

A Bit of Italy in Marion, Indiana



Bella Medical makes visiting the doctor a pleasant outing

When patients enter Bella Medical—a medical office building with space for future retail businesses in Marion, Indiana—they may feel as if they’ve stepped into an open-air villa in Tuscany or Provence.

“People identify it with a romantic spot to which they’ve traveled or seen in a magazine” says Dr. Shawn Swan, one of four doctors who own the building. “For

some, it might be the French countryside. For others, it could be a European village. The design reminds them of someplace that they have loved—where they have felt at ease.”

For Swan, an art major before he went into medicine, that special place was Tuscany—and he wanted a building that reflected his impressions of that region.

BY BEN JONES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY D. ALTMAN FLEISCHER AND PAUL IVY

A BIT OF ITALY IN
MARION, INDIANA

“We decided that what we needed as physicians was someone who could essentially design and build the building for us”

DR. PAUL WOLFE, BELLA MEDICAL

The building’s atrium features a dramatic central tower and has a coffee and chocolate shop that is popular with the staff and patients.

Bella Medical includes two medical practices—one dealing with obstetrics and the other with pediatrics. The four doctors who built it, including pediatrician Paul Wolfe, right, also included future retail space for related businesses.



Old World look, New World engineering

But how to create a bit of Italy in the middle of Indiana, on a reasonable budget? Swan and his partners turned to Felderman Design-Build, a Butler Builder® in nearby Fort Wayne.

Dr. Paul Wolfe, one of Swan’s partners, had been an investor in two other medical facilities in Marion—a radiographic imaging center and a cancer care treatment center, both built by Felderman. “We were very pleased with the outcomes of those buildings,” Wolfe says.

“To build Bella Medical, we did look at other general contractors as well as architects. But we decided that what we needed as physicians was someone who could essentially design and build the building for us, and that’s what Felderman did. They were very easy to work with.”

Using Swan’s postcards and photos from Italy and pictures of U.S. buildings that he admired, Felderman quickly captured the image Swan wanted. “They nailed exactly

what I was looking for,” he says.

The \$3.1-million, 18,860-square-foot Bella Medical building contains two practices: One wing houses Obstetrics and Gynecology Inc., where Swan is a partner; and the other, Marion Pediatrics, LLC, which is owned by Wolfe. A 40-foot-high atrium tower connects them.

The atrium contains a medical lab, a coffee shop, and room on the sides for two future enclosed retail spaces.

Felderman used systems construction for the medical wings, while the atrium was built conventionally and

covered with a CMR-24® standing seam roof system. The Widespan™ structural system provided column-free interiors in the two wings. This flexible space, coupled with the design/build process, enabled the doctors and their staff members to come on site during construction to confirm the best wall placements for the examination and waiting rooms and the correct location of electrical

BELLA MEDICAL

Butler Builder®: Felderman Design-Build, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Size: 18,860 square feet

Butler® Systems:

Widespan™ structural system

MR-24® standing seam roof system

CMR-24® standing seam roof system

"They nailed exactly what I was looking for"

DR. SHAWN SWAN, BELLA MEDICAL



outlets and plumbing.

"We got to pick where every wall went in the building," Wolfe says.

"The layout's perfect," Swan agrees.

The facility has two weathertight standing seam roof systems—the MR-24[®] system for the wings, and the CMR-24 system for the atrium. The central tower has an exposed copper ceiling with skylights. Around the lobby's edge, the CMR-24 system's metal deck and the exposed joists were painted white for a neat finished look. The atrium's walls are brick and cut block combined with a stucco-like finish.

Felderman began construction in November, and despite a brutal winter finished by the deadline, May 10, when the doctors' leases on their former quarters expired. At \$165 a square foot, the project's final price tag fell within its projected cost.

"The doctors' biggest concern was that there be no hidden costs. Using the design/build method, we had very few changes during construction," says Dan Eads, Felderman senior project manager.

Medical offices, plus

Swan and his partners conceived their venture as a facility that would combine their medical practices with retail space for businesses catering to the needs of their patients—such as maternity and children's clothing stores or a massage therapist for pregnant mothers.

With that in mind, they purchased additional land in front of the building for a future retail strip featuring more such businesses.

"The whole concept would be something of a one-stop shopping opportunity for women's and children's retail services," Swan says.

Bella Medical has already attracted plenty of attention. Business has increased since the facility's opening, and the practices have added new partners in their expanded space. There are now eight doctors in all.

One of the building's popular features is the atrium's coffee and chocolate shop, Bella Caffé, which features an Italian espresso maker on a handmade cart. Patients waiting to see their doctor can linger over a cappuccino at bistro tables until their pager buzzes. The nurses eat lunch there.

Even before it opened, the building created a stir in Marion—a town of around 30,000. Swan was there at night putting finishing touches on some decorative elements in the atrium when people came driving up—hopping out of their cars to press their noses against the glass.

"A parade of cars was coming through the parking lot and underneath our portico so they could see the interior, because it's so different from anything else around here," Swan says.

There's no denying its appeal. Whether in Tuscany or Marion, the building is "*bella, bella.*" ■

BUILDING PROFIT[®]

SUMMER 2009 Vol. 29 No. 2

Editorial Director: Leslie Clark
Editor: Judy Findsen
Editorial Assistant:
Catherine Cooper
Art Director: Frank Satogata

Building Profit[®] is published on behalf of the Butler Builder[®] organization by Page Two Publications, Ltd., in cooperation with Butler Manufacturing[™].

Editorial Office:
Building Profit Magazine,
Page Two Publications, Ltd.,
P.O. Box 8067,
Cincinnati, OH 45208,
Phone: (513) 321-7780.

Printed in U.S.A. © 2009
BlueScope Buildings
North America, Inc.
All rights reserved.
Butler Manufacturing[™]
is a division of BlueScope
Buildings North America, Inc.
P.O. Box 419917, Kansas City, MO
64141-6917.
May be reprinted by
permission only.