

**Monticello Visitor Center Store  
Charlottesville, VA**

After several years of careful planning and a meticulous design phase reflecting the highest standard in sustainable ingenuity, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation celebrated the opening of the Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center. The new, LEED certified complex, designed by Ayers Saint Gross, is composed of five pavilions, one of which is the Museum Shop, designed by Eileen Ritter & Associates (ERA).

The ERA design team carved the 4,800 sq ft shop into discrete departments: a book department with one of the most comprehensive selections of Jefferson related books as well as a comfortable lounge area for reading, an all-season indoor-outdoor garden center which offers Monticello's historic plants and seeds, an exclusive Monticello furniture and reproductions department and a Virginia food and wine section.

Taking cues from the architecture, Ritter and associates conceived of the space as a modern interpretation of Jefferson's aesthetic. Working within a modernist vocabulary, the design team wove traditional elements into their plan. Mahogany cabinets enhance the display of books; weathered oak was selected for the garden center. The elegant environment appeals to an upscale customer yet it is equally suited to handling large crowds of school children.

The results - the dollar per visitor has increased, the average sale has increased and visitors linger in the space.

