case study



Sfuzzi Uptown Dallas

Challenge

A restaurant with limited space for ductwork needed to replace its outdated HVAC system.

Sfuzzi Uptown wasn't always one of the hottest spots to dine in Dallas. A funeral home from 1928 to 1952, the building at 2533 McKinney Avenue has gone upscale with the neighborhood and has been home to Sfuzzi Uptown since 2010. The name "Sfuzzi" is the "juxtaposition of letters from a famous New York pizzeria menu," says co-owner and Long Island native Robert Colombo. In Colombo's faux Italian, the name means "having fun while you dine." The Dallas Morning News named Sfuzzi Uptown the highest-grossing restaurant in Texas in 2011.

When Colombo's firm bought the single-story, 3.000-square-foot funeral home in 2010. the first thing he did was gut the interior. A graduate of the hotel school at Cornell University and former manager of The Plaza and Grand Hyatt in New York City, Colombo had a good idea of what the interior of his new restaurant should look like. Replacing the existing 20-ton HVAC system would not be necessary, he reasoned.

Because of the building's age, the only space for air ducts was at the exterior walls. Installing a conventional system throughout the building was out of the question. The problem was that Sfuzzi's most important space was the 1,000-square-foot bar area at the heart of the interior. "The stagnant air around the bar was dreadful," Colombo said. "My guests were uncomfortable, which eventually hurt my business. I called in several HVAC professionals to help me solve this problem, but I knew what they offered was either way too expensive or would not work."



Colombo knew there had to be a better solution, so he searched online for a compact system that would conquer the comfort problem at his restaurant's bar. He discovered the ductless systems from Mitsubishi Electric US Cooling & Heating Division, Suwanee, Ga. The website indicated that Jack Schmidt. Benchmark HVAC, Inc. in Dallas was his closest Mitsubishi Electric contractor.

Schmidt told Colombo that the Mitsubishi Electric ductless system was the only one in the industry capable of overcoming the space limitations at Sfuzzi. Schmidt confirmed that there was just enough room on the rooftop for the two suitcase-sized outdoor units needed to do the job. The two indoor units were also sufficiently compact to fit up in the ceiling, because they were only 9 inches, compared to the industrywide standard of 12 inches.

Solution

A Mitsubishi Electric ductless system was the only system capable of overcoming the space limitations.

Benchmark HVAC installed the system in January 2011. "The linesets penetrated the roof membrane perfectly between the old joists," Schmidt said, "and the indoor units slid nicely up into the roof." Finding a suitable place for the wall thermostats, however, was a problem; there was no space in the old walls to install the wiring, so Benchmark put the controllers (thermostats) on the roof, in the outdoor units themselves. This inaccessibility was inconvenient and made it difficult to

Sfuzzi Uptown Restaurant

Project Location: Dallas Completion Date: January 2011

Project Team

Owners: LaReve Consultants, Inc., Dallas

HVAC Contractor: Benchmark HVAC, Dallas

Mitsubishi Electric Ductless **Equipment Installed**

control the temperature in the bar. Columbo needed a better solution.

At the time, Mitsubishi Electric was beta-testing a remote controller kit that was the first in the HVAC industry to incorporate Honeywell's RedLINK[™] wireless technology: the MHK1 Wireless Remote Controller Kit. The RedLINK wireless controller operates over radio frequency instead of through infrared waves or electrical wires. This eliminates the need for electrical wires and enables the controllers to be placed in a different room than the indoor units. The MHK1 Controller allowed Schmidt to hang the controllers on the walls close to the bar and restrooms. "It was this wireless technology that enabled us to bring the controllers inside, making it easy to adjust the temperature and providing total comfort control in the bar hotspot," said Schmidt.