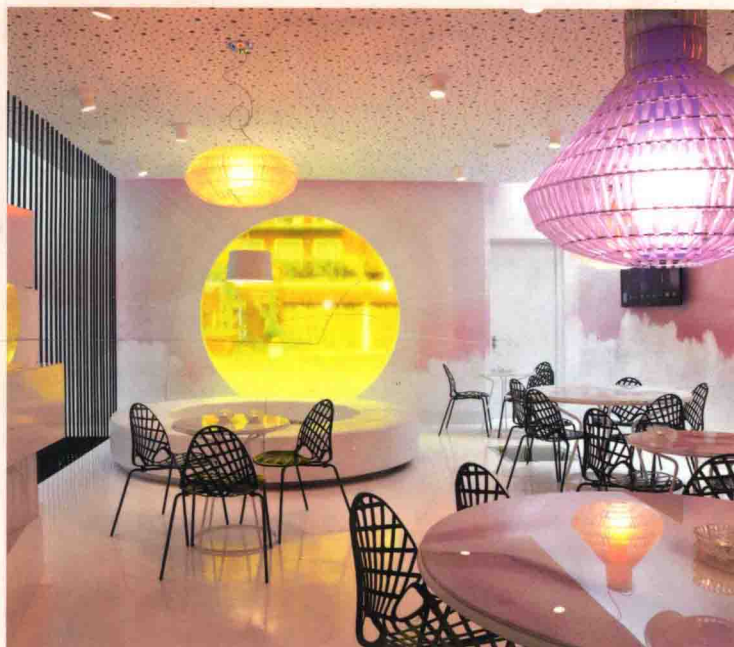


# Let's Go Out!



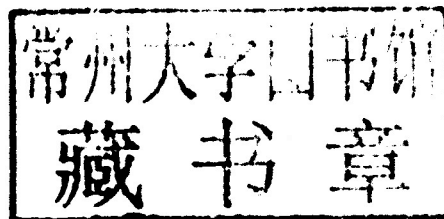
Interiors and  
Architecture  
for Restaurants  
and Bars



gestalten

# *Let's Go Out!*

Interiors and  
Architecture  
for Restaurants  
and Bars





# Let's Go Out!

## Interiors and Architecture for Restaurants and Bars

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# *Let's Go Out!*

Interiors and  
Architecture  
for Restaurants  
and Bars

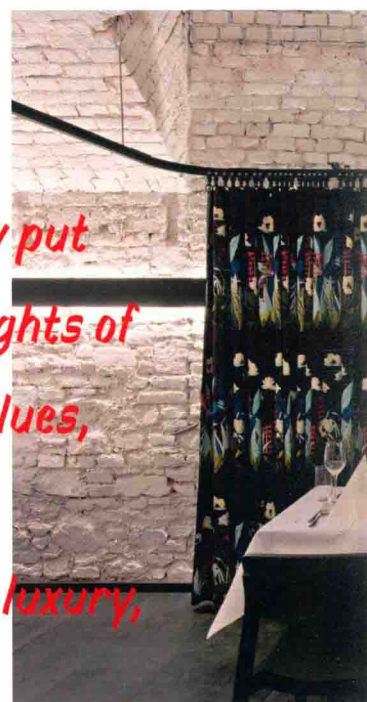
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# Experience New Values



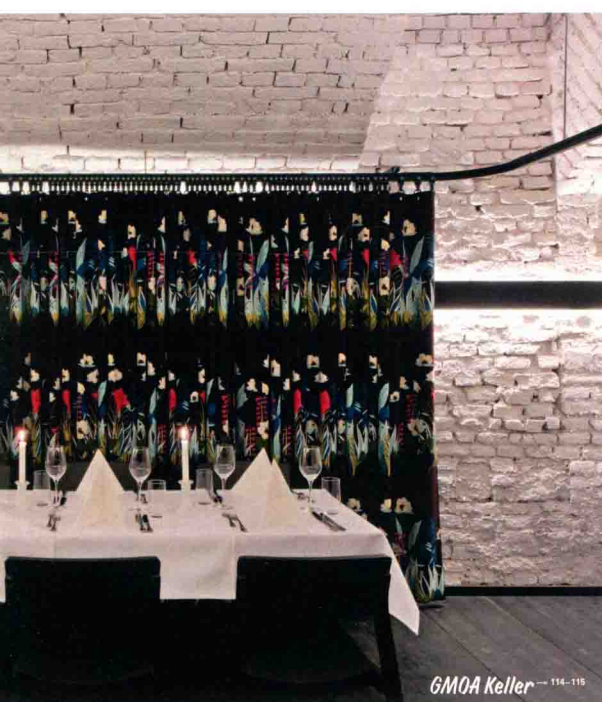
*Bad times may be bad, but they have their upsides too. They put our feet back on the ground and inspire us to greater heights of creativity. They lead to renewal, including a renewal of values, and the design world is not immune to this recalibration. Today, the design world has a new valuation and vision of luxury, a luxury that delights in diversity and multiplicity.*





