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# Restaurants Compete For Diverse Diners

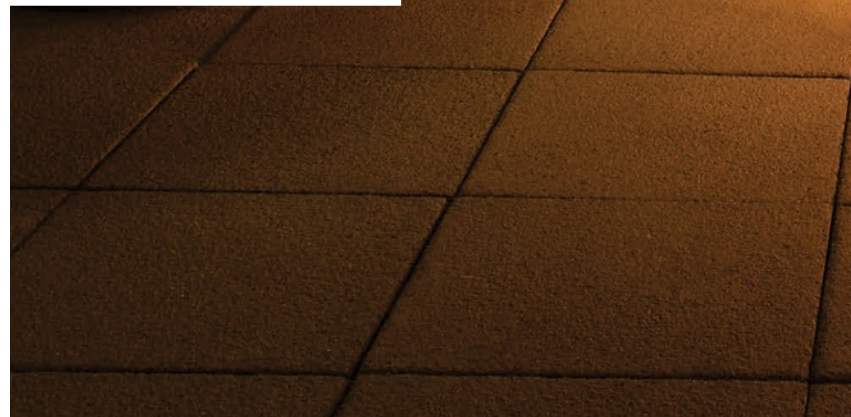
Eateries cater to a mixed set of lifestyle-focused, design, and cuisine-conscious clientele.

Kenneth W. Betz, Senior Editor



**Above.** CetraRuddy collaborated with the international hospitality group D&D London to create a New York outpost of their London brasserie, Bluebird. The concept centers on a celebration of British 60s pop culture. *Photo: Will Stanley, courtesy CetraRuddy*

**Right.** In Manchester, UK, CetraRuddy worked with D&D London to create 20 Stories, a “garden in the sky” atop the city’s tallest downtown tower at the time. Inspired by Manchester’s landscape and ever-changing skyline with a nod to the British love of gardens, 20 Stories offers an expansive terrace and rooftop garden with 360-degree views and a series of intimate, all-weather gathering spaces. *Photo: James French, courtesy CetraRuddy*





In the United States and around the globe, the restaurant market is highly competitive. To stand apart, a successful restaurant concept needs to create an authentic, experiential, and immersive hospitality destination, according to Nancy Ruddy, cofounding principal and executive director of interior design, CetraRuddy, New York.

“We find that integrating compelling and unique design touches with innovative programming choices is crucial. This approach helps to form destinations that feel crafted while offering flexibility. This flexibility can be through a mix of different dining and social experiences. By activating a variety of spaces within the same property, restaurants cater to a more diverse set of lifestyle-focused, design, and cuisine-conscious audiences,” she said.

In New York, CetraRuddy recently collaborated with the international hospitality group D&D London to create a local outpost of their London brasserie, Bluebird. “The concept centers on a celebration of British 60s pop culture,” Ruddy said, “and our team activated the restaurant with a thematic mix of art and design that draws patrons through a number of different experiences.

“At the entrance, a casual café becomes a wine bar at night,” she continued. “A vibrant cocktail lounge with a sculptural bar and curated artwork also offers space for a DJ and dancing on weekends; an elegant sunken dining room overlooks Central Park; and a chic private room offers a more intimate experience for small parties or groups. Each section offers a unique environment that allows moments of discovery. People appreciate the ability to choose how they want to experience the restaurant at a given time, and the flexible design allows Bluebird to function as a true all-day hospitality hub,” she said.

#### AL FRESCO DINING

More than just a trend, Ruddy sees outdoor dining as an important part of the restaurant experience. “Especially in urban settings, a well-designed outdoor environment helps to cultivate a feeling of authenticity and offers patrons a sense of place and connection to the city scene. This approach works well at the street level, as with our recent Sugarcane raw-bar grill in Brooklyn’s Dumbo neighborhood, where a 2,000-sq.-ft. patio is set up to offer sweeping waterfront views of the Brooklyn Bridge,” she explained.

“Rooftop settings are also an ideal basis for a successful outdoor dining experience, because they offer a feeling of connectivity to the cityscape and a sense of place at a larger urban scale,” Ruddy observed. “In Manchester,

## Casa Caña Celebrates Cuban Culture



Upon stepping outside Casa Caña into the 5,600-sq.-ft. courtyard, guests will find an additional 106 seats, fire pits, whimsical twinkle lighting, and secondary bar, perfect for al fresco dining and drinking. *Photo: Christine Gatti, courtesy Dyer Brown*

Casa Caña, a nuevo Latina kitchen and rum bar from Lyons Group, Boston, opened August 2018 inside the new art-inspired, experiential boutique hotel, Studio Allston, Boston. Dyer Brown, Boston, designed the hotel for The Davis Companies, Boston, and Casa Caña for Lyons Group.

