

*Case Study*

## **Atlanta Airport Gateway Marriott**

*High Style and High-Efficiency Plumbing Help*

*Atlanta Airport Gateway Marriott achieve Silver LEED certification*



Marriott International has made environmental stewardship a priority for two decades. The company was first in America with a LEED-certified hotel and conference center (Hyattsville, MD), and it continues to strive for environmental excellence. In 2011 the chain achieved LEED Silver certification for its Atlanta Airport Gateway hotel, which exclusively features American Standard high-efficiency plumbing fixtures.

Across all Marriott brands, this is the 13th LEED-certified property. "Marriott has a goal of reducing its hotels' water and energy consumption 25 percent by 2017," says Mari Snyder, vice president for social responsibility and community engagement at Marriott International.

The new 403-guestroom hotel opened in August 2010. Although another brand was initially specified for the project, American Standard fixtures were selected based on price, style, availability and performance, says Bruce Tucker, the hotel's director of engineering. "It wasn't just what company has the best price, or most efficient water reduction capabilities, it was who encompasses the look that we were going for, the water efficiency and the pricing. Taken together, American Standard beat everyone else out in that category."

Among the American Standard products featured in the Marriott guestrooms are Cadet 3 FloWise water closets, Town Square faucets and spouts, Cambridge Americast bathtubs, and Studio undermount lavatories. Other high efficiency fixtures installed on the property include the AFWall 1.28 GPF water closet and Allbrook FloWise .5 GPF urinal.



*Marriott Atlanta Airport Gateway guestroom bath featuring American Standard Studio undermount sink and Town Square faucet*

“The American Standard fixtures that we used played a part in attaining a 30 percent water reduction on our property,” Tucker says, comparing their high efficiency to standard performance. “It was essential to choose fixtures that could achieve that.”

Abraham Mack, owner of Panola Enterprises in Norcross, GA, oversaw the plumbing installation at the property. “You’re seeing high efficiency fixtures more, even on the commercial side,” Mack says. “American Standard is a good product at a good cost. That’s what we sell to our customers – good product, cost is right, and ease of installation. It all goes hand in hand.”

Mack worked with Tammy Cantrell, market development leader with American Standard since 2000, to make the sale. “In the Marriott, there was a savings with American Standard,” Mack says. “We said we can give you a product that is just as good or better, at a better price. Tammy was very helpful in submitting all the documentation and samples to present to the owner. She was instrumental in helping us prove our point.”

Despite the successful track record of low-flow plumbing fixtures, not everyone is familiar with them. Since clogs are a hotel’s worst nightmare, it’s not surprising that the project had an early skeptic. Just prior to the hotel’s opening, the owner expressed concern about the high-efficiency water closets in the guestrooms. Having little experience with less than 1.6 GPF toilets, he was worried that they wouldn’t work.

Rick Beverly, senior plumbing designer with HESM & A Consulting Engineers in Atlanta, was the plumbing design engineer on the project and he wanted to prove to the owner that the American Standard Afwall 1.28 GPF toilets would work and work well. "He was used to seeing more water in the bowl and tank and we had to reassure him that it would work fine. So I went to a local Korean grocery store and bought some miso," he says. (Miso is a thick paste made of fermenting rice or soybeans that is a staple of Japanese cuisine.) "I poured it into the toilets and flushed them and they worked fine. The owner was happy and we haven't had any problems with the toilets whatsoever."

"That was a good selling point," says Abraham Mack, noting that reassurance that the toilets will work is always a big deal to the customer. "We proved to them that the system worked and worked well."

LEED-certified buildings are designed to reduce the use of both energy and water. At the same time, they lower operating costs. The benefits are far reaching. "I think water conservation is very important," Beverly says. "Not only are you giving the guest an opportunity to utilize a system that will usually be lower flow than their typical house, it gives them some satisfaction that they are helping the environment. You're also helping the hotel owner, whose water bills will be cheaper. For fixtures with hot water, we're saving energy too because we don't have to heat as much water. Finally, you're also helping the municipality because their water usage won't be as great, so their sewer systems won't have to be upgraded as soon."

Incorporating the American Standard high-efficiency products and fixtures into the hotel's overall project was a team effort, Tucker says, with a fine line meeting the needs of the interior designers that wanted an elegant look along with the finance members that needed to stay on budget. "All those things have to be taken into consideration, but we have to get the water efficiency. Being able to have an American Standard product that fits the look and price and can help achieve a 30 percent less water use on the property makes a great partnership for Marriott. I think our company is doing it better than anyone else is."



Tucker says the American Standard low-flush toilets are the single largest water saving device at his property. But being LEED-certified is a comprehensive achievement for the hotel. "What it boils down to for me is that our company is making huge strides toward being a

good steward of the environment and we are hoping that that has an impact on a guest's choice to stay with us," he says. "Not only are we providing a wonderful room that looks nice, but we're also doing something good for the environment."