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ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN
LOCATION SINGAPORE
PROJECT WAKU GHIN

HIGH DINING

TETSUYA WAKUDA'S NEW RESTAURANT OFFERS A MULTI-SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Singapore's prime Marina Bay waterfront is undergoing a major transformation, the most recent development being the Marina Bay Sands resort and casino complex. Housed within the complex, Waku Ghin occupies 743 square metres and caters to an exclusive 25 guests per seating. Throw in a budget of US\$4.9 million and you can expect no less than silver-platter standards.

Waku Ghin is the first restaurant outside Australia for renowned Australian chef, Tetsuya Wakuda. It is as much a spatial experience as it is culinary, which is why Wakuda engaged Joshua Zinder Architecture + Design (JZA+D), a multi-disciplinary firm based in Princeton, New Jersey to create an environment through and within which guests can not only appreciate Wakuda's cuisine, but also gain a better understanding of the chef.

JZA+D's design concept reflects Wakuda's culinary philosophy, which is a marriage of fresh ingredients with impeccable technique to create dishes that are simple and elegant, yet multi-dimensional and oozing a complexity of refined flavours. Skilfully combining a varied palette of materials, JZA+D has created a multi-faceted interior. This layering of materials, textures and colours echoes Wakuda's articulation of different tastes, textures and aromas.

Crossing the threshold into the restaurant is like entering a sanctuary, intimate yet welcoming, one that cajoles the senses into submission to fully savour the culinary masterpieces that await. Guests are greeted by a lounge where a sake and caviar bar takes centre-stage, the first of a series of carefully orchestrated

spaces intended to create experiences and ambiances that are slightly different, but which are all part of a harmonious whole. The Macassar ebony furniture, the upholstery of the bar stools, also designed by JZA+D, and the diffuse glow illuminating the ceiling all balance the cool marble of the bar counter and the metallic plaster and mother-of-pearl on the wall surfaces. Set against a backdrop of sake and caviar are flowing swaths of fabric, inspired by American fashion designer Mary McFadden, suspended from the ceiling. The delicateness of their gentle rippling provides an interesting dialogue with the robust backdrop.

As a result of functional kitchen requirements, Waku Ghin's floor plan is irregular. JZA+D has turned this constraint into an opportunity, using a main circulation spine (The Grand Hall) to derive a clear parti that organises the entire layout. "The Grand Hall is the element that spatially ties together the multiple dining experiences within Waku Ghin," explains Joshua Zinder, Principal of JZA+D. Zinder also saw an opportunity to adopt a sculptural form for The Grand Hall, taking advantage of the irregularly shaped plan and reflecting Wakuda's love of art.

The Grand Hall connects the lounge to the rest of the restaurant. Its serpentine form meanders further into the restaurant, beckoning guests to explore the realms of Waku Ghin. The Grand Hall is a display of both visual and culinary arts, and transforms an otherwise utilitarian circulation space into an engaging experience. Strung along one side is a series of teppanyaki rooms. Guests will find it difficult not to succumb to the soothing embrace of their rich Nyatoh timber floors, walls and ceilings, which create an intimate environment where the spectacle of the chefs' skilled manoeuvres can be appreciated. The steel cooking surfaces were specially designed by Wakuda himself, with temperatures that can be adjusted with absolute precision, each costing as much as a luxury car. The exacting precision of the cooking equipment and technique provide an interesting contrast to the fluidity of The Grand Hall. Guests are offered a glimpse into Wakuda's personal pursuits. His love for art, be it sculpture, paintings or knives, is evident through the collection that is displayed along niches set into the wall facing the teppanyaki rooms. These

"The Grand Hall is the element that spatially ties together the multiple dining experiences"

JOSHUA ZINDER, JZA+D

PREVIOUS PAGES Fabric is suspended above the sake and caviar bar
LEFT The main dining area has spectacular panoramic views of Singapore
RIGHT The private teppanyaki room





personal touches give Waku Ghin a home-like quality. Considering the amount of time Wakuda spends at Waku Ghin, it almost is a second home.

