RIGHT AT HOME
PORTFOLIO KITCHEN & HOME DEBUTS ITS FLAGSHIP STORE AND ESTABLISHES ITS DESIGN SHOWROOM IN FULL VIEW OF UNION STATION
Geri Higgins, CEO and principal at Portfolio Kitchen & Home, landed her Flagship Store across the street from her favorite building in Kansas City, Union Station. The 100-year-old Pershing Building is now the design center and state-of-the-art showroom for Portfolio’s design professionals.

At the base of the Liberty Memorial and overlooking Union Station, the new Portfolio Kitchen & Home Flagship Store opens its glass front doors to the iconic downtown skyline. A year in the making, Portfolio’s 7,000-square-foot Flagship Store has found a home worthy of housing the design firm’s wealth of creativity and unique products inside the restored Pershing Building at 215 W. Pershing Road.

“The Union Station District has always been my favorite,” says Geri Higgins, Portfolio’s CEO and principal. “We feel like we are investing in Kansas City and our design community by opening our Flagship Store in the Union Station District.”

The nearly 100-year-old Pershing Building is an architectural jewel on the midtown skyline and a prime example of the city’s thriving urban core revitalization efforts. But as the saying goes, what’s on the inside counts the most. An innovative interior concept, the Midwest’s largest product line, a team of experienced design experts and the ultimate client experience combine in the Flagship Store to deliver
a sophisticated design culture that rivals any found in New York City, Chicago or Los Angeles.

Since the original Portfolio Kitchen & Home store opened on State Line Road six years ago, Portfolio has gained a reputation as the go-to design firm for not just the Kansas City area, but for the Midwest and beyond. Portfolio offers an individualized experience for each client and budget, and the scope of the Flagship Store now allows clients to immerse themselves in Portfolio’s culture and design heritage. Featuring everything from cabinetry and appliances to flooring, lighting and more, the store represents a seemingly endless stock of high-quality products for residences, commercial properties and businesses. And regardless of the project at hand, clients may choose from custom, semi-custom or studio line products to meet the needs of individual tastes and budgets.

The primary showroom space is large enough to display Portfolio’s diversity of designs and exclusive product list, but Higgins says the essence of Portfolio’s boutique culture is still preserved. The space allows Portfolio to fully explore all elements of the culture that put the firm on the map. In addition to the large showroom, the new space includes a state-of-the-art, media-ready demonstration kitchen and outdoor terrace with a stellar view of the city for hosting design-related and philanthropic events.

The showroom has many zones of activity, including the conference room. Situated in the forefront of the showroom, the conference room serves as the primary point of contact between Portfolio’s team of designers and diverse clients.

“The most critical space is our conference room, where the client’s project needs, our design abilities and product collections find synergy to achieve the client’s individual project requirements,” Higgins says. “The formula that made this boutique special is honored here every day. It begins and ends with the client.”

For Higgins, another important component of the business model revolves around Portfolio’s ability to provide a custom experience, with each member of the award-winning team of designers providing a special skill set and area of expertise. In the breadth of the Flagship Store, the magic happens as the team gathers, collaborates and creates in its communal design studio.

The Portfolio design team has a strong reputation and history of working with the design community to create top-notch results. The move to the Union Station District has made Higgins and the Portfolio team more accessible to their partners in the Kansas City design community.

“Synergy is critical to design,” Higgins says. “Portfolio embraces great design and works with talented design professionals, architects, space planners, local artisans and boutique businesses.”

When Higgins and her team began scouting for the Flagship Store’s home, they wanted a unique location and architecturally prominent building that communicated what they do, who they are and what they love about Kansas City. Higgins says her business was courted by many downtown developers, but it was working on the hospitality kitchen for Studio Dan Meiners that solidified her desire to be located near Union Station.

“We have always done a lot of business in the Crossroads Arts District with noted architects, space-plan designers and design boutiques,” Higgins says. “But Dan’s commitment to set the tone for this fabulous area made moving here an easy decision for me.”

Soon after, Higgins selected the historic Pershing Building for its ability to celebrate Kansas City’s architectural footprint and showcase Portfolio’s sophisticated brand to the regional design community.

“[Building developer] Dan Clothier was instrumental in the beautiful renovation of the Pershing Building to its original elegance and splendor,” Higgins says. “It’s an absolute gem.”

But moving into the restored 1919 Beaux Arts-style building was not without challenge. Staff tapped into their own design experiences and local resources to help them create their dream—the Portfolio Flagship Store. Higgins called on friend and fellow Edward Tanner Award-winner Christian Arnold of Clockwork Architects + Design to collaborate on the details of bringing a raw space into a functioning environment, and A.R.C. General Contractors was retained to provide its skill set and the attention to detail needed for the complexity of the project.

“We’re proud to raise the visibility of great design and lifestyle in the Midwest and beyond,” Higgins says. “Many of our clients are first-time visitors to Kansas City, and they are in awe of the design community here. Our Flagship Store represents a truly unique design experience that was previously found only on the coasts. Our clients truly appreciate the elevated experience—it’s a pleasant surprise for them.”

Exceeding expectations is all in a day’s work at Portfolio, but Higgins says the Flagship Store signals the beginning of a new and even more successful era for the design firm.

“The Flagship Store is our future,” Higgins says. “It enhances our ability to celebrate all that is home through design culture and products.”

DESIGN THAT INSPIRES, INSIGHT THAT INFORMS