

Employee Spotlight

Jess Baccari

This issue's Employee Spotlight focuses on Project Manager Jess Baccari. Jess joined Siena in 2019, with the high recommendation from her irascible brother Andy (Garnitz). Jess brings nearly a decade as a designer to her role as PM. She oversaw renovations at Harvard Law School's Langdell Hall Library, and is currently managing a project at EMD Serono in Rockland. Plumb Bob recently asked her some questions about her professional background and interests. Thanks for all you do, Jess!



Your education and early professional background are in architecture. What first drew you to design?

I went to an alternative elementary school that focused on hands on learning. In 3rd grade we were studying ancient Greek, Roman, and Egyptian cultures. We dressed up in togas, made canopic jars out of paper mache, and built an entire Egyptian city out of foam core to scale. It was 15'x15', took up almost the entire classroom. We learned about the design of courtyard style homes, the clay brick construction and the structure of the pyramids. I would like to say that ever since then I wanted to be an architect. But I actually forgot about how much I loved it until senior year of high school when my art teacher Mrs. Ranke told me I should go into Architecture because I was good at Math and Art.

How do you think your architectural design work prepared you for transitioning into construction management?

Managing people and client expectations. It's the same thing, but the day to day details are different.



What was the most memorable/favorite design project you worked on prior to starting at Siena? Why?

I have three!

- 1. Westfield State University Hall** – “Best Ride Award” – This was the best client I have ever worked with: reliable consultants, large budget, relaxed schedule, fun and hardworking internal team, and an iconic design. 138,400 SF 411 Student beds. \$40 million. 12 months for design, and 20 months for construction.
- 2. Yotel Seaport** – “Square Peg in a Round Hole Award” – Performing mechanical coordination with exceedingly tight plenum space. Girder slab structure, 9'-3" floor to floor, 8" deep concrete planks, 7'-9" to 8'-3" desired ceiling heights. The hotel layout was the opposite of a traditional hotel room, with the bathroom (and all related plumbing) along the exterior. 99,000 SF 326 key hotel.

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3. **Exchange South End** – “I Get by with a Little Help from my Friends Award” – 1.6 Million SF of Office & Lab Space with Retail base. 2 year permitting process with over 75 community meetings. Only project I have ever heard of where the South End neighborhood asked for part of the building to be taller! Comments from the community members were vital in helping to change the zoning to make the building taller.

You recently received some rave reviews for completing the first construction phase for EMD Serono, which had a very challenging fast-track schedule. What’s the secret to your success?!

Color coded phasing diagrams, schedules overlaid on plans, overcommunication, adapting the design documents to the field conditions quickly, and a great superintendent!

You’re a member of the Professional Women in Construction organization. What advice might you give to a young woman in construction to help grow and navigate her career in the industry?

Get involved in extra curriculars either in the AEC community, or beyond, and make sure its something you are passionate about. This will help grow your network with real meaningful connections.

Your bio also says that you’re an avid gardener. How is tending to and growing a garden like running a construction project? Which is more challenging?

Prior planning is key, making sure the plants are set up for success, they have plenty of light, plenty of soil depth, and space to grow. They require daily attention, watering and pruning, otherwise they can go wild, similar to a construction project without attention to detail they go wild!

What do you like most about working at Siena, besides seeing your brother every single day?

The people and the projects!

Can you tell us an embarrassing story about your brother Andrew?

Too long (and inappropriate) for this newsletter! However, I will trade stories for favors...



All-time Favorites or Recent Recommendations

Movie | *Empire Records* (the VHS version, not the DVD version)

Binge-watch Show | *Ballers*

Music | Country

Restaurant | The Butcher Shop, Toro, Barcelona, Santarpios, Taqueria el Amigo, Town Spa, Cosmica

Vacation Spot | I prefer exploring a new city over sitting at a beach. Next Up in May Honeymoon to Italy and France!

Activities | Tennis