

## WORKSHOP KITCHEN & BAR, PALM SPRINGS

*cold concrete minimalism a brave move for sunny California...*

LIFESTYLE

JANUARY 18TH, 2013



Fusing seasonally-minded Americana with European influences, the interiors at **Workshop Kitchen & Bar in Palm Springs** are like a simile, you either love it or hate it. Either way, it's going to get a reaction. Architects **SOMA** haven't pulled any punches with the interior, which they themselves describe as brutalist, with no arguments from us. The structural proportions of the pre-existing building (tall and thin) led them to emphasise the venue's height, with massive vertical concrete partitions separating the booths like doorless jail cells. The booth seating is also concrete, as is the dining hall's long central table. Not sure if the dress code is orange jumpsuit.

Much as we're fans of concrete brutalism, viewed in isolation this oppressive hall could give many a cold shudder – save for the lighting by our friends at Beirut-based **.PSLAB**. Descending from the heavens, these microphone-shaped saviours are in such contrast to the surroundings that they serve to overpower, despite their delicate form, the austerity of the concrete and achieve the seemingly impossible task of making this church of grey an attractive prospect.

Of course, this juxtaposition is not by accident and **SOMA** knew what they, together with **.PSLAB**, were doing from the outset. Even so, this is a brave modernist direction to take for a Palm Springs restaurant (where bright pastels and '50s retro rule), but bravery is rarely a bad thing.

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