

### **Program Summary:**

Renovation of a renowned celebrity chef's flagship restaurant, transforming the dining experience after 35 years of successful operation.

### **Program Statement:**

A celebrated chef returned to us with a bold vision: to reimagine his flagship restaurant as his son stepped into a larger role. The goal was to create a more refined, exclusive dining experience—while honoring the legacy that made the restaurant iconic.

In the main dining room, the design strengthens the connection between guests and the kitchen. A previously partial view was fully revealed by replacing the chef's counter with new glass panels framed within the original arches. Now, every guest can watch the culinary team at work - and is invited to visit the kitchen, where a dramatic ice podium displays the evening's ingredients. The room has been pared down to just twelve tables, many set within deep banquettes that offer intimacy and exclusivity, complementing a new high-touch service model and tasting-menu format.

A major part of the reimagined concept is a distinct, more casual wine bar with its own identity and entrance on Julia Street.

Occupying the original bar and part of the former dining area, it features a collection of over 30,000 bottles. The iconic black counter remains, now framed by a custom surround, while the original woven wood ceiling has been carefully refinished to suit the space's darker, moodier palette.

Throughout, the design balances legacy and evolution—blending the refined with the relaxed, and the progressive with the timeless—to carry this New Orleans institution into its next chapter.

## **SP-180.01**

Building Area: (sf)

7,310 SF (Restaurant)

4,790 SF (Reno. Area)

Cost per Square Foot:

**\$459**

Construction Cost

**\$2,200,000**

Date of Completion:

**September, 2023**

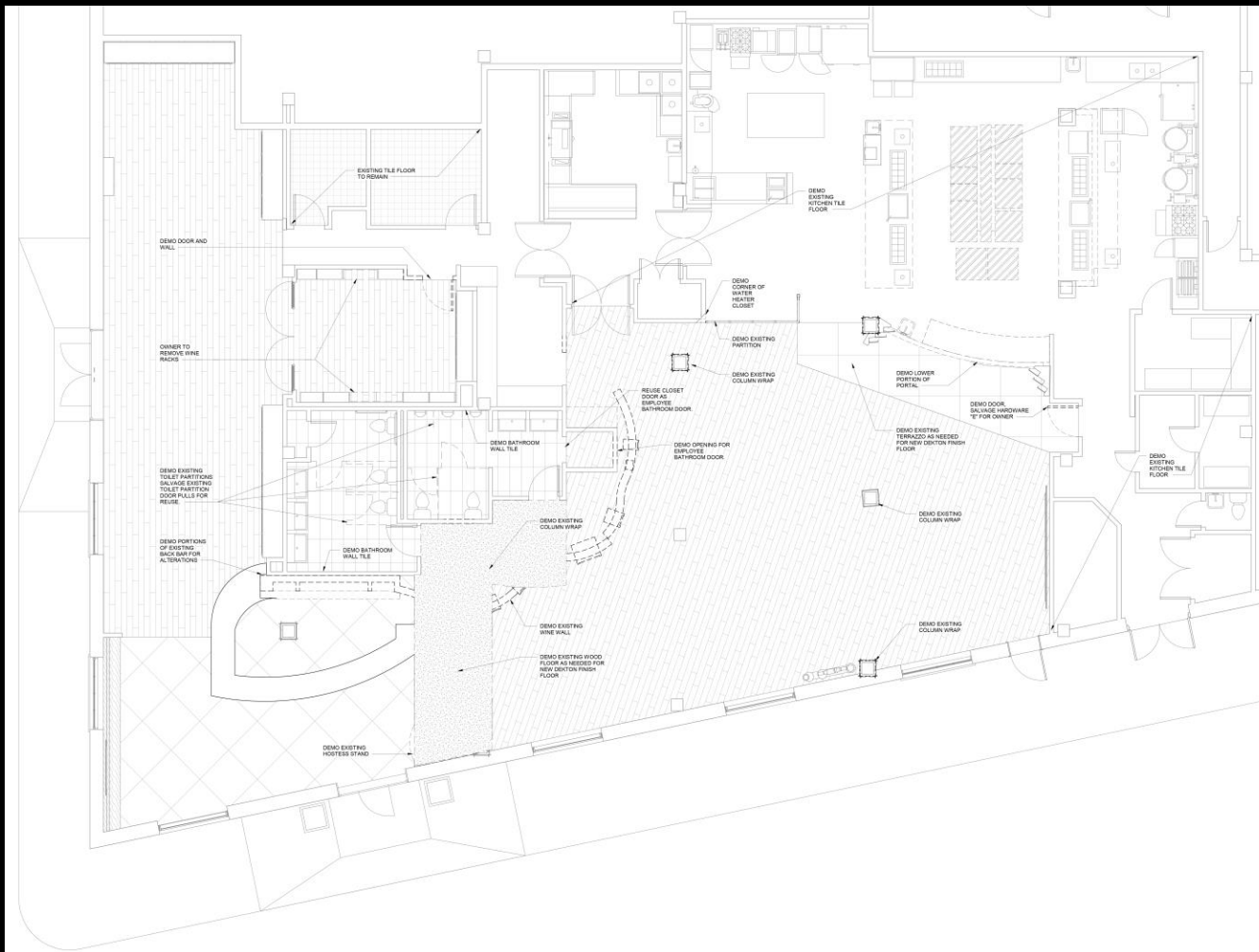
# SP-180.02

## The Existing Space:

The demolition floor plan highlights how layout needed to change to reflect the new vision of the restaurant.

