

INTERIOR DESIGN

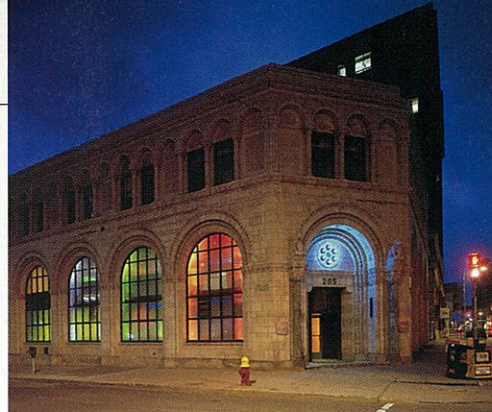
\$8.95

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wet 'n wild
new talent

Miraculous Recovery

An ailing 1920s Detroit bank gets a new lease on life as McIntosh Poris Associates's hot spot, Panacea



SEVEN YEARS IN medicine taught Glenn Hernandez about the elusiveness of cure-alls. Now—after a dramatic career switch—he's found one for a distressed 1920s Detroit bank, which he and former mortgage-company exec Eric Calado have reinvented as hot spot Panacea. Architecture firm McIntosh Poris Associates oversaw the treatment.

Located in the financial district, the building had an elegant facade of terra-cotta and limestone, but the interior had seen better days. "It was pretty nasty," says principal Michael Poris, by way of understatement. MPA began by removing two drop ceilings to uncover hand-stenciled coffers and tearing down drywall partitions to unearth a wraparound mezzanine. The double-height part of the ground level became the dance floor, ringed by an intimate mezzanine lounge and VIP area. Defining the dance floor's perimeter, slipped between the original concrete columns, concrete-topped drink rails double as light sources.

Lighting was key in emphasizing the original architecture. "We like the Philippe Starck philosophy of colored light," says Hernandez. Acrylic panels, tinted blue, were affixed to both sides of steel members bolted to the floor, with sleeved fluorescents sandwiched between for a moody glow. The architects used the same treatment to front the bars, this time deploying yellow-green acrylic. Installed at the base of each arched window, curtained with theatrical scrim, a pair of fiber-optic fixtures cycles through thousands of colors. And where would the lighting technician go? The ideal spot for him and the DJ, the architects realized, was the old bank manager's office—situated on the mezzanine, with a perfect view of the action. —Sheila Kim

Top: The restored bank was built in a Moorish-revival style.

Above, left: Fiber optics light the arched windows, screened by theatrical scrim. The mezzanine's banquettes are upholstered in faux leather.

Left: The architects touched up the stenciled ceiling and installed 3-inch-thick acoustical panels in the coffers.

BANQUETTES (MEZZANINE): A&J COMMERCIAL SEATING. SCRIM FABRICATION: WEST END STUDIOS. LOUNGE TABLES (MEZZANINE): UNICAHOME. DRINK-RAIL PANELS, BAR SHELVEING (GROUND FLOOR): ACRYLIC SPECIALTIES AND PLASTICS. DRINK-RAIL TOPS: KENT UNDERLAYMENT SPECIALTIES. ACOUSTICAL ENGINEER, CEILING PANELS: BURST SOUND & LIGHTING. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: STOREM AND LEWIS.