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CODE

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Padella

by Lisa Helmanis, Day Studio

Padella, a pasta bar serving hand rolled pasta, is the second project from Tim Siadatan & Jordan Frieda, the team behind Trullo. Trying to find any information about the design or interior was hard to come by. But then that's the impression you get.

Padella is an exercise in understated. It doesn't shout, it soothes and welcomes you in (if you're happy to queue, of course). The visual delight is seeing your pasta rolled - if walking by early morning - or constructed on full view as you dine. It's like the white walls of a gallery allowing the audience to see the main show without any over the top distractions. We were able to track down Lisa Helmanis, designer & founder of Day Studio, to ask her a few questions about the project.

1. From a design point of view can you sum up the project in your own words?

Hard and fun; the best kind. We had a very small space but as with sister restaurant Trullo we really wanted to put the food at the centre, so the kitchen is the first thing you experience as you arrive.

2. Padella doesn't fit into any obvious design influence - what was the inspiration behind the interior design and layout?

I tend to think about the food first and go from there; Padella is about doing something extremely well; the freshest Italian pasta using Spadellare (the pasta cooking water) to give the authentic, moreish taste that keeps you returning.

The white tiles and zinc was inspired by the 50s Italian cafes that I used to haunt as an art student when I first arrived in London. There aren't so many any more sadly. The matchboard I've used for seating reminds me of the old cabbie huts (there is still one in Hanover square) that also seemed about taking comfort after a hard days work; but lent some glitz with brass details and gloss black. I used curved wooden panels to divide space because I had an obscure image in my mind of old, grand Italian horse stables and they do the job without closing the space down.

My references rarely get a literal interpretation but I think they lend the schemes some depth that might subtly come through in how you feel in them.

3. The restaurant gives the impression of 'less is more' - was this a clear goal from the first conversation?

Yes, I don't like design that feels 'stuck on' for the sake of it. My only really decorative flourishes are the old Italian 80s Vogue pictures upstairs. I love a good hair flick.

4. What do you consider the most important factor when creating a restaurant identity?

That it is a backdrop that makes sense when you eat the food; it should be an enjoyable, welcoming place to be that's easy to work and dine in, but above all, let's the food shine.

5. Lastly, are there any other restaurant or bar identities that you think work well?

Ducasse at the Dorchester I think manages to feel very special and like an event; hard in London with such a well fed crowd. But I also am happy anywhere that is what it is; I can happily appreciate a Formica bench in that cabbies hut.