



# Restaurant Jonathan

*A superbly detailed recreation of the Art Deco era by Jack Cosner*

In New Orleans, food is a serious business. And although the cuisine at Jonathan may be of gourmet calibre, it is the restaurant's design that is truly spectacular. For Jack Cosner, co-owner/architect/designer has transformed two abandoned townhouses (built in 1825) into a virtual Art Deco museum.

"At first, I planned to base the motif on Hollywood Deco," says Cosner after determining that he would indeed conjoin the two structures and use the facility for a restaurant. ("I had no intention of entering the restaurant business at all when I bought the property," he interjects.) "Then when I discovered that original material was available, I decided to design an authentic Deco installation rather than a stage set. Jonathan is authentic because it's concerned with architectural elements, spatial flow, and what was really used then, as opposed to present conceptions of the period," he explains.

Why Art Deco? "Because," says Cosner, "there are no commercial interiors of the period remaining in New Orleans. Further, it is a period in interior design which adapts well to commercial projects, particularly restaurants." Add these to the obvious connotations of glamour the era holds, and the fact that the owners previously had amassed a small collection of art and artifacts, and the choice of idiom is easily explained.

Beginning with structural alterations, Cosner demolished the wall that had divided the two buildings and completely gutted the three-floor, 5700-square-foot interior space. Rebuilding (Cosner acted as general contractor as well) concentrated on establishing a flow

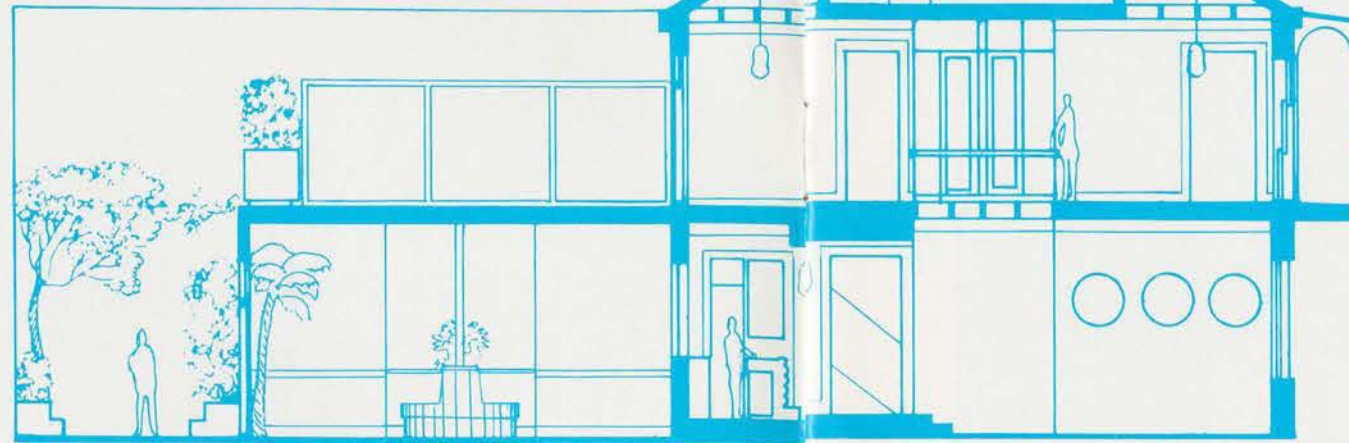
**Back page:** Dominating the entrance foyer is a canvas mural of aquatic life by Dennis Abbé. The artist also created the maitre d's stand which is finished with black lacquer, gold leaf, and eggshell. The ceiling is covered with gold foil squares that have been given a tortoise treatment; the zigurat lightwell is typical of the era. Both the bronze lamp and marbled glass vase are originals. **Above:** Glass plate was created by Dennis Abbé to commemorate the restaurant's opening.

*Continued*

*Photographer: Jaime Ardiles-Arce*



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among the three floors. There is an actual opening between the three floors on one side of the building; terraces and patios provide further visual linkage among levels. (See drawing).

Each dining facility and lounge has a distinct character and color palette. On the first floor are: the Night and Day Lounge, dramatic in its oxblood/black/gold coloration; the salmon and grey-blue toned Paradise dining room; and the kitchen and support systems. On the second floor, characterized by a dark blue and silver palette, are the main dining rooms named after the two artists most frequently associated with the period—Erté and Icart. The third floor holds two private dining facilities, Diva's Den and the Carnival Room. The former, silver and blue in color palette, is dedicated to Cosner's friend Leontyne Price, and displays her tiara from the Metropolitan Opera's production of Tosca. The other dining room based on Mardi Gras colors of purple, green and gold, has as its focal point exhibits of carnival memorabilia dating from the 1880's to 1940's.

