermet’s M Screen Deco fabric in Hazelnut was an excellent selection,” said Dominic Sarno, owner at D.F. Sarno Enterprises Inc., the project’s fabricator/installer. “Aesthetically, the fabric blends with all the wood stain finishes on the inside and complements the exterior finishes. M Screen Deco also allows view through when shades are down, and controls direct sunlight.”

For Gallaway, the project extends beyond the completion date. “The brewery is often referred to as the ‘destination for beers,’ and we truly enjoy having been a part of creating something that brings people joy. We have said before that the best projects are the ones where you make lasting friendships. This is one of those—great teams that built strong friendships.”

“Watching this project grow over the years as the brewery expanded and more people were drawn to it was a wonderful experience,” continued Sarno, “Working with Sierra Nevada, the architects, and Mermet to create a beautiful, quality-driven facility really underscored it all.”



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