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## PRESS RELEASE

DENIZENS OF DESIGN INC.  
in collaboration with  
DS STUDIO INC.

**KASA MOTO ROOFTOP**

FOR  
IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE

TORONTO, CANADA

*“Kasa Moto’s newly renovated rooftop is an elegant, cosmopolitan collaboration of design and architecture in Yorkville ”*

Denizens of Design and DS Studio have unveiled their latest collaboration, the rebuild of Kasa Moto’s rooftop bar and lounge in the heart of Yorkville. The restaurant serves Japanese Izakaya using ingredients direct from Tokyo. The new design combines Japanese tranquility (or Seijaku) with a cosmopolitan energy that typifies Kasa Moto’s clientele.

The project was not without challenges. To meet the summer patio season, the project required a quick turnaround. Underlying structural elements of the roof unexpectedly needed to be rebuilt, but this was done on time and within budget, thanks to the expertise of the teams involved: designers, architects, contractors, and engineers. This was no small feat, especially on a heritage building.

A harmonious duality permeates every aspect of this project: East and West, day and night, light and dark, calm and energetic. The new Kasa Moto embraces contrast and offers a space to celebrate life’s fine balance.

“The great gift of outdoor projects is light,” says Dyonne Fashina, principal of interiors firm, Denizens of Design. “Kasa Moto’s rooftop is perfectly situated to catch everything from morning sun to golden hour. It’s a popular destination at all times of day, so we had to meet the expectations of their guests. We needed to simultaneously create a serene respite for business lunches by day and a buzzy vibe for nights and weekends.”

Creating a meaningful arrival moment at the host stand posed a challenge due to the fixed location of functional back of house areas. In response, the team designed an elegant breeze wall by assembling black brick masonry into a Tetris pattern, elevating this standard building material. From inside the restaurant at night, it frames a halo of circular light from the wall sconces beyond, creating a clear but gentle welcome.

The bar – previously in the middle of the floorplan, bisecting the space and interrupting the natural flow – was moved forward to greet patrons. This pivotal decision transformed the spatial dynamic. The flow is now logical, inviting, and focused on the customer’s journey.

The bar is the first touchpoint with guests before they settle into the lounge or dining areas, so it had to be special. Its new position counterbalances the rear lounge, stabilizing the design both visually and functionally. To emphasize its importance, it’s crowned in Cosmopolitan Quartzite, a pink veined stone with a natural glow. Responding to the towers of steel and glass surrounding the restaurant, a poetic pergola structure defines dining spaces and echoes the city grid beyond, but softens the grid aesthetic into a more comfortable, human scale. “The pergola functions as public living room. It’s out in the open and in the middle of the city, but designed for intimacy and social interaction,” says Dina Sarhane, principal architect of DS Studio. “With limitations around overhead lighting, we instead integrated dimmable lighting behind a charred valence around the perimeter of the space, supplemented with portable table lighting. This furthers the intimate living-room feeling.”

“Japan has inspired designers for centuries,” says Fashina. “I visited in 2017 and was constantly taking photos of the prosaic: sidewalks, siding, temple soffits. They appreciate beauty in the mundane.” The banquette seating detail, inspired by seating in the Tokyo subway, is paired with kiln-dried white oak backs and platforms that are inspired by Japanese woodcraft.

The most striking Japanese feature is undeniably the use of Shou Sugi Ban, an ancient technique that preserves wood by charring it with fire. For practicality and to create pattern, delicate “alligator” texture planks are used above human scale while a more forgiving version of the material is used at tactile height. The team sourced these materials from Nakamoto Forestry, an institution founded by the Nakamoto family in Western Japan in the 1920s, and mixed them with local wood species. Douglas fir and cedar planks juxtapose the Japanese cypress in an elegant celebration of wood in various states.

Duality and harmony permeate the design, but the most harmonious aspect of the project was the coming together of two skilled and complimentