

Program Summary:

Buildout an unused, existing dirt floor space on the ground floor of a historic Warehouse District building, transforming it into a bespoke Portuguese restaurant.

Program Statement:

Rooted in New Orleans, this distinctive restaurant celebrates Portuguese culinary traditions, with a design that sets the table for a renowned family of chefs to share their craft in a truly memorable way.

Guests are welcomed through a one-of-a-kind wooden cocoon and guided along a winding, ramped tunnel to the big reveal: a glowing, backlit quartzite jamon bar at the heart of the space. Here, the artistry of cured meats is on full display, framed by a dramatic live-fire grill that radiates warmth and fills the restaurant with enticing aromas. Transparent glass dissolves the boundary between kitchen and dining, fostering a dynamic atmosphere that elevates both guest and chef experiences.

The design strikes a balance between moody elegance and modern sophistication—layering natural wood, dark painted wall paneling, brass accents, and curated artwork in a rich palette inspired by the Portuguese landscape. Acoustic-engineered, microperforated linear wood slat ceilings provide both aesthetic refinement and sound control, seamlessly integrated throughout the dining areas. Varied seating arrangements offer diverse dining experiences, while a hidden speakeasy invites discovery. Every detail—from handcrafted mosaic tile banquettes to state-of-the-art kitchen equipment—is meticulously coordinated to create a setting where both the familiar and extraordinary can be savored.

IA-70.01

Building Area: (sf)
8,790 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$717

Construction Cost
\$6,300,000

Date of Completion:
October, 2024

IA-70.02

Introduction from the Street:

The understated entrance is marked only by a bright neon sign.

Diners near the expansive storefront glass can be viewed from the street, but the design obscures most of the view, compelling passers by to wonder what's hidden inside.



Existing Conditions:

The existing space at the ground floor of a historic warehouse district structure had a dirt floor and steel cross-bracing dividing the large space into undesirable sections.

Our first task was to remove the cross-bracing, creating an expansive space for the future restaurant.

IA-70.03

Inspiration:

After several visits to Portugal to rediscover his heritage, our inspired client welcomed a palette of bold, luxurious materials to pay homage to the vibrancy of his ancestral country.

Handmade tile, rare stone, and lush fabrics would be needed to make this space truly unique.



IA-70.04

The Concept:

As the concept came to fruition, schematic renderings show the formation of the spaces.

There would be a compressed entry opening to the reveal of the jamon bar and main dining spaces, flanked by the kitchen, bar, and private dining areas.

Custom banquette seating and tables would offer a variety of seating arrangements with degrees of privacy and views, each catering to a different experience, depending on where the guest is seated.

Dark colors and warm tone woods pervade the restaurant and defer to the bright handmade tiles, vibrant commissioned artwork, and sculptural light fixtures.



