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## A FLIGHT OF FANTASY

Text: Suzanne Miao Photography: Edmon Leong / Courtesy of Stefano Tordiglione Design

*At Sal Curioso, the quirky interiors were inspired by the eponymous — and entirely imaginary — food inventor and traveller for whom the restaurant is named*

In Hong Kong, the legendary nightlife district of Lan Kwai Fong is in the final throes of a revamp which dates back to 2011, when entrepreneur Allan Zeman decided to tear down and rebuild California Tower. Bars and restaurants in the immediate area, after months of flux, are finally settling down again — and one of the area's most recent arrivals is Sal Curioso.

Located on Wyndham Street rather than Lan Kwai Fong proper, this too befits the overall theme of a curious traveller — Sal Curioso himself, a mythical character dreamed up by husband-and-wife duo Chris Woodyard and Bronwyn Cheung of Woolly Pig Concepts. Serving Spanish cuisine, the interiors of the cocktail bar and restaurant were conceived by Stefano Tordiglione Design (construction and material selection, the layout and story of the space) and award-winning branding agency Substance, which translated the story of Sal Curioso into the graphics and decorations on the walls of the restaurant.

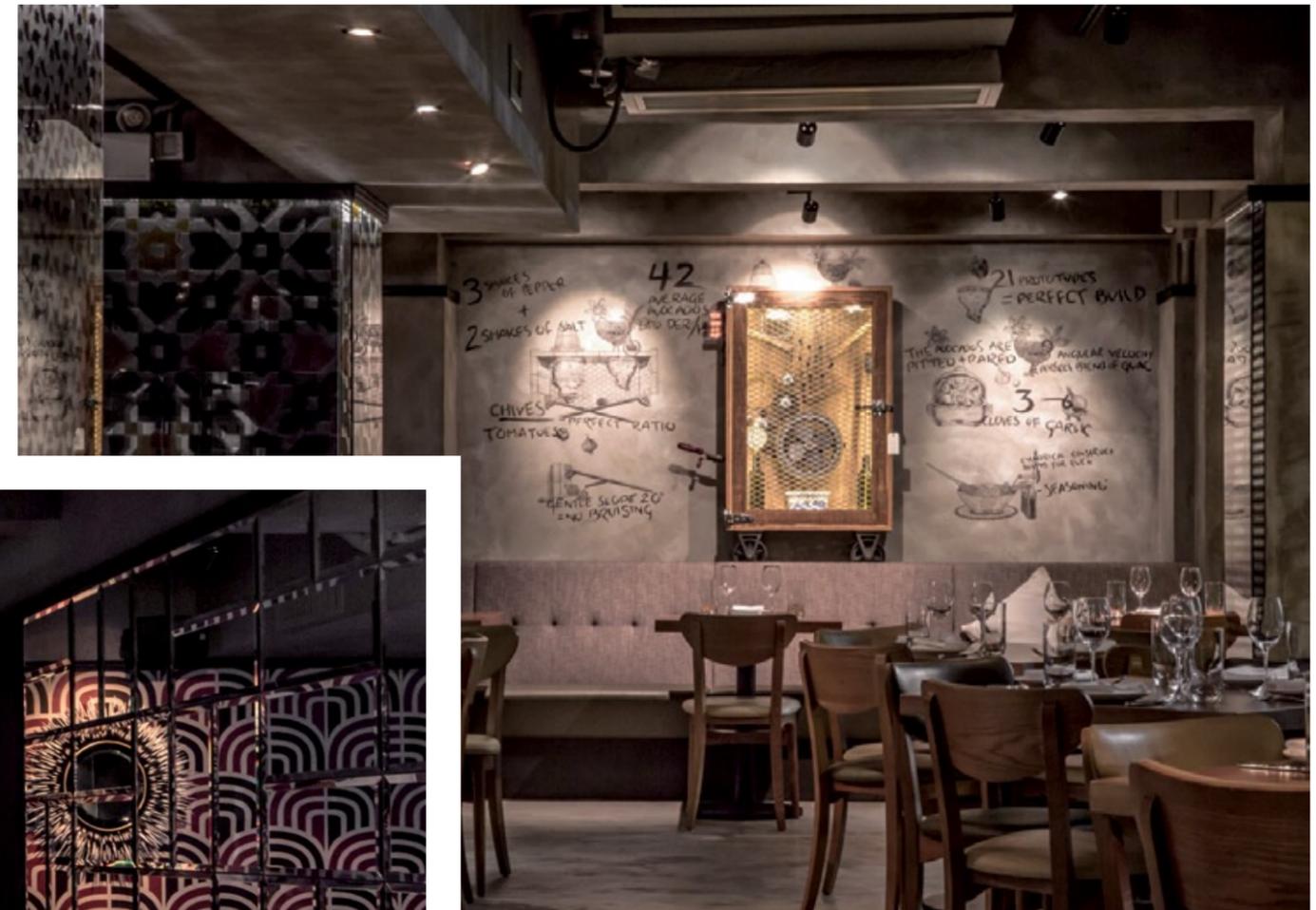
"The project is the second restaurant by Chris and Bronwyn. Sal Curioso is a continuation of the concept of the first restaurant, Madam Sixty Ate in Wanchai," says Stefano Tordiglione. "Sal is the Spanish the ex-lover of Madam, a world traveller who is curious and eccentric. He is crazy about food and is a genius inventor of food machines."

