

2014 MFE Awards

# Senior Housing, Grand: Residences at Wingate

By Les Shaver



*Warren Jagger*

The Architectural Team knows how to produce seniors housing. Over the years, the Chelsea, Mass.–based firm has built 55 assisted-living facilities, and it has another 20 in the pipeline.

But building the Residences at Wingate, a facility with 91 independent-living, assisted-living, and memory-care units, for longtime client Wingate Healthcare brought challenges even Robert Verrier, co-founder and managing principal at The Architectural Team, hadn't encountered before.

## GRAND WINNER: SENIOR

**Location:** Needham, Mass.

**Developer:** Wingate Healthcare

**Builder:** Callahan Construction

**Architect:** The Architectural Team

**Opened:** October 2013

**Number of units:** 91

**Unit mix:** Studios and one-bedrooms

**Rents:** \$4,550 to \$8,300

Normally, proximity to a major artery is considered a good thing in real estate, but the Residences' position next to Route 128 S. was a problem in this case. When the highway was built 40 years ago, construction crews piled rubble, bricks, tree trunks, and sand on the site. "We had to dig [out] 10 or 15 feet of material dumped there 40 years ago," Verrier says.

The project's goal was to bring hospitality design concepts to a senior audience. The amenities include card rooms, dining rooms, an open kitchen, a bistro, fitness rooms, a courtyard, a salon, and a patio with a barbecue, fire pit, and water feature.

Inside, the team focused on earthy, warm colors and materials that are practical yet aesthetically pleasing, to address the changing physical and cognitive needs of the senior population. The designers used durable flooring with smooth transitions, and a mix of natural and artificial lighting. Flexibility was also important. "Some [units] have sleeping areas with sliding doors so [residents] can open up the entire space," Verrier says. "In other units, we were more traditional."