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Vigilante Associates Has Made An Impact in South Florida With Quality Custom Glass Systems

Janice Hoppe-Spiers • August 27, 2020



David Vigilante's company, Vigilante Associates, installed 16-foot-by-6-foot glass panels and radius glass panels in the retail area of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Fla.

Vigilante Associates lives up to its name as its clients' security in the successful design and installation of impact glazing systems. "When other companies say a project is too complex, that's when we step in," President David Vigilante says. "We put our signature on every job we do. Our quality of work reflects who we are as a company."

Backed by a 26-year reputation in south Florida for successfully delivering on projects that others consider to be impossible to do, Vigilante Associates delivered on that expectation once again when it completed "the hottest project in North America," according to Vigilante. The company not only delivered on its glass and glazing contract for the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Fla., it also took over the contracts of two other glazing competitors that weren't able to complete the job.

"They fell down, and the general contractor asked us to step in and take over their work," Vigilante says. "Our scope on this project took a year and a half and was our largest contract to date. We were in a situation where we were going to make it work or we were going to fail — there was no in-between and we hit it out of the park. Not many people could have done this."

First-of-its-Kind Structure

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood is the flagship destination of Hard Rock International, which is owned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Known in the gaming industry for its innovation, the tribe made a bold statement with its latest development, which features the world's first guitar-shaped hotel that soars 450 feet into the sky.

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino's guitar hotel structure was a vision of Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen, and Las Vegas-based Klai Juba Wald Architects brought it to life with the help of structural engineers DeSimone Consulting Engineers.

Vigilante Associates was contracted to complete custom glass on the interior and exterior of the massive structure. The company procured 31 different glass types from countries around the world. Vigilante

VIGILANTE ASSOCIATES

www.vigilanteassociates.com

- **Headquarters:** Hialeah, Fla.
- **Employees:** 47
- **Specialty:** Custom glass systems
- **Best Practice:** Meticulous attention to detail, quality of work and meeting project schedules

"When other companies say a project is too complex, that's when we step in."

– David Vigilante, president

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Associates partnered with Mexico City-based Cristacurva, a leading fabricator of unique glass solutions, to manufacture the more than 30,000 square feet of glass.

"We had 30 truckloads of 16-foot-tall single pieces of glass that were roughly 1-inch thick, and one-third of it was radius glass. The truckloads had to travel all the way from Mexico City to Miami, and I couldn't sleep at night during that time," Vigilante says. "But we didn't break one piece."

The successful accomplishment is a testament to Vigilante Associates' project management team and its detail-oriented approach. "From the project managers to the superintendents, they all worked in concert to help make this hotel and casino what it is today," Vigilante says.

In addition to the challenge of transporting the massive pieces of glass, Vigilante Associates was under duress to meet a strict deadline for its delivery. Frequent design changes also added to the company's challenges.

"The project had to be done in time for Super Bowl LIV, and we delivered," Vigilante says. "Our comradery got us through the experience and everyone bought into our philosophy. It was all hands on deck, and we worked hand in hand with everyone involved to make this project successful."



Although the 450-foot-tall, 596,044-square-foot guitar tower draws the most attention, the total \$1.5 billion project was a massive undertaking in itself with many different standalone components. The 3.2-million-square-foot master plan includes a new 240,000-square-foot, 6,500-seat Hard Rock Live entertainment venue; an additional seven-story hotel tower; a 42,000-square-foot spa; and 120,000 square feet of new meetings and convention space.

It also boasts a 13.5-acre water feature; 16 new dining concepts, three of which will be high-end restaurants; 20 bars and lounges, including a comedy club, poolside day club and ultra-luxe nightclub; a central energy plant; and the remodel and expansion of low-rise buildings that house gaming, hotel rooms and restaurant space.

Boutique Services

Vigilante Associates specializes in the design, manufacture and installation of architectural glass and aluminum and hurricane impact systems. The company has two divisions: high-end interiors and envelope exterior glazing. Seventy percent of its work consists of exterior glass systems, while the remaining 30 percent includes interior work.

"They are separate divisions because the exterior crews can't do what the interior crews do," Vigilante explains. "You have to be meticulous and use the right crew for the right installations."

Vigilante says he comes from an Italian background and grew up in a family that did things very meticulously with attention to detail. "I was raised that way, and that's the only way we do business," he adds.

Vigilante credits the members of his team for being diligent, thorough and accountable, among other qualities. Team members include Art Forte, senior project manager; Christopher Lynch, general superintendent; and Alec Montoto, project administrator.

Since its inception in 1994, Vigilante Associates has successfully completed projects for the University of Miami, Florida International University, American Airlines, Ritz-Carlton Hotels and the Network Access Point of the Americas. A majority of its work is in south Florida, but the company has successfully completed projects throughout North America and the Caribbean.

"We are a boutique glazing company that primarily works with architects in helping them design building envelopes and custom glazing," Vigilante explains. "We work with a handful of general contractors and don't really hard bid projects."

"We win work because of our reputation and relationships with architects and developers, and we work with top-of-the-line contractors. We generate constant, repetitive business from those relationships."

A Perfect Track Record

Vigilante Associates prides itself on never having been litigated. It has also never had a bond revoked or a worker's compensation claim. The company's low liability is a direct result of paying top price for the best installers, Vigilante says.

"There are a lot of companies out there that pay their employees just above the minimum," he adds. "But by

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doing that, they won't get the right installation and teamwork. We have a comradery here, and I treat all my employees like they are family."

Vigilante Associates' experience modification rating (EMR) is 0.72. The industry average is 1.0. "It's important because if a general contractor engages us on a project and we are slightly more expensive than the competition, they still are more likely to hire us based on our safety record," Vigilante explains.

The company also maintains a perfect track record by not overextending itself and limiting the number of projects it performs each year. "We are always on the offensive, meaning we are never behind on a project," Vigilante says.

Although the company could take on three times the amount of work it currently performs, Vigilante Associates chooses fewer projects so it can deliver superior work on those projects.

"The responsibilities that come with our work are more important to me than the money," Vigilante says.

"Because those responsibilities are so strong and important, you have to always focus on the challenges of the project, and make sure that everything you do is clear and precise. If you do that, the money will follow."

Last year was Vigilante Associates' biggest and best year since its inception, and Vigilante expects this year to be much the same. He attributes the growth in construction to President Donald Trump lowering taxes and removing regulations that negatively impacted the market and developers.

"When the Trump administration talks about putting America first and creating more jobs, I'm a testament to that thinking," Vigilante says. "I've hired more people than I ever have in my company's history."



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