Following the imaginary chef's footsteps in creating the concept for the space, Tordiglione sliced it through the middle to create a distinctive split effect centred around a 'construct and deconstruct' approach, inspired by Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the long bar, which features a mosaic countertop constructed of varied slices of Spanish tiles.

"Everything was specifically designed, beginning from the chairs that are inspired from an Italian '60s design," Tordiglione notes. "The concept of the whole project is very Spanish, so we tried to keep the whole atmosphere coherent with a Mediterranean influence."



Quirky touches include optical-illusion wallpaper, sofas covered with multi-hued fabrics, and eye-catching black and red stools



Mixed-era furniture includes chairs from the 1950s and a 1960s banquette designed by Stefano Tordiglione Design

Against the gritty, industrial neutrality of a cement-dominated backdrop of floors, walls and ceiling, molded panels, sumptuous fabrics and a riot of colours and patterns provide visual interest. The establishment is divided into distinct areas, each with its unique design. The lounge is welcoming and cosy, for example, inspired by clubs of the 1970s with optical-illusion wallpaper, sofas covered with multi-hued fabrics, and eye-catching black and red stools.

With regards to the graphics and wall décor, Maxime Dautresme, creative director and co-founder of Substance, points out that Sal Curioso is an inventor and uncommon genius: "He meticulously designs and builds contraptions to best broil, steam or pop the strange animals from Madam's travels," she says.

"Each device is accompanied by Sal's annotations. His schematics fill the menus as patents, the interior is his studio displaying assembled machines and licensing labels as business cards. Showcased is his anthology complete with illustrations and diagrams.

Even the coasters are not immune — they are a piping system to transport excess condensation when placed together to connect the pipes."

Quirky and bright themes continue throughout. Mixed-era furniture includes chairs from the 1950s and a 1960s banquette designed by Tordiglione, as well as vintage lamps from the 1970s at the chef's table. The details are, of course, expressions of the imagined journey. Wave-like, sand-blasted mirrors surround the sleek stainless steel open kitchen, also reminiscent of an ocean and reflecting the importance of seafood in Mediterranean cuisine. Large central columns in the dining area are decorated with patterns and prints inspired by the Islamic palace and fortress complex Alhambra, in Granada, Spain.

Opposites attract in the bathrooms, where an inverted theme is apparent — simple black and white tiles provide a frame for the space, while a striking strip of stark cement runs around the middle. Like Sal Curioso's extraordinary mind, his restaurant is full of surprises.



