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THE HOUSE THAT NIKE BUILT

Karrie Jacobs Trashes the NATIONAL DESIGN TRIENNIAL

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SKIRTING THE RULES

A Sculptural Facade Challenges San Francisco's Stodgy Building Culture



Left: "That room is great," Goin says of the atrium. "Because wherever you are in the building, you kind of see it in the distance."

"We wanted it to be a place where you can go in by yourself for coffee and read the paper, or you can go for a business lunch," says Tavern's chef, Suzanne Goin.



Suzanne Goin and her business partner, Caroline Styne, knew what they wanted for their new Los Angeles restaurant: a spot that would serve the city's Westside neighborhood like a French brasserie. "We wanted it to be a place where you can go in by yourself for coffee and read the paper, or you can go for a business lunch, with your family, on a date, or late at night—a place where you can do whatever you want," the chef says. The only catch? They'd purchased an 8,000-square-foot building on San Vicente Boulevard that once housed an outpost of Hamburger Hamlet, the faded burger chain. "The space was so large that we were like, 'What the hell do you do with it?'" says Ross Cassidy, a designer with the firm Jeffrey Alan Marks. "There were three clearly defined rooms. We wanted to make them relate to each other but have separate functions." They started by taking advantage of the building's corner location and existing architectural features. The atrium, entered from a quiet side street, became the formal dining room, while the sunny

front area with the bustling main entrance became the larder, where customers can get take-out, groceries, and coffee. "The middle section was very dark," Cassidy says of the remaining space. "We decided to go with that darkness and turn it into a great pub." To create a sense of intimacy and encourage conversation throughout the huge building, they packed it with seating. "People come in for a drink and stay for dinner," Cassidy says. "I think people on the Westside were starved for something like this—a place where they could hang out." —K.C.



Photos: Anne Cook; plan, courtesy Jeffrey Alan Marks



The middle room was always dark. "We didn't want to change too much of the architecture," Cassidy says. "So we decided to go with that darkness and turn it into a pub."



The rooster was part of an early logo. Goin and Styne then began collecting figurines of the birds.

tavern
LOS ANGELES



The atrium, which had been a nightclub in the 1960s, was in poor shape, with a disco floor pattern and fake ivy on the ceiling. "The glass ceiling provided its own answer: turn it into patio dining," Cassidy says.

To create a sense of intimacy and encourage conversation throughout the huge space, they packed it with seating.

The larder (above; and opposite page bottom), Goin says, "is kind of like the pantry of the restaurant." People hang out here to read the paper and drink coffee.

Right: The designers compensated for the large floor plan by putting in a great deal of seating.