Previously the dining room wrapped around a typical restaurant bar, and the wine room served as a traditional private dining room.

The removal of the primary restaurant equipment and chef's counter show how the customer experience was intended to change with this renovation.





## SP-180.03

The Existing Space:

Existing conditions photographs show the more closed off nature of the kitchen, and the lighter finishes.

The multiple wood tones between the ceilings, floors, and furniture create a mismatched appearance and one that's lacking cohesion.

# SP-180.04

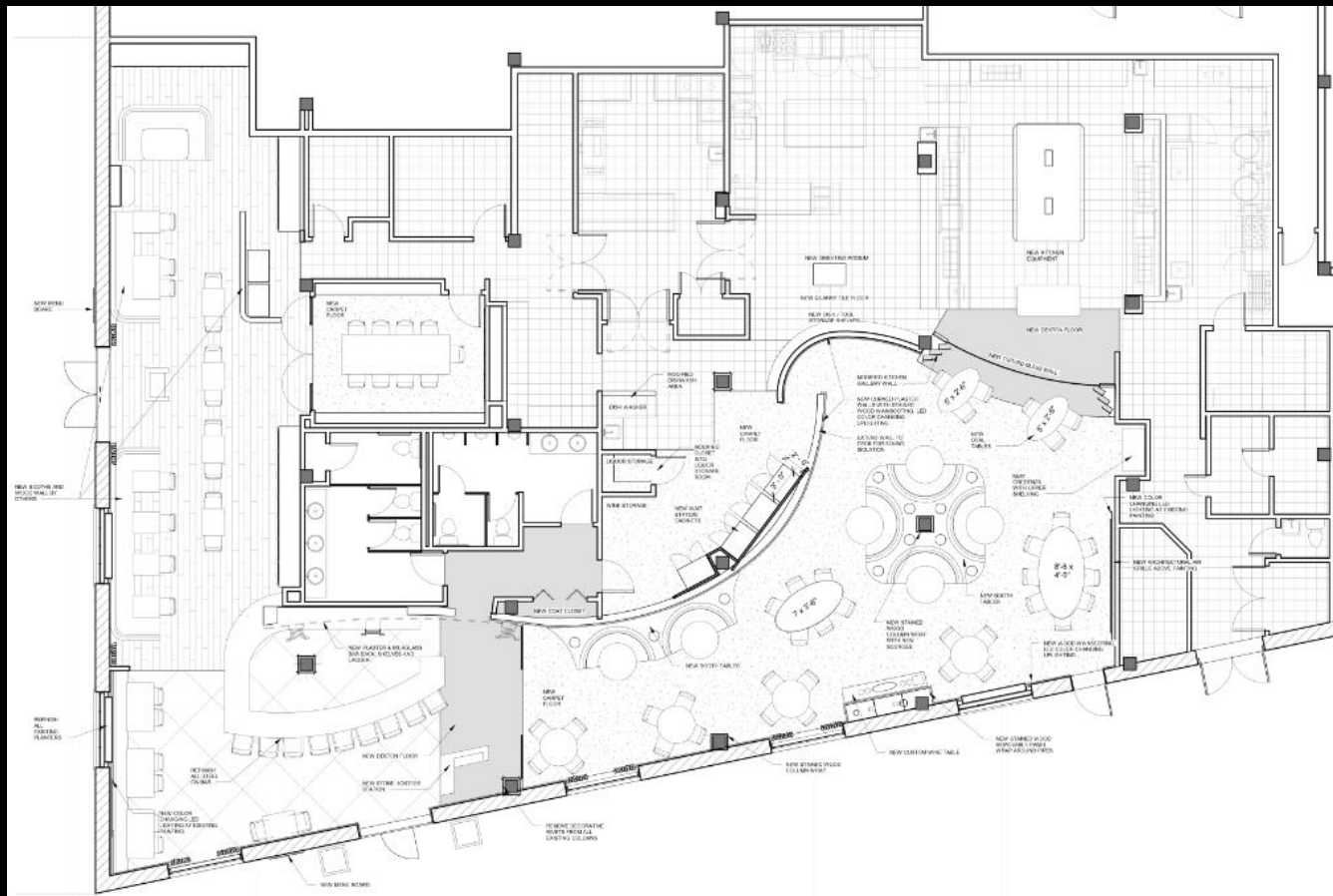
## The Reimagined Space:

The new floor plan shows the delineation between the more exclusive, reservations-only dining room (plan right) and the more casual wine bar (plan left). Each has its own identity while still tying into each other.