/ Increasingly, there is a little something for everyone out there—and by “out there,” we mean almost anywhere. The joy of going out in style is no longer the exclusive domain of Parisians or New Yorkers or the Milanese. Good design is spreading into the hinterland—cities you can’t quite place on the map without being told which countries they’re in—to Kfar Saba, Kilis, Varna, Port Washington, Osnabrück, Trollveggen. It’s Utrecht, Wu Xi, and Hiseko as much as Amsterdam, Shanghai, and Tokyo. Girona and Ashford as often as Barcelona and London. The cities you’ve never heard of are catching up to the international innovators and integrating local styles and visual vernaculars along the way.

And so hospitality and entertainment have become just a bit more democratic: aesthetic experiments are more widespread, venues are more accessible and, much to patrons’ delight, they offer greater variety—of sensibilities, people, and food. Interestingly, it is a boom in specialization that gives us an early clue that this is happening: in recent years, monofood eateries dedicated to, say, only grilled cheese sandwiches, lobster rolls, or the peanut butter and jelly sandwich have sprung up around the world. Specialization allows owners to perfect both their place and their product and lets them pamper a constituency that has been underserved or served only en masse in the past: coffee shops that cater to an increasingly java-savvy public, for example, are presenting themselves as laboratories—equipped with sterile-white tiles, grid lighting, stainless steel surfaces, and beaker-like glassware—where coffee becomes a “crafted” comestible that must be prepared with a skillful combination of art and science.



GMOA Keller — 114–115

The recent shift in perspective also acknowledges the great value of simple things: time, well-being, and comfort are counted among the greatest luxuries of all, and the spaces we go out into are catering to these changed perspectives. In progressive design, over-the-top glamour is being toned down, decadence of the clichéd sort pushed to a distance. Luxury is signaled less often by the stereotypical precious materials and finishes and increasingly by objects in which we take comfort: objects that suggest the human hand in their surfaces, objects that are textural and tactile, objects that embrace, shelter or blanket us. No wonder then that textiles, ceramics, wallcoverings, upholstery and drapes are more popular and innovative than ever. *Clancy's Fishbar* — 22–23 in Perth is nearly incandescent with a mash-up of varicolored fabric “chandeliers,” while curtains and seating made from Kvadrat’s *Jungle* fabric soften and warm the white brick walls of the subterranean *GMOA Keller* — 114–115 dining room.

Our renewed emphasis on simplicity brings ambitions back closer to home, within our range of focus. Sometimes it is a focus on traveling lighter and trusting more in our materials: the most surprising spaces are stripping down instead of dressing up. In Copenhagen, *Noma Lab* — 132–133 consists of simple oak surfaces and a series of cylindrical shelving units that give it an organic Scandinavian coolness. In Lisbon, *Poison d'Amour* — 256–257 shares a similar “austerity,” but renders it in harder materials like marble and stone and white furnishings that contrast sharply with the monolithic black floors.

Ironically, this simple solution is more complex to execute because there are fewer distractions to obscure banality, derivation, cheapness, or flaws. It requires the rare ability to recognize when “blemishes” have value, can add to a space instead of detracting from it: in the Parisian *Coutume Café* — 198–199, freshly stained flooring and new furnishings are paired with industrial plastic sheeting partitions, bare bulbs, and construction site-like excavations that reveal historical elements like the shop’s original door, without embellishing or finishing them. Similarly, is Mexico City’s *Cantina de Comida Mexicana* — 168–169 half-demo’ed or half-built? The interior’s structure remains exposed after the designers tore down sections of the ceiling and walls so that its bones serve both as a marker of local history and as ornament. In this way, structure is presented as something that can be mined as much as built. By combining this skillfully displayed construction-site rawness with refined finishes, wood furnishings, and polished cement floors, the designers suggest that the past and present can do more than co-exist; they can enrich one another.

