

Couture Cuisine

A glamorous respite for Saks Fifth Avenue shoppers

By JoAnn Greco

Photography by Ballogg Photography

They had hoped they would have a whole six months to implement their vision for 51fifteen Cuisine & Cocktails, the new restaurant inside the Houston Galleria's revamped outpost of Saks Fifth Avenue. But after proposing their plans, the team at local and Miami-based firm Contour Interior Design was told it needed to be completed in only 90 days to coincide with the unveiling of the spruced up department store.

"In the restaurant's preliminary designs, the entrance included blossom lighting clustered in different sizes and heights for a dramatic look. After the first installation, there were not enough lights, leaving parts of the ceiling exposed and visible," explains Nina Magon, creative director and principal. "As the project was already on a short deadline, we had to move quickly and contact the lighting company to create new lights that would fill the empty space."

Such challenges, combined with an overall fast pace, didn't detract Magon from keeping "precision and detail" at the forefront of the build-out, which also encompassed the complementary, metal-accented Bar 12 on the first floor. The 8,500-square-foot 51fifteen Cuisine & Cocktails showcases the fabled retail heritage of Saks Fifth Avenue, a New York brand that graces such far-flung locations as

Bahrain and Kazakhstan. Now, that once troubled lighting feature has evolved into one of the design highlights, amplified by "super graphic wallpaper that echoes the blossom theme in the entry ceiling," points out Magon.

Found on the second floor, in the women's contemporary section, the restaurant offers reprieve from all-day shopping marathons with aperitifs served at the bar (a showstopper with a stone base), or alongside seasonal American cuisine in the dining room. Glamorous and upscale to capture the Saks Fifth Avenue personality, it also features a hexagonal motif and a stepped octagon wall, shapes that Magon says "add an element of playfulness." Dekton, mimicking Carrara marble, mingles with Coltrane sconces, Saarinen chairs, and Serge Mouille light fixtures, embodying a narrative of "classic elements combined with a modern aesthetic."

Magon met with the retail design team to review selected finishes and ensure that both realms were in dialogue with each other. At her insistence, Contour was allowed to delve beyond the initial palette of prescribed black and white with punches of brass and deep blue so that "the space did not appear flat. The classy nature of both reveals a strong synergy to each other."

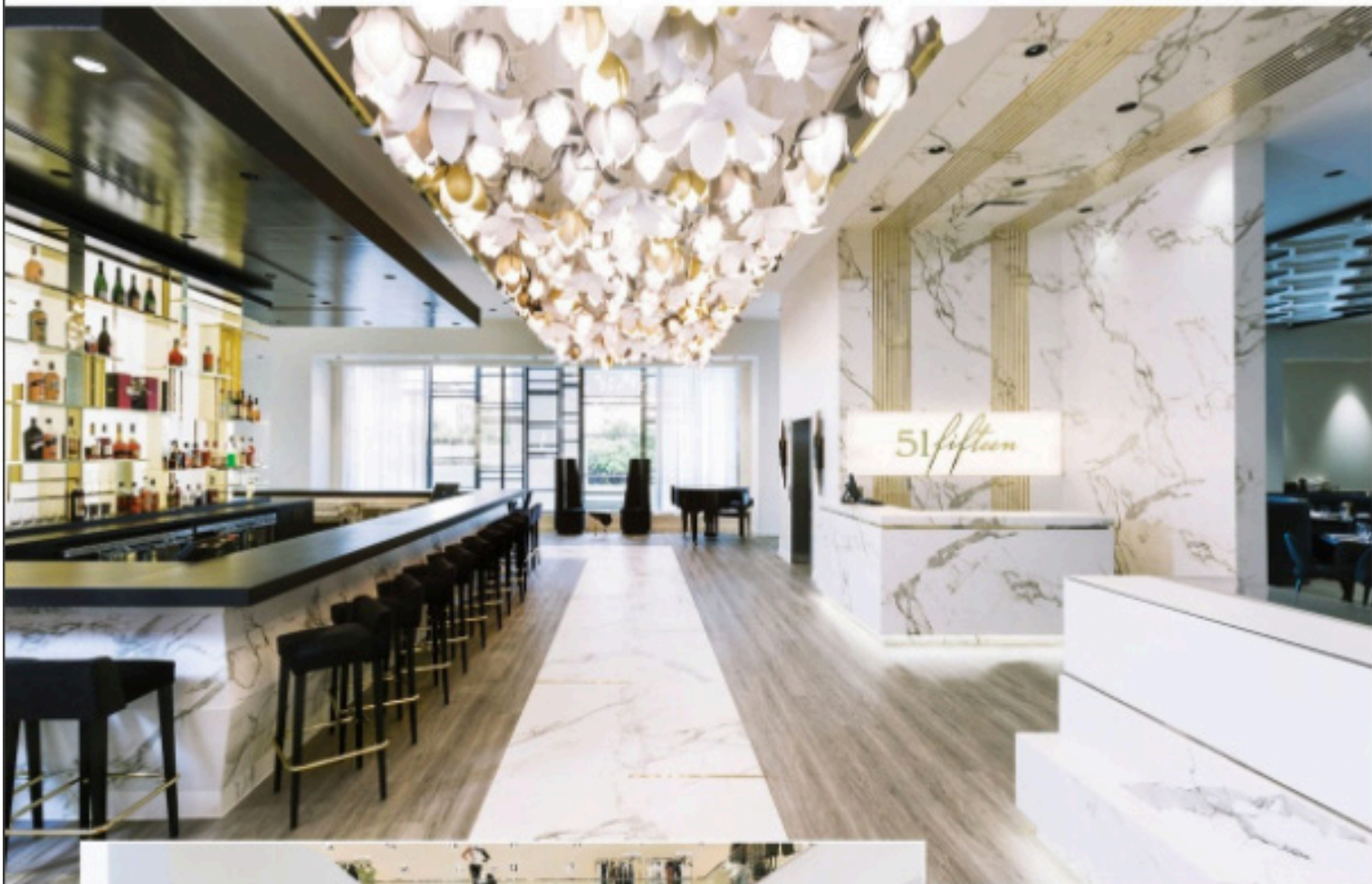


Right: Brass and deep blue punch up a palette of black and white, and an octagonal wall adds playfulness at 51fifteen Cuisine & Cocktails; the modern bar and restaurant features Dekton that mimics Carrara marble for a classic elegance.

Left: A graphic wallpaper echoes a bright blossom theme that appears throughout.







Above: Clustered blossom lighting above the large stone-base bar create a dramatic spot for mid-shopping aperitifs.

Left: The metal-accented Bar 12 on the first floor was also part of Contour Interior Design's 90-day build-out.



contourinteriordesign.com; 51fifteen.com

Owner and Management Company

Simon Properties & Landmark Hospitality

Architecture and Interior Design Firm and Purchasing Firm

Contour Interior Design

Contractors

Construction Concepts

Photographer

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Carpet

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Casegoods and Furniture

Knoll

Drapery

Creation Baumann

Fabrics

Duralee and Pindler & Pindler

Floor Tile

CoreTec

Lighting

Serge Mouille, LightArt, Flos Lighting, and DelightFULL

Wall Tile

Dekton material by Cosentino

Wallcovering

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