

# CASE STUDY



Project | *Nirmal's Restaurant*  
Location | *Seattle, WA*  
Architect | *Acoustical Design Inc.*  
Product | *FeltWorks™ Acoustical Panels*



1 877 276-7876  
[armstrongceilings.com/feltworks](http://armstrongceilings.com/feltworks)

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## the challenge:

The fine Indian cuisine at Nirmal's Restaurant in Seattle has brought numerous accolades from local and national media. Consistently ranked the top Indian restaurant in Seattle by Seattle Magazine and one of the hottest restaurants in the country by Zagat's, there is no limit to the praise the restaurant receives for its imaginative approach to Indian cuisine.

With its exposed ceiling, natural brick walls, and wood floors, the restaurant, which is housed in a historic building dating back to 1891, has an ambience reflective of a bygone era. While the great food and old-world charm has kept customers coming back for more, they would often complain that the restaurant was too loud. "It was really a problem," says owner Oliver Bangera. "Because it's fine dining, the customers are a little older. People come in suits. They dress up to come to the restaurant and then they would have to shout."

Hoping to bring down the noise, Bangera reached out to Armstrong Ceilings to provide a solution that would control acoustics in the 1,515 SF space while preserving the ambience of the exposed structure design.

## the solution:

With nothing but reflective surfaces, Armstrong recommended that 30 one-inch thick FeltWorks™ acoustical panels be attached directly to the exposed 25-foot-high ceiling to capture the reverberant sound of the bustling restaurant. Calculations suggested that this material would reduce reverberation time by 76 percent to bring the environment to a more comfortable level. The 48" x 96" felt panels have an NRC of 0.85, meaning they absorb 85 percent of the sound that strikes them.

Following the installation of the FeltWorks panels, there was a noticeable improvement in the acoustics at the busy restaurant, with customers commenting that it was much easier to carry on a conversation. "The noise level is significantly down," says Bangera. "There's still noise. It's not too quiet. It's just that now people can talk."

Attached by magnets to a hat track channel, the panels installed quickly and easily, enabling the ceiling contractor to complete the installation in three days. "The installers really liked the magnets," explains Michael Grace of Acoustical Design Inc. "The magnets are screwed into the back of the panels and attach directly to the hat track, making it easy to change or adjust the panels once they are up there."

With the installation taking place early in the morning before the restaurant opened, the acoustic improvements were made quickly and without any disruption to the business. "The most important thing for us was that the restaurant remain open," says Bangera. "So, this worked out perfectly for us."