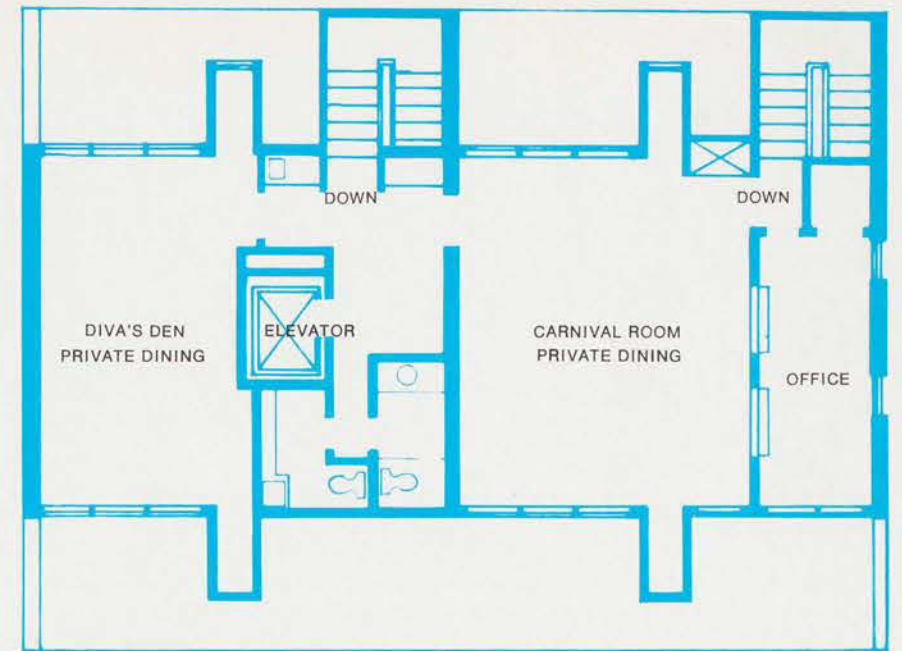
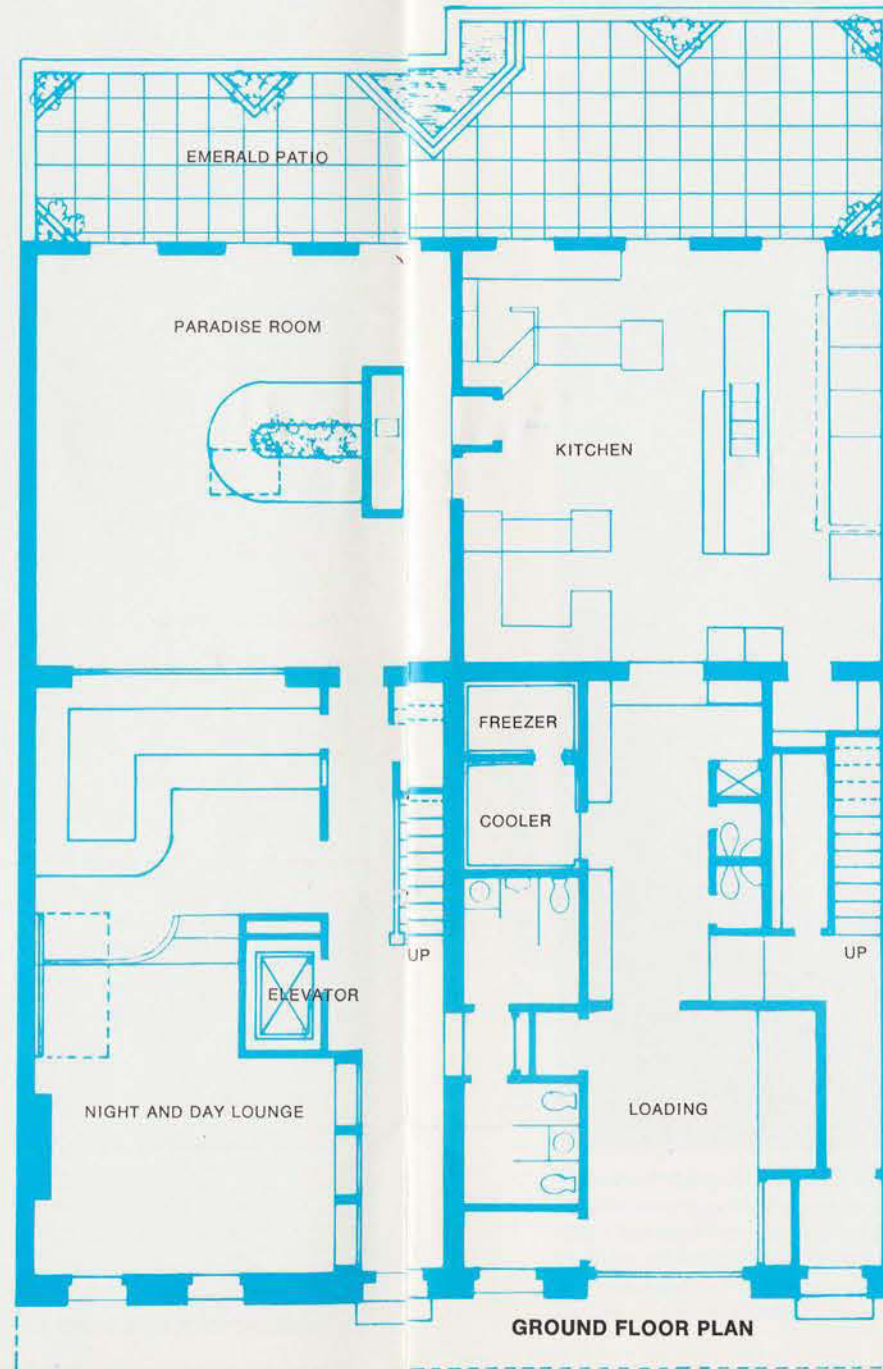
Aside from the art and objects (with Lalique, Sabino, Erté and Icart represented), probably the most extraordinary aspect is a group of larger-than-life scaled murals and glass work by Dennis Abbé of New York. In the entrance foyer, his painted canvas mural is based on an aquatic theme to relate to the Gulf of Mexico. The major glass work, a huge piece rising two stories from the Night and Day Lounge through the ceiling into the Icart dining room, is said by the designer to epitomize the era. Other works are a sliding four-panel double faced piece, "Deco Goddesses with Birds," for this first-floor lounge, and an egret fantasy for the smaller second floor bar.

