

# Texas Architect







## #thepatternofcoffee andpeople

Dallas practice OFFICIAL designed the new Houndstooth Coffee and Jettison — its cocktail bar antipode — for an era in which a space’s appearance in a photo posted on Instagram is as important as the experience of being there.

by Audrey Maxwell, AIA

A search for #coffee on Instagram yields over 56 million posts, filling the screen with a never-ending grid of square photos featuring the caffeinated beverage in its many guises. Frothy latte creations are captured from a birds-eye perspective. Mugs are posed amid leather journals, macaroons, or strategically scattered coffee beans. The hand selfie with to-go cup is particularly popular. While the beverages themselves are the dominant subject matter, there are also plenty of posts showcasing equipment, bearded baristas, and coffee shop ambiance. Instagram and coffee, it turns out, make a formidable social media pair.

As Instagram hit the 500 million user mark in June 2016, brands continued flocking to the platform, including coffee shops. Coffee giant Starbucks boasts over 12 million followers, each opting to fill their feed with glamour shots of the brand’s signature concoctions. The self-described “home for visual storytelling,” Instagram has evolved from a creative outlet for everyday folks to a mechanism for brands sharing their narrative.

Followers can like and comment on a business’ posts, and many feeds include photos submitted by consumers. This interaction allows consumers to feel like a part of the brand’s community, a key feature for marketing-savvy businesses.

The owners of Houndstooth Coffee have fully embraced Instagram (@houndstoothcoffee) in their social media strategy. When they brought OFFICIAL on board to design their fourth location, they were already building an image collection alongside the hashtag #thepatternofcoffeeandpeople. The feed includes a roundup of their beverages and branded products, but most notably includes shots of the shops’ interiors with people prominently featured. In keeping with their hashtag, the owners wanted to tailor an engaging customer experience and recognized that architecture would play a lead role in achieving this goal. The ‘Instagrammability’ of the new space became a key design concept for designers Amy Wynne Leveno and Mark Leveno.





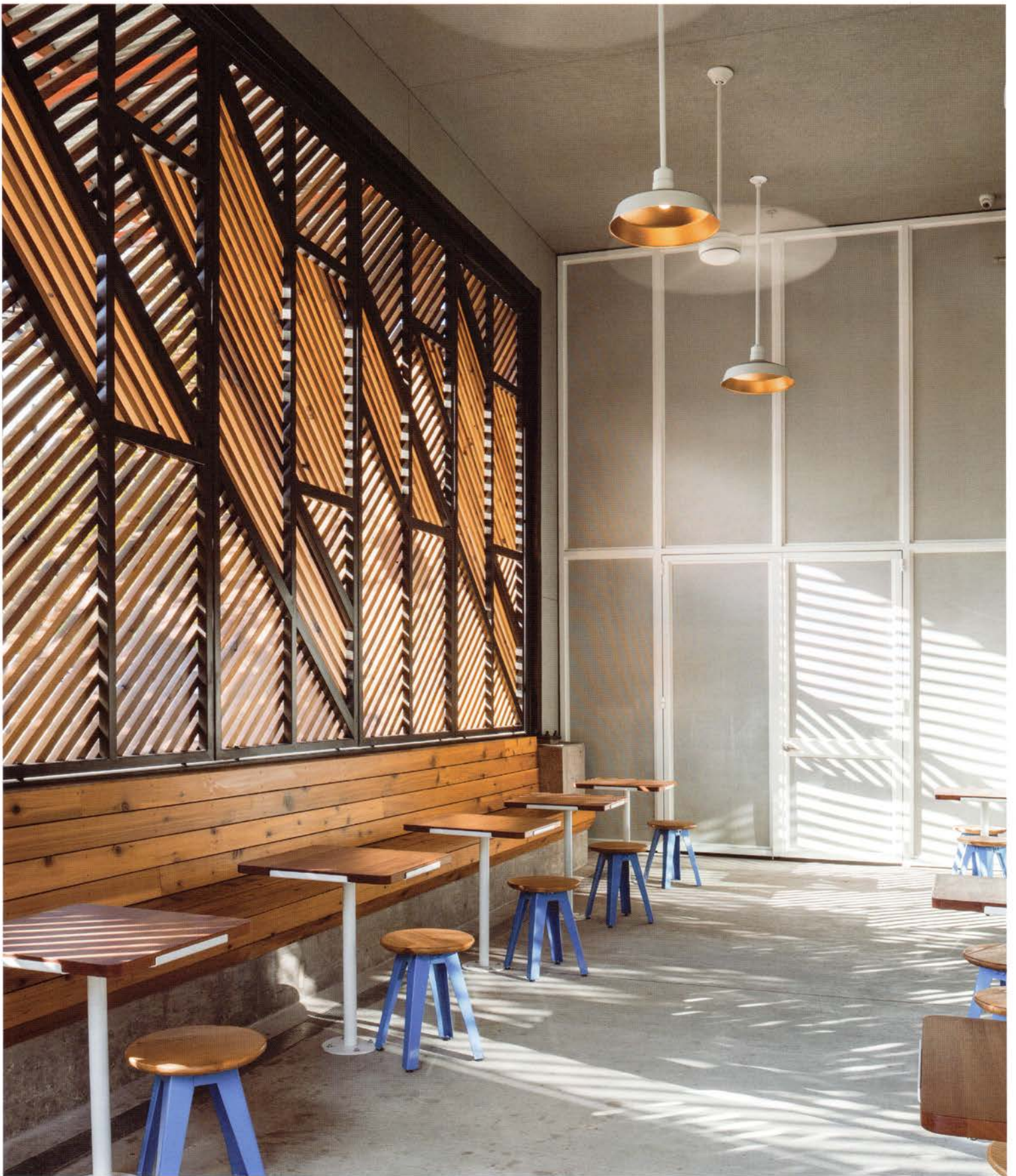
**Facing** A large bar and “ceiling cloud” sit center stage at Houndstooth Coffee, with activity occurring on all sides.

