

The Design Issue

SOMA

THE DESIGN ISSUE

LOVING LE TIGRE
UNDERCOVER KURT COBAIN
HAUTE HOTELS



ALFREDO HABERLI'S FINE LINES
GRAPHICS SUPERSTARS
ALEX MCDOWELL GOES WONKA

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RESTAURANT DESIGN

When it comes to dining out, quite often the food takes a backseat to a thrilling design concept. And that's ok by us. We took a tour through Chicago, Rome and London to see the latest in restaurant design, from edgy décor to waiters in couture.

CHICAGO

Kaze Sushi

2032 W. Roscoe, 773 327 4860, kazesushi.com

When the owners of Kaze got together and showed interior designer Hilary Bailes pictures for inspiration, "they just kept showing me avant-garde, bizarre pictures from Tokyo," she said. With that in mind, Bailes got to texturizing the restaurant by wallpapering certain walls and spaces with vinyl pictures. For instance, all the Louis XVI chairs are actually "upholstered" by Knoll with pictures of golden glitter. One bathroom is papered with pictures of faux blue fur, while the other gets its 3D look from continuous pictures of river rocks. "We basically want to create the effect that not everything is as it appears to be," she added. As for the sushi bar area, everybody (including architect John Baumann) wanted it to look as if a gold box had been dropped into the space. It does, and as the sun sets the entire restaurant glows.

Heather Bradley

Alinea

1723 North Halsted, 312 867 0110, alinearestaurant.com

With a mind-boggling menu and a wine list to make even the staunchest of oenophiles drool, Alinea oozes high-design, from the food to the Guy Degrenne flatware, to the waitstaff's Z Zegna threads. Grant Achatz left Trio and opened Alinea this past May, based on the philosophy that "creativity doesn't have to mean complicated." Many aspects of the restaurant have an unequivocally modern sensibility, such as their futuristic twist on the standard PB&J – a grape dipped in tempered peanut butter, cooled then toasted on bread with a heat gun – and a striking elevated staircase that acts as a catwalk, showing off

diners to the second floor while at the same time giving them a 360-degree view of the restaurant. Choose from three menus that start at eight courses. **Heather Bradley**

F212

401 N Wells Street, 312 670 4212, f212lounge.com

If the 3D molecular structure hanging in front isn't clear warning that F212 isn't your average coffee house, then just open the door. Starting with their logo – the Carbon/Hydrogen/Nitrogen/Oxygen structure of caffeine – everything about it is a bit like a mad science experiment. The name stands for the temperature at which water boils, and is demonstrated in a tile installation in the entryway. Designed by Chicago heavy-hitter Suhail (Sonotheque, Sugar), no futuristic exceptions are made in the new space. It brims with thermometers, periodic table-inspired menus and even temperature-related colors – hot oranges and reds in the seating area, cooler greens and stainless steel at the espresso bar. All drinks are done up properly, like their hot chocolate with Belgian chocolate shavings, and they serve comfort food like chicken pot pie and mac 'n' cheese. **Kendah El-Ali**

ROME

Ripa

Via Degli Orti Di Trastevere 3, +39 (0) 6 5861, ripahotel.com

Ripa was the first hotel in Rome to cast aside the Renaissance kitsch that clutters the lobbies and rooms of the majority of its upscale establishments. Located in the hip Trastevere, the old Jewish ghetto, the hotel rose to prominence when Matt Damon decided to book Suite at