

THE GREAT INDOORS : ISSUE 68 : MAY/JUN 2009

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HAPPY HAIRCUTS IN JAPAN : MARCEL WANDERS GOES HOME : INGO MAURER : NOSIGNER DESIGNER : ROSS LOVEGROVE GETS REAL
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FOOD MOODS : FRESH EDIBLE EXPERIENCES

'IN A WELL-DESIGNED RESTAURANT, THERE SHOULD BE NO SUCH THING AS A CRAP TABLE'

— EMMA STURGESS, FOOD WRITER

Features Projects in Perspective

Theme : **EDIBLE EXPERIENCES**

From Michelin-starred monuments to the humble hot-dog stand, eating out means more than just food. In the age of the celebrity chef, atmosphere and theatre are the special ingredients that add spice to any restaurant visit. Brazenly elitist reservation policies, Zac Posen staff uniforms, and starters that arrive with their own i-Pod soundtrack are the new flavours of the moment. But what makes an edible experience really great? We ask a seasoned restaurant reviewer. Then we profile ten examples of how to do it properly. Because these days, you are where (not what) you eat.

- + CLUBBING WITH CARSTEN HÖLLER
- + LIVING WITH MARCEL WANDERS
- + ROCKING 007 WITH ALBERT FRANCE-LANORD
- + HAIRDRESSING IN JAPAN
- + MEETING SWEDEN'S WISE GUISE
- + GETTING TOUGH WITH WILLIAM RUSSELL

07

WORKING LUNCH

CAFETERIA
BY IPPOLITO FLEITZ

With a reputation for a good price-to-value ratio, a Stuttgart-based insurance company was keen to keep its expansions in line with its public image. When the firm wanted a cafeteria suitable for informal meetings that would function as an alternative to the large, efficient canteen catering for its 800-plus employees, it brought in Ippolito Fleitz, an outfit that had recently finished a customer-service centre for the group, to do the job. 'They didn't want anything that was too luxurious-looking, as that would send the wrong signals,' says Peter Ippolito; his team, meanwhile, had its own concerns about the project. The challenge was to fit the add-on programme into an existing office space that had never been meant for anything else; its layout included several exit doors and, with a training centre on the far side of the cafeteria, lots of through traffic.

In the main cafeteria space, six circular tables surround a central table, forming, when viewed from a distance, a specific cluster that Ippolito calls 'a flower'. Far from being lost in space, thanks to very subtle elements all parts of the blossom are clearly defined and anchored in place. Outlining a perimeter around each table is a flat, 2.5-cm-wide, stainless-steel band that encloses the table and its set of chairs in a needle-felt inlay. Directly overhead, a discoid uplighter floats beneath a dome, which it floods with a wash of light that delineates the dome's diameter. 'The doughnut light is a very straightforward, cheap element, but it has such a refined effect,' says Ippolito. 'We like how the lighting element almost becomes a shadow - and that you can't immediately see how it works.' Each circular surface centres on the middle of the table. The format is repeated in steel-plate circles in the floor, which overlap to produce a graphic accent.

'We bound the tables floor to ceiling, centring them and creating an island,' he continues. The domes were pre-bent before being fitted and sanded on site, but it wasn't quite as simple as it sounds. 'The ceiling was full of mechanical systems. We had to rearrange the air-con, lighting and air-duct technology to pack all that in around our domes,' he says.

'Protecting the tables from through traffic', as the designer describes it, is a long floating counter; people heading to places other than the cafeteria pass this volume on the far side. Employees can sit at the counter on stools or stand to eat. Supported by a steel bar, the counter is fixed to a central column but is lengthy enough to look quite magical. >>>

BY SELECTING ROUND TABLES AND ARRANGING THEM IN CLUSTERS, IPPOLITO FLEITZ PROVIDED ITS CLIENT WITH A COMPANY RESTAURANT THAT IS ANYTHING BUT COLD AND BUSINESS-LIKE.





THE POSITIONS OF THE VARIOUS TABLES ARE ACCENTUATED AND REINFORCED BY PENDANT LAMPS.

Beyond the counter and flanking the entire length of the façade is a 'kind of dining car' made up of eight cabins that carefully formulate a second space within the cafeteria. 'It creates an envelope that you step up into,' elaborates Ippolito. As the view outside was unsightly, the firm turned the seats, making them perpendicular to the window and drawing the focus inwards. 'Without actually quoting a train carriage, we used elements that generate a zone that pulled our ideas together,' he says. A long wooden structure, the booth is lightly whitewashed to lighten the oak grain and give it a more elegant appeal, because 'we didn't want too rustic a look'. Even the tables rolling down the façade in an L-shape, with a solid vertical side panel, play a role in screening the exterior. Countering the corridor created by people passing the booths is the subtly shaped frame of the structure of the booth itself, which almost feels like an enclosed form that's had the sides cut out. To further shield the interior from the six-lane motorway outside, Ippolito explains that 'we decided early on we needed a semi-transparent wall, and the best solution was a micro-mesh curtain that acts as a filter'.