**Top left** A custom bench nestles into a corner where the coffee shop’s aphorism is on display. A David Trubridge pendant casts geometric patterns on the panel wall.

**Top right** The central ceiling cloud folds up at one corner, drawing customers toward the barista.

**Left** The bar hides equipment, displays retail goods, creates transaction areas, and provides seating.





DRAWING BY OFFICIAL





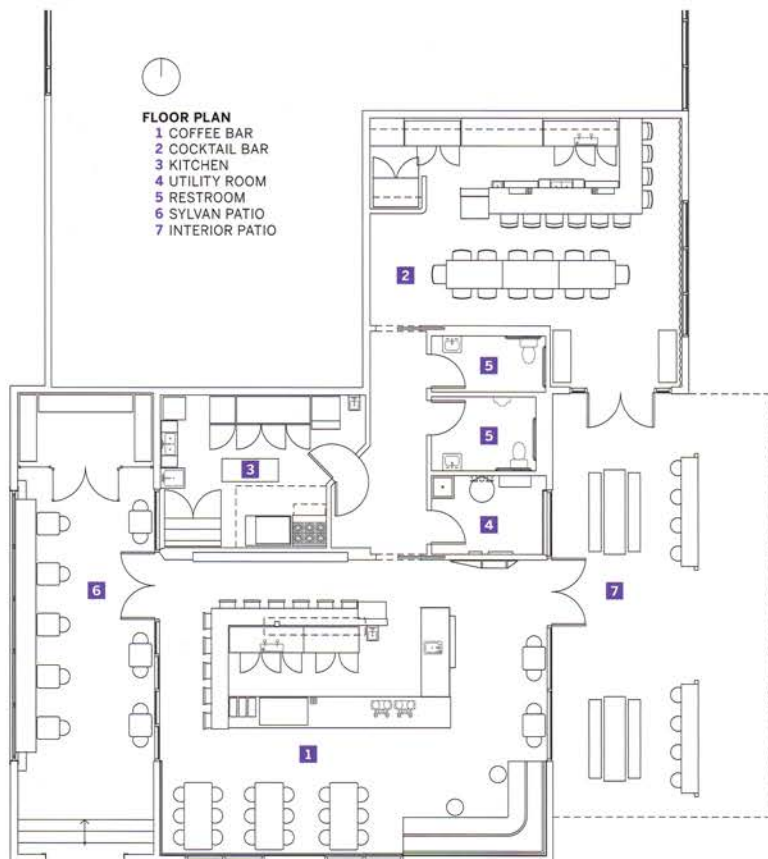
**Facing** A custom screen on the back patio mitigates the western sun and blocks visual clutter from busy Sylvan Avenue.

