

april 2009 hdmag.com

# hospitalitydesign

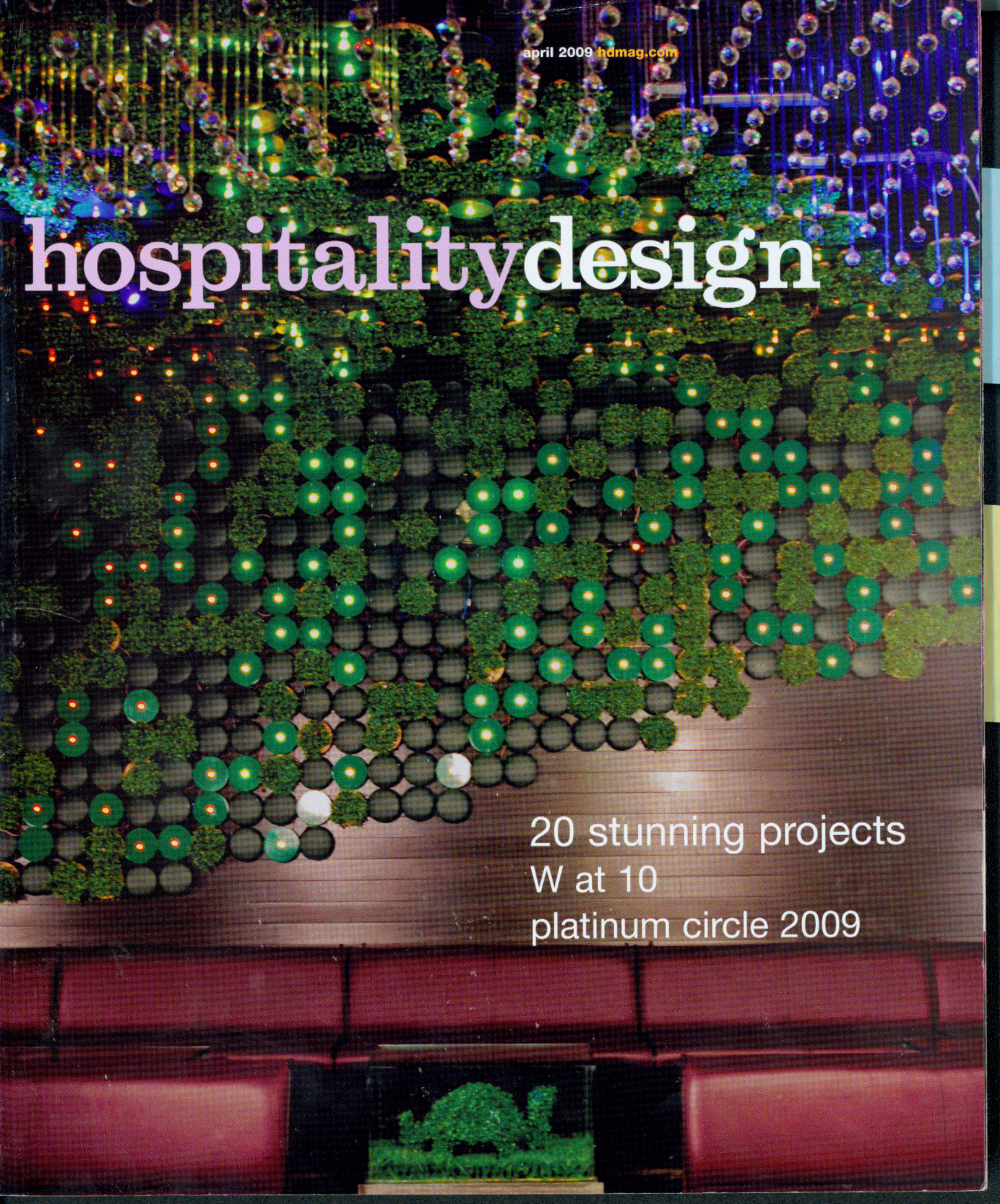
20 stunning projects  
W at 10  
platinum circle 2009



april 2009 [hdmag.com](http://hdmag.com)

# hospitalitydesign

20 stunning projects  
W at 10  
platinum circle 2009



By Alia Akkam  
Photography by William Vázquez (Visual Waves, Inc.)

# mexican modern

A new spin on tacos  
and tequila in Las Vegas

**T&T (Tacos & Tequila)**, the latest hotspot in the Luxor in Las Vegas, is hardly an average margarita and salsa joint. With a massive, carefully crafted stainless steel "sombrero" hanging overhead as its design centerpiece, T&T injects historic Mexican cultural motifs with a relevant, modern-day sensuality. "The overriding idea was to provide a new aesthetic for a Mexican restaurant," explains Brannen Brock of New York City-based Alvarez + Brock Design, the team behind the 9,000-square-foot restaurant's look.

This new aesthetic includes concrete floors, paper banners with contemporary renditions of traditional Mexican skulls and dancing skeletons, and a striking orange stone bartop. The aforementioned sombrero, which also doubles as a light fixture, was perhaps the biggest challenge of the project. "Having a 150-foot-long



