

A WORLD VIEW

The Strangers Club, Panama City, Panama

When six bartenders from New York City — who happen to be the people behind iconic cocktail bars Macau Trading Company and Employees Only — made a trip to Panama to visit a rum distillery and some sugarcane fields, they were captivated by the rich history and culture of the country. Together with two local partners, they developed a cocktail bar that would bring their shared expertise to the local market.

Designed by Dutch East Design, The Strangers Club

borrows its name from a bar that operated from the 1920s to the 1970s in Colon, Panama. It spans 2,500 square feet across two floors. The upper floor doubles as event or overflow space. Typical of buildings of this scale throughout Panama's historic district, the upper floor's balcony, running the full perimeter, serves as an awning for the street below. Original wood architectural details have been restored, and it was very important that the interior design honor the building's history and neighborhood.



Images courtesy of Jessie English

↑ Dutch East repurposed a vintage wood cabinet as a wait station, and one of the owners contributed 100-year-old wooden shutters that had spent many years in storage in his parents' barn. The back wall of the bar is clad in these wood shutters, and while they may have been shipped from New York, they are very much in keeping with the local aesthetic. Custom banquettes were designed with loose cushions and open wood slats.

↑ The interior design follows the area's vernacular very closely. Walls are hand-troweled stucco and transition from sage green to white. The stained beadboard ceiling with overhead fans further captures the breezy tropical vibe, as do the bentwood dining chairs and marble tabletops.