**Left** The patio connects both Houndstooth and Jet-tison, a transitional space for morning coffee and evening cocktails.

The shop, located in Sylvan Thirty, a mixed-use development in Dallas designed by Lake|Flato, consists of a series of vignettes that offer aesthetically pleasing photo backdrops. A wood banquette wraps one corner, below upholstered foam wall panels displaying its trademark “The Pattern of Coffee and People.” The signage is conducive to close-ups or as a textural background for candid images of customers leaning over laptops, espresso drinks close at hand. Round, glossy white tables provide an ideal backdrop for the ubiquitous latte shot. A David Trubridge-designed light fixture casts sculptural shadows on the walls, adding interest to architectural photos and selfies alike.

Once their social media energy has been exhausted, customers enjoy a holistically designed environment that emphasizes the customer experience. A substantial island bar is the focal point, placing the barista and coffee equipment center stage. A large white cloud clad in wood ribs lowers the scale of the high ceilings, and folds up at one corner to draw customers toward the barista. The arena configuration creates a 360-degree arrangement of diverse seating options — from bar stools and high-top tables to a wall niche in a nearby corner for the ever-present wallflower. The bar is custom-tailored with planar surfaces that fold and change to expose transaction tops, hide equipment, form bar-height counters, and create display areas for retail goods.

The material palette is simple and crisp, capitalizing on the shop’s three sides of natural sun exposure. According to Mark, the client likes wood and utilized a lot of wood in previous Houndstooth spaces, “but we wanted to step away from it and get down to basics of the sun, clear the palette, and let shadow play and other elements do the work.” The space is overwhelmingly white with touches of white oak, mouse