The dining room has a greater visual connection with the kitchen and the limited number of tables highlights the exclusivity of the experience.

Milk glass panels provide a physical separation between the dining room and wine bar, while back of house spaces and shared restrooms provide an additional buffer.

The wine bar is more open, particularly to the reimagined bar seating area. The tables are closer together and generally seat fewer patrons. It also has its own entrance from Julia Street, while the restaurant can be accessed per usual from Tchoupitoulas.





# SP-180.05

## Progress Renderings:

These progress renderings highlight the vision our client was seeking to achieve – a nod to the past with its eyes on the future and what's next in New Orleans fine dining.

The top rendering is of the dining room and showcases the new visual connection with the reimagined kitchen. Each diner has a view of the work being done and has the opportunity to step inside the kitchen.

The bottom rendering of the wine bar is more intimate and features the original exposed masonry walls and well-recognized bar counter.

Similar materials are used to connect the spaces while still creating different user experiences. The original woven wood ceiling panels used for acoustics were retained and refinished, and new smooth Venetian curvilinear walls create a sense of whimsy.





## SP-180.06

A Nod to the Past  
With a Look Toward the Future:

The restaurant entry has traditionally been off Tchoupitoulas Street and that remains post-renovation, but the entry experience has completely changed. While you still enter and see the bar, dining room patrons are ushered past the hostess stand, past the milk glass panels, to the more secluded dining room.

The beautiful exposed brick and wooden woven ceiling panels remain, but have been refinished a darker hue to match the moodier vibe of the dining room while standing in contrast to the brighter wine bar.

The mixture of new and old materials is reflective of the restaurant's desire to retain its longstanding legacy while also acknowledging its progression to a future with a new generation of chefs at the helm.





## SP-180.07

### A Look Back:

Looking back at the dining room entry, you can see the visual and physical division between the restaurant and the wine bar.

The dining room features new carpet, luxurious banquettes, and dining room chairs - all of which help with the acoustics of the space given their soft materials. The original restaurant design had a wood floors, which did nothing to help with the acoustics of the space. To create a more exclusive and intimate dining experience, an appropriate auditory environment was essential to complement the exquisite cuisine.



## SP-180.08

Introducing Luxurious Banquettes and Pops of Color:

The new dining room layout introduces luxurious, deep-set banquettes that create more intimate dining experiences than a series of tables in a line.

The banquettes have a commercial-grade faux velvet finish, which adds a touch of luxury while still being easily cleanable for optimal practicality.

In the dining room, the client envisioned a darker, more reserved ambiance. We achieved this goal by re-wrapping the columns in a cherry wood finish and staining the woven wood ceilings a dark finish. Otherwise, the finish selections are generally neutral, deferring to the glowing kitchen with its custom green casework, and the beautiful large scale abstract art.





## SP-180.09

A Show Stopper:

The new focal point of the restaurant is the kitchen. The glass box perimeter was retained from the original restaurant, but the chef's table counter was removed and replaced with glass panels. The new design frames the kitchen as if it's a piece of art and is reflective of the beauty of the plates that they put out, which are their own artform.

Instead of just a few guests getting an up-close look of the work being done, now all diners have a better view.

Additionally, all patrons are invited to visit the kitchen to see the chefs in action, and to stop by the kitchen entry podium ice display to view that night's dinner ingredients.

The level of transparency in the cuisine and its ingredients is reflected in the architecture that frames the kitchen in which it's cooked.



## SP-180.10

The Kitchen as a Centerpiece:

The primary kitchen equipment of the original restaurant was removed and replaced with world class, bespoke machines for cooking.

This new equipment does not shy away from attention with its custom signature green coloring of our client's branding, making this hearth of the kitchen the centerpiece of the restaurant.





## SP-180.11

A View from Within:

It is in this portion of the kitchen that diners are welcomed in to see the chefs in action.

The kitchen island closest to the glass is for expediting. It is where the finishing touches are put on dishes before they are ushered out to the guests in the dining room.





## SP-180.12

A Different Experience at the Wine Bar:

In contrast to the dining room, the wine bar has its own unique feel. Here the existing terrazzo and wood floors remain, rooting the overall design to the restaurant's familiar former aesthetics.

Smooth Venetian plaster walls and refinished woven wood ceilings tie the wine bar and dining room together.

In the distance of the photo, you get a glimpse of the immense wine collection on display throughout the space, as well as the new hostess stand just inside the new Julia Street entrance.



## SP-180.13

A Different Experience at the Wine Bar:

The exterior walls of the wine bar are largely finished with the historic building's original exposed brick masonry, which adds a wonderful texture and warmth to the space.

The interior walls are largely lined with wine coolers, allowing patrons to gaze at the vast collection of over 30,000 bottles.

In the wine bar, the tables are generally smaller and closer together to facilitate the more casual experience for this component of the restaurant.