A projecting upper floor made interior lighting critical. The lighting designers that Ippolito collaborated with not only 'threw out 30 per cent of our lighting in initial sketches', but suggested integrating lighting into the base of the booths, while cleverly hiding the light source, so there's no overhead lighting in that area at all.

The acoustics posed another difficulty. 'We micro-perforated the ceilings, the walls of the wagon booths, and the upright elements of the booth's leather seat coverings,' he explains, adding that the silver fabric used to pad columns was selected especially for its technical, acoustic-enhancing qualities. ***

WORDS Charlotte Vaudrey PHOTOS Zoëy Braun



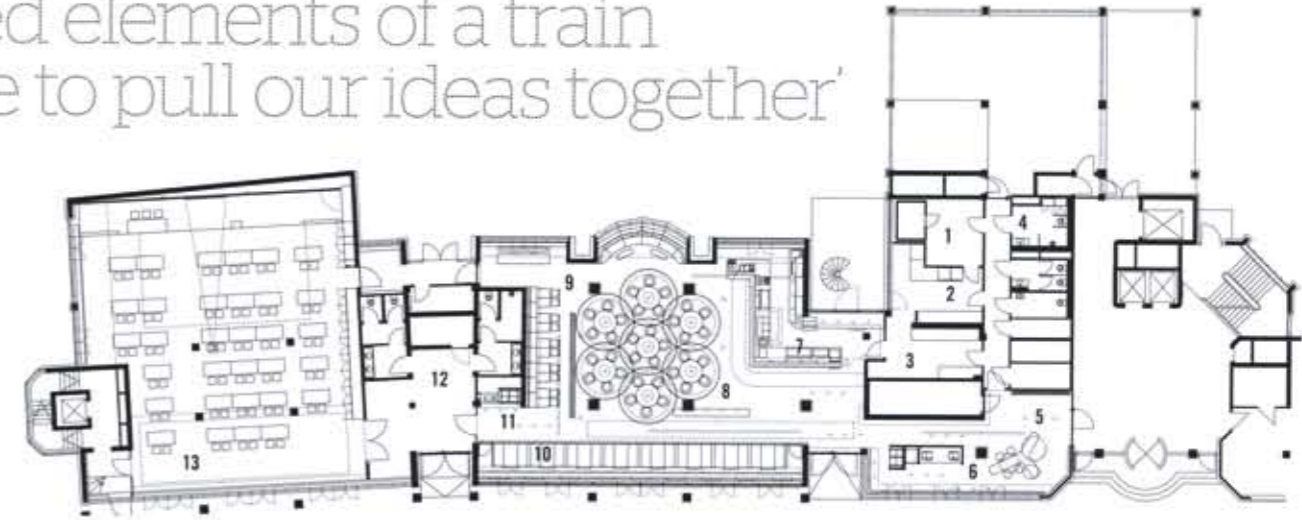
BOOTHS ALONG ONE SIDE OF THE CAFETERIA EVOKE AN IMAGE OF RETRO AMERICAN DINERS.



'A too luxurious-looking design would send the wrong signals'

A 'BRONZED' WOODEN ROOM DIVIDER IS BOTH FUNCTIONAL AND DECORATIVE.

'We used elements of a train carriage to pull our ideas together'



- FLOOR PLAN.**
- 1 STORAGE
 - 2 KITCHEN
 - 3 SCULLERY
 - 4 TOILETS
 - 5 BISTRO ENTRANCE
 - 6 SELF-SERVICE MACHINES
 - 7 COUNTER
 - 8 'FLOWER' SEATING AREA
 - 9 SEATING AREA
 - 10 'DINING CAR' SEATING AREA
 - 11 WARDROBE
 - 12 FOYER
 - 13 CONFERENCE ROOM

WGVS VERSICHERUNGEN CAFETERIA
 Feinstrasse 1
 70178 Stuttgart
 Germany
DESIGNER Ippolito Fleitz Group (ifgroup.org)
FLOOR AREA 400 m²
COMPLETION May 2008
CONSTRUCTION Ippolito Fleitz (site management)
LIGHTING Pfarré Lighting Design (lightingdesign.de)
FLOORING Terrazzo by Estrich Bossert; carpet circles in needle felt by Armstrong (armstrong.de); high-quality steel circles

TYPICAL GUEST Company employees, from technicians to managers
ATMOSPHERE Informal yet corporate, thanks to materials chosen to prevent the space from becoming so intimate and relaxing that employees linger too long
FEATURES A series of spaces within an existing space: circular tables are grouped in an island defined by lighting and flooring, while cars/carriages create a second, subtly enclosed space
PRICE €€€€€

IPPOLITO FLEITZ GROUP MIXED BLANCHED OAK (TABLES, WALLS, CEILING AND SEATING) WITH BLACK IMITATION-LEATHER UPHOLSTERY AND CALAIS 1900 CURTAINS BY SVENSSON.

