

MY SPACE : ARCHITECTURE BRIO PATCH DESIGN STUDIO UNCOVERED DESIGN DESTINATION : VALENCIA

HOME REVIEW

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KITCHEN TRENDS 2014 FROM CABINETS & DRAWERS TO SINKS, FAUCETS & MUCH MORE



The original mosaiced floor and the roof with its peeling paint help maintain the venue's ties with its history.



LET'S SAY GRACE

An erstwhile military chapel in Belgium shines in its new role as a haute cuisine restaurant after a makeover by Amsterdam-based Piet Boon Studio.



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With Baroque arches, a stained glass window and a crucifix atop the roof, the façade of The Jane restaurant, appears more a place to say grace before a meal, than to sit down for a meal itself. When Michelin-star chef Sergio Herman and Chef Nick Bril zeroed in on this venue for their fine dining meets rock 'n roll restaurant in Antwerp (Belgium), their brief to Piet Boon Studio was clear: transform the church of the former military hospital into a high-end fine dining restaurant, without losing the authenticity of the site.

Chief architect Piet Boon says, "Every project we work on has its own charm and sometimes unexpected obstacles. Working with old buildings is exciting, but full of surprises." The team's aim at The Jane was to preserve as much of the original chapel and restore only what was absolutely necessary. **The best example of this is the conservation of the original arched ceiling. Its aged colours and peeling paintwork represent the chapel's past while the spotless floors and spanking new furniture and accessories narrate the story that is about to begin.**

The original altar has been assigned a new role; it is now the most important element of a restaurant, that being the kitchen. A glass partition holds the sounds and aromas in but at the same time allows guests to witness their food being created. Another 'window' into the chapel's past, quite literally, is the stained glass windows.





At first glance, they appear similar to those that adorn churches across Europe, depicting Biblical themes. But, a closer look paints a different picture. **Designed by Job Smeets and Nynke Tynagel of Studio Job, the 500 unique panels are a mishmash of various figures; images of Jesus, crucifixes, devils, skulls and babies represent the building's past life and others like cakes, ice cream cones, apple cores, croissants and spatulas speak of its present.** The windows flood the interiors with daylight and also infuse playfulness into the elegant ambience.

Ask the architect about his favourite element in the restaurant and he dithers like a mother being asked to pick her favourite child. "Everything is just in perfect harmony in The Jane: the service, the staff, the food and design. It is what we had envisioned it to be and wished for, but it turned out even better than we expected." says Boon.

While it is apparent that there are many elements strewn across the space that demand attention, there is one that pulls the eye away from the delectable food under the nose and up to the ceiling to the enormous bespoke chandelier.

Designed by a Beirut firm, PSLab the light fixture weighs over 800 kg. and measures 12 by 9 metres, the light fixture has a hundred and fifty spokes branching out of its central core with each one fitted with a light at its end.

The chandelier, the customised stained glass windows, the vintage ceiling...are some of the many distinctive features of the restaurant. But, what makes the entire experience appetising is the harmonious and subtle manner in which all these components come together, much like the flavours of the food that is dished out from the kitchens of The Jane.

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In its 30 years of experience of designing across the globe, Piet Boon Studio has stuck to its principle of conceptualising its design based on the site, environment, function and culture. Boon says, "Our signature can be seen in strong lines and symmetry, innovative solutions for the optimum use of space and light and a harmony in materials, textures, colours, shape and scale."

