

# Rolling out the "Red" Carpet

at The American Film Institute  
Silver Theatre & Cultural Center



When the stars came out for the Silver Theatre's second grand opening in 2003, Clint Eastwood proclaimed, "This theater is a work of art." The New York Times has since declared it "the plushiest place to see a movie in Washington," and today the AFI's Silver Theatre and Cultural Center stands as a demonstration of the importance of culture and entertainment to urban revitalization.

The  
**Antron**<sup>®</sup>  
DIFFERENCE

only by INVISTA

## CASE STUDY:

### The American Film Institute Silver Theatre and Cultural Center Silver Spring, MD

## public space

In the 1930s, names like Bette Davis, Clark Gable, Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart emblazoned the fronts of theaters from coast to coast. In Hollywood's Golden Age, the thrill was more than the big-studio film – it was the fantastical experience of going to the movies.

When the Silver Theatre first opened its curtains in 1938, it was celebrated as the nation's centerpiece of entertainment for the emerging car culture. Located in suburban Washington, D.C., Silver Spring became a cultural mecca that drew in masses. And at the end of the red carpet was a palace befitting of Hollywood royalty, resplendent with all the glamour and elegance of the Art Deco day.

Cut to 1985 and it appeared that the Silver Theatre had seen its last star. The neighborhood was declining and the dilapidated theater was forced to shut its doors. With its heyday a distant memory, the building was facing the wrecking ball. That was until a unique community effort sprung forth with a \$400 million revitalization project that would once again situate Silver Spring as an entertainment destination and cultural landmark.

The American Film Institute (AFI) and Gensler Architects set forth restoring the original building and auditorium design sympathetic to the original standards of the Silver Theatre's legendary cinema architect John Ebersohn. Also serving as AFI's new

East Coast headquarters, a 32,000 square-foot addition was designed to support facilities, offices, meeting and reception spaces, as well two new state-of-the-art stadium theaters. But the team soon found that unearthing the stylish building buried beneath decades of neglect would be a challenging task.

Gensler Architects, a worldwide architecture, design and planning firm, has worked on hundreds of cinemas and studio screening rooms. They went back to the archives, combing through photos and news clippings from different eras to piece together what the interior might have looked like. The new upscale facility would once again appeal to older, more affluent audiences, which U.S. exhibitors are finding have a renewed interest in going to the movies.

"The new structure is very compatible with the old, and the carpet is no exception. We selected a rich blue and red star pattern that alluded to the AFI logo and paid homage to the many stars of screen and stage that have been a part of the organization."

– Richard Logan  
Design Principal, Gensler Architects

### Performance



Antron® uses the four hole hollow filament shape which minimizes the soil trapping area of the fiber and enhances soil resistance. The four holes refract and diffuse light to hide the effects of soil, while the smooth outer surface makes it easier for soil to be released during cleaning.

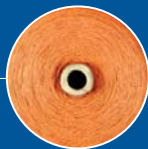
With painstaking detail, the auditorium's historic plaster ornamentation and streamlined cove lighting was reconstructed to closely resemble what was there before. Salvaged scraps of fabric from the original building were analyzed to recreate the original, rich color palette.

With the carpet being such an important part of the theater's overall design aesthetic, Gensler created a custom design constructed of Antron® Legacy nylon especially for the landmark.

"The new structure is very compatible with the old, and the carpet is no exception," said Gensler Design Principal Richard Logan. "We selected a rich blue and red star pattern that alluded to the AFI logo and paid homage to the many stars of screen and stage that have been a part of the organization."

Dedication and commitment throughout the four-year, \$20 million project enabled the team to restore the historic theater and create a modern workspace for the nation's preeminent cinema arts organization. In the process, they sparked a vibrant renewal of the surrounding community.

### Color



Antron® Legacy nylon fiber offers the widest range of lusters, fiber sizes and dye levels available in the commercial market.

With the variety of Antron® Legacy fibers offered and the outstanding tufting technology available, the opportunity to meet creative needs is virtually limitless.

As a third party certified Environmentally Preferable Product, Antron® is identified as having a reduced effect on the environment when compared to competing products. Antron® is not only made with a lower environmental impact, but it is engineered to stay newer looking longer. After all, when a carpet can stay on the floor for a longer period of time, less energy is used, fewer raw materials are consumed and less waste is generated.



For more information about Antron® carpet fiber,  
please call 1-877-5-ANTRON or visit [antron.invista.com](http://antron.invista.com).

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