

Somerset from page 1G

with a polygonal-faceted skylight. Simplified, classical-like columns of Mankato stone, quarried in a Minnesota town of the same name, mark the two entrances.

The entrances were inspired by the Cranbrook Academy of Art, as it too is constructed of Mankato. This lends a rich, indigenous palette to the Somerset Collection. Over the entrances are glass canopies that do not break the pedestrian sight line

of the interior through the windows above. The exterior walls are defined with rusticated, horizontal belt courses of Mankato breaking up the vast expanse of brick and creating a sense of human scale in the lower courses.

The rotunda presents a grand entry that will also be used for public performances and events. It leads to the central two-story pedestrian corridor that defines the major

shopping axis of the Somerset Collection, which is enveloped with light from the skylight extending the entire length.

Also serving to define the central axis are two spear-like projections of variegated marble in the floor that project out from Cafe Jardin in the center of the mall. They terminate at two circles, also of variegated marble, in front of Neilman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue and define the major tenants.

Shopping in a hermetically controlled environment has become a favorite American pastime. When it opens this fall, the Somerset collection will serve as the consumer culture's Eden which, ironically, is kity-corner to Kmart's headquarters, lending a little levity to the scene.

Dale Northrup is a college professor who teaches architectural history and writes an architecture.

New-look kitchen done on the cheap

AP — Sprucing up a tired-looking kitchen doesn't have to be a complicated remodeling project. The cabinets, walls, ceilings and countertops all lend themselves to creative improvements on a budget. Here are some ways of doing it:

- The simplest change for wood wall cabinets is to remove the doors and hinges, conceal screw holes with wood filler, and paint the interiors a lively color to show off kitchen gear on open shelving. To make the cabinets seem deeper than they are, line the cabinet backs with mirrors (be sure the back of the face frame is painted).
- Cheer up a dark kitchen by painting wood-grain cabinets with any bright high-gloss enamel, then paint the surrounding woodwork white or a color to contrast with the cabinets (Strip or sand old finish, and prime before painting). Also consider stenciling walls and cabinets with a design, or painting the ceiling. Use high-gloss enamel for an eye-catching, easy-to-clean look.
- Change cabinet hardware; for example, replace with round porcelain knobs.
- Replace old cabinet doors that are beyond repair with new stock doors available from cabinet dealers.
- For the appearance of ceramic tile at a fraction of the cost, look for vinyl-coated wallpaper designed to look like tile. Some tile papers look so authentic that a person has to touch the paper before realizing it's not real.
- Cover damaged or badly worn walls with wood lath placed on the diagonal. Apply a protective coat of polyurethane, then hang utensils, pots, and pans from hooks or nails attached to strips.
- If the walls aren't right for windows, install a skylight to bring sunlight into the kitchen. Skylights provide five times as much light as a wall window of the same size — and won't sacrifice privacy. For improved ventilation, consider an operable skylight that opens by remote control on a hinged frame.
- Consider painting everything white — the ceiling, walls, woodwork, cabinets, even the floor. A light palette will enhance a feeling of spaciousness.

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