

# RESTAURANT/HOTEL DESIGN INTERNATIONAL®

*The Magazine for the Hospitality Design Team*



- HD '92 PREVIEW ISSUE
- WEST COAST PROJECTS
- COVER: LAZAROFF'S GRANITA





# WATER MUSIC

A lyrical new restaurant celebrates  
the sea in light, form, and detail





Sensuously draped in plaster, a pair of columns encrusted with a mosaic of biomorphic ceramic shapes flanks the terrazzo and marble stair (below right) that leads to the lounge level (left). Bubble-collar lights and pendant fixtures: *Exciting Lighting*. Jewel lights: *CSL*. Bar stools: *West Coast Industries*. Ceramic fabrication: *Mike Payne Architectural Ceramics*. Stone work: *Mike Payne & Associates*. Interior paint surfaces: *Tim Harris*. Carpeting: *Mannington*. Wine rack fabrication: *The Gentrywoods*.

Guests enter through Brian Tedrick's cast iron and redwood portal (above right), set on a walkway of marble and terrazzo. Architectural glass panels punctuate the facade around Daane Dahl's fused and slumped glass entry doors. Granita's logo is carved into the boulder beneath the olive trees. Glass panels: *Leucos*. Stone: *Mike Payne & Associates*.

**Developers:** Barbara Lazaroff and Wolfgang Puck  
**Architecture and Interior Design:** Imaginings Interior Design  
**Project team:** Barbara Lazaroff, Deborah Forbes, Ben Burkhalter  
**Contractor:** Pacific Southwest Development  
**Project superintendent:** Bill Lazaroni  
**Photography:** Penny Wolin



When designer Barbara Lazaroff (Imaginings Interior Design) and chef Wolfgang Puck opened their newest restaurant—a \$3.2 million paean to the sea—in Malibu last August, it was a dream brought to life by Lazaroff's sheer tenacity over three difficult years of planning and construction. "Since I saw Granita as the last restaurant I would personally design for myself and Wolf," she says, "I wanted to create an environment that was visually dazzling, inspired by the visceral and emotional elements of the sea—a celebration of the cooperative efforts of America's most talented artisans."

There were obstacles from the start. It took a year to get site approval from the California Coastal Commission, and still more time to overcome opposition from neighbors in posh Malibu Colony ("Almost all of them are now regular customers," Lazaroff observes.) In the course of creating "a visual landmark that people would be drawn to," the budget had to be doubled with support from investors like Johnny Carson, who visited often to watch the project unfold. Lazaroff's Beverly Hills home and design studio filled up with works of art and craft items com-





## GRANITA

The main dining room (below) is lyrical with layered detail in mosaic, stone, and glass. Pam Morris's glass objects, resembling sea creatures, are displayed in illuminated niches, while her bubble fixtures top the columns. Morris's cable lights are suspended above the booths. Chairs: Bob Josten. Chair and banquette fabric: Grey Watkins. Carpet: Mannington. Ceramic work: Mike Payne Architectural Ceramics. Stone: Mike Payne Associates. Painting: Jim deFrance's Callistus. Architectural glass panels: Leucos. Lyetmode control panel: Ligholier. Jewel lights: CSL. Wall washers: Prescolite. Neon Lighting: Archigraphics. Special effect projectors: Art Environments. Glass partition panels: Polly Gessel. China: Mary Burns, Villeroy & Boch. Glass: Schott Zwiesel. Silver: Oneida.

missioned especially for the restaurant.

Located within the Malibu Colony Plaza shopping complex on the Pacific Coast Highway, Granita is a separate structure with distinctive colors, materials, and massing of form. The shell, clad in glass-fiber reinforced concrete with a decorative base banding of imbedded Brazilian pebbles and punctuated with square panels of architectural glass, cost just \$240,000 to construct, but "we had to spend more to heat the patio on the front and left side of the building," Lazareff recalls.

She conceptualized the design for Granita as a three-dimensional metaphor of the sea; a statement about "the counterpoint of man and nature," symbolized by sculptor Brian Tedrick's 12x12-foot iron and redwood portal at the main entrance. A multihued stone carpet of biomorphic shapes outlined in marble and terrazzo leads guests into the restaurant through Duane Dahl's sculpted glass doors that look like softly rippling water. Inside, the 130-seat space unfolds in gentle underwater pastels, aglow with refracted and diffused light and lavish with layered detail.

To the right of the entrance, sensual plaster-draped columns flank terrazzo stairs to the elevated bar/lounge level, where curving seafoam suede banquettes embrace a fireplace inset with handcrafted tiles, semiprecious gemstones, and geodes. The bartop is crafted of marbles and onyx in a multicolored terrazzo inlaid with semiprecious stones, and is edged with a copper shield of petroglyph cutouts that are







backlit in golden neon.

