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October 29, 2007

On the Waterfront



Part marina, part resort, Newport, R.I.'s newest waterfront address—Forty 1^o North—is 100-percent waterfront destination. The new campus, designed by Philadelphia-based DAS Architects, comprises a marina with dockage for yachts ranging in size from 45 ft. to 250 ft.; an outdoor bar pavilion and up-market dockside restaurant called The Grill; waterfront private event space and a landscaped courtyard;

Christie's, a casual restaurant; and a retail shop and four rental units.

Boat owners themselves, DAS' David Schultz, AIA, and Susan Davidson, IDC, brought an appreciation for the vista and incorporated some of the elements found in yacht design into the project. Design highlights of the project are found in its two restaurants: one a comfortable outdoor dining retreat called The Grill, with a white sculptural pavilion as its focal point; the other a playful casual eating spot called Christie's, distinguished by its wall-size photo murals of nostalgic beach scenes and bathing beauties.

The Grill features several unique dining areas, from a courtyard to a lounge to a swanky bar, with total seating for 150. Whether arriving by land or by water, the first thing guests notice is the white bar pavilion. At night, a light box above glows with a soft blue hue. Bar chairs of white mesh on silver frames complement the bar top: white marble with silver veining, with clear glass fused on top to protect from water stains. The front of the bar is comprised of holly wood inlaid with ebony. A horizontal nautical striping pattern resembles a yacht interior and complements the mahogany decking underfoot.

On the patio near the bar pavilion, wicker dining chairs and glass-top tables create an elegant dining space, while closer to the courtyard, teak wood-slat tables and chairs trimmed with powder-coated aluminum set a more casual tone. Kidney pillows and decorative fabrics on ottomans introduce accents of orange, and large canvas umbrellas block the rays without interrupting the lounge-like gathering spaces.

Overall, lighting plays a key role in the project design, from an emphasis on natural lighting, to lighting schemes that enhance the new pavilion architecture. The bar light box is made of 2-in. thick acrylic, lit from behind with LED lights. The pavilion is covered with a translucent roof that lets in light, providing an open, airy feel while at the same time shading guests from sun and rain. Soft white LED lights on stanchions of the glass railing create puddles of light without interrupting the view. And 30-in. candelabra lanterns cause candlelight to reflect on the water. Between spaces, six moveable dividers resemble natural reeds you might find waterside, and allow flexibility for private receptions and events.



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The second restaurant space, Christie's, combines modern design with a taste for nostalgia. Two beach-happy photo wall murals set the retro theme and vibrant color scheme, and are focal points in the overall design of the 100-seat restaurant. Citrus colors such as orange and lime lend a sense of playfulness to the space.

A nostalgia theme and graphic treatment is evident in a 1950s-style mod mahogany wooden sculpture at the bar back, which serves both as an artistic piece as well as a functional one, housing wine glasses and bottles. Creative seating options throughout the restaurant keep the mood light and comfortable. Soft block seating in the entry lounge, some in orange and some in chocolate brown, were described by one guest like "sitting on a cupcake." Bright tangerine Neptune chairs in the main dining room give the impression of sitting in a doughnut, while nearby, stainless chairs are cozied up to stainless tables. Lime green ultra-suede bar stools grace hightops in the lounge, and white vinyl and stainless barstools blend with the bar front made of stacked white quartz river stones.

Christie's second floor houses two private event spaces which accommodate up to 75 people each, or 150 combined, for sit-down events, with access to outdoor decks. Wide-plank pine floors, newly finished and original to the building, fit into the casual theme, while window coverings with wave patterns play up the waterfront surroundings.

Also included in the complex is The Shop, a retail space catering to the yachting culture with select products and services for boat owners and crew, including exotic fresh flowers. Creating a sense of unity among the various components, the exterior of all buildings on the Forty 1^o North campus were completely renovated, most painted a chocolate brown accented by a contrasting white trim.

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