

APRIL 2015

Interiors & Sources

Excellence
in Commercial
Design

The **JOY** of
DESIGN



FINDING JOY in Unexpected Places

Rediscovering the delight of design is just a matter of where you look for it.

By Robert Nieminen

Two Ways to Play in Grand Central ▾

New York City

If you're the type who loves to get the inside scoop, we'll let you in on a couple of secrets about the iconic Grand Central Station that not many are aware of—not even most New Yorkers.

First up is a little-known championship tennis court tucked away on the 4th floor of the Terminal that was opened to the general public in 2011. The Vanderbilt Tennis Club is perhaps the most exclusive tennis facility in Manhattan and provides plenty of space for even the hardest hitters, while its distinctive windows overlooking 42nd Street and Park Avenue

South offer a seldom seen perspective of the city.

Just don't forget your wallet—prices vary from \$75-225 per hour depending on time and day of the week.

Another furtive feature in Grand

Central can be found as you pass by an unmarked archway in front of the iconic Oyster Bar and Restaurant, where you may observe people whispering into corners (about the tennis court above, perhaps?). The Whispering Gallery reveals an acoustic anomaly in which the faint-

est voices carry across the domed tile ceiling when two people stand at the bases of opposite arches and whisper. Although it's not clear whether the arches were originally designed by Spanish builder Rafael Guastavino with such delicate acoustic properties in mind, 200 of the Whispering Gallery's tiles were carefully examined and meticulously replaced during a 2012 renovation to preserve its acoustic properties.

The Lighter Side of Constraint ▶

Beirut, Lebanon

Although some may find joy in a blank canvas, it is equally discoverable in the presence of constraint—a point that is beautifully illustrated in the new Unilux Group lighting showroom in Beirut. Charged with developing a concept to help the store's limited depth appear larger to the eye, Michel Abboud, founder and principal of international architecture firm SOMA, unveiled a plan that is a marvel of both contemporary design and ingenious problem solving.

Although Unilux's new showroom features a 65-foot-long storefront, its internal dimensions measure just 13 feet in depth. Working within these confines, Abboud used advanced parametric tools in order to help arrange 1,000 20-by-20-inch white, glass-reinforced plastic cubes at various lengths, helping the room appear as one continuous space. The room's lighting is given different surfaces to play on, and its stunning results are sure to draw in passing shoppers.

"The space was challenging because the store is very shallow, and we needed to find a way to help it appear larger as well as draw people in," said Abboud. "The sculptural elements that we created deceive the eye and create the illusion of greater depth."



Finding Treasure in the Trash ◀

Madrid, Spain

Who says having a conscience about waste can't be fun? Not Madrid-based Izaskun Chinchilla Architects, one of two winners selected for the fifth annual City of Dreams Pavilion Competition hosted by FIGMENT, the Emerging New York Architects Committee (ENYA) of the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter (AIANY), and the Structural Engineers Association of New York (SEAoNY).

Izaskun's Organic Growth Pavilion brings attention to the large amount of waste in our landfills by repurposing a smorgasbord of parts and pieces from discarded trash. Flower structures such as those found in hydrangeas have the ability to respond to the natural environment, and Izaskun believes architecture must adopt a similar responsiveness. The proposed design utilizes broken umbrellas, old stools, and damaged bicycle wheels, which several institutions in New York are already recycling. Branches composed of several umbrellas and tripods can be easily reused as sun, wind, and rain protection in outdoor spaces

all around the city. Larger elements can be repurposed as beautiful indoor chandeliers or can be useful for community centers and other public spaces.

Pending approvals and fundraising, the pavilion will be assembled on Governors Island and open to the



public for the summer 2015 season.

The Joy of Healing ▶▶

Brisbane, Australia

"People who are here for even a short period of time—it's usually a very tense period of time, a critical period of time, and a stressful one on families' lives," noted Dr. Peter Steer, chief executive of the new Lady Cilento

Children's Hospital in Brisbane, Australia, designed by Conrad Gargett in partnership with Lyons. "So to be able to get out into these extraordinary open spaces with the green, the landscaping, just adds to that overall healing feel."

The 359-bed hospital is designed to create a healing environment for critically ill and injured children throughout Queensland, providing abundant access to natural light, fresh air, and landscaping that offer a place of respite for patients where they can find comfort in an otherwise taxing situation.

"We started master planning the building [in 2007] but even before that, we started thinking, 'What



makes a good children's hospital?' And what makes a good children's hospital that doesn't feel like a hospital," said Prof. Bruce Wolfe, director of Conrad Gargett.

One look at the facility's brightly colored green and purple facade, inspired by the native Bougainvillea plant, makes it clear that this hospital was designed with children in mind.

