



A hot spot





on the Square

New Manhattan restaurant's look inspired by Chinese courtyard

By Mark Pasciuto

Times Square is where the hip come to play. So, when Trinity Building + Construction Management completed the construction of the newest location of the famed London-based Chinese restaurant Hakkasan, it became an instant hot spot for Manhattanites.

The 15,000-square-foot project, located at 311 West 43rd Street, was completed in 20 weeks with the help of Paris-based designers Gilles & Boissier and globally acclaimed architects Woods Bagot. The restaurant is Hakkasan's seventh location globally. (There are two other locations in London, and one in each Miami, Mumbai, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.) In addition, it is the only Chinese restaurant in Europe with a Michelin star rating.

"This project had a uniquely sophisticated design that required incredible attention to detail in a timeframe that was by far the most compressed that we had ever attempted at any of our locations around the world," says Mike Anzelc, director of construction, Hakkasan. "This, coupled with the urban setting of New York City and the mechanical design challenges

that were set out in front of the construction team makes this project even more of a success story. We could not be more pleased with the end result."

The project was challenging in that it demanded a sense of urgency and high-level of attention to detail, while working with a design and ownership team based primarily overseas. For example, the kitchen and mechanical systems included the installation of a new grease exhaust system with a 15 story, 48-inch round black iron riser on the exterior of the building, as well as a new electrical and gas service upgrade to the entire building.

"We are very proud of this project," says Mark Pasciuto, senior project manager for Trinity, the Wilmington, Mass., general contracting and construction firm.

“Hakkasan is how the West wants to celebrate Chinese food.”

– Niall Howard, CEO, Hakkasan

When diners enter Hakkasan, they walk through an impressive 80-foot corridor, encased in matched slabs of marble with dim lighting. The dining room is divided into several labyrinth-style sections that include up to eight tables, so as not to overwhelm diners by the space’s openness. Some of the banquettes are embroidered with gold dragons. One of the space’s one-top private dining rooms is enclosed by embossed leather walls and wooden screens, while Carrara marble panels laser-cut into 5-foot x 5-foot lattices are present throughout the restaurant and even on some of its ceilings.

“Hakkasan is how the West wants to celebrate Chinese food,” says Niall Howard, CEO. As a result, the designers worked to showcase the open kitchen concept, which is enveloped in blue frosted glass.

“There’s energy, movement, Chinese food is a great scene to look at,” says designer Patrick Gilles. “Locating the kitchen and understanding how to take advantage of its view is the first step of each Hakkasan restaurant.”

The kitchen is even entirely visible from one of the restaurant’s corridors.

The restaurant’s high-end design finishes includes carved lattice window screens, Green Cleft slate flooring, marble walls and ceilings, embossed painted leather panels, jet cut marble, and carved decorative wood, stone, leather and glass elements. Additionally, Trinity installed a new 16-story kitchen exhaust up the building’s side, with new ductwork.

The opulent space also features an elegant bar called “Ling Ling” for guests to experience Hakkasan’s signature cocktails. The 60-foot bar seats 22 and is underlit in an elegant blue. The rest of the lounge is inspired by the brand’s Miami location, with hints of pink embroidery on some of the upholstery. The bar’s back wall is illuminated by projected swirling light patterns.



Prior to designing Hakkasan New York, designer Patrick Gilles was familiar with the brand’s mainstays, as he previously worked on the original Hakkasan concept design. The Gilles & Boissier team also designed the brand’s first overseas restaurant in Istanbul in 2006. “Each restaurant is a moment to invent new ideas, but we always kept the idea of a Chinese house, which is about transparency, opacity and framing,” he says of the space’s inspiration.

“The success of the Hakkasan project was based on positive rapport made by ourselves and the client, as well as subcontractors Mark Richey Woodworking, Artisan Stoneworks and Carbone Metal Fabricators,”

Pasciuto says. “Our clients engage us because we deliver superior, personalized service, and manage our business with integrity, accountability and social responsibility.” **CCR**

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