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OPEN> RESTAURANT

The power of minimalism shows through at Soma Architects' new space in Palm Springs.



COURTESY SOMA ARCHITECTS

Workshop Kitchen + Bar

800 North Palm Canyon Drive

Palm Springs, CA

Tel: 760.459.4351

Architects: Soma Architects with PS Lab

By far the most energizing new restaurant in Palm Springs is Workshop Kitchen + Bar. Designed by New York City-based SOMA Architects in collaboration with Beirut-based PS Lab, it is a sleek space located inside the historic El Paseo building along the city's main drag, Palm Canyon Drive.

The landmark building's facade remains basically untouched. Inside, the restrained simplicity of the minimalist space, lofty and narrow, heightens the power of a few very dramatic design elements. The most apparent is a bank of towering cast-in-place concrete booths—made with 15-foot-tall-molds—which reach to within 8 inches of the room's wood-beamed ceiling. A series of pendant lights suspended from steel conduit drop down from the rafters and hang about 18 inches above the tables.



Those two elements "exaggerate the verticality of the space," said SOMA lead designer Steven Townsend, who likened the interior to the aisle of a cathedral. It's an apt analogy. A big cast-in-place concrete communal dining table occupies the center of the room, acting as a communal dining space. It gives the impression of an altar. The bar at the back, also made of concrete, is lit by the same pendant lighting and accented with bands of LED rope lights concealed beneath brushed aluminum shelves.