No detail escaped Cosner's attention. Crown moldings were cast from originals from Manhattan's Roxy Theatre. The Deco signature ziggurat is repeated in the entrance ceiling light well and in the second floor Egret Bar. When original items could not be found, Cosner created them to recall the period. Such is the case with the door frames and also a wall covering in the Erté dining room—half rounds on pieces of plaster lathe. Even the tableware (already in commercial production) and graphics were specially attended to by Cosner.

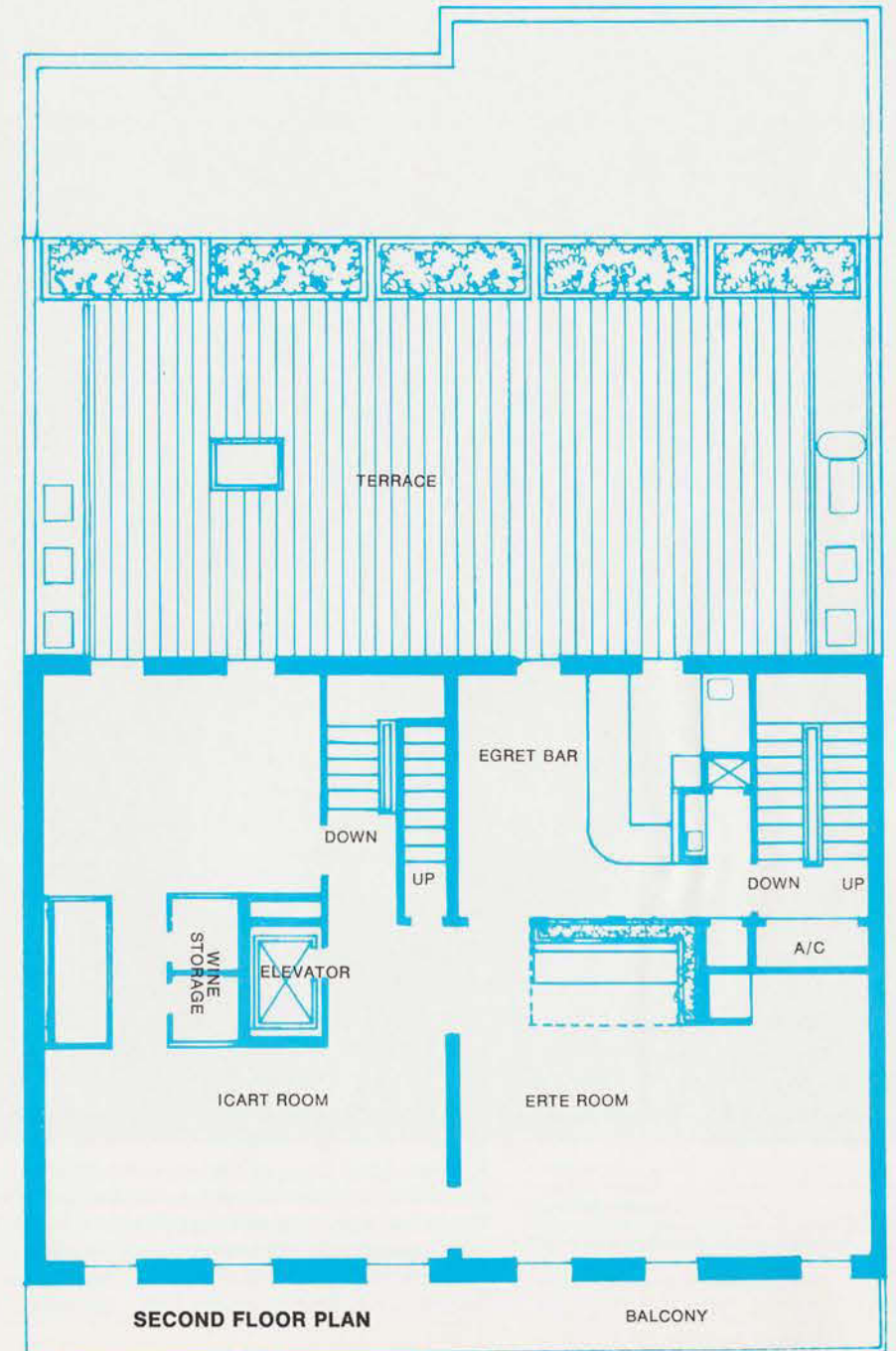
Working for approximately nine and one-half months, "almost 24 hours a day," Jack Cosner has recreated an era in New Orleans. □

