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SPIEGELGLASS CONSTRUCTION

4TH GENERATION AND BEYOND



If you've ever dined out in St. Louis, you've probably set foot in a restaurant built by Spiegelglass Construction Co. And if you've ever eaten in a Panera Bread Co. location, you've almost certainly been to a restaurant built by the Maryland Heights-based company.

It was after building locations for Panera in the early 1990s that contractor Spiegelglass Construction found its niche in restaurants.

Over the past century, the company has taken on a variety of building jobs as construction and development evolved in the St. Louis region. It ultimately narrowed its focus on restaurant, retail and corporate interior work. Joe Spiegelglass started the company in 1904 as a one-man operation that mostly did repair work for downtown storefronts.

Today, the company is run by its third and fourth generations with co-owners Barry Spiegelglass and Tim Spiegelglass at the helm. The father and son duo said the company's strong reputation has kept it thriving and allowed it to cultivate long-term clients such as Panera.

"Fortunately, since 1991 when we did the first store for them, we're still doing stores throughout the years as they've evolved and went to different owners," Barry said.

Spiegelglass Construction has built more than 400 Panera restaurants. The firm, which has about 15 full-time employees, also has built multiple locations for restaurants such as First Watch and Wasabi Sushi Bar. Spiegelglass Construction declined to disclose revenue.

"Our long-term clients is where we can see our value, that people keep on coming back to us," Tim

said.

Recent work for Spiegelglass includes construction of the region's first Shake Shack location in the Central West End and The Arch Cafe, located inside the Gateway Arch and built as part of the Arch grounds' \$380 million revamp. The company is also general contractor for Fitz's Root Beer's planned location at the new \$7 million Gathering Square development in South County.

Fitz's owner and President Michael Alter said his company chose Spiegelglass because of its reputation as the best restaurant builder in St. Louis. He said there's a personal touch provided by the construction company that sets it apart.

Barry "takes personal attention to make sure everything is going OK. He is constantly in contact with us, asking us questions, making suggestions," Alter said.

That type of involvement in projects is something Barry said has been handed down to each generation that has led the business.

"Since I can remember, my father and even my grandfather always had a strong integrity to complete the work, keep the customer happy and do whatever it took to have the great integrity and ethics that kept people coming back," he said.

As for its future plans, Spiegelglass Construction said it plans to continue with its niche in restaurants and grow organically with its existing client base. And whether the business ends up being a fifth generation company remains to be seen.

"Just like Barry, throughout my life, there was always a choice. It was always there if I wanted to go there," Tim said of the company. "I have three little girls. Fortunately,



in my generation and future generations, things have changed in the construction world. I'd be more than happy and I think they'd fit right in if they ever wanted to be part of Spiegelglass Construction."

While Spiegelglass Construction has found its niche in recent decades, the company's success hasn't come without challenges. The company points to the 2008-2009 recession as its biggest threat in recent years. The recession forced the construction company to evolve its business model by tightening its overhead, subcontracting more work out, downsizing its office and

shifting its work online. Barry and Tim also said their long-term clients helped during the recession, since many restaurant chains were still expanding and building.

Outside of its work, Spiegelglass Construction has also placed an emphasis on building up the community. Members of its leadership team have volunteered at organizations including Covenant House and Camp Rainbow and the company has made donations to the St. Louis Area Food Bank, BackStoppers and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation.

— Nathan Rubbelke

