



# JELENA NIKOLIC

## Design Leader

### EXPERIENCE

**Sargenti Architects | Phoenix, AZ (July 2019-Present)**

*Head of Design*

- ❖ Lead multi-disciplinary design teams across corporate, hospitality, and commercial sectors, managing multiple client accounts and delivering high-value projects across U.S. markets.
- ❖ Oversee the complete project lifecycle—from concept design, narrative development, and schematic planning through construction administration and launch—ensuring design integrity, budget adherence, and timely delivery.
- ❖ Partner cross-functionally with Client's Construction, Real Estate, and Operations teams to align design strategy with business goals, optimize workflows, and streamline delivery.
- ❖ Develop compelling visual and written design narratives that translate strategic placemaking ideas into experience-driven environments. Strengthen and expand client relationships by conducting high-level presentations, progress reviews, and strategic planning sessions with executive stakeholders.
- ❖ Oversee FF&E programs, specify furniture, artwork and manage vendor coordination, and quality assurance.
- ❖ Collaborate with Tenant Experience and Operations teams to evolve hospitality touchpoints that merge service design with spatial experience. Direct project production, consultant coordination, and inter-office communication to drive efficiency, collaboration, and innovation across multiple offices.
- ❖ Serve as right hand to Managing Director—establishing and running design departments in Dallas, Phoenix, hiring, mentoring, and leading high-performing teams of designers and architects.
- ❖ Implemented firm-wide design and documentation standards, improving efficiency, quality control, and client satisfaction.
- ❖ Managed office build-outs and construction, overseeing contractors, budgets, and schedules for multiple locations.
- ❖ Provide reporting and forecasting of design deliverables, construction progress, and departmental KPIs.

**Bar Napkin Productions | Phoenix, AZ (February 2018-June 2019)**

*Designer*

- ❖ Led multiple fast-paced hospitality projects from schematic design through construction documentation, translating brand vision into cohesive spatial experiences that balance functionality, aesthetics, and operational flow. Oversaw the integration of architectural, interior, and branding elements to ensure design consistency across all phases.
- ❖ Collaborated closely with consultants, contractors, and vendors to align technical requirements with creative intent, resolving design challenges in real time and ensuring constructability, compliance, and budget alignment. Managed specifications, materials, and FF&E selections to deliver environments that reinforce brand storytelling and elevate guest experience.

### PROFILE

Strategic design and construction leader with **15+ years** delivering **hospitality, restaurant, retail, and commercial projects** for domestic and international clients, including globally recognized brands. Expert in **guiding multidisciplinary teams, managing multiple accounts, and driving design strategies** that align with client vision, brand standards, and business objectives. Known for **balancing creative excellence with operational efficiency, budget oversight, construction administration, and on-site construction management**. Known for balancing creative excellence with operational efficiency, financial oversight, and brand integrity.

Proven track record in **client relationship management, cross-functional collaboration, and developing high-performing design teams**.

### EDUCATION

**Northern Arizona University**

2008-2010

- Bachelor of Science in Interior Design
- C.I.D.A. Accreditation
- Graduated Cum Laude
- Gold Axe Award Nominee and Excellence Achievement Award

**Scottsdale Community College**

2006-2008

- Associate in Applied Science in Interior Design
- President's List and National Dean's List
- Class Valedictorian Nominee
- Graduated Summa Cum Laude

### SKILLS

AutoCAD, Revit, Photoshop, InDesign, Bluebeam, Sketchup, Microsoft Office, Great Organizational Skills, Detail Oriented, Excellent Interpersonal and Communicational Skills.