Further down The Grand Hall, a slanted wall peels away to reveal the main dining area, where dessert is served, along with a panoramic view of Waku Ghin's 3000-bottle wine room and the Singapore skyline. The other side of the wall arches over the entrance to a private teppanyaki room located furthest away from the entrance, conveying a sense of utmost exclusivity.

To design a beautiful and functional space that speaks about the owner requires a symbiotic collaboration between architect and client. Waku Ghin is the result of such a relationship. "I am not an architect – I can only cook," says Wakuda humbly – which is why he refrained from telling Zinder what to do. Instead, it was about letting Zinder understand "who I am, what I do and what I want to achieve". This is in line with JZA+D's design philosophy, which is about working closely with clients to create distinct spaces where the client's personality comes through in the finished design. As Zinder says: "Ultimately, our creation is for, and belongs to, someone else – the client."

Lynn Tan is a freelance writer based in Singapore.

LEFT The Grand Hall spatially connects the various dining spaces
RIGHT The Nyatoh timber-clad bathrooms



WAKU GHIN

ARCHITECT Joshua Zinder Architecture + Design

PROJECT TEAM Joshua Zinder (Principal Architect), Ludwig Vaca (Project manager, Designer), Arturo Ponciano (Designer), Jason Skeehan, Richard Morgan (Junior Designers), Vanessa Kitzie (Graphics, Interior Design), Allison Zarski (Interior Designer)

ARCHITECT OF RECORD AEDAS
CONTRACTOR Marina Bay Sands Construction

ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL AND PLUMBING ENGINEERS Parsons Brinckerhoff

KITCHEN CONSULTANT Culinary Design and Fixture Inc.

LIGHTING ENGINEER Project Lighting Design

LIGHTING DESIGN L'Observatoire International

RENDERINGS IO Media

MARINA BAY SANDS COORDINATOR Mark Signorino (Director of Design, Las Vegas Sands Corp.)

BUDGET US\$4.9 million
TIME TO COMPLETE 9 months
TOTAL FLOOR AREA 743m²

JOSHUA ZINDER ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN (1 609) 924 5004 joshuazinder.com

FURNITURE In Main Dining Room, flat top standard tables are from Decolines. Other furniture throughout restaurant is all custom-designed by JZA+D.

LIGHTING In Dining and Lounge, light box from Panelite. Other lighting from Unilight.

FINISHES In Main Dining Room, Lounge Area and Drawing Rooms, drape fabric hanging from ceiling above Bar by Gretchen Bellinger, Architex International, and Sai Silk Inc. In Private Teppanyaki Room, Main Dining Room and Drawing Room, roller blind drape fabric from Carnegie Fabrics. In Main Dining Room, Drawing Room and Grand Hall, carpet designed by Joshua Zinder Architecture + Design, made by Tai Ping Carpets. In Kitchen, Wine Room floor and Bar, quarry textures from Dal-Tile Corporation. In Bar and Hallway, flooring and base are both from Sadlerstone, and doors throughout are from Sai Silk Inc. Generally throughout Restaurant, stone and tile work from Mirage Fabrics and Elite Stones, wall coverings are from Jumbo Pacific, glass and mirrors from H&K Glass, metals are from AKI-Best Engineering, paints from ICI Paints,

plastic laminates and panels from Formica and Panelite, and timber veneers used throughout from Glory Veneer.

FIXED AND FITTED In Main Dining Room and Drawing Rooms, MechoShade motorised roller blind from ElectroShade System. Generally throughout Restaurant, general fixtures are from Hastings Tile & Bath, Mario Bongio, Robert Pearson and Company, and TOTO Asia Oceania. All equipment throughout Restaurant is from Rigel Technology, Carl F. Singapore, Doug Mockett & Company, Häfele Singapore, Excell Dryer, Ingersoll-Rand Southeast Asia, Weiland Sliding Doors & Window, Yong Hup Hardware, Hager Companies, SOSS Asia, Pemko Manufacturing, K.N. Crowder Manufacturing, and ASSA ABLOY Door Security Solutions.

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