

hospitality design

The humble beginnings of the restaurant trade was a simple meal to feed a weary traveller. Man on horseback stopping off overnight after a day's riding across country.

Today's restaurants feed appetite and soul, they are designed to excite, inspire and satisfy taste on every level, not just food. The design and décor is just as important as the food and beverage. It may be edgy and modern, simple and traditional, or theatrical and entertaining.



The beach café is minimal in design and doesn't compete with its environment. The colourful interior decoration of the café above is an example of fun and fantasy.

Educated diners have more sophisticated tastes, and there is a myriad of food products available all year around on offer. As the way we live changes, e.g. blended families, singletons, active seniors; the way restaurants and cafes are designed is changing to meet new demands.

People who live alone often enjoy the company of other diners sitting in long communal tables, families may choose to sit at a dining booth to contain small children, and seniors may prefer the comfort and support of sturdy chairs at a table. And generations Y and X like to slink into sofas at late night bars with cocktail in hand.

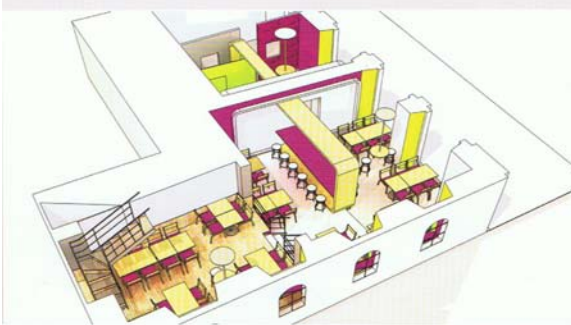


There is one long-term trend that feeds all others: humans inherently have a desire to be together. And when a dining room provides an uplifting social environment it will attract people into the space. Sharing food is an important part of life, nearly every family or social event takes place around the table in all cultures. The red and white tablecloths below are typical of an Italian or pizza café.



Design can significantly improve the bottom line on the operational side, especially in regards to energy-use and well planned floor layouts. Restaurants and bars can reduce energy costs and help create a greener environment, as well as maximise the most efficient use of the space.

It's about finding solutions for the vital connections between design, operations, service, location, demographics and identity.



The design concept needs to be reinforced by the cuisine and service, to attract the target market to the bar or café.

Outdoor eating is always popular when weather permits.

The cultural and social issues of the consumers impact on how food products are prepared and presented, as well as differing budgets for the various consumer groups. Restaurateurs need to understand their target market and cater to their preferences.



People want to be stimulated by the dining experience - exciting menus with fresh and innovative foods, as well as the ambience of the eating establishment - the décor, the table setting, the lighting. They don't want to feel at home, they want a memorable experience away from home.

Hospitality designers should be equipped with knowledge and skill to create a dining experience that fosters word of mouth marketing long after the meal is over.

Restaurant design requires an in-depth understanding of how restaurants flow, how employees will interact with the design and work within the space, and how guests will respond to the design and atmosphere created.



Eating out has become an addictive activity, from the daily morning-coffee, healthy salad lunch or a glass of wine after work with friends. A local cafe/bar that entices people out of their homes or workplace to make us 'feel good' is a winner.



The commercial kitchen is a specialised field of design and the designer needs to work closely with the owner, chef and staff to ensure the spaces, equipment and storage service their requirements for the numbers of guests they are preparing and serving food to. Large hotels cater for hundreds of diners 24/7 and a small breakfast café next door may serve only breakfast foods in the mornings to a small number of guests as any one time.

There needs to be adequate refrigerated storage for perishable foods, easy access to pantry items and storage for crockery, cutlery, glassware and cooking utensils. Bench space needs to be designed to accommodate food preparation as well as clean-up areas. The cooking equipment will vary according to the size of the restaurant and style of cuisine.



As with any kitchen, safety is paramount to minimise injury and burns. Non-slip flooring surfaces, excellent levels of task and over-all lighting, ergonomically designed work surfaces and easy access to stored items.



The ambience affects the taste of the food, people eat out for sustenance and dine out for the experience - both gastrological and sensual experience.

People interested in the health and wellbeing may seek organic and fair trade food would most likely expect the café to adopt ecological approach to the fit out as well in order to support their values.

The taste of ethnic food is very much supported by the selection of colours and style of furnishings to set the scene for a great taste experience.

On the other hand, a fine dining restaurant is all about beautiful presentation and sophisticated decorating to support the more expensive menu and wine list.



Restaurants and bars are constantly seeking new customers as well as trying to retain and strengthen relationships and loyalty with existing customers. The Absolute Vodka bar is carved out of ice. The more cosy restaurant has a wall of photographs of people to personalise the room.



Cafes are operating within book stores, fashion boutiques, beauty salons and sports stores. And every shopping mall has an extensive food hall within it. Dining spaces are popping up everywhere, even among factories in industrial areas.



This is an example of an industrial styled bar in an old warehouse.



Locally grown produce supports the restaurant above.