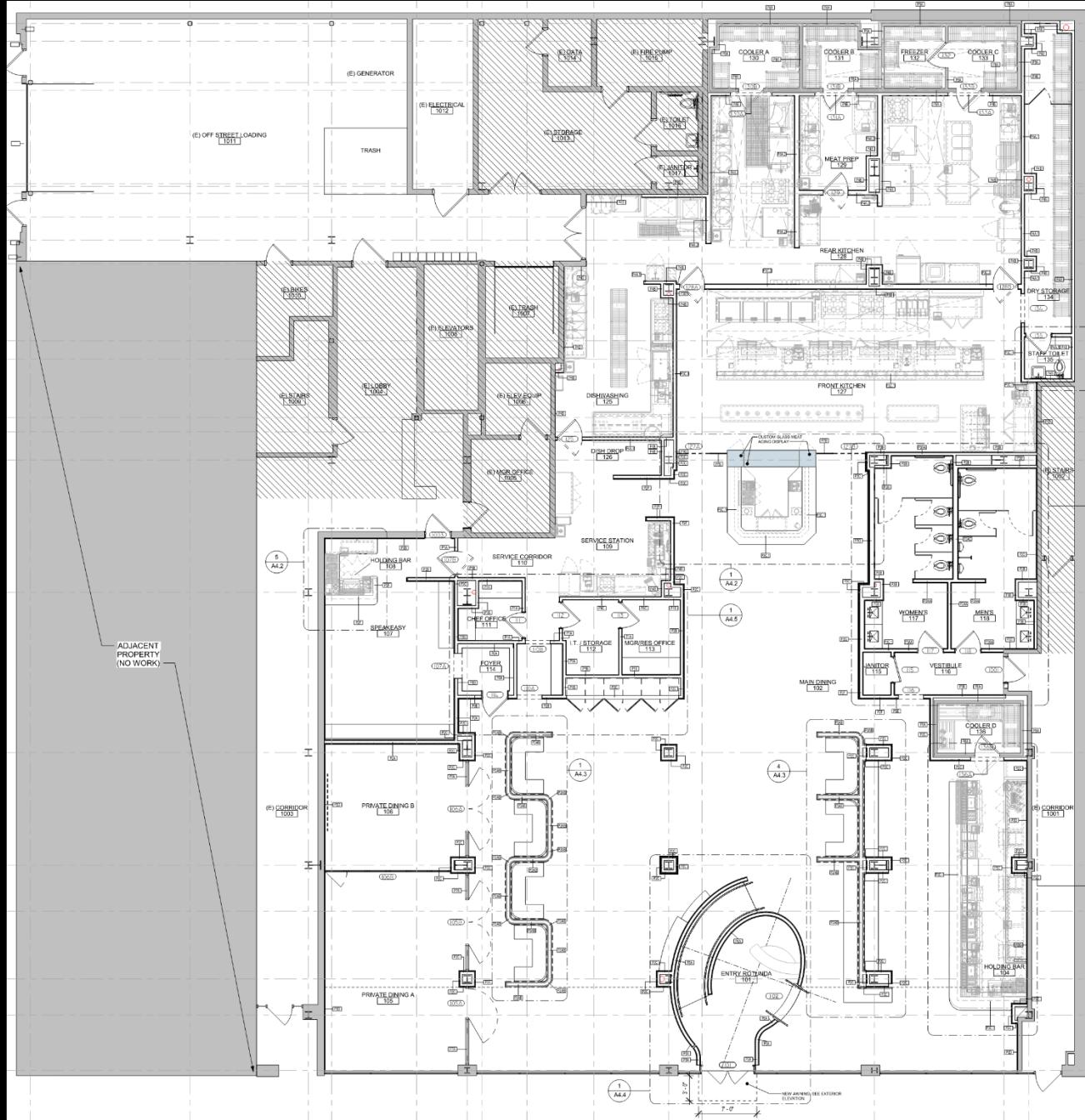
IA-70.05

Floor Plan:

The layout of the restaurant was key to balance the diners' experience with the functionality required for operation.

The entry rotunda captures those waiting to be seated, and ushers them into the main dining area with a direct view of the jamon bar. They're presented a choice of seating options: high tops at the jamon bar or bar, private or open banquette, the more reserved private dining rooms, or (for those in the know) the secret speakeasy.

The connection between kitchen and seating area is emphasized and direct, bringing diners almost into the cooking area.



IA-70.06

Ceiling Plan:

Critical to the delineation of space and acoustics is the remarkable system of ceilings.

In each bay, linear real wood slats with black felt backer, surrounded by beveled real wood panels with microperforations and felt backer form the lower, aesthetic surface.

Above, additional acoustic insulation is accomplished via a sound membrane layer and fiberglass batts to fill the ceiling.

The effect of the acoustical efforts is the perfect environment for dining – lively and bright, but quiet enough for intimate conversation.

Additionally, the system prevents restaurant noise and late-night music from the DJ booth from interfering with hotel operations directly above.



IA-70.07

Rotunda:

Truly a one-of-a-kind work of art, the entry rotunda sets the stage for a remarkable culinary experience.

Made of Sculptform straight and steambent wood battens, the space captures diners but only offers a glimpse into the bar area, intentionally blocking most of the restaurant from view.

The guest is then escorted up the curving ramp for the big reveal beyond.

Anchored by a fantastic chandelier, the focal point of the rotunda is the rooster painting hung behind the stone and leather maître d stand. In Portugal, the rooster is a symbol of justice and good fortune.

