

A different take on a modern steakhouse gives choice cuts some choice digs



Free-associate on the word "steakhouse" and some images spring immediately to mind: suited good ol' boys cutting slabs of angus; white tablecloths and tufted velvet banquettes; brass rails and wood paneling. But that's not the case for the newest BOA Steakhouse in Santa Monica, California.

"Our demographic is younger, more style-conscious," says Lee Maen, a partner at Innovative Dining Group, whose repertoire of eateries includes three Sushi Roku restaurants, two other BOA outposts (in Las Vegas and West Hollywood), and Kantana. "We wanted a modern, cool-vibe steakhouse."

Los Angeles-based Tag Front Design—which specializes in "mixing up organic materials and textures

Left: BOA Steakhouse's bar. Opposite page, left and right: Red boxy lighting and a sculptural grouping of sandblasted "ghostwood" driftwood decorate the dining room.



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with a more modern language," according to principal Mandi Rafaty—had created the look of the other BOA sites, so they began by carrying elements of those into the new 5,500-square-foot space. One is a phalanx of minimalist walnut chairs upholstered in leather that was repeated outdoors on the patio in teak and Sunbrella fabric. Another is a row of floor-to-ceiling stainless steel rods supporting rectangular light boxes made of stacked layers of colored resin, which float at shoulder height between the lounge and dining room. "It serves as something that attracts attention," Rafaty says, "but also as a screening element."

Breaking up the cavernous space without losing its impression of vastness was paramount. "We're not a tourist-driven group," Maen says. "Our clientele is more local. We wanted to have several different areas to dine in so that each time you come—even though it's the same menu—you have a different experience." So Tag Front devised multiple responses: a wall of L-shaped walnut beams that form a floating, see-through partition and canopy in the lounge; a glass-enclosed wine cellar that visually dominates the center of the room; and boxy leather booths with low backs that encourage conversation between tables.

The most striking partitioning effect is a sculptural grouping of sandblasted "ghostwood" driftwood. It sits in a waist-high planter surrounded by polished blue beach glass that's illuminated from below, creating "a very cool separation that throws off interesting shadows all around," Rafaty says.

Padded ultrasuede walls and a grid of boxy red laminated-glass overhead lighting ("a modern take on the chandelier," Maen says) add a crisp, tailored contemporary character that gives the word "steakhouse" an entirely new association. **hd**

This page: Private dining. Opposite page: Seating by the restaurant's glass-enclosed wine display.



- BOA Steakhouse
Santa Monica, California
- Owner Innovative Dining Group (IDG)
- Architecture/Interior Design Firm
Tag Front Design, Los Angeles
- Architecture/Interior Design Project Team
Mandi Rafaty, Gary Hunt, Nichel Rafaty, and Christopher Penz
- Contractor ITC
- Lighting IDG and Lexington Scenery
(www.lexingtonscenery.com)
- Chairs/Booths/Banquettes/Stools/
Tables Décor and Designer Imports
- Specialty Fabrication
Lexington Scenery
- Ghostwood Tree Sculpture
Krylin Design
- Fabric Premiere Leather and Suede
and Maharam
- Wine Room Fabrication IDG
- Seaglass Pebbles Try Viro