In the main dining area, round tables center the space, while ceramic-mosaic banquettes covered in a silky pastel print define the perimeter. From any vantage point, diners are treated to a lyrical layering of biomorphic sea shapes expressed in ceramic, glass, metal, and stone. For example, along the wall opposite the entrance, the grotto-like open kitchen with its woodburning oven is elaborately tiled with handcrafted ceramics that suggest the colorful accretions of a coral reef. A shaped cornice bordered in ceramic "sea grass" seems to undulate across the wall. This decorative *tour de force* is the work of ceramic artist Mike Payne, who with students from the Otis/Parsons School of Design was commissioned by Lazaroff to create the biomorphic sea shapes that also line the restroom walls and face the columns both indoors and out. A hands-on designer, Lazaroff herself helped lay in the hundreds of ceramic elements that give the restaurant its multi-layered "life upon life" effect.

Overhead, architectural niches display Pam Morris's jewel-like handblown glass sculptures inspired by sea anemones and other creatures of the deep. Morris, the principal of Exciting Lighting, also created the "illuminated artworks" that serve as pendant fixtures over the bar and in the lounge area, as well as the kelp-like "bubble collars" of glass and verdigris copper that surmount the ceramic columns.

It took Lazaroff "close to a year" to design and refine the complex lighting schedule for Granita; she says that "so much of the magic and drama I was trying to create comes from the use of light." Above the dining room, a skylight soffit houses a special projector that creates the illusion of ever-moving water on the ceiling. Hand-poured square glass panels are backlit with cold cathode for a subtle undersea effect. These fixtures—plus the wallwashers that suffuse the space with warm illumination, halogen spots for the artworks, and low voltage "jewel lights" that create star-like patterns across the ceiling—are all controlled by a 117-channel computer that is pro-

Surfaced with an elaborate mosaic of stone and ceramic biomorphic shapes, the open kitchen (above) resembles an undersea grotto formed of coral and fringed by waving sea grass. Accenting the wall oversized platters are by ceramic artist Anna Silver, while Pam Morris's glass sculptures adorn the illuminated niches. Carpet: *Mannington*. Banquette fabric: *Grey Watkins*. Stone: *Mike Payne Associates*. Ceramics: *Mike Payne Architectural Ceramics*. China: *Villeroy & Boch*. Glass: *Schott Zwiessel*.



## GRANITA

A koi pond lends serenity to outdoor dining on the patio (right), which seats 60. Landscaping: Jackie Tone, Rob Takiguchi with Barbara Lazaroff. Trees: Mission Tree. Doors: Duane Dahl. Chairs: Fong Brothers. China: Villero & Boch. Glass: Schott Zweisel. Silver: Oneida. Koi pond fabrication: Mr. Fish, Bob Morris. Ceramic columns: Mike Payne Architectural Ceramics. Bubble lights: Exciting Lighting. Stone flooring: Mike Payne & Associates. Copper beam shields: Metamorphosis. Landscape lighting: Luminere.

In the men's bathroom (below), the vanity is surfaced with an elegant variety of colored marbles. The biomorphic ceramic mural and urinal surround are a collaboration of Mike Payne and students from the Otis/Parsons School of Design. Etched glass partition doors are the work of Polly Gessel. Lighting fixtures: Prescolite, Lightolier.

grammed for changing light conditions throughout the day and night.

Visually dividing the interior spaces (and screening off the restroom stalls) are elegant etched glass panels, the work of Polly Gessel. In lieu of the elaborate flower arrangements that she favors for Spago and Chinois, Lazaroff commissioned Richard Bilow to create "a watery fantasy world of exotic corals" and sea anemones that waft their colorful tentacles in the moving currents of high-tech saltwater tanks set like vivid windows in the wall between the main and private dining areas.

To add flexibility to Granita's seasonal seating plan, a series of Duane Dahl's slumped-glass doors opens from the main and private dining rooms onto the patio. There, a koi pond and water cascade create a serene mood. Ceramic-encrusted columns and halfwalls, thickly planted with greenery and flowers, define the patio's perimeter. Golden neon light "drips" from copper shields with petroglyph cutouts set along the beams, while biomorphic stone patterns flow underfoot. In spring and summer, 60 are seated on the patio and 110 inside; in cold weather, the interiors will accommodate 140 diners in both the main area and the private rooms seating 25 and 50.

Indoors and out, Granita's undersea metaphor is reinforced by a variety of sculpture, paintings, and constructed artworks, including Eugene Jardin's "Not a Fish" epoxy construction, David Ruth's cast glass sculpture "Gomeisa", and Richard Clopton's bronze frog and koi sculptures.

Lazaroff estimates it cost \$3.2 million to bring Granita to life, including \$250,000 for lighting, \$350,000 for the kitchen, \$350,000 for stone and ceramic, and \$200,000 for fine art.

Etched into a boulder placed near Granita's front door is Lazaroff's last word on the three-year project: "Time is meaningless in the face of creativity." —M.J. Madigan







Floor plan:  
1. Entrance 2. Reception 3. Lounge  
4. Bar 5. Dining 6. Private dining  
7. Patio dining

Redrawn by Martin Doef