



How ai3 Created a
Show-Stopper Space at
Microsoft with Alpine Tiles



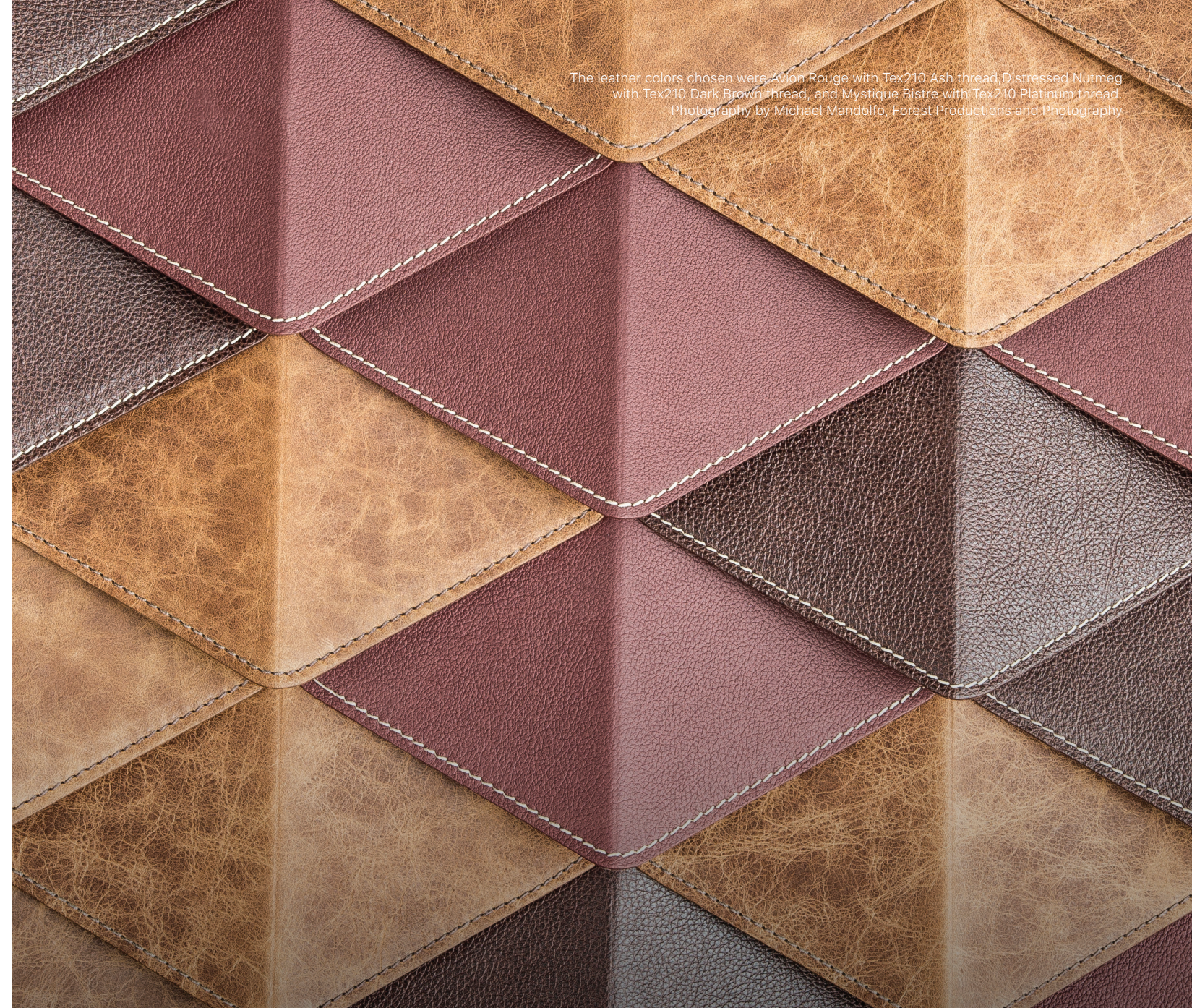


The Challenge

ai3, a design firm in Atlanta, Georgia, specializes in hospitality projects such as boutique hotels and chef-driven restaurants. When Microsoft was looking to create a new space for their Microsoft Technology Center, Customer Experience and Employee Areas, they wanted to create an employee and customer space that did not feel like a traditional corporate office, but rather a custom hospitality experience. Hence, Microsoft hired ai3 for their hospitality expertise and approach.

For this project, the design team at ai3 wanted the space to encompass all of the aspects that employees love about the Atlanta area. They drew their inspiration from outdoor activities that connect neighborhoods and communities, nature, notably the city's beautiful tree canopy, and of course, Atlanta's southern hospitality and progressive mindset.

The main goal of ai3 was to create spaces that employees and customers would want to be in all day. The space needed to be comfortable, but also provide an elevated experience with all of the best technology.



The leather colors chosen were Avion Rouge with Tex210 Ash thread, Distressed Nutmeg with Tex210 Dark Brown thread, and Mystique Bistre with Tex210 Platinum thread. Photography by Michael Mandolfo, Forest Productions and Photography



ai3

ai3 design team (left to right): Catrina Rosa, Ann-Marie Lima, Heather Rice and Ethan Lewis.

The Design Process

The design included a 52-foot curved wall within the space. The design team at ai3 considered other products and wall-cladding treatments for this important structure.

Garrett Leather, in collaboration with Harcourt London, worked with the designers to develop a solution that could be installed on the curved wall. Garrett Leather provided varying cost options that did not compromise the overall look and feel of the space.

Ultimately, Garrett Leather's Alpine Tiles proved to be the best solution for a unique wall cladding that provided the depth, color, texture and pattern the designers wanted to create a design element and reinforce their nature concept. The design team chose three leather colors, varying in texture, to mimic the look and feel of a pinecone. Each tile included decorative stitching.



The Installation

The Alpine Tiles arrived in Atlanta on time and in good condition. With a wall of this size and magnitude, Garrett Leather was hired to install all of the Alpine Tiles onto the curved wall structure. Two employees from Garrett Leather and one employee from Harcourt London traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to install the plywood substrate and approximately 3,500 individual tiles. They finished the task ahead of schedule, in less than one week. The entire design team at ai3 was pleasantly surprised with how quickly and easily the tiles were installed, with no issues or delays.



The Final Results

The project was a huge success for ai3. Ann-Marie Lima, the lead designer for the project, explains, "Microsoft's employees and customers are wow-ed by the overall space and design and enjoy using the area. The Alpine Tile wall is a big part of what makes the space unique and people gravitate to it like we hoped they would."

ai3, with the help of Garrett Leather and Harcourt London, delivered a truly unique and impressive design statement which has become a show-stopper in the space. Ann-Marie explains, "It shows that ai3 thinks outside of the box and uses innovative and unique materials and products in our designs."

Garrett Leather always strives to provide a superior customer experience and exceed customers' expectations. Ann-Marie was thrilled with the results and was impressed by how Heather Leopold, the Account Executive for Garrett Leather in the Atlanta area, went above and beyond to make this design concept come to reality. Ann-Marie explains, "Heather took care of us, answered all of our questions, created budget options and personally, quickly addressed our client's issues and needs after the tiles were installed." Ann-Marie adds, "I recommend Garrett Leather for their beautiful product and service! It was a great overall experience."

"The Alpine Tile wall is a big part of what makes the space unique."

- Ann-Marie Lima





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