The long bar features a mosaic countertop constructed of varied slices of Spanish tiles



## 奇幻之旅

撰文：Suzanne Miao  
攝影：Edmon Leong 及由 Stefano Tordiglione Design 提供

Sal Curioso 一室奇妙設計，靈感源自虛構的同名料理發明家兼旅行家

在香港，赫赫有名的夜生活據點蘭桂坊已步入大變身的最後階段。這個最後的改造工程要追溯到2011年企業家盛智文決定把加州大廈推倒重建，而經過數月的變遷，附近的酒吧和餐廳都終於塵埃落定，而其中一間最新加盟的餐廳就是 Sal Curioso。

Sal Curioso 選擇在雲咸街而非蘭桂坊開設，對整體主題來說也很恰當。餐廳以一名好奇心強的旅行家 Sal Curioso 為題，實際上是 Woolly Pig Concepts 夫妻檔組合 Chris Woodyard 和 Bronwyn Cheung 虛構出來的人物。這間雞尾酒吧餐廳所提供的是西班牙菜，室內設計(包括建造及挑選用料、空間佈局及背後的故事)出自 Stefano Tordiglione Design 的手筆，參與設計的還有屢獲殊榮的品牌形象設計公司 Substance，負責把 Sal Curioso 的故事轉化成餐廳牆壁上的平面設計和裝飾。

Stefano Tordiglione 說：「這間餐廳是 Chris 和 Bronwyn 的第二個餐廳項目。他們的第一間餐廳是在灣仔的 Madam Sixty Ate，而 Sal Curioso 便是其概念的延伸。Sal 是 Madam 的前愛人，是個在各國遊歷的西班牙旅行家，好奇心強又古古怪怪。他對食物很熱衷狂熱，是個料理機器天才發明家。」

隨著這位虛構的大廚的思維而得出創造空間的概念，Stefano 把餐廳從中央一分為二，營造出以一種「建構與解構」的方向為本的獨特分裂效果，靈感源自西班牙建築師高迪。最明顯表現出這種概念的或許是長長的吧台，面由形形色色的西班牙碎磚砌成美麗的馬賽克。

Stefano 說：「從意大利 60 年代設計所啟發的椅子起，一切都是度身設計的。整個項目的概念帶有強烈的西班牙氣息，所以我們盡量保持整體氣氛帶有地中海的味道。」

石屎地板、牆壁和天花塑造出粗糙的工業味道，讓模鑄鑲板、奢華的布料及豐富的色彩和圖案在中性

背景中帶出有趣的視覺效果。餐廳劃分成個別的區域，各有各獨一無二的設計。以廳區為例，氣氛舒適怡人，靈感源自 70 年代的俱樂部，以錯視效果的牆紙、裹上七彩布料的梳化和亮眼的黑色和紅色矮凳作裝飾。

說到平面設計和牆壁的裝飾，Substance 的創作總監兼合夥人 Maxime Dautresme 指出 Sal Curioso 是個發明家，更是個非一般的天才。她說：「他精密地設計和製作新發明，想出最好的方法來烤、蒸或煮 Madam 從旅行帶回來的古怪動物。」

她又說：「每件發明都伴隨著 Sal 的註解。他的圖解把餐牌變成他的專利品，餐廳是他用來陳列各件機器的工作室，而牌照標籤則是他的名片。展示的都是他配上插畫和圖表的創作。就算是杯墊亦不例外，實際上是個管道系統，把杯墊的管道連接好就可以運送多餘的凝結水滴。」

奇異且繽紛的主題繼續漫延到餐廳每個角落。室內擺放了不同年代的家具，包括 50 年代的椅子、一張 Stefano 設計的 60 年代長梳化椅，以及大廚桌上的 70 年代古董燈。當然，細節訴說著一趟幻想的旅程。時尚的不鏽鋼開放式廚房圍上波浪形的噴砂鏡面，亦讓人聯想到大海，反映出海鮮在地中海菜中有多重要。用餐區中央的巨柱子亦以印花圖案和圖紋來裝飾，靈感是西班牙格拉納達的伊斯蘭宮殿兼堡壘阿蘭布拉宮。

洗手間裡又是一種截然不同的美，主題明顯是剛好相反的。簡單的黑磚與白磚形成空間的背景，中間有一行顯眼突出的混凝土。如同 Sal Curioso 異與常人的腦袋，他的餐廳也是驚喜處處。●

Top The bar countertop was designed with a 'construct and deconstruct' approach, inspired by Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi



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