### THROUGHOUT

Floor tile: American Olean  
 Paint: Pittsburgh Paints  
 Manufacture of glass murals: Shefts Brothers of Carved Glass & Signs  
 Recessed lighting fixtures: Lightolier  
 Mirror work and glass mural installation: Lester Glass Co.  
 Dining tables (custom): L&B Manufacturing Corp. (bases)  
 Dining chairs: Fanta Inc.  
 Upholstery vinyl: "Corda" Naugahyde by Uniroyal  
 Carpet: Magee  
 Crown molding: Lachin Plasterers



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

BALCONY



Tables: Gampel-Stol  
 Chairs: Jansko  
 Bar stools: L&B Manufacturing  
 Vinyl covering on bar: Naugahyde by Uniroyal  
 Fans, lighting fixtures: A&G Machinery Corp.  
 Chandelier: Camer  
 Wall sconce: San Jacinto House  
 Fan mirror: Marion Thomas Antiques  
 Railing (custom): Iron Work Service  
 Coffee maker: American Best Coffee

**Night and Day Lounge.** The major 8'x20' glass work begins here and rises through the ceiling to the second floor Icart dining room. Behind the custom built bar is a sliding, double-faced, four-panel work that separates this main lounge from the Paradise dining room. Cosner's own baby grand piano (**foreground**) was lacquered oxblood to match the walls. Crown molding was cast from originals from Manhattan's Roxy Theatre. The bronze and crystal sconce is a Sabino piece; bronze theater light, one visible behind bar, is from the Paris Opera Comique.

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**Paradise Room.** The salmon and blue-grey color palette makes this the most tranquil of the various rooms. To the rear is the glass work that separates this dining facility from the Night and Day Lounge. Art Deco accents include: three white fiber glass palm trees with metal leaves (not visible here), taken from a display window in an R. H. Macy Corporation store; an original figurine of silver washed copper on an etched glass globe; and mirrored detailing on the custom banquettes.

*Banquettes (custom): Orleans Cabinet Works  
Tables (custom): L&B Manufacturing Corp. (bases)  
Chairs: Fanta Inc.  
Fans: A&G Machinery Corp.  
Place settings (throughout): Shenango (china);  
Delco (flatware);  
Libbey (glasses); Bolter Sales (salt and pepper shakers)*



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**Erté room.** Named for the artist whose work is displayed there, this second-floor dining room opens onto a balcony. The wall covering on the far wall is made from half rounds and wood lathes. A canopy covered with navy blue and silver-grey fabrics (**foreground**) creates an illusion of intimacy. The figure in the foreground is a signed French bronze; the sconces (circa 1928) are from part of the Smithsonian Institution that has been demolished.

*Lighting fixtures: A&G Machinery Corp.  
Canopy fabric: David & Dash (navy blue); Westgate (grey)  
Blinds: Levolor*



**Egret Bar.** Focal point of this small second floor station is Abbé's glass work, framed in the same motif that is used for crown molding in the Paradise Room. The bar unit is a custom design.

*Bar top: Formica  
Vinyl covering on bar: Naugahyde by Uniroyal  
Bar stools: L&B Manufacturing Corp.  
Lighting fixtures: A&G Machinery Corp.*