In these projects, (apparent) accessibility has increased in comparison to the speakeasy

sensibility of recent years with its secret addresses and unmarked doors in lieu of velvet ropes, where queued visitors have been turned away at the door arbitrarily, sometimes for no other reason, according to one restaurateur, than to make the



Trollwall Restaurant — 59–61

point publicly that not just anyone can get in. Instead, the new space is relatively relaxed, friendly, open, inviting—if anything, it’s attitude they check at the door.

## LOOKING INWARD & OUTSIDE

Following recent trends in retail design, successful spaces for eating and drinking take their clients on a journey inward, not just into the viscera, but also into the imagination. Color, graphics, and tactility are food for fantasy and reflection as well as the ingredients of emotion and designers continue to use both to soothe or animate interiors. Perhaps colors appeal to the same synapses that fire in front of candy shop windows, a fact exploited by the designers of Stockholm’s *Café Foam* — 90–91 where a series of rooms starts in frothed-milk neutrals that are brought to a sudden boil with hot pink walls that draw all eyes irresistibly through the space. At times, even quiet materials can be rendered highly graphical through obsessive repetition or extremely formal treatments: *Niseko Look Out Café* — 68–69 is threaded with wooden ribs set on a uniform grid of tiles, taking a traditional Japanese residential architecture detail to the nth degree. It’s nearly Op Art, but in a neutral, natural material.





we needn't view ourselves in opposition to Nature; humans too are a *force majeure*.

## REALITY: ESCAPING IT, EM- BRACING IT

In hard times, in particular, escape from reality becomes a necessary extravagance. Not long ago, we were escaping into flamboyantly scripted and deeply themed environments. Lately, however, theatrical treatments have become less histrionic. Immersive experience remains more important than flat imagery and logos in the service of branding, but staged interiors are less like opera sets and more like an Elizabethan theater; less visually overwrought and more narrative. Berlin yogurt shop, *EFA's Box*<sup>74-75</sup>, consists of a series of *coulisses*: in spots, holes have been punched in the extant architecture and propped open with rough plywood to frame a vignette, elevating ordinary fast food service to a modest performance.

Even toned down, however, scenographic space still delivers top-drawer escapism: At Amsterdam coffee house, *Smoking Club Hi/Lo*<sup>224-227</sup>, visitors toke up in spaces kitted out as postmodern heavens and hells, escaping into ... their fumes. At *Stationen Uppsala Three*<sup>234-235</sup> in Sweden, period-based interiors allow guests to escape into another time. *Griffins Steakhouse Extraordinaire*<sup>236-241</sup>, which is cluttered with objects sketching out the detailed life and characters of two imaginary hosts, lets visitors escape from their own lives into someone else's. At the Juliet Supperclub, where the interior was modeled on abstracted elements from the *1001 Nights*, clubgoers escaped into a fairytale.

Sometimes we just want to feel good to feel good. But at other times, we crave a space where we know that our consumption makes real sense, where we can do good (or not do bad) to feel good. World events have served as a reminder that having a voice and being able to use it is a rare privilege; we have agency. And we can speak with our cash.

Gone entirely are the days when "sustainable style" meant hemp and hippies. Sustainability can look slick today—the US's first LEED-certified nightclub, *The Greenhouse*<sup>280-282</sup>, consisted mainly of recycled or recyclable materials though most guests ordering bottle service at glossy tables would never have known it—but it doesn't have to. The naive, repurposed, and handmade is also increasingly appreciated. Today, upcycled materials like salvaged wood are so popular that New England cows may be threatened with homelessness if barns continue to be stripped at the current rate.

Along with flea market finds and DIY objects, upcycling is being put to resourceful and sophisticated use: *Dishoom Chowpatty Beach Bar*<sup>20-21</sup> recreates a vociferously colorful Indian snack shack beside the Thames by using "construction materials" like rolled-up newspapers and reused yogurt tubs. The greatest virtue of some projects is a rough-hewn appearance that is nonetheless sophisticated in its craftsmanship or execution. Self-production is on the rise: the owner of Bakery in the lobby of Vienna's *Hotel Daniel*<sup>210-213</sup> made some of his own furniture, including a silk-covered sofa that he turned into a swing by cutting off its legs and suspending it from a length of old rope.

In an open-air London market, a pop-up kitchen called *Ridley's*<sup>218-219</sup> promoted local business, local agriculture, and what they called "exhibitionist eating": the cooks prepared meals on the ground floor kitchen of a structure made of scaffolding and hoisted it up via pulleys—table and all—to the floor above where it slotted into the center of a large communal dining table. The concept encouraged visitors to patronize the local market stalls: instead of taking cash payment, *Ridley's* accepted market produce in exchange for a cooked meal.