The techno café provides internet access and plasma screens for diners to use during their visit.



First impressions are critical... signage usually communicates the 'feel of the restaurant' or style of cuisine. Illuminated signs have great impact day and night. Awnings and canopies are used to protect pedestrians from inclement weather and reduce the sun from damaging furnishings. Menus placed outside help to inform the diner of the food selection. The entrance door should be easy to find, welcoming and seductive to invite the customer into the eating establishment.



Pale, natural colours of bleached timber, stone, cream leather upholstery, dark timber. The only colour is the backlit glass wall panels. Some chefs do not like colour or decoration to compete with their food presentation.



floors

The floor is a good way of defining space - the transition from outdoors to indoors, the circulation around the restaurant or bar - public and private spaces. Floors can be neutral or bright and colourful in design, and should be slip resistant and safe.

Materials should be durable and easy to maintain, and protected by a good quality entrance mat to remove dirt and grit from shoes.

Timber, cork, vinyl, terrazzo, polished concrete, terracotta or ceramic tiles are all popular, sometimes used in conjunction with carpet or sisal. Tiles and other hard floors may be noisy.

All interior surfaces should comply with fire and safety regulations and materials should be researched and checked with regulatory bodies to ensure standards are met.

walls and ceilings

The walls are used to conceal, support, divide and focus attention within the space. Materials are varied, paint commonly used to create planes of colour for a sculptural or decorative effect. Colour can add drama, heighten space or conceal it, add warmth to make a space look 'cool'. Wallpaper and textiles are also used to decorate walls and ceilings.

Ceilings sometimes conceal the air conditioning, security, fire alarms, electrical cables, etc between floors of multi story buildings, commonly called suspended ceilings. The surface finish is usually a mineral fibre tile sometimes with open grid sections.

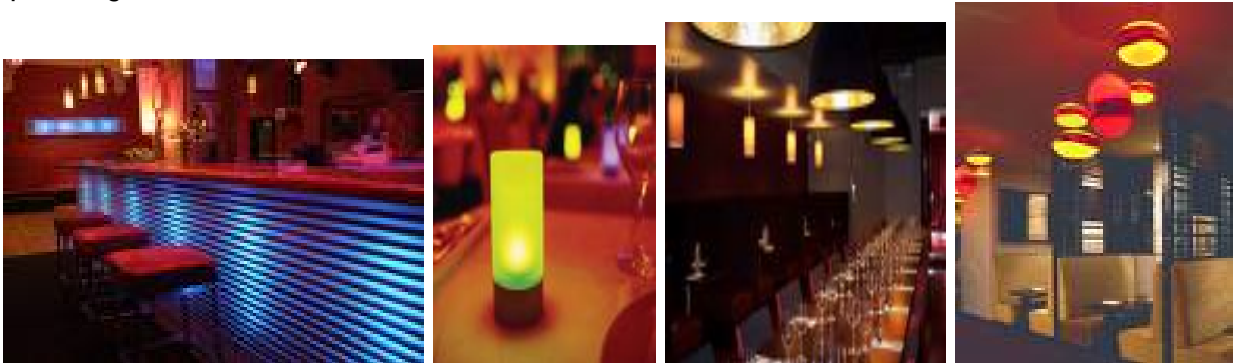
Some open-ceiling designs expose all the services and they become a feature of the store interior giving a high-tech effect.



lighting

Lighting can be used to create atmosphere and influence moods - it should create excitement and anticipation. But as the lighting is usually on all the time it is important to consider cost of energy consumption as well as the installation and maintenance of light fittings and bulb replacement.

Technically there are lots of options for creative lighting effects, and candles are always popular for convivial dining. Fluorescent lamps are economical and give good colour rendition, halogen lamps also provide good colour rendition to make food look appetising.



Strip lighting has been used on the front of this bar for a strong visual effect. Candles add ambience to a dining space. Pendant lights give good overall illumination to dining spaces.

services

As for any commercial building, there are always lots of services to accommodate in addition to lighting. There is the air conditioning and heating, telecommunications, till equipment and eftpos. Security systems, smoke detectors and fire sprinklers, electrical cabling and sound systems.



Cabling and ducting is usually concealed within the suspended ceiling space or sometimes a cavity is created under an access flooring system. Cables may also be ducted along skirting boards and incorporated within cabinetry.



Table settings and dining furniture are carefully selected to ensure they provide long term service as well as add to the design. Chairs need to be sturdy, lightweight and easy to move, tables easy to wipe down after spills.



**eating drinking sharing
communicating nourishing enjoying**

The sensual approach to food is to eat well and enjoy, eat when you are hungry and eat the things you love, plus one or two new things for a bit of adventure. The natural flavours and fragrances of fresh food nourish the body and soul.

Table settings make all the difference to bring people together to share a meal. Cutlery should be substantial and well balanced, glasses should be clear and appropriate for the drink taken from them. Plates should be generous in size but never overfilled. Flowers, living plants and herbs, water and candles add to the sensual dining experience.



compiled by

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