



TRADITION AND INNOVATION MEET

AN ITALIANATE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONSTRUCTED FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE

Text by Sherry A. Boyd | Photos courtesy Bellarmine University. Photography by H. Carleton Godsey, Godsey Associates Architects.

The Siena residence halls at Bellarmine University, Louisville, Ky., were constructed in four phases, in total comprised of more than 165,000 square feet, providing living space for 518 students along with cafes and public spaces. The Arboreto green space added additional leisure areas for outdoor gathering and relaxation, including a landscaped water feature and amphitheater. With the recent completion of the fourth phase, Siena Terzo, half of the student population has access to campus living.

A leading independent Catholic university, Bellarmine takes its name from St. Robert Bellarmine, which inspired the Tuscan-influenced architectural style. The residential complex designed by Godsey Associates Architects, has a warm, inviting presence on the Louisville campus, in stark contrast to some modernist buildings designed by the same architects. Uniquely, there is no discernable front or back entrance to the Siena. The design approach bears similarity to Italian hill towns with variations in the facades and exterior treatments, yet unified by color scheme and the broad stylistic themes distinguishing the four phases and the new Palio dining hall.

Taking full advantage of the steep terrain, the grouping of differentiated structures holds a prominent position on the campus with sweeping views across athletic fields and the landscaped academic campus. Archways and stairs lead through the buildings to the interior courtyard. Inside the building, residents enjoy community spaces with balconies and rounded windows framing the views.

This masterful plan—albeit achieving a feeling of antiquity and tradition—is constructed with innovative building methods that afford energy efficiency and reduced operational costs. All four phases were constructed using insulated concrete forms (ICFs). In addition to accelerating the building schedule, the ICFs provide a building envelope that is 50 to 70 percent more energy efficient than traditional stick-built structures. The forms are made from recycled material and also are 100 percent recyclable, the approach is environmentally sound and minimized construction site waste.

Inside the finished structure, additional advantages are obvious to the residents. The insulated concrete forms used in the building envelope provide an effective sound barrier that produces



Photo courtesy Nudura

more quiet living conditions. Indoor air quality is superior as a result of eliminating allergens and pollutants.

According to Godsey Associates Architects, the ICF method was selected for the Siena residence halls at Bellarmine University for several reasons; it provides an efficient structural system, fire resistance and sound control. The deciding factor was the contractor's input that it would save construction time and place students in housing at the start of the semester.

The design intent achieved by the project was to provide comfortable, efficient and functional housing for students. As part of their larger vision, the University has a goal to provide more on-campus living.

The best of old and new merge in the gracious Siena residence halls at Bellarmine University. Perhaps a reflection of the approach the university takes in preparing its students for what awaits them beyond their formative years of study. [enr](#)

PROJECT TEAM

ARCHITECT

Godsey Associates Architects

ENGINEER

Slesser Engineering

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

F.W. Owens Co.

ICF INSTALLER

River City Development

DISTRIBUTOR

Advanced Concrete

ICF SYSTEM

NUDURA Integrated Building
Technology

OWNERS REPRESENTATIVE

Bob Zimlich
V.P. Administration & Finance

Photo courtesy Bellarmine University.

