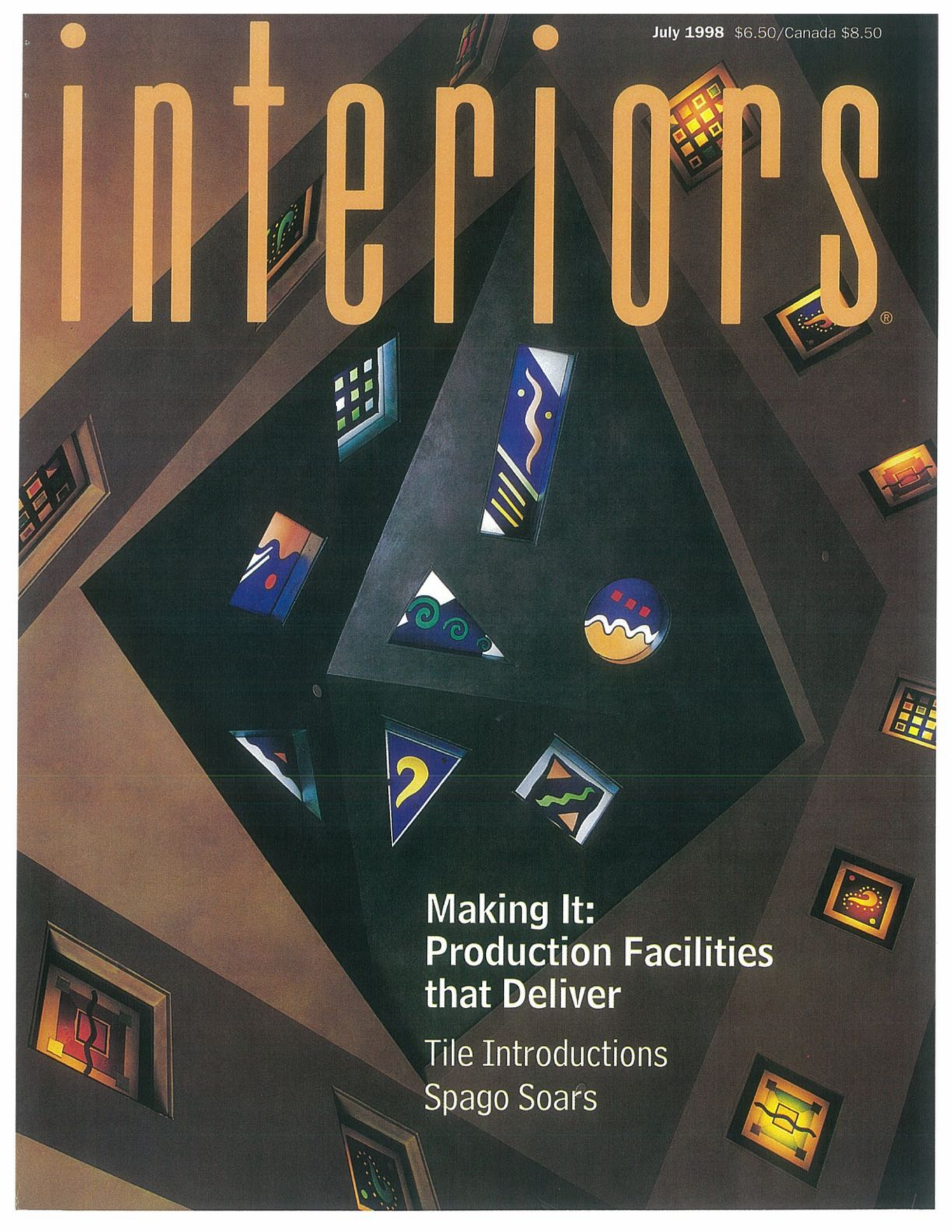


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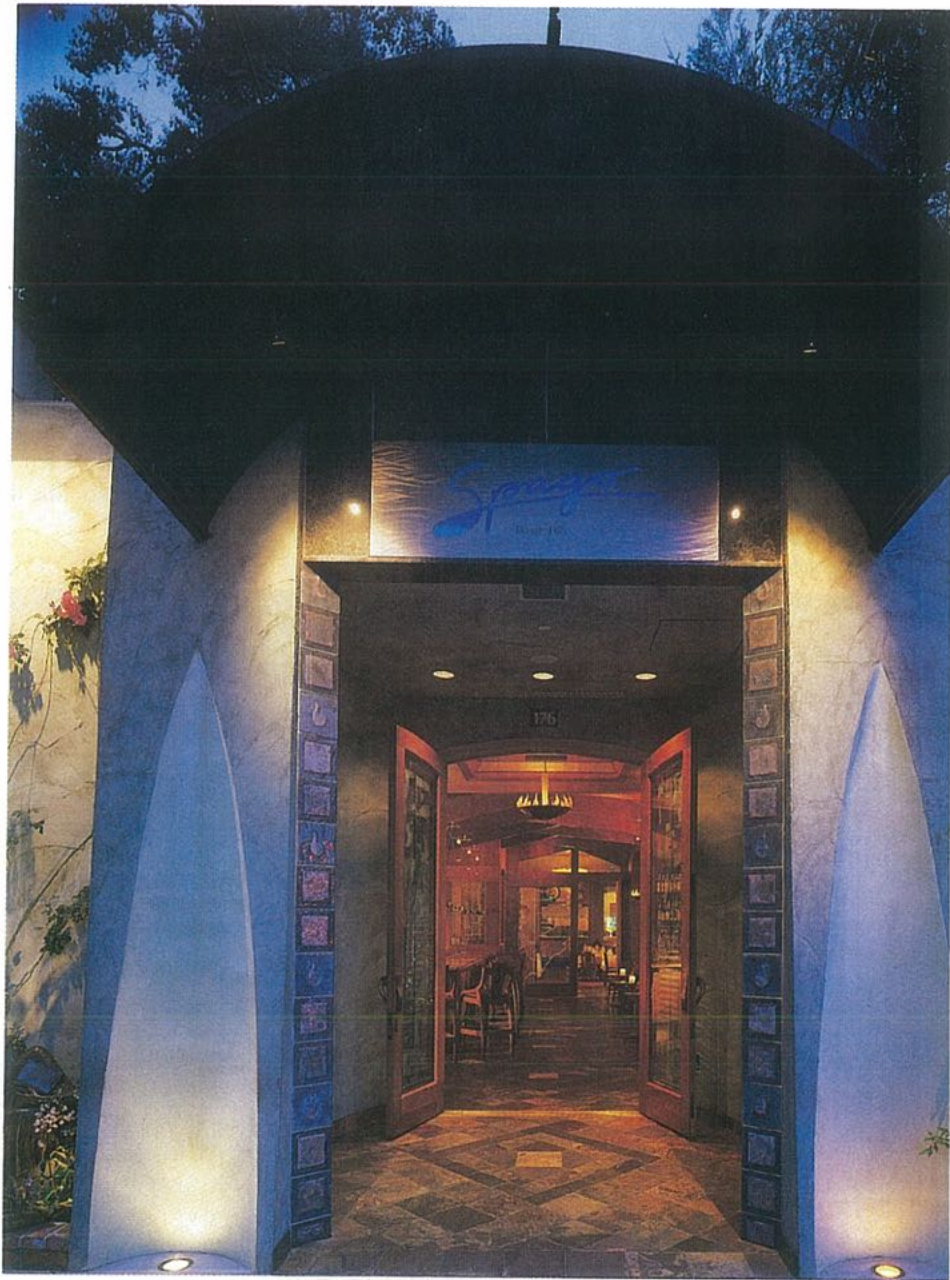
Tile Introductions
Spago Soars

Beverly Hills, California

Spago Beverly Hills

Barbara Lazaroff/Imaginings Interior Design

“Great dining is a seduction, from the door to the plate; every detail, every sense, matters and should be explored and celebrated,” muses Lazaroff.



It's hard to top a legend, which is what grew up around the original Spago in West Hollywood from the day it opened 17 years ago. Chef Wolfgang Puck lured a celebrity crowd to dine on gourmet pizza and other culinary delicacies, and his business partner and wife, Barbara Lazaroff, ASID, transformed a neglected shack above the Sunset Strip into what became the prototype for many California restaurants: a sparkling exhibition kitchen, art-filled interior, and easy indoor-outdoor flow of space. Spago Hollywood was recently upgraded, but when a coveted location in Beverly Hills became available, it seemed logical to create a new flagship.

The new 11,500-square-foot Spago Beverly Hills occupies the site of the former Bistro Garden, from which it retained only the shell of a pavilion and a portion of the court-

Slate flooring creates a transition between dining room and courtyard.

