Michael Jordan Nissan is breaking new ground as one of the first Nissan dealerships to incorporate almost all LED lighting from Cree.
Opportunity

At Michael Jordan Nissan in Durham, NC, management partnered with Gontram Architecture in 2010 to begin planning for a renovation using the architect-led design and build model.

Wanting the best for their project, Managing Partner Ray Vrscak and Eddie Gontram selected an LED lighting solution from Cree, a leader in the LED lighting revolution. As a result, Michael Jordan Nissan became one of the first Nissan dealerships to use LED lighting almost exclusively, both inside and out.

Prior to the renovation, Vrscak had to deal with constant bulb and ballast outages, color shifting lighting, and high maintenance and energy costs. To address these issues, the remodeled dealership included an upgrade to the exterior lot lighting, as well as a reconfiguration of the entire interior space.

Solution

Vrscak worked with Nissan to evaluate how a Cree® LED lighting solution could fit the Nissan spec. One interesting result was a change for the L1 fixtures, known as the Nissan cloud. Michael Jordan Nissan became the first dealership to use an LED solution for the cloud — a decision so successful that Nissan may adopt the Cree solution for the corporate spec.

The cloud features a group of fluorescent fixtures sitting directly over the showroom cars. With the traditional cloud configuration, according to Gontram, mismatch becomes a problem. "The cloud fixture may be nice right out of the box, but in just a year, they start replacing lamps." Since the Cree solution offers lower energy usage with much longer lamp life, the cloud’s light quality remains consistent for years. As Vrscak confirms: "LEDs provide that nice, even illumination. It’s nice not having that maintenance above all those cars."

The dealership is currently about 75 percent LED lighting with almost 300 Cree® LED luminaires throughout. The interior includes the SR6™ and LR6™ downlights and CR22™ and CR24™ troffers. All fixtures feature Cree TrueWhite® Technology, delivering, high-quality light with exceptional color rendering — displaying the true colors of the latest models while providing energy-efficient and near maintenance-free lighting. The exterior lot features Cree Edge™ High Output LED area, flood and wall mount luminaires. Ideal for auto dealerships, the Cree Edge™ High Output solution features Automotive FrontlineOptic™ Technology, precisely delivering light while reducing energy consumption by more than 50 percent over traditional technologies.

“Just the reaction from my subcontractor has been interesting. Everyone I’ve talked to seems very impressed with the light and the quality of the LED luminaires.”

Eddie Gontram | Principal | Gontram Architecture
Benefits
Backed by Cree’s industry-leading 10-year limited warranty, Cree® LED lighting is offering Michael Jordan Nissan a more reliable light source, increased uniformity, improved color rendering and virtually no maintenance for 10 years.

According to Vrscak, “There’s nothing worse than customers walking onto a dark lot to look at a new car and they can’t see.” As to benefits over the previous metal halide solution, Vrscak replies: “It’s the maintenance. Every time the wind blew, I’d lose a ballast. I was spending about $12,000 a year and now, that goes to zero. Every dealer understands driving off his lot at night and there are three poles out. It’s painful because it looks bad and you’ve got to make that phone call the next morning. It’s a thousand bucks...every time. And since we’ve installed these lights, I haven’t had a light out. I don’t expect to have a light out for a long, long time. That’s payback.”

With the exterior lighting plan, Gontram and Vrscak did not want to tear up the parking lot or add more poles. With the new Cree Edge™ High Output fixtures, light levels are very similar to the previous solution, but seem much brighter because of the quality of the LED light. Full light cutoff ensures no light pollution spilling onto adjacent properties. Wattage levels will also decrease significantly, delivering an anticipated annual energy savings of 58 percent. By lowering energy bills and maintenance costs, the exterior lighting solution has an estimated payback of 2.8 years.

Another pleasant surprise for Vrscak was noise reduction: “I notice how quiet [the interior fixtures] are. You don’t have the buzz of the ballast. Definitely on the exterior as well. Those old metal halides were very, very noisy. These are just silent.”

When asked about the light quality, Vrscak replied, “When you walk the rows of cars and you can actually see the colors and the colors really stand out — that is the biggest difference I notice.” Vrscak and Gontram aren’t the only ones noticing the benefits. According to Vrscak: “Everybody loves the LED lighting. My parts manager was left out because no customers ever go in the parts department. He said, ’I’d really like to have those LED lights like everybody else.’”

Cree also played an important role in securing rebates for the project, with up to 15 percent of the project paid for by utility incentives. As Vrscak states: “When you get a check from your power company — I’ve never seen one of those before — that’s a really good day.”

“Walking down the asphalt, actually seeing the colors of the cars and reading the window stickers is much easier now... You can definitely see the detail a lot better.”

Ray Vrscak | Managing Partner | Michael Jordan Nissan
**Cree® LED Lighting Used**

- LR Series Downlights
- SR Series Architectural Downlights
- CR Series Troffers
- Cree Edge™ Series Area
- Cree Edge™ Series Flood

**Participants**

**End User:** Michael Jordan Nissan  
**Architect:** Gontram Architecture  
**General Contractor:** Ten Penny Construction

Visit [lighting.cree.com](http://lighting.cree.com) or contact a Cree lighting representative to learn more.

info@cree.com  |  800.236.6800