## HOME: GOING OUT VS. GOING OUT TO STAY IN

Many venues are tailored to the harried lifestyle of the new century: In recent years, the artisanal food truck has become wildly popular and increasingly high-end, selling anything from handmade ice cream sandwiches to gourmet cupcakes, even winning over Parisians, who have begun to eat boutique burgers and tortillas on the streets and in the *marchés*.

In spite of recent catastrophes and Hollywood's wildly popular natural disaster genre, designers are willfully envisioning Nature as a source of both shelter and inspiration. Nature is effortlessly graphical and seductively haptic: the shape of the Vietnamese *Lam Café*<sup>70-71</sup> building resembles a coconut leaf, while the focal point in San Francisco's *Fritz Dining Room*<sup>48-49</sup> is a series of framed terrariums embedded flush in gallery-white walls as if they were man-made canvases, the oldest of the Old Masters.

Nature is, of course, the mother of fractal geometry, the earth having given us facets and polygons, crystals and snowflakes, analog elements that on a macro level appear high-tech. Imitating these therefore nicely reconciles our ambition for technological progress with our craving for a peace it has been unable to provide. It is the vast scale and proportion of the faceted walls and ceiling of Abu Dhabi's *Allure*<sup>78-79</sup> nightclub—not the gold leaf and bronze panels—that make for its out-size sumptuousness.

*Twister*<sup>96-97</sup>, a Kiev restaurant slangily named after hurricanes, is both graphical and tactile. The designer has imagined Nature as fierce but protective and then abstracted it: Pendant lights shaped like raindrops never fall, banquettes ripple through the room, pine cone-shaped seating is all cushion and no needles. In Norway, Nature dwarfs man daily and to an extreme with severe weather, pounding waterfalls and unpredictable glaciers. Here the architect of the *Trollwall restaurant*<sup>58-61</sup> and visitor's center echoed his site, perched atop the tallest rock face in Europe, as if suggesting that



In Portland, Oregon, the *Sip Mobile Lodge*<sup>—120</sup> was converted using white paint and lots of wood from a 1969 Dodge Chinook into a juice and cocktail bar inspired by the cozily domestic feel of mountain lodges. As venturesome as we imagine ourselves to be, we do appreciate allusions to home; we just don't want to get stuck there. So we find ways to reconcile the urge to roam with the gratification that “staying in” represents in a world that is becoming ever more overwhelming; we “stay in” by going out.



*Kitchain*<sup>—202–203</sup> gives the dining room table superpowers by turning it into a mobile unit and stowing basic kitchen tools inside, much like a picnic table or camping equipment. Integrated kitchenettes and grills provide DIY cooking and social space (or can be equipped with a chef) so that it becomes a pop-up dining room table, a place where strangers become neighbors even if only for the course of a meal.

Today, just as some of the newest hotel lobbies are becoming neighborhood living rooms, so too are other hospitality spaces working to simultaneously match and counteract our rampant nomadism (virtual, physical or both) by creating domestic environments that momentarily root us and yet sometimes move themselves: the *Otakara Supper Club*<sup>—200–201</sup> takes place in a Brooklyn backyard that feels as casual and naïve as its food is refined. With a similarly undesigned look-and-feel, the *Kinfolk Dinner Series*<sup>—220–221</sup> toured 12 cities in 12 months. Supper clubs like these make diners feel at home; it's just someone else's home where none of the guests have to do the dishes at the end of the evening.

In the age of social media, the popularity of the supper club should perhaps come as no surprise. Having arrived on a wave of informal food-related events, design, and media, it is partly a response

to the need people feel to reconnect in the flesh. Supper club events hinge on the creativity of the chef, and on local food, produce, people, and styles. Most of all, they are meant to mend frayed community ties, serving as nodes where business relationships and creative collaborations can begin eyeball to eyeball.

## KNOWING ONE'S PLACE

The supper club emphasis on the local is matched in more commercial settings like *La Bipolar*<sup>—44–45</sup> cantina, where the designers took an almost anthropological approach to their research into (and rediscovery of their own) local Mexican culture and the objects of its expression. Restaurants like *Walden*<sup>—150–151</sup> in Brooklyn recall late nineteenth and early twentieth century New York with their pressed tin ceilings, wooden bars, marble counter-tops, globe lighting, and tiled floors.

