

Casa Apicii

The clubby Greenwich Village townhouse where former New York hotspot the Lion was located is now light and airy, illuminating the modern narrative local firm Dutch East Design wove for the Apicii Group's namesake location, Casa Apicii.

Still, the 19th-century building served as a powerful guide for the seasonal Italian restaurant (a collaboration between chef Casey Lane of Los Angeles' Tasting Room and A Voce alum chef Adam Nadel), with many of its existing details in need of only minor modification. "There was always a sense of awe when one walked into the dining room," says partner Larah Moravek. "The vaulted ceiling and historic oval skylight, which are extremely rare to find in New York, gave us an amazing starting point."

Mirrors incorporated into paneling line the perimeter, creating a provocative sense of discovery for diners. A series of golden, spherical chandeliers can be glimpsed in them, "bringing the light levels lower than the ceiling to ensure guests feel nestled into the space," explains William Oberlin, a partner of the New York-based firm. These fixtures complement the vintage pendants fashioned from copper and cast glass hanging over the main bar, a muted contrast to the bright, Campari-red stairwell that leads to Bar Fortuna above, a cozy library-inspired space wrapped in bookshelves, and complete with a fireplace, backgammon table, and a separate private dining room.

Like the lighting, furniture selections conjure curved profiles and luxe textures. Seating, for instance, mixes a Gubi Beetle statement piece with chairs done in emerald velvet and brass as well as mustard-hued ones with black piping. Quilted leather and brass-inlaid woods nod to circa-1960s mod fashion and the classic speedboats and automobiles synonymous with Italy's breezy glamour.

Ensuring patrons "wouldn't feel lost and that the dining room was sufficiently grounded," partner Fiona Sanipelli says the team crafted a quartet of large stone tables flaunting subtle wood details that are placed in the four corners as anchors. Seemingly an oasis, the bar finds unity through the re-stained floor, which doubles, adds Sanipelli, as Casa Apicii's "continuous thread."

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Photos by QUENTIN BACON