The Dekton ultracompact surfacing floor is both beautiful and highly durable.

Brass railings provide a pop of glitz.



IA-70.08

Jamon Bar:

Integral to the restaurant's concept is the jamon bar, where chefs training in the art of cured meats deliver a chef's table experience to those wanting an up-close view of how the sausage is made.

As the focal point of the restaurant, the jamon bar is lit with gold dome lights and also by a two-level, backlit quartzite bar top and front.

Between the jamon bar and the kitchen is only a thin pane of glass. This transparency is absolute and the glass is almost imperceptible, essentially merging the two spaces and giving guests at the jamon bar a front row view not only to the jamon, but the massive and custom wood burning grille in the kitchen beyond.



IA-70.09

Main Dining Spaces:

Rather than being thrown into a large open space, the design created distinct neighborhoods of seating; each with a different ambiance and seating options.

In the main dining space, guests are offered tables or a variety of banquette seating, including the serpentine banquette form, perfect for small parties who need privacy.

More open seating allows for better views and glances to adjacent tables to see what Portuguese food is most enticing.



IA-70.10

The Main Bar

The bar presents a unique alternative to other seating arrangements and an impressive collection of beverages and spirits from around the world, but with a focus on Portuguese options.

Sangria is served from the tap and with unique varieties of the week homemade in jars.

The design provides a perfect backdrop for this special collection of spirits by offering built-in edge lit shelving and cubbies, and exquisite handmade tile.

At the floor of the bar seating is a more geometric marble, and the face of the bar is a sculpted ceramic tile in a custom green emblematic of our client. The bar top is black granite with a double-beveled edge to reflect the beveled ceilings.

Not just for looks, this bar is truly functional with top of the line bar equipment.



IA-70.11

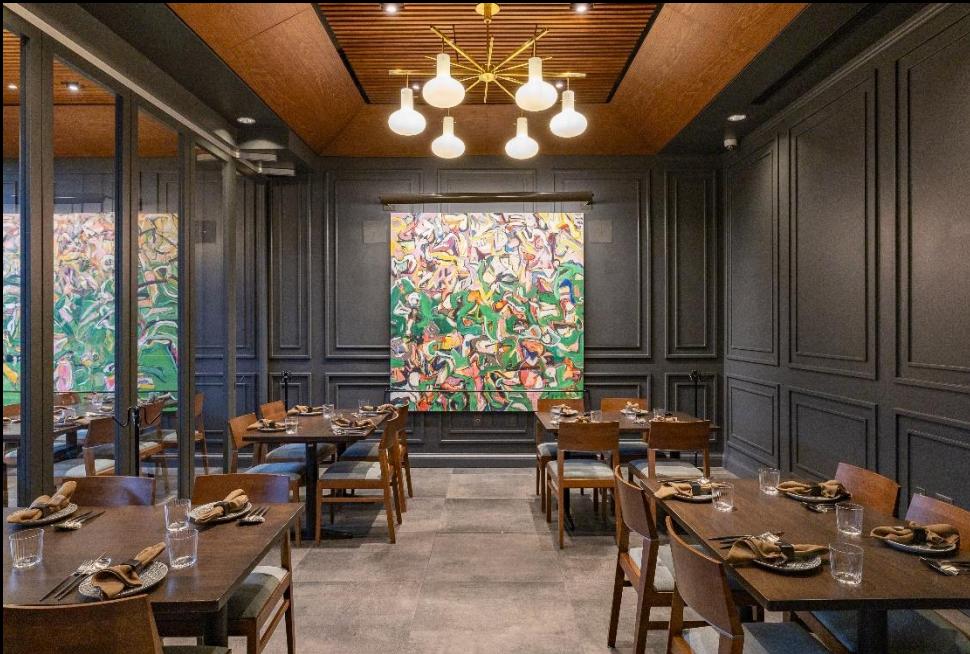
Private Dining Rooms:

The private dining rooms are flexible, yet beautiful, and offer the restaurant alternative dining arrangements for private parties or regular dining.

The large private dining area is bifurcated by a movable acrylic partition, so light it can be adjusted by the push of a finger and stacked to one side. When closed, the clear acrylic partition still provides a typical swing door for servers to move between two separate private parities, if needed.