The design of *Alemagou Beach Bar*<sup>—134–135</sup> on Mykonos works with the harsh local climate instead of against it and drew on surrounding Cycladic architectural elements, becoming a perfect creature of its place: whitewashed, stone-walled, and thatched with naturally insulating reed, it marries this familiar vernacular with crisp modern forms.

At the other extreme, it is still one of the pinnacles of indulgence to do extraordinary things in extraordinary places. Electrolux's *The Cube*<sup>—86–87</sup> offers one of these once-in-a-lifetime opportunities: in this angular, hypermodern box craned onto the roof of a different major European landmark every three months, guests sit around a Michelin-starred chef's table while taking in views rarely seen by others through the glazed and perforated walls. It is an architectural symbiont that takes unparalleled advantage of location, location, location.

And then there are the places located somewhere between the physical and virtual worlds. *Zebar*<sup>—102–103</sup> in Shanghai is a fine formal example. Imagine an immersive environment somewhere between the belly of Jonah's whale and Tron's living room. Its voluptuous black-and-white ribs arc upward, morphing from floor into ceiling. They are actually unique slices drawn in 3D modeling software but cut manually by Chinese workers. As we delight in our virtual tools but become virtually overwhelmed, both terra firma and the ether acquire new significance to us, values that are beginning to show up in a limbo-like space that might be called the “phygital” world.

In the following five chapters, the spaces we go out in are examined from several aesthetic and



conceptual points of view. We start with “Playfull” spaces, celebrations of the emotion generated by color, graphics, form, composition and contrasts, of pop cultural objects and icons, and of cultures ranging from Indian to urban street art and coffee that have acquired a new dynamism thanks to this design approach. “Sophisticated” mines the sculptural, highly graphical, and sometimes layered design schemes that spring from a focus on structure and construction, where the skeleton often becomes the skin and the technical and the organic may be fused or confused. “Northern Comfort” could describe the clean, well-lighted, modernist spaces in the next chapter, with their straightforward Scandinavian elegance. Because these are softly minimalist, forthright and, above all, welcoming, they are places to which it is an easy pleasure to return again and again. Comfort is a key word in the following chapter, as well: “Home Sweet Home” describes interiors that are both cozy and charming. They may share a rustic chic style communicated through upcycled or salvaged materials and DIY details. At the opposite extreme, “Showtime” spaces involve the greatest mixes—sometimes dense mixes—of materials, colors, and patterns and don't necessarily rely on the worn out tropes of luxury that gleam a bit tinnily today. They have a unique voice and tell a story that may be true or may be a gorgeous fiction. Each design approach in these pages reflects our shifting values in a fraught era, where values turn out to be one of the most valuable things we possess.

