

INTERIOR DESIGN

\$6.95

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Sea of Tranquility

With lighting fixtures symbolic of its name, Cafe Atomico by David Mann is a cool and quiet place to dine.

WHETHER OR NOT they are "atomically" correct, British designer Tom Dixon's groovy lighting fixtures inspired the name of the sweet new cafe within the Gift Building in New York's Flatiron district. Without them, Cafe Atomico would hardly be the same.

Designer David Mann of M.R. Architecture & Decor discovered the English-made fixtures in a magazine after being hired to transform an existing coffee shop into an upscale breakfast, lunch and catering business. "The clients were thinking about launching a chain," he states, "and this location was to be their calling card."

Because of its serene views of Madison Square Park, Mann decided that the 1,200-sq.-ft. cafe should be a quiet oasis rather than the typical noisy watering hole. Sonex, an acoustic material used to control sound in recording studios, covers the walls and ceiling in the dining area. With its soft undulating surface and charcoal gray color, it provides both a functional noise reduction solution and an aesthetic punch. Carpet in the dining area and curtains at the windows further control acoustics. A delicate color palette of whites and grays, as well as smooth planar surfaces in simple materials, contribute to the subdued atmosphere. Credit is shared with project architect Richard Perry. —*Andrea Loukin*



Above: Light fixtures designed by Tom Dixon were imported from England.

Right: Maple bar is topped by sanded stainless steel. Backlit panels of Polygal acrylic also reflect light cast from the front.

Opposite: Ceiling and wall are covered in Sonex for acoustic control.

POLY GAL PLASTIC: AIN PLASTICS. CUSTOM FOOD DISPLAY BOXES: PRECISION GLASS & MIRROR WORKS. SONEX: ARCHITECTURAL SURFACES. LIGHT FIXTURES: EUROLounge UK. RECESSED FIXTURES: REGGIANI. VINYL FLOOR: FORBO. CHAIRS: THONET. TABLES: CHAIRS & STOOLS. DRAPERY FABRIC: GRETCHEN BELLINGER THROUGH ANGELA BROWN. LIGHTING DESIGN: RENEE COOLEY LIGHTING. MILLWORK: GAUGHAN CONSTRUCTION. CONTRACTOR: CFO MANAGEMENT.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID M. JOSEPH