Unique lighting and artwork helps to define the private dining rooms.

Dark wall paneling and the warm tones of the wood ceiling tie the design with the main areas of the restaurant.



IA-70.12

Speakasy:

Hidden behind an understated door that says “UTILITY” is the secret speakeasy. For those in the know, access will be provided to this exclusive area with seating for only a few special guests.

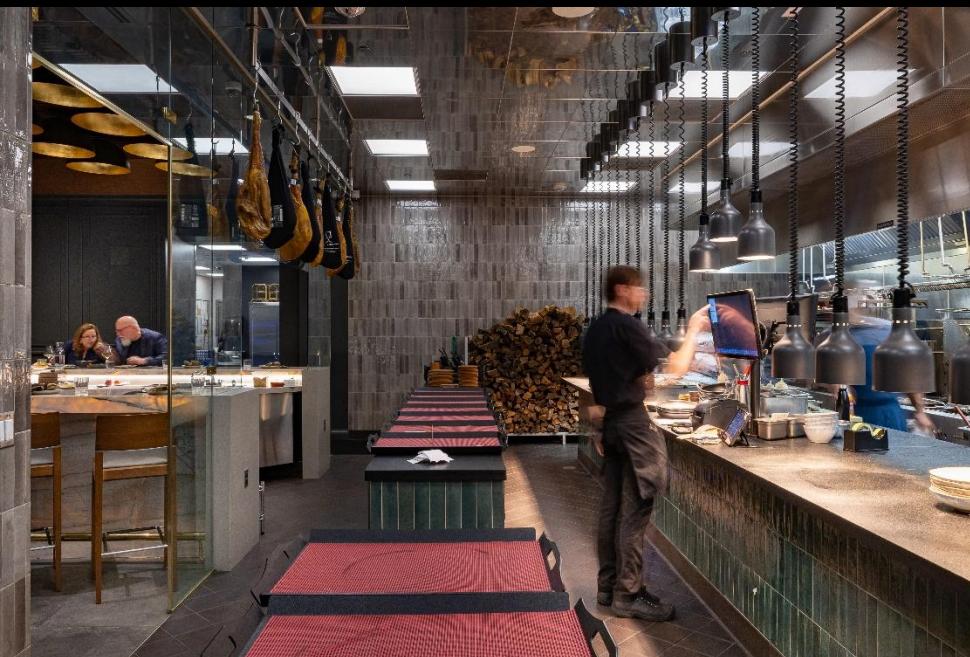


Here, the dark wall paneling remains, but other materials are introduced: opulent carpet, backlit quartz countertops, Kaynemaile gold mesh bar backdrop, and glitzy gold ceiling and chandelier, are rooted by comfortable and snug velvet barrel swivel chairs.

The most sensational drinks in the restaurant are served here, in a space one wouldn't know existed if you didn't hear about it.

Kitchen:

Our client's most powerful kitchen to date, this one feels more like part of the restaurant than a commercial cooking space. Luxurious materials – tile and stone – were brought into the kitchen. This, in addition to separation only by a pane of glass, blends the spaces completely.