by *Shonquis Moreno*



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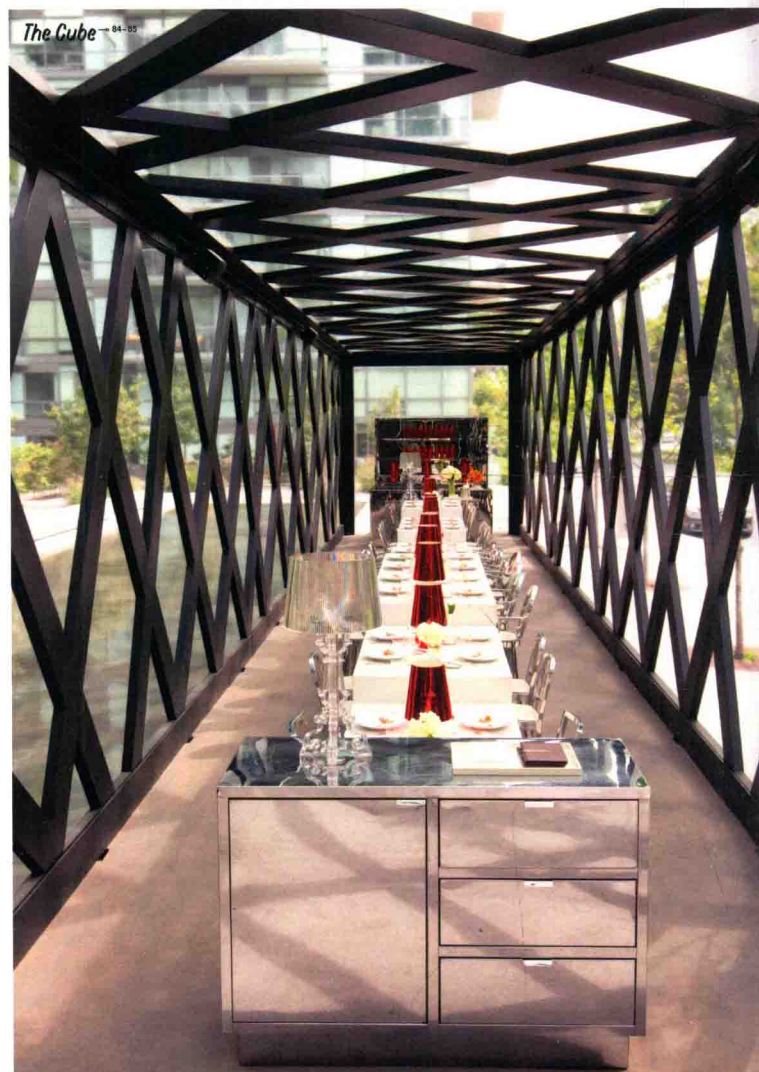
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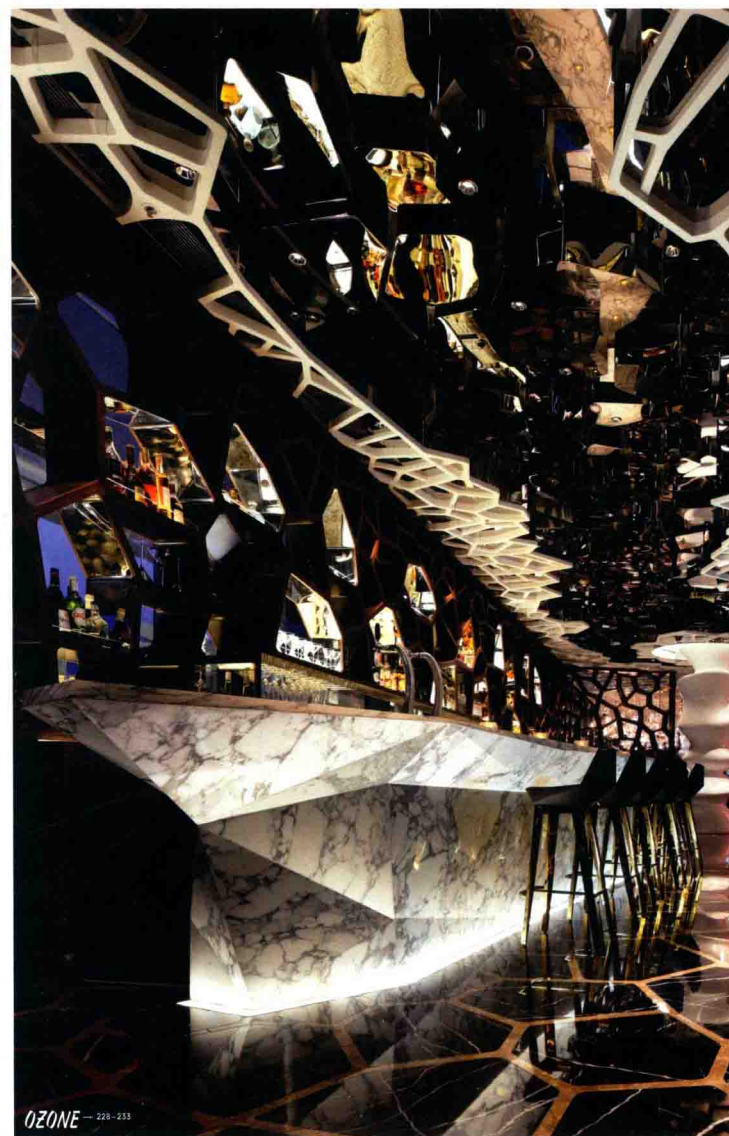




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# Playful

COMO CAIDO  
DEL  
CIELO



*If eating, drinking, and socializing—if going out—is a celebration of being alive, the spaces we do it in should celebrate and stimulate*

*the senses that let us know we're alive. Designers dress playful environments in whole ensembles of color—gradients, spectrums, or clashing mash-ups—or they use it to accessorize. A whimsical sensibility dramatizes familiar objects and visuals, intensifying their impact through repetition or abstraction, amplifying their graphical qualities, exaggerating form through hue, sharpening the contrast on finishes and materials, or isolating elements that are especially evocative. Sometimes playful spaces glamourize everyday objects of the past or present; others draw on collective fantasies.*