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Remodeling a historic building. Designing the experience.

[Art direction and project by: Visual Display S.r.l. – *interior, identity, stories*]

Ristorante “Vitello d’Oro” – in Udine since 1849.

The oldest restaurant in town, opened since 1849, is located in the historic city center, adjacent to the old fish market. It’s crossed by the old city wall. A first-class cuisine recognized throughout the region and beyond, mainly oriented to seafood dishes.

The owners' desire was to wear a new dress that best represents the quality of the service and the cuisine, made of tradition but increasingly oriented towards innovation:

«We have been thinking of renovating the interiors for two years – said the brothers Massimiliano and Gianluca Sabinot, respectively chef and maître. – We are a point of reference in the hospitality industry in the city and not only. Our customers are cosmopolitan and demanding, used to eat out in the best restaurants around the world: this is why we wanted to be more contemporary, we are aiming to the highest quality not only in the menu but also for the environment in which we welcome people».

Starting from these assumptions, the study and project of Visual Display began, with a very precise idea in mind: the challenge of creating an atmosphere which is welcoming and charming at the same time, contemporary but respecting history and characteristic features of the place. A space that could also connect with a new clientele, more dynamic and international, and with new generations; but without disappointing the expectations and affection of the "historic" clients who have always frequented it.

“Before considering the stylistic and technical aspects – says Giorgio Di Bernardo, Visual Display CEO – the project started by analyzing with the customer the dynamics, flows, and needs of the restaurant. We individuated and preserved those gestures that over the years have become rituals and safety both for those who work there and for guests. Investigating and creating new opportunities, evolving and improving existing ones. So the design work has begun with designing the experience, working carefully on flows and functions to guarantee the quality of work, service and stay. Imagining restaurant life, setting it as a project element, before starting to design the style, then shake altogether. This means designing the experience. And looking for a resonant result.”

Ristorante “Vitello d’Oro”

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Udine, June 5th 2019

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project involved the total renovation of the interior and part of the external façade, an intervention that restored the structure without altering it but rather bringing to light historical details previously hidden under plasterboard layers; like the second city wall, on which the restaurant rests, which is now one of the points of attraction in the restaurant's atrium.

The original elements of the premises that were already visible, such as the Venetian terrazzo flooring and the wooden beams of the hall, have been restored to their splendor by a masterful conservative restoration work and enhanced by an accurate dedicated lighting project.

Many local companies (**Moroso, Gervasoni, Tonon, Tabula, Torre, La Cividina**) and skilled artisans were involved in the project, including **Arredamenti Livon**, which dealt with the creation of all the custom elements/furnishings designed specifically for the project.

The hall of the restaurant has been designed as a place of welcome for excellence. The decision to relocate the main entrance to have it in central position respect to internal flows was fundamental; these structural gestures have widened the area and made it more open. This area welcomes the guests with soft padded lounge seating, elegant fabrics, and the bright wine display cabinet, in which are displayed the bottles of the restaurant's cellar.

Entering the arch of the city walls you access one of the most unique rooms of the restaurant, a dark room decorated with a bucolic wallpaper. Here stands a 5 meters plane table, illuminated by three large brass suspension lamps, designed for great events, or more informal dinners.

In the restaurant dining room, the original subdivision in three spaces has been maintained and emphasized by light partitions in burnished copper, glass and fabric, which create privacy without explicitly separating the spaces and maintaining a visual continuity from one side of the room to the other. The Italian dark oak parquet floor gives warmth and elegance to the entire area.

In the first room, the old wooden ceiling brought to light creates, together with the custom-designed velvet bench and the abstract paintings, a hyper-cozy, intimate and sophisticated atmosphere.

The second room, covered in the lower part by an upholstered boiserie in blue velvet, is characterized by the new skylight that floods the central room making it look like a winter garden, surrounded by a porch.

In the third room, the old Friulan *fogolar*, has been replaced with a new fireplace with more modern lines, positioned to become the focal point of the restaurant. The fireplace is visible from the entrance and creates the space for one of the most intimate, romantic and requested tables of the restaurant, characterized by the rust-colored velvet bench designed for the project. The whole room is characterized by a full-height boiserie in sage green lacquered oak with precious burnished copper inserts.

The restoration project also continues on the first level, with the full renovation of the restrooms. The two doors, which are custom-designed in a modernist style, create a game of contrasts: they separate the dark green gentlemen's restrooms from the ladies one painted in soft pink. All marble sinks and mirrors are also made to design by Visual Display.

On the outside, the alfresco area becomes the true heart of the restaurant over the summer months. New steel and glass doors and windows guarantee luminosity to the interior and together with the elegant opal glass lamps in a vaguely retro style give to the façade a touch of modernism. New stone paving and new furnishings in metal structure and nautical rope in a delicate turtledove-grey color complete the outdoor project.