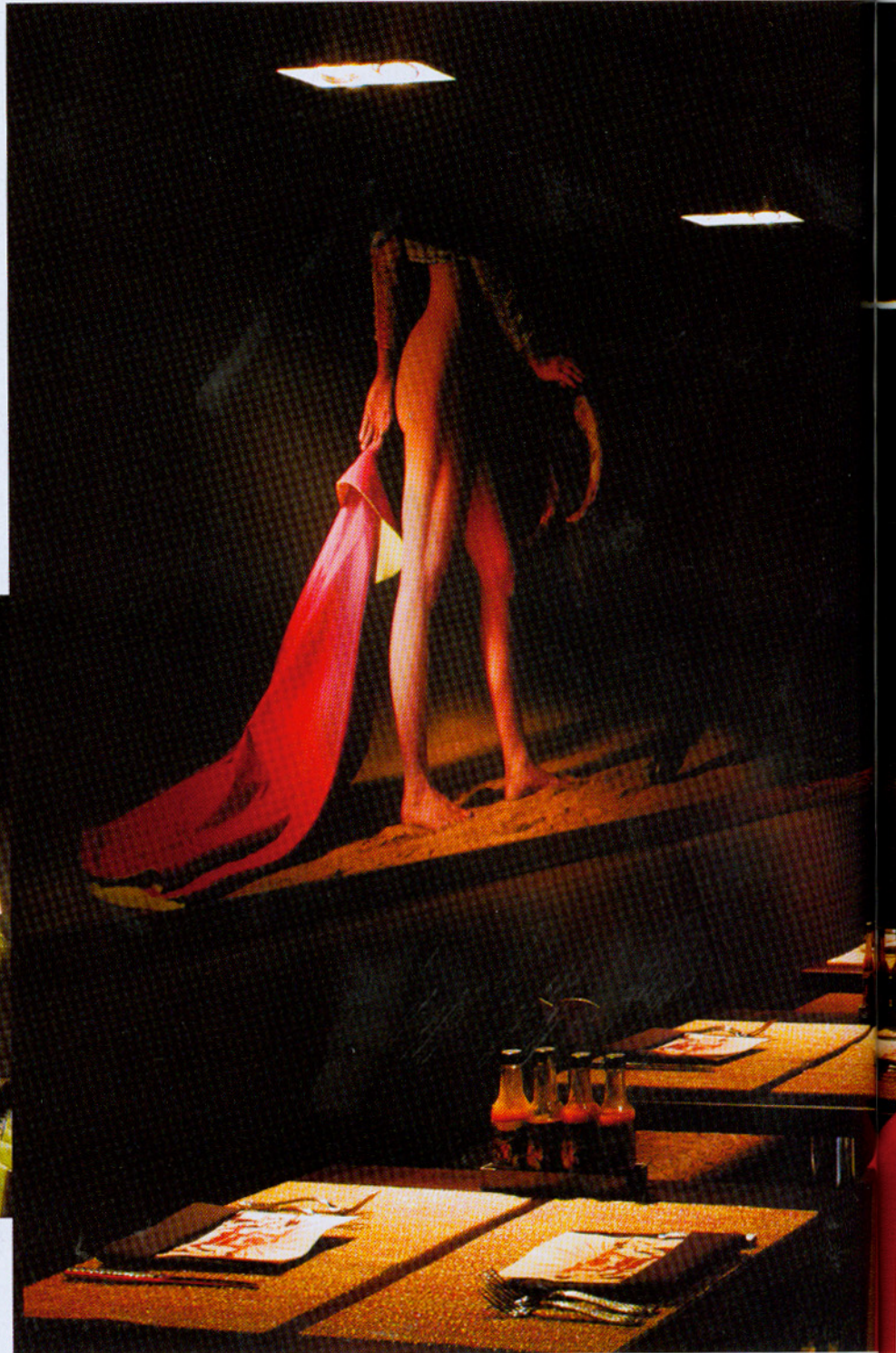


*Left:* A colorful mural of a female matador makes a wall come alive at T&T (Tacos & Tequila). *Opposite page, inset:* A 150-foot-long stainless steel "sombrero" hanging from the ceiling defines the space.

“The overriding idea was to provide  
a new aesthetic for a Mexican restaurant.”

metal sculpture on the floor is one thing, but having it on the ceiling is another,” adds Brock, who says the piece was first assembled on the factory floor and then trucked over to the Luxor. Many hours were devoted to meetings and conference calls to determine lighting and sprinkler logistics; a computer model of the sombrero allowed for sprinkler lines to be laid in so they wouldn’t be seen from the cutout. “We wanted it to look as invisible as possible,” adds Brock’s partner, Rafael Alvarez.

Custom artwork, like a 30-foot high, 65-foot-long mural of a female matador battling a bull also heightens Alvarez + Brock’s mission. “When thinking of a Mexican restaurant, everyone imagines a typical colorful place, with hats hanging and ceramic tiles,” points out Alvarez. “But here, the sombrero, little banners, the bullfighter, all these things together add an element of surprise.” **hd**  
[alvarez-brockdesign.com](http://alvarez-brockdesign.com); [www.luxor.com](http://www.luxor.com)



*Above:* The orange stone-topped bar. *Right:* Splashes of red punctuate the dining room. *Opposite page, inset:* Dancing skeleton cutouts on stainless steel lampshades echo the cutouts in the sculptural light fixture above.



### **Tacos and Tequila (T&T)**

Las Vegas

**Owner** Drive This Entertainment!

**Architect of Record** Bergman Walls & Associates, Ltd., Las Vegas, Nevada

**Interior Design Firm** Alvarez + Brock Design, LLC, New York City

**Interior Design Project Team** Rafael Alvarez, Brannen L. Brock, and Raul Abinader

**General Contractor** Bentar Development Inc.

**Lighting Design** Ann Kale and Associates, Ltd.

**Engineering** JBA Consulting Engineers (MEP) and John A. Martin & Associates (structural)

**Food Service Consultant** JEM West Food Service Design Consultants Audio/Visual Consultant Sound Audio Investments

**Millwork** GM Monarch West

**Decorative Metal** J. Frederick Construction, Inc.

**Stone and Tile** Ventura Marble

**Custom Furniture** Chair Choice (chairs & barstools) and Commercial Custom Seating (banquettes); custom designed by Alvarez + Brock Design

**Custom Floor Lamps** Triton Chandelier; custom designed by Alvarez + Brock Design

