



## Young designer is a restaurant hit

Adam Dawe Interior Design and Decoration (+44 (0)7958 200268) is the eponymous trading name of a talented, young, British designer who is just adding the finishing touches to his first restaurant makeover.

Dawe has worked on a wide range of projects, including loft apartments, bespoke kitchens, fashion shoots for Vogue magazine and Red or Dead, parties and numerous other events. His work on Chives restaurant in Fulham Road for the Red Pepper Group marks a move in a new direction, one which he is keen to explore. He believes commercial work offers greater scope for problem-solving and exploring the use of a wider range of concepts.

### A designer for all fields

"I work across a few fields at once, and I think they inform each other well," says Dawe. "When you work on a fashion shoot you're seeing what's going to be out in the magazines six months later. I'm talking about visual culture and I think it's all coming together. I want to my work to be fun, interesting and break new ground, this is what I'm interested in."

At Chives, Dawe has given a taste of his flair by bringing cohesion to an existing restaurant space on a limited budget. "My brief was to come up with a fresh colour scheme and some minor alterations to make the place feel better," he explains. "As the restaurant opened they were getting a lot of positive press about the food, but there was always this 'but it doesn't feel very nice, not a great atmosphere' attitude."

"It involved a colour scheme to bring all the surfaces into harmony, because it was just a mess really," says Dawe. "There were about four or five different types of wood in the restaurant. So we took the view that the woodwork would look better, for instance, if it was all painted one colour rather than being various different shades. So we did that and I tried to make the downstairs and the upstairs work better together by running themes through. I had a couple of partitions made and I introduced some texture to those with tongue and groove panelling."

Dawe's aim was to create a space that provides a subtle canvas for the contemporary Italian food that comes from the chef, Jun Tanaka. "They didn't want something like a flash West End bar," he says. "They wanted it to look calm and comfortable so that the food would be the thing that comes through, the rest is just the atmosphere."

### Playing with light and texture

Dawe enjoys playing with light and texture and has introduced bespoke mirrors for the upstairs area which are smooth, frameless and backed in silver leaf. "I wanted something that had a feeling about it," says Dawe. "It's less a mirror and more a texture on the wall. It's halfway between the reflection you get on stainless steel and a mirror."

By making subtle interventions, Dawe has significantly enhanced the atmosphere of Chives. New wall lighting has been installed upstairs, the original chairs have been recovered in a corded chenille and frosted glass brings in a new texture. But the glue that holds these features together is the colour scheme which Dawe describes as "tonal and neutral, warm and to the grey/green end of the spectrum". Four different tones of paint have been used, but the similarity is such that you may only notice two, says Dawe.

Having effected maximum change from a minimal budget at Chives, Dawe is keen for an opportunity to be involved in the design of a restaurant from the planning stage. "For me, good design is all about detail," he says. "It's about following that through, always keeping your eye on it, and making sure that everything works, at every level, from all points of view: Some places have stunning features that looks great but if they omit to consider how that relates to other parts of the space, the design cannot be called successful."

By Glen Poole