### CONTACT

**Phone:** 602-558-0344

**Portfolio:** <https://jelena-id.wixsite.com/resume>

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## EARLIER CAREER EXPERIENCE

- ❖ **Fitch – Scottsdale, AZ | CAD Consultant | 2012–2013**  
Drafted and rendered retail and commercial interiors for major brands including JCPenney, M&M's World Las Vegas, and Victoria's Secret, producing detailed drawings and 3D renderings that captured brand identity and design intent across large-scale retail environments.
- ❖ **H&S International – Scottsdale, AZ | Project Coordinator | 2011–2012**  
Assisted in design development and project coordination for hospitality and commercial projects, collaborating with architects, vendors, and clients to align design intent, materials, and schedules for cohesive project execution.
- ❖ **Parnian Design & Manufacturing, Inc. – Scottsdale, AZ | Interior Designer & Showroom Manager | 2009–2011**  
Designed furniture, interiors, and showroom layouts while managing daily showroom operations to ensure a seamless client experience and polished product presentation. Oversaw custom casework, furniture, and rug design, conducted site visits to verify quality and installation, and supervised interns in design coordination and client support.
- ❖ **Mountainside Fitness Club – Phoenix, AZ & CO | Interior Designer | 2008–2009**  
Developed interior concepts for new-construction fitness clubs, creating functional, branded environments focused on member experience. Coordinated with contractors and consultants to ensure design intent, materials, and construction details were accurately executed through all phases.
- ❖ **Hotel Highland at Biltmore – Phoenix, AZ | Design Consultant | 2005–2010**  
Assisted in hotel remodel design, supporting space planning, material selection, and guest experience improvements. Delivered high-level guest services, ensuring brand standards and design aesthetics were consistently reflected in daily operations.

## CORE COMPETENCIES:

Leadership & Team Mentorship | Multi-Project & Multi-Site Management | Corporate, Hospitality & Commercial Design | Architecture & Interior Design Strategy | Construction Administration & Oversight | FF&E Specification | Client & Stakeholder Relationship Management | Design Concept Development & Presentations | Contract Negotiation & Financial Management | Multi-Account Management | Brand Development

## EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

### **Kona Grill Inc. | Scottsdale, AZ (March 2016-Dec. 2017)**

#### ***Project Designer***

- ❖ Responsible for the design and development of restaurant concepts across domestic and international markets, leading projects from schematic design through construction completion. Drive the creative vision, develop design narratives, and translate brand standards into functional, high-impact environments that enhance guest experience and operational efficiency.
- ❖ Oversaw all phases of design and construction, including documentation, permitting, consultant coordination, and field review. Manage and mentor internal design teams, providing direction on layout, detailing, materiality, and brand expression. Partner with architects, contractors, and vendors to ensure design intent is executed accurately and within budget and schedule.
- ❖ Developed and maintain comprehensive project palettes, material libraries, and FF&E standards, producing detailed take-offs, specifications, and procurement documentation. Establish and refine drawing templates, QA/QC checklists, and workflows to streamline production and ensure design excellence across multiple programs.
- ❖ Lead prototype development and rollout for new and evolving restaurant concepts, ensuring brand consistency and scalability across diverse sites while adapting to local regulations and market conditions. Coordinated with stakeholders and cross-functional teams to balance creativity, constructability, and business objectives.

### **Safeway Inc. | Phoenix, AZ (May 2013-March 2016)**

#### ***Designer***

- ❖ Served as a key member of the workplace design team, responsible for space planning and layout development across multiple corporate divisions. Utilized AutoCAD and CAP software to produce detailed architectural and furniture plans, ensuring accuracy, functionality, and alignment with client standards and brand guidelines.
- ❖ Created and rendered 3D design concepts and visual presentations to communicate spatial intent and design solutions effectively to clients and internal stakeholders. Collaborated with architects, consultants, and cross-functional teams to coordinate design documentation, specifications, and approvals through all project phases. Supported project management through the preparation and distribution of drawings, specifications, and construction documentation, maintaining version control and design integrity throughout.
- ❖ Conducted field verification and created as-built and proposed architectural and furniture plans to inform accurate design and installation coordination.
- ❖ Served as part of the corporate facilities and design team, coordinating and executing large-scale office relocations, departmental reconfigurations, and workplace renovations across multiple divisions. Managed cubicle reconfigurations, space optimization plans, and construction oversight to support operational growth and evolving organizational needs.
- ❖ Played a key role in the Albertsons–Safeway merger, partnering with executives and cross-functional teams to integrate design standards, consolidate office environments, and align facilities operations across regional divisions.
- ❖ Managed and oversaw construction and remodel projects for division offices, collaborating with contractors, vendors, and consultants to ensure timely, cost-effective, and high-quality delivery while maintaining business continuity.