

CRAFT Atlanta

Tom Colicchio firmly believes that cooking of any kind is a craft, not an art. For his new restaurant in Atlanta, he planned to use the highest form of uncomplicated culinary craftsmanship to explore the full flavor of each artisanally-raised ingredient on the seasonal menu, and serve these unadorned on separate plates placed at the center of each table for all to share.

His approach to cooking motivated us to experiment with a limited set of architectural materials, using the simplest and best craftsmanship required to join them. Our goal was to shape, within a tepid new two-story neo-classical shell, a simple yet texturally and spatially rich interior that integrates with the food and service both functionally and metaphorically.

Upon entering the restaurant, guests encounter an open wood-fired grill clad in copper and steel that not only emphasizes the craft of cooking but also acts as a symbolic hearth for the two-story space. Past the grill on the first floor, a 3-inch thick solid walnut slab anchors the bar and provides a warm contrast to the blackened steel and glass wine vault that screens an intimate dining lounge beyond.

A monumental staircase composed of continuous planks of walnut flows down from above to draw guests up to the second floor, the rooms of which overlook both Peachtree Road and courtyard of The Mansion on Peachtree Hotel (to which the restaurant is allied). The spatial compression and release of the sequence of dining areas on this level provides varying degrees of intimacy while preserving the communal quality of a one room refectory that the chef sought.

The palette of major materials on both floors – walnut, steel, copper, oak, brick, cherry, leather and muslin – weaves together to create a sensuous series of spaces that evoke the character of grand Southern domestic interiors but in a distinctly modern way.

All furnishings and fittings, including the cherry dining tables, walnut banquettes and sofas, and steel hardware were designed to celebrate the materials and the simple craftsmanship used to assemble them. The absence of any protective coating on most of the material palette intentionally promotes their natural ability to age with grace.



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