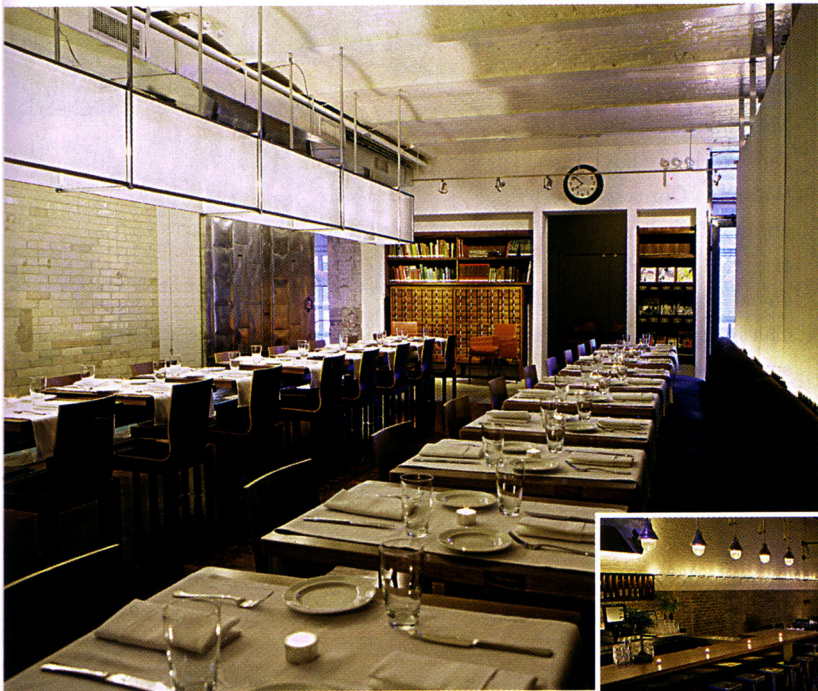


wave of the future 2004
eight designers to watch

hospitality design



Decent Exposure

Breaking into restaurant design by hiring yourself isn't the easiest way to gain a foothold in the specialty. But if it works, *it works*, as in the case of Public, a Manhattan restaurant created by local design firm AvroKo to showcase its aptitude for hospitality design. "Not having access to larger projects, and yet knowing we could put together something positive: That was the impetus," says Adam Farmerie, a principal in the five-year-old firm.

Before Public, with its gourmet cuisine by two New Zealand chefs, Farmerie's expat chef brother Brad, and a tongue-in-cheek institutional décor (remnants of just the charming parts of old public libraries and post offices, "a utopian vision of civilized society"), AvroKo had only designed offices and retail space. "On Public, we handled fundraising, concept, finding the space, and building it," Farmerie beams. And at least one impressed diner has been converted to a new design client, ordering up a 2,000-square-foot nightclub. "We're all around 30. The firm is small, and clients think we're fast," Farmerie says. A chic fast food concept from AvroKo is also on the boards.

Above, left and right: The dining area and bar of restaurant Public in Manhattan, owned and created by local design firm AvroKo.