

90 PUB, BAR & CLUB



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## IN CONVERSATION: OLEG KLODT ARCHITECTURAL BUREAU

Founded in 2000, Oleg Klodt Architectural Bureau is an award-winning Moscow-based firm, renowned for its eclectic, yet understated style. Here, Oleg Klodt – an alumni of the Moscow Architectural Institute, and lover of classic, chic interiors – lends his unique insight into the Pub, Bar and Club design scene ...



Queen V Gastropub, Moscow

“Over the last 15-20 years Moscow has leapt to the top in terms of the quality, number and variety of restaurants, pubs, and bars on offer”

### What would you say are the top three trends influencing Pub/Bar/Club interiors at present?

Trends in pubs, bars and club interiors are driven by the approaches designers take when creating them.

Some venues wish to have a style that will appeal to a broad range of clientele. Designers can help achieve this by using the simplest of materials in a contemporary, minimalist manner – perhaps with dashes of classical elements here and there.

The combination of different timber and metal finishes alongside painted surfaces works well, as illustrated by the many cafes created in this way throughout northern Europe.

When it comes to upscale restaurants and bars, a completely different tactic is needed, as seen for example with the London destinations designed by David Collins. The methodology in this approach is to devote close attention to the fine details that result in the interiors becoming a stand-out attraction within the venue. This high-

design technique can potentially produce a more formal-feeling atmosphere.

On a different level, another trend these days is to re-think the conventional organisation of space. Engineers and kitchen designers have been leading the way by opening up a whole new dimension of ideas. One of the more popular examples is the relocation of the back-of-house prep areas into the open space of the dining zone, thereby thrusting the professional skills of the chefs into the spotlight.

### What, for you, is the most critical element of effective Pub/Bar/Club design?

To me, the primary focal point in hospitality venues should be the bar area. It has a natural appeal that draws people towards it, so its design needs to make it be the centre of attention – an attractively-lit zone that comes to the fore with everything else in the background.

The style of the toilet areas can also be an opportunity to set another tone within the establishment. As small, distinct spaces that

are separated from the rest of the venue, they offer designers the chance to unleash their imaginations.

I'm sure readers will have noticed the way that some loo concepts gallop off in different directions to the rest of the premises. I've noticed this myself – in particular with the increased use of electronic systems and sensors to control the facilities, as well as lighting, sound and aromatherapy effects.

Something else I'm seeing more and more in bathrooms is the use of a single material for all the walls, ceilings and floors in order to create a clean, unified atmosphere.

### How do you ensure your projects stand out in such a fast-paced and heavily populated sector?

That's a very good question! We aim to stand out by being generous with our clients and exceeding their expectations, while also designing with a refined, subtle touch.

One example would be the interiors we've



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created for the Queen V gastropub here in Moscow. While this is certainly a one-off creation for our studio, we still approached the project with the tasteful restraint we practice when designing residences.

We weave a sense of sophistication into every design – although of course our clients' ideas, plus the inherent possibilities of the space itself, come first. When creating hospitality venues, our aim is to optimise the functionality of the areas and strengthen brand identity through smart and elegant design solutions.

#### How would you describe Russia's hospitality design scene?

Over the last 15-20 years Moscow has leapt to the top in terms of the quality, number and variety of restaurants, pubs, and bars on offer. The Russian

public are choosy about where they drink and dine these days, and venues have to work hard to keep up.

We have lots of fusion places and eateries that offer eclectic combinations of dining traditions. Televised cookery shows have hit the mainstream all around the world – and Russians are very much into them, too.

Fifteen years ago there was less imagination in F&B design. If a person went to a Parisian-style brasserie, it would serve French food and its decor would typically be identical to any other. That's changed now that guest expectations have evolved and the design of the establishment is as important as the menu it serves.

Customers care a lot more about what a venue looks like, and Russia has bought into that big time – high quality design is on an unstoppable roll.

#### Have you got any new projects on the horizon you're able to share with us?

Right now we're working on a new restaurant in an historic mansion in Moscow. We've created an easy-going, simple, and cosy sort of concept that plays upon the shared traits between traditional French interiors and 'dachas' – pastoral second homes that are characterised by sweeping elegant verandas.

So, our vision is for a relaxed venue where everyone's gathered round tables in comfy chairs and with beautiful chandeliers overhead. The chairs and lighting styles are mixed, and each group can pick the spot that feels comfortable to them. As with all our projects, we've handpicked an eclectic range of elements so that the space tells a story and becomes a comfortable place that guests will really enjoy.

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