



Drawing inspiration from three of the city's coolest restaurants for your home

by Glen Peloso for Streets of Toronto | Posted: September 23, 2015

Design inspiration can come from a variety of places, and what better place to get inspired for a kitchen renovation than from your favourite restaurant.



The Chase Fish & Oyster

Design influences restaurant choice as much as the food, or we'd all be ordering delivery and eating at home. The design is a visual "cookbook" while you "bake" your own kitchen reno, so drink in every visual you get.

Seating is a big component of any restaurant, and your comfort affects your enjoyment of the establishment whether it's chairs, benches or banquettes. Every patron has a preference.

People rarely choose to install banquette seating at home, but it can be a very effective way of conserving space while offering a great visual.

The banquettes should be flat against the wall if you want to conserve space, but a horseshoe shape can be a fun esthetic. You can have one with a very high back or something quite low. Fabric, vinyl, button tufting or a tight back provide different feelings, from an elegant dining establishment to a diner. Notice the chairs as well. If you really love them, ask where they came from.

Lighting is also a huge part of any successful restaurant's plan to enhance experience of the dining room. A space such as restaurant Parts & Labour, for example, with the circular tube lighting fixtures, creates a dramatic and retro look.

You may not have room for the number of the fixtures they do in the restaurant, but one over the dining table and/or over the island in your own kitchen will create drama.

Also look at the repetition of lights in places such as The Chase.

The seven fixtures they have at the "kitchen pass" create a great visual because they're placed close together, and there are more than you might anticipate.

Generally you don't think of repetition at home because you're focused on the lighting, not on the visual of the light fixture, but use this inspiration to create that visual at home. The same can be said for the industrial lighting of Pizza Libretto with its many wires strung from the ceiling, creating a sculptural feature of cords. A scaled-down version of same will work well in a more industrial-inspired home or condo.

People have become comfortable with a feature wallpaper for a bedroom, but it's "too much" for a kitchen. There are some wonderful murals and textures that can add appealing detail to the kitchen. Add mouldings to walls, oversized paintings, tiles, painted brick or a large chalkboard to create your own details.

Everything from graffiti to an old industrial sign from the “Ruby Watch Company” can add detail, history, richness and visual interest. Don’t limit yourself to paint and a standard backsplash tile because you can create the same feeling at home.

The wine fridge that has become ubiquitous in the residential kitchen was born of the restaurant industry. In restaurants, it’s common to create a wall of wines not only to feature what is available to patrons, but also for the visual impact. These displays are easy enough to create in your own kitchen, and the impact is dramatic.

Next time dining out, consider a “design doggy bag” to take home that will nourish your soul long after the meal is over.

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