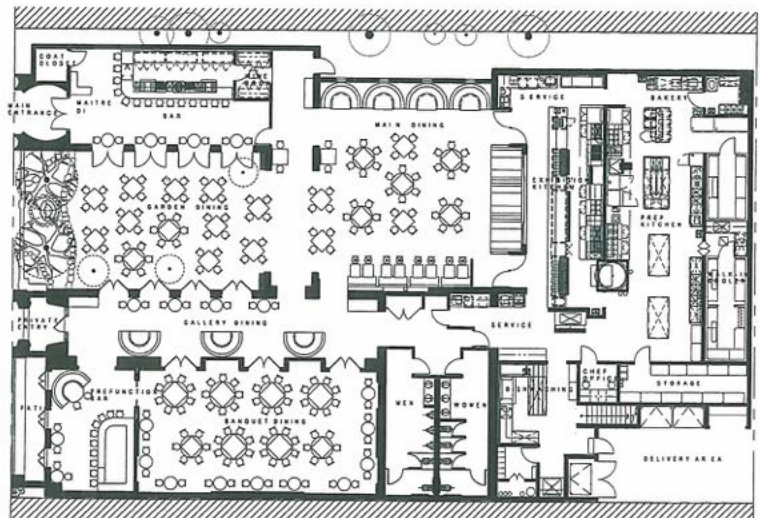
Custom chairs: designed by Imaginings, fabricated by Fong Bros.; patio chairs, metalwork: Lazo Ornamental Metal; custom glass: Architectural Glass.

yard. "The restaurant was conceived as a space exhibiting two primary focal points," explains Lazaroff: the first is the beloved outdoor courtyard, which was greatly enhanced with two century-old olive trees. A set of arched French doors leads to the entry bar and wine room on one side, while on the other doors connect a transitional gallery area to the pre-function bar and private dining rooms. The second focal point is the exhibition kitchen, situated along the far wall of the main dining room behind dramatic 14-by-6-foot sliding art-glass doors, whose panels encase a variety of hand-blown, carved, and dichroic stylized elements which seem to float above the diners.

"Too much of a good thing can be wonderful," said Mae West, and it's a sentiment Lazaroff embraces with gusto. She dis-

dains minimalism, and seduces her guests with rich colors, complex patterns, and poetry. "I wanted Spago to have elegant bones with sensual overlays and adornment; a space evoking the feeling of an old soul, but with a young spirit," the designer explains. Working closely with architect Stephen F. Jones, AIA, as well as a team of artists and craftspeople, a structure from the ground up in which every element reinforces the whole was created. The new restaurant is full of light and surprising shifts of perspective. The bar is tied to the restaurant by a pitched-maple wood vault, which is criss-crossed by triangles of purple-heart and mahogany. Jones designed an acute vault along the north side to preserve the branches of the eucalyptus trees. In the main dining room, Lazaroff and Jones designed a soaring asymmetrical pyramid vault, with





GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SPAGO RESTAURANT

The 120-seat main dining room features an asymmetrical pyramid vault, with panels by George Heuther Architectural Glass which can be backlit. Paintings at left are by artist Lowell Herrero. Custom chairs: designed by Imaginings, fabricated by Fong Bros.; banquettes: Kress, with fabric by Maharam; custom carpet: Durkan.; recessed lighting, dimming system: Lightolier; kitchen consultant: Hank Sachs.



In the elegant 100-seat private dining room, a massive mahogany cross-brace inspired by the original Spago was installed as a good-luck charm.

Faux painting: Demar + Feldman Studios; glass sandblasting: Polly Gessell; custom lighting: Brad Abrams; custom chairs: designed by Imaginings, fabricated by Fong Bros.

skylit geometric glass panels. A broad gallery separates the courtyard from the large private dining room, which can be divided into sections with glass panels by artist Polly Gessell, etched with lines of poetry and song chosen by Lazaroff.

Like theater, Spago's layered spaces offer guests a choice of vantage points from which to enjoy the changing show. Lazaroff established a luminescent palette of amethyst (her favorite color), forest green, amber, and apricot tones, visible in the custom-woven carpet and upholstery, slate flooring, and rare-marble countertops. A stylized flame, inspired by Lazaroff's poem "The Flame of Life," winds its way around and onto the various sur-

faces and appointments throughout: in the etched exhibition-kitchen windows, on the menu cover, in the Italian blown-glass lighting sconces, and in the custom carpet, interwoven with dancing squares that recall the wall niches and coffered ceilings.

More than a dozen artists contributed site-specific works to Spago. In addition, paintings and prints from Lazaroff's own collection and works by 20th-century masters like Picasso, Motherwell, Dine, Frankenthaler, and Hockney also line the walls, a visual feast that enhances the experience of Spago's edible pleasures. •*Michael Webb*

Inside Spago's entry doors is the 16-seat bar. Light fixtures reflect the "flame of life" theme.

Custom lighting, bar pendants: Brad Abrams; millwork: Douglas Carpentry; custom glass: Architectural Glass. Right: signage: Moz, Bright Light Neon.

