

let the sun shine in



1

1. At Girasol Restaurant, neutral hues, natural light, and sophisticated textures create an organic aesthetic.

2. Backlit flower petals dressing the ceiling create the illusion of eating amid sunflowers.

A flower inspires a Studio City dining room

By ALIA AKKAM
Photography by JESUS BAÑUELOS



Ethereal flower petals, made of wood, painted white, backlit and suspended from the structural ceiling, are the visual centerpieces of Girasol, two-time *Top Chef* alum CJ Jacobson's new Los Angeles restaurant in Studio City. "Girasol means sunflower in Spanish," explains Gulla Jonsdottir, principal of West Hollywood, California-based G+ Gulla Jonsdottir Design, who crafted the space. "The ceiling is meant to interpret the sunflower for a feeling of dining inside a giant girasol."

Eating dinner amid this swirl of blooms descending into the dining room appropriately captures Jacobson's farm-to-table stance on cooking, but as Jonsdottir points out, "His food is also elegant, so we wanted to match that through the design." This means there are a mix of calming neutral hues and sophisticated woods like oak, teak, and walnut, complemented by surrounding windows that draw in natural light.



2



While exploring Studio City—known more for its quiet, residential appeal among entertainment executives than for its vibrant nightlife—Jonsdottir discovered charming coffee shops and small boutiques, realizing Girasol’s boldness meshed well with the neighborhood’s hip new inclinations. At the same time, she was conscious of keeping the space warm and familiar, so locals who might want to dine here every day would feel right at home. So she weaved in comfortable, honest materials, like the raw wood floors, white plaster walls, and casual, durable striped fabric seating. A wall of folding glass doors makes the transition to the lounge and patio a seamless one.

“Because of the organic nature of the food and the environment, we wanted to use some recycled items—items that we generally use in alternative ways versus their common placement, such as a rebar wine cellar and black burnt wood walls on the exterior and entry foyer,” Jonsdottir says.

The restaurant’s emblematic girasol was at the forefront of Jonsdottir’s vision. Walls, graced with dark, gray stone, represent the leaves of the stem, she says, while those waves of plaster are also an ode to the towering sunflower: “They undulate in and out, like a flower blowing in the wind.” **hd**

gplusdesign.com; girasolrestaurant.com

Girasol Restaurant

Studio City, California

Owner and Purchasing

Roman Gofman

Interior Design Firm

G+ Gulla Jonsdottir Design, Los Angeles

Interior Design Project Team

Gulla Jonsdottir, Erni Taslim, and Thu Ngo

Contractor

Countrywide Development and Contracting, Inc

Lighting Consultants

The Ruzika Company

Dining Chairs and Barstools

G.R. Manufacturing

Tables

Gulla Luxury Furnishings

Banquette and Bar

Design by G+ Gulla Jonsdottir Design; manufactured by RMD Inc.

Fabric

Sunbrella



3. Above the bar, wavy stone wall patterns evoke the stems of sunflowers.

4. A closeup of the restaurant’s centerpiece: a wood flower petal, painted white, climbing down into the dining room.

5. Raw wood floors and white plaster walls enhance Girasol’s ethereal setting.