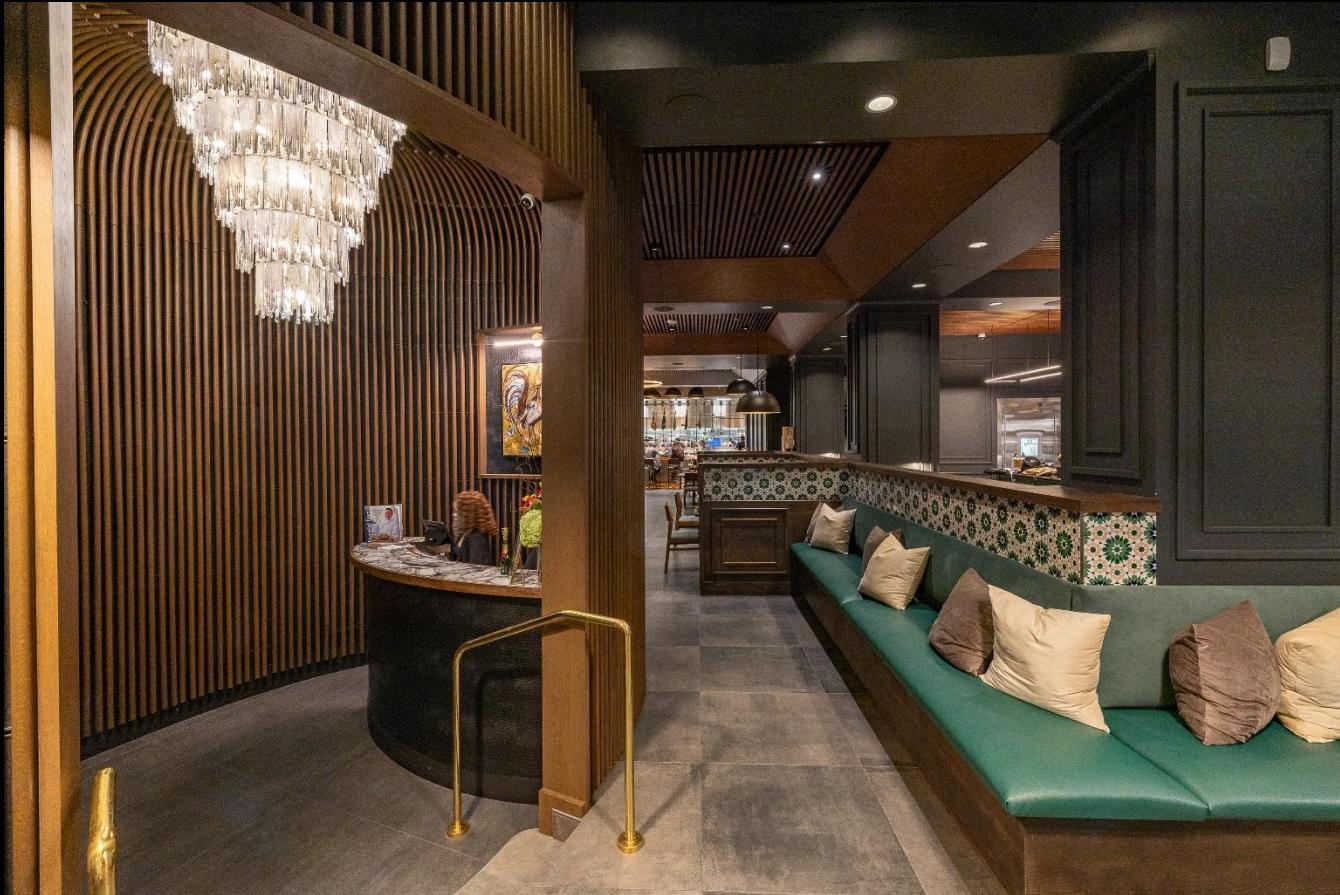


Guests at the jamon bar are seated right next to the kitchen, and can view the expeditor tables (where finishing touches are added), but also the main cookline behind it where all the magic really happens. A giant custom wood burning grille fills much of the front kitchen both physically and with the campfire aroma of cooking with real wood. Even the ceiling of polished, reflective stainless steel mirrors the space below, giving diners unprecedented views of the cooking.

IA-70.13

In Conclusion:

The Portuguese restaurant and bar concept – unique to New Orleans – provides a beautiful environment for our celebrated chef client and his family and network of chefs to hone their craft and do what they love most – serving delicious food.



Project Name:
34 Restaurant & Bar

Project Location:
714 Baronne Street
New Orleans, LA 70113

Owner/Client:
The Emeril Group

Architect(s) of Record:
(names and addresses)
Charles Ward, Jr.
AQ Studios
1100 Poydras Street, Suite 3550
New Orleans, LA 70163

Project Team:
Philip Goldberg, AIA
Charles Ward, Jr.
Kelly Nagy

Landscape Architect:
N/A

Consultants:
HG Engineering
Cambas Electric

General Contractor:
Perrier Esquerre Contractors

Photographer(s):
(please list which specific slides get credited to each
photographer(s) listed).
Neil Alexander / NEILPHOTO