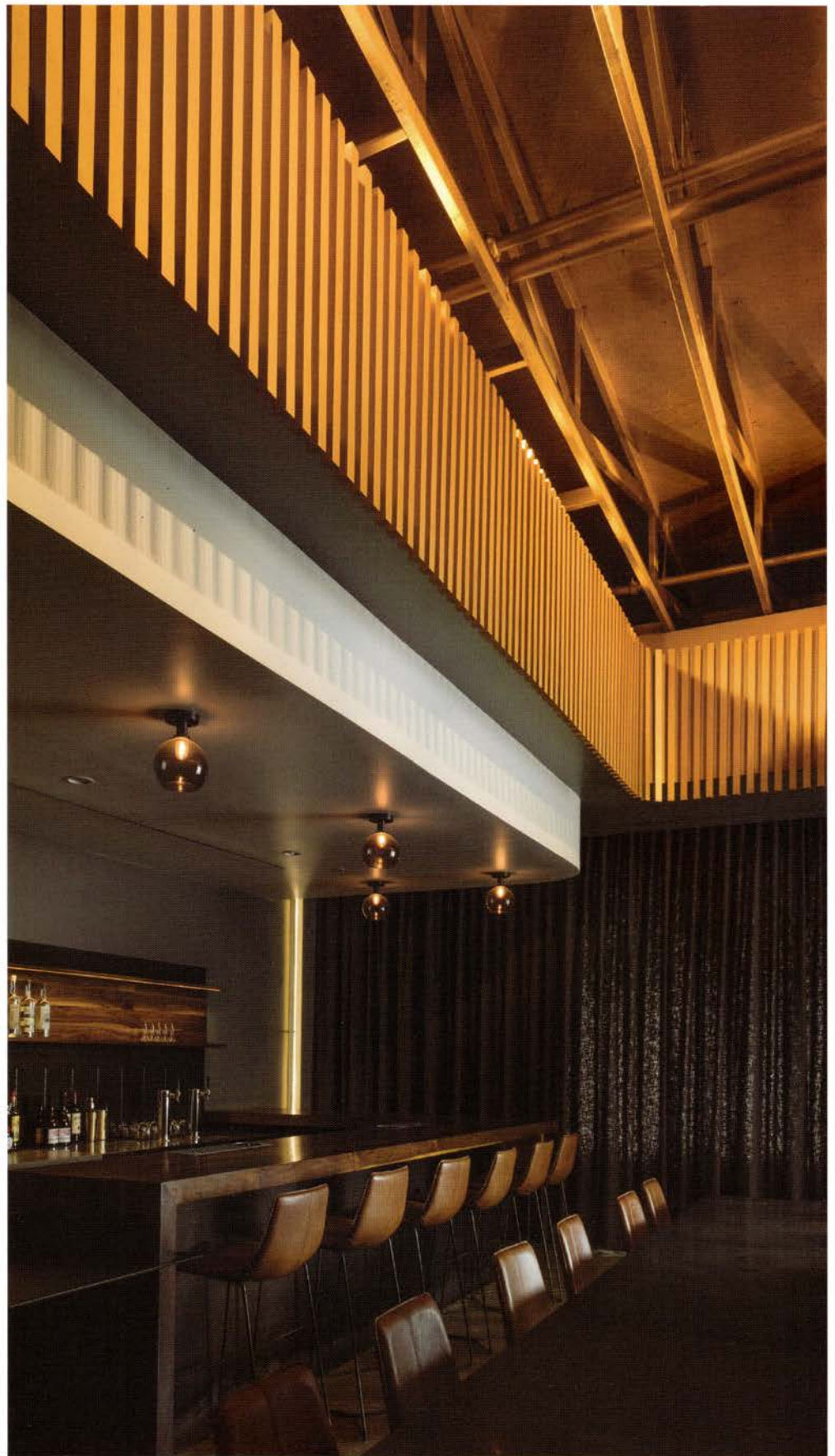


gray upholstery, and gold accents. Custom furniture by RAD Furniture (exterior picnic tables), Petrified Design (interior large tables and stools), and OFFICIAL (square interior and exterior cafe tables and wall mounted gold arm lights), retail display fixtures, and lighting add texture and warmth. The interior space extends outdoors to two bracketing patios. The front patio is ideal for people-watching, while the back creates a cozy nook shielded from the western sun and passing cars by a decorative screen. The sun-filled space has a bright, upbeat atmosphere that is evident even in the photos on Instagram.

The adjacent cocktail bar, Jettison, is the theoretical void to Houndstooth's positive. This is interpreted most literally in the ceiling plane, where an inverted version of the cloud is rendered in gold ribs, evoking a chandelier. The bright voluminous space of the coffee shop is offset by the dark, intimate interior of the bar. The palette here is rendered in walnut and plate steel, a charcoal grey curtain blocking exterior light. A connecting corridor acts as a valve between the two spaces, housing shared program and allowing for simultaneous use of both spaces during pop-up events. The patio on the parking lot is accessed from each and transitions seamlessly from morning cafe to evening *biergarten*. Crafted cocktails replace lattes in Jettison's Instagram feed, which also flaunts its speakeasy ambience.

Houndstooth and Jettison are certainly more than an assemblage of life-size photo backdrops. The unique program requirement is a product of its time, one met in a clever yet subtle way by the designers. The Instagrammable aspects of the spaces — the individual vignettes — are not hokey one-offs. They are functional design elements integrated into a thoughtfully crafted architectural whole. The spaces stand alone, they simply have the added benefit of helping customers capture the perfect Instagram shot. So, snap away — just don't forget the hashtags: #thepatternofcoffeeandpeople #houndstoothcoffee #jettison #cocktails #official\_design\_dallas...

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**Facing** *Jettison's ceiling features a rectilinear void lined with gold-painted wood ribs, evoking a chandelier.*

**Top** *Jettison serves as the theoretical void to Houndstooth's positive with its darker material palette and dim mood lighting.*

**Far left** *OFFICIAL designed many of the lighting fixtures for the project.*

**Left** *Walnut, plate steel, and black tiles contribute to Jettison's intimate, speakeasy ambiance.*