

# hinge

ARCHITECTURE  
INTERIOR DESIGN

## Well Plated... F&B Serves It Up

Playing With Bamboo  
A Sports Hall in Thailand

Elephant in the Room...  
An Office in China

Spin Class...  
A Fitness Club in Berlin

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# Down the Hatch...

No matter what's happening in the world, it seems eating and drinking out remains a fundamental desire. Even during tough times, bars do a steady trade, and when people can't afford fancy grub, they don't stop eating, they simply eat at cheaper places. Meanwhile, the upper echelons of the food and beverage industry do just fine, thank you. All this means that those architects and interior designers brave and/or talented enough to work in this area keep busy as always. They have to contend with famously short timetables, often mercurial clients, usually constrained spaces, and a target audience that is spoilt rotten by the world's ever-changing competition. It's not for the weak-kneed or the cautious: F&B is the 'extreme sport' of design; if you can't stand the heat, you fry.

Of course, this also makes it manna for some types. The fast pace, the freedom – nay, demand – to experiment, the high-stakes investment and sharp-elbowed personalities of owners and chefs... it's all a bit intoxicating. And the world over, the fresh ideas and iterations keep flowing. Whilst there are some cities renowned for eating (and a few for drinking), the designed spaces in which it occurs are good (or not) just about everywhere. Amazing restaurant rooms are to be found in places as far afield as Shanghai, Rio, Detroit, Manila, Bologna and Guatemala. And cities don't have a monopoly; some of the best eateries anywhere tuck themselves away in rural villages, beside farmland, or near slums. Indeed, it sometimes seems that chefs want seclusion in order to concentrate on the food, figuring that appetites will find them no matter where they are. And on a certain level of the food economy

it is certainly true; foodies are usually 'travellers' as well. So what if you have to take the train to northern Spain, or boat to southern Japan, for a great meal? If reservations can be had, the effort to show up is part of the adventure.

It is true that no matter how much work and joy goes into designing these places, patrons make them successful primarily for the fare. But design in F&B is essential nonetheless; it may not be able to save a poor kitchen or menu, but it can help kill a decent one. And that has nothing to do with style or materials. Good restaurants or lounges can speak virtually any style language and use literally any material, if done with skill. In *hinge's* roundup this year, there's everything from rustic to chic, luxurious to 'found', and steel, concrete, metals, fabrics, masonry, timber, veneers, paints and stains, with an encyclopaedia of

accessories cleverly employed. It's all up to the eye of the designer. And if there's a category that hews especially tightly to the adage that 'God is in the details', it's F&B. End-users of this category spend hours sitting or standing in tight spaces with their eyes open; you can't mess up the small bits.

There really isn't a type of building or space that is 'easy' or that doesn't deserve respect, but we salute the particular challenges of F&B design and the achievements of the following entries on our annual list. Yet, even more than bowing before the evidence of talent here, we revel in enjoying the spaces and buildings themselves. That they give such pleasure even to the sober and hungry, is surely proof absolute of their measure.





2018

Restaurants and Bars New Design



# Speys Eten & Drinken

Utrecht, the Netherlands  
UXUS

Photos courtesy of Speys Eten & Drinken and UXUS

As part of the current trend toward food emporiums, this huge facility in the Jaarbeurs Event Centre in Utrecht fits the bill, with a lively, cavernous space that invites wandering and tasting in an atmosphere of spontaneity. But it was all planned, of course, down to the forks. In fact the building itself is celebrating its centennial, so revamping the food court was part of the general celebrations. The results are anything but old. Indeed, the forward thinking goes straight to the programme: a place for food, drinks, coffee, chatting, even working... This is meant to be a kind of social market space for locals and visitors alike. The casual-chic style is centred on patterned surfaces such as floor tiling, tile mosaics and backlit glass panels. Dominating the long view is a series of 'stained glass'-effect canopies over each of the booths, which scatter individually through the hall as pavilions offering different food or drinks to patrons.

The enclosing structure is left open and raw: industrial-scale steel beams and posts painted milky grey. The floors are hard surfaces – tile or polished concrete – and the seating options range from compact plywood booths to lightweight tables and chairs. This is fast, casual dining on the go, for when one is either coming from or going to the nearby cinema or doing some shopping or just pausing on the way home from work. 'Speys' means food in Dutch, and it lives up to its name, with a feast of different culinary choices to support the 'market' character of the space. There is an outdoor terrace, naturally, plus areas that can be sectioned off for private dining or parties or events.

The pattern invented for the canopies becomes the motif for Speys, and iterations appear throughout in graphics. There is a mezzanine over a portion of the hall, with additional seating. Its balustrades reconfigure the same pattern in the form of







cutouts in plywood panels. Among the challenges inherent in working with such a large space were lighting and acoustics. On the latter front, the pavilion food-and-beverage booths help break down the massive space into smaller zones. On the former, the architects use a range of tactics to light the very tall space without letting it turn into an airport or hospital in tone. Indeed, the lighting aspect of Speys is particularly successful. The colour range is also retained within a medium bandwidth, which seems to avoid the risk of variety becoming disorder. Greys and browns rule here, allowing brief splashes of brighter colours to stand out.

These food forums seem to be ever more popular everywhere, answering a general desire to head out for refreshments without deciding ahead of time what exactly to eat. Speys welcomes its fans with enough choice to remain interesting even on multiple visits, and groups of friends can eat different types of food while hanging out together. Hitting the sweet spot between too generic and too specific is what the design of this category is all about. UXUS has good aim.