Located adjacent to the hotel lobby, Casa Caña boasts a 3,000-sq.-ft., 74-seat interior that includes a private dining space and expansive 5,600-sq.-ft. courtyard that offers an additional 106 seats as well as a secondary bar. Additional private and semi-private space is also available for larger groups, special events, and private parties.

Dyer Brown worked with the restaurant team to

bring to life a space that illustrates the vibrant culture, beautiful landscapes, and weathered architecture of Havana, Cuba. The tropical climate drives the bright blue-and-green color scheme, supported by a secondary palette of raw woods and deep tobacco tones drawn from cultural elements of cigar boxes and its precious contents.

Patrons entering Casa Caña first encounter non-uniform decorative Cuban floor tiles emphasized by the contrast with the raw concrete floor. Drawn toward the main bar area and the courtyard beyond, diners discover elements of patinaed metal and reclaimed wood forming the bar, illuminated from above by mid-century-inspired pendant lighting. Upon stepping

outside into the 5,600-sq.-ft. courtyard, guests will find an additional 106 seats, fire pits, whimsical twinkle lighting, and secondary bar, perfect for al fresco dining and drinking.

Inside the main dining area, a soft-focus, tropical-landscape mural serves as a backdrop, and handcrafted, woven-wicker pendant fixtures scattered throughout contribute a playful glow. Statement details such as leather strapping on the banquette cushions add warmth and personality. The semi-enclosed private dining room is bounded by two small decorative wing walls and features a large-scale botanical mural that creates an immersive experience, a sought-after spot from which to see and be seen.

UK, for example, we worked with D&D London to create 20 Stories, a ‘garden in the sky’ on top of the city’s tallest downtown tower at the time. Inspired by Manchester’s landscape and ever-changing skyline with a nod to the British love of gardens, 20 Stories

offers an expansive terrace and rooftop garden with 360-degree views and a series of intimate, all-weather gathering spaces that emphasize the feeling of being in nature and complement the design and programming of the restaurant’s interior environments,” she said.

Ruddy continued, “The overall design approach for 20 Stories merges indoor and outdoor spaces as a seamless experience, showcasing the stunning views while creating a harmonious dialogue between interior and exterior. Carefully thought-out design features are

*continued on p.14*

## Nikkei Cuisine Finds A Home in Boston



Discriminating diners in Boston’s Back Bay district now enjoy creative nikkei (Peruvian-Japanese) cuisine amid soaring arches in a double-height venue that merges historic architectural detail and a tropical vibe. The much-anticipated new restaurant is Nahita, conceived by Turkish designer Zeynep Fadillioglu of ZF Design, Istanbul, Turkey, in partnership with architecture and interiors firm Dyer Brown, Boston, as architect of record. The arresting venue graces the first floor of the historic Boston Gas Co. building at 100 Arlington Street, now a high-end apartment building known as The Arlington.

Recently awarded Design of the Year by foodie-centric website Eater Boston, Nahita merges historic character defined by original stone columns and plaster ceilings with custom-print wallpaper and Italian marble. Ms. Fadillioglu relied on Dyer Brown to draw on the firm’s experience in hospitality design, adaptive reuse, and property repositioning—attributes which make them able to provide input on specialty finishes and key preservation approvals. For work on a building in a neighborhood eligible for status on the National Register of Historic Places, such input is critical for project success. Dyer Brown drew on local sources for globally inspired materials to assist Fadillioglu in creating an unrivaled dining environment.

Adding metal arches to the former building lobby and celebrating its high ceilings, the upscale but approachable interiors offer a light, airy feel complemented by ruddy wall finishes and chic pendant lighting. Tile accents and a mix of furnishings in rich brown leather add to the cozy, speakeasy vibe. Nahita’s patrons relax in a mix of formal and lounge-style seating that feels worlds away from Boston’s hustle and bustle. Off the main dining area, diners find a marble-wrapped bar as well as a cozy private dining room lined in rich, dark wood and marble over ceramic tile floors.

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Nahita, conceived by Turkish designer Zeynep Fadillioglu of ZF Design, in partnership with architecture and interiors firm Dyer Brown, the restaurant merges historic character defined by original stone columns and plaster ceilings with custom print wallpaper and Italian marble. *Photo: Jared Kuzia, courtesy Dyer Brown*

## Freezing Temps No Match for All-Season Patio

The all-season rooftop patio at the Cactus Club Café in the Sherway Gardens Mall, Etobicoke (Toronto), Ontario, has become a defining feature of the restaurant.

Guests can escape harsh Canadian winters into a bright and sunny space even in freezing temperatures. To accomplish this, Assembledge+ architects, Los Angeles, used a combination of overhead heating arrays, fully operable slide-and-stack glass windscreens, and a retractable canopy system.

The patio measures 3,180 sq. ft., divided into a 70-seat dining patio that can be rented out to large parties and a 120-seat bar and lounge patio. The building dramatically cantilevers its roof to envelop the patio. As a result, the entire infrastructure is integrated into the 12-ft.-tall ceilings. The Brazilian-slate floor tiles in a custom repeating mosaic are paired with teak booths and tables. The walls and ceilings are clad in western-red-cedar boards, backed with insulation engineered for optimal acoustics. Synthetic green walls, torches, and the signature yellow umbrellas provide texture and animation, so the space always feels alive.

The central component to a successful year-round patio is the Kubo retractable canopies by Corradi USA, Carrollton, TX, and Horizon sunshades, also by Corradi, adapted by Assembledge+ to be completely integrated into the building's structure and form. The system has become the standard due to its versatility and customization, combined with superior water collection and drainage in a turnkey solution. Assembledge+ worked closely with the manufacturer and distributor to develop custom installation and attachment details to ensure complete coordination and integration across multiple trades.

As a fully exterior space, the patio is quite susceptible to the swings in temperature and humidity of Toronto weather. In the summer, an array of large Haiku fans by BAF, Lexington, KY, are paired with an HVAC system to circulate cool, dry air and exhaust the warm, humid air that leads to guest discomfort. In the dead of winter, the more than 50 electric WD-series infrared heaters by Infratech, Gardena, CA, are capable of delivering more than 1 million Btu. This heat, along with heat tracing, prevents any deleterious snow buildup in the canopies. The frameless glass windscreens, PR-SAS series by SlideClear, Surrey, British Columbia, are designed to minimally obstruct views in the winter and be completely retracted in the summer.

Each of these elements helps provide an improved patio experience for guests, but their installation is often an afterthought and can result in unsightly pipes, conduits, and structure that can take away from the look of a restaurant, according to the architect. With careful planning and close discussions with all manufacturers and installers, Assembledge+ was able to create a seamless design that incorporates the functionality of the infrastructure without sacrificing the high-design aesthetics for which the brand is known.



Guests can escape harsh Canadian winters into a bright and sunny space at the Cactus Club Café in the Toronto area. Assembledge+ used a combination of overhead heating arrays, fully operable slide-and-stack glass windscreens, and a retractable canopy system to accomplish this goal. *Photos: Michael Weschler, courtesy Assembledge+*





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## Queensyard Comes To Hudson Yards



Set in an 11,142 sq. ft. space designed by CetraRuddy, queensyard's interior blends the warm environment of a contemporary English home with the sleek feel of a New York penthouse. The space balances crafted wood and metal textures inspired by the original Hudson Rail Yard tracks with a warm and inviting environment of curated furnishings. *Photo: Courtesy D&D London*

Queensyard, a new restaurant, bar, and café within the much-anticipated Hudson Yards neighborhood, aims to bring a flavor of London to New York, blending classic English cooking with more modern dishes reflecting the international food scene in the UK today. Each dining space is inspired by the entertaining rooms of a traditional home: a relaxed Kitchen for casual meals, a more sophisticated Dining Room for formal dining, a modern Cocktail Bar, and a daytime grab-and-go Café which turns into an evening Wine Bar.

"To match the scale and boldness of Hudson Yards, we wanted to create a flagship restaurant that embodies the neighborhood in which it will thrive," said UK

restaurant group D&D London chairman and CEO Des Gunewardena. "With thousands expected to work, live, and visit this area, we know one thing to be true: food brings people together, and that is our main focus with queensyard. We're building a beautiful environment where residents and visitors will be comfortable, with a menu of from-scratch dishes that ensures they will eat well."

Set in an 11,142-sq.-ft. space designed by CetraRuddy, New York, queensyard's interior blends the warm environment of a contemporary English home with the sleek feel of a New York penthouse. The space balances crafted wood and metal textures inspired by the original

Hudson Rail Yard tracks with a warm and inviting environment of curated furnishings. The restaurant's British influence is portrayed with artwork referencing modern UK icons as well as two murals of the Thames River, hand painted on the north and south walls by American artist, Sarah Moore. At the entrance, an elegant private dining room encircled by glowing wine storage maintains the vibrancy of the main dining room with a touch of added intimacy.

Located on the fourth floor of The Shops & Restaurants at Hudson Yards, queensyard also features views of Thomas Heatherwick's Vessel, the Shed Arts Center, and the Hudson River.

instrumental to success at 20 Stories: the terrace's al fresco fireplaces are set amid a lush installation of native plantings, under a canopy of silver birch trees with dramatic lighting. Reinforcing the connection to nature and the sky, an installation by British sculptor Jon Bickley depicts a flock of ascending birds and cre-

ates a focal point for the garden. An undulating concrete bar frames the dynamic indoor-outdoor atmosphere set against the backdrop of Manchester's skyline, and echoes the form of the restaurant's centerpiece, a dramatic indoor bar with a shimmering, illuminated canopy."

Diners expect more than just food from restaurants today. They want experience, ambiance, and a unique environment—to name just a few of their demands. Putting together just the right combination of those elements is an ever-changing task for architects and designers. **CA**