

STUDIO ARTHUR CASAS

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

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FACTSHEET

Project	Alma María Restaurant
Author	Arthur Casas
Team	Maria Magalhães, Marcela Muniz, Renata Adoni, Daniela Diniz, Fernanda Castelo Branco, Cristiane Trolesi, Milena Chieco, Bruna Rizzi
Contractor	Souza Lima
Consultants	Studio Serradura (light design), Estillo Arquitetura (kitchen project), Renata Tilli (landscape), K2P Projetos (MEP - Mechanical Electrical Plumbing), Leão e Associados (structural), Engetrel (wood structural), Taag (audio and video)
Dates	2010 - 2011
Built area	395 m ²
Location	São Paulo – SP, Brazil
Photos	Tuca Reinés

ABOUT

In the beginning of 2010 a Spanish investor hired Studio Arthur Casas to design a restaurant in Rua Oscar Freire, São Paulo's high end street. The office took part of the conception of the restaurant's branding, which allowed an intrinsic relation between architecture and gastronomy.

An exception in São Paulo, Oscar Freire is one of the few streets where there's intense pedestrians' traffic. The insertion in this part of the city, Jardins' neighborhood, was essential for the of the project's concept: the restaurant should be integrated with the street and the flux of pedestrians, their movement should be noticed.

The sidewalk extends inside the restaurant, which is constituted by a series of plateaus, creating a rich spatial path that connects them. One of the main elements is the façade. The concrete portico is closed by 6 automatic doors in laser-cut solid wood. They play a major role as a boundary, being completely open and allowing total transparency when the restaurant is open, and working as the Spanish moucharabies

when closed, giving a glimpse of the restaurant and creating curiosity among the pedestrians.

The main materials are concrete, stone and demolition wood. Glass is used as handrails and to seal the kitchens to assure spatial fluidity. A slit runs through the side of the ceiling allowing a large amount of natural light to penetrate the restaurant. Though most of the colors are neutral, the atmosphere is quite joyful as the chairs and the sunshade are orange. Shelves all along the side of the restaurant are occupied with Spanish products, bringing the relaxed atmosphere of traditional Spanish grocery stores. Lighting was mainly designed in an indirect manner, through slits in the shelves, benches and ceiling.

The 4 different plateaus that define the space have a level difference of 1.50m between each of them. Thus each space has a unique character though visually connected with the other parts of the restaurant.

On the street level the sidewalk extends inside the restaurant, continuous to this terrace the tapas bar welcomes the clients. A semi-underground plateau works as a more intimate space under the mezzanine, with a stronger presence of natural materials such as wood and stone. A specific kitchen to this area is located at the rear of the space. The 8m high cellar running to the ceiling accommodates 1000 bottles and accentuates a strong vertical connection to the spaces. A stone corridor leads to the toilets.

Over this basement and 1.50m above the street the mezzanine is directly integrated with the vertical openness of the restaurant. This central space is dominated by the shelves that run on the side of the restaurant, with their colorful range of products. One might watch the intense movement of the workers through the glass that reveals this second kitchen. Finally the uppermost level is 3m above the street, with a smaller salon and a bar. It's the space where the clients can have both the sensation of the street and of the rear of the restaurant, seeing and being seen in all directions.

Alma María is a project that was above all conceived in section, trying to enrich the experience of pedestrians in a city largely dominated by cars, generating an apparent spatial complexity with simple means that play with strong horizontal and vertical elements.