

BEST INTERIOR DESIGN



CIELO NEW YORK, DUPOUX DESIGN

Stephane Dupoux has become something of a saint in the nightclub design world. Known for his modular design and deep love of sensual textures, he took "Best Interior Design" honors for Miami's Pearl in 2003. This year his boutique nightclub Cielo, the "hot log cabin" in NYC's ultra-chic meatpacking district, is an exercise in warm-blooded restraint, perhaps inspiring cabin fever on the sunken wooden dancefloor. Deep brown and tan suede panels intersperse with backlit LED panels on the walls, as built in benches, and on the ceiling. It all looks a retro-Euro interpretation of Tron, only in this game, the players wear Prada instead of full-body light suits. The fabulous enter through refurbished packing doors, and enter and face no VIP closeouts – only the best of co-owner Nicolas Mater's DJs in the mosaic-framed booth. And a large picture window reveals the exotic, private backyard patio full of greens to balance out the interstellar interior. –DC

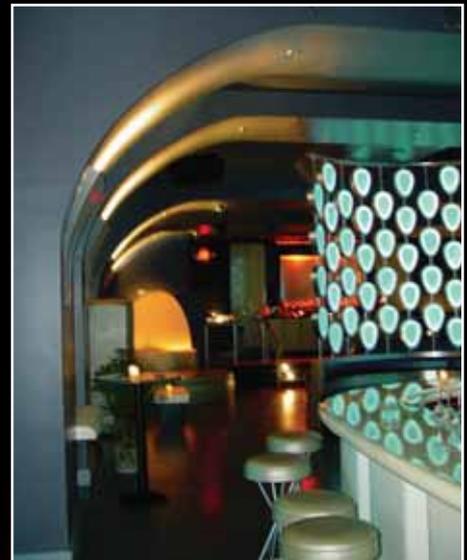
Y CHICAGO, SLICK DESIGN & MANUFACTURING

Chicago's SLICK Design & Manufacturing does everything from concept to fabrication, and Y is a stellar example of how good a club can look with turnkey trust. Owner Rainer Zach wanted bottle service chic, and Y provides a multitude of cozy nooks and small party gathering spots while affording glimpses down long vantage corridors. Y's warm beige, marigold, and deep orange tones warm up the designer wood panels that give the place retro-future comfort while maintaining an unapologetically present-tense feel. The modular cubes of the VIP room allow for easily rearranged seating and the beautifully textured, underlit bars add to the "touch me" aspect that keeps revelers enchanted. The same thorough, fully-realized approach can be seen in SLICK's work with Chicago's doomed Sound Bar. –DC



CROBAR CHICAGO, BIG TIME DESIGN

It had to happen some time: Under the guidance of designer and Miami and New York co-owner Callin Fortis and his firm Big Time Design, crobar Chicago grew out of its bare-warehouse, no-frills, ugly duckling phase and blossomed into nightclub adulthood. Where there was once black there's now brick, and reflective white. A glass-encased VIP lounge (reminiscent of the elevated one in crobar Miami) borders the roomier dancefloor, which zooms upward into "stratospheric ceilings," a catwalk-esque mezzanine level with built-in loveseats for lounging, and an additional VIP area. Other new features include additional transit space around the floor, LED cove lighting throughout the club, sleek and simple nesting tables, and a stunning mirrorball entry tunnel. All these improvements are meant to help crobar in its goal of attracting the upscale and fabulous, rather than the young and penniless: A responsible intention for the swanky lady she's become. –KLM



OXYGEN LOUNGE COCONUT GROVE, KOSTAS DESIGN GROUP

Brushed steel and teardrop lighting form the basis of this retro-future Florida lounge designed by Miami based Kostas Design Group. The Googie, or Populux, style of postwar L.A. is in full effect in Andrew Kostas' aqua-tinged underground motif, where soft curves and gently cushioned walls balance the sleek waterfall-back bar and small, metal tables. A large, oyster-shaped banquette sits near the DJ booth and is the most coveted of perches. A curved projection wall, great for the lounge's parties and live entertainment, might even catch the outline of the staff – outfitted in designer Barbara Hulanicki's Jetsonian-Japanese mod dresses – as they dart past bearing Pan Asian fare. Kostas counts this as one of the newest in his design cadre of over 40 nightclubs and restaurants along the East Coast. –DC

