



KNAUER NEWS

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FEATURED PROJECT

QUARTINO

A few years ago we designed a little restaurant that has turned into a big deal, Quartino. Staring out modestly, this hot spot has become the “go-to” place for young Chicagoans looking for quality Italian cooking at a reasonable price. The wine list is extensive and a great value, the décor is urban, “been around a long time”, and the crowd is plentiful. Today, the restaurant has grown taking over the second floor with numerous small dining rooms.

DESIGN TALK

RECYCLING

Much of the décor at Quartino has been recycled. We are talking about old stuff being reused. not the seneration of waste!

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RISTORANTE
QUARTINO
PIZZERIA • WINE BAR



RECYCLING

What does it take to build with old stuff? It first takes a commitment by all parties, client, architect, and contractor. Next, everyone must mobilize their teams to search for products that are appropriate to the concept.

We started Quartino with a rough design and a list of the items that we all thought would be appropriate to the design. We broke them down into two categories, construction materials and FF&E. The construction materials included wood flooring, marble mosaic flooring, ceramic wall tile, stamped metal pan ceiling and moldings, doors, hardware, glass, mirror, wrought iron railings, plumbing fixtures, lighting fixtures, wood paneling, wood molding and trim, and many other items we came across as we became hunters and gatherers.

In the FF&E category, we listed tables, chairs, kitchen equipment, display cases, wine racks, artwork, decorative mirrors, accessories, and artifacts. This list also grew as we found stuff that made sense for the concept and started to include china, glassware, and silverware.

None of the recycling started with the intention of saving money or being green. It was all about authenticity. But, in the end, buying the right products from the right suppliers can save the project money and save the environment. Starting with a knowledge base that includes the cost of all of these related products combined with a lot of research will yield great results. Just going to the obvious and first suppliers you find, won't do it.

Buying product in lots, which includes more than you need, is one of the ways we found old stuff at great prices. There are, however, a couple of drawbacks with this approach. Items you don't need, and items that require repair. It is good to have an architect who works in the industry and has other clients who need the unused old stuff, and the repairs are dependent on a qualified contractor who is up to the task. Repairs take some ingenuity and are an ongoing expense.

Choose the old stuff wisely. Some was made to last and some was not.

Utilizing recycled construction materials is a great way to obtain authenticity and uniqueness in a design while saving money and the environment.

RECYCLING

Through our searches for old stuff for Quartino and other projects we have found a great many resources that we continue to use in our projects. Our client at Quartino has made it part of their business and have people committed to the research and procurement. It can become a business philosophy that works.

Many people call recycling, antiquing, and it can be. However, most of the products we find to reuse are far from antiques and cost nowhere near the price. In many cases they may be considered junk and are priced as such. That is not to say that recycled heart pine for floors or old subway tile for walls will be cheap. There is a reason we use it in the designs. It is cool and in demand. The keys are timing and dealing with the right suppliers. Timing is very important. If you are in a hurry you may need to take that which is available at the time and at the price the supplier wants. If you can wait, the next big demo project may be right around the corner. Inventory in the recycling business is the same as in any business, expensive. Recycling is an industry where supply and demand economics thrives.

Not all recycled products need to be used as they were originally intended. In fact, we have used old stuff in new ways and in very contemporary surroundings. The juxtaposition of these items can create a very interesting tension within the design. Think out of the box, or at least the intended box.

For instance, mixing machine edge materials and products, with 40's retro furnishings, and original Edison lamps has been quite popular recently with many restaurant concepts. We will be looking at some of those more contemporary designs utilizing old stuff in future months.

There is a lot of old stuff out there waiting to be discovered and reused. It may take a little searching, a few repairs, some cleaning up, but it will be worth lessening the impact on the environment, the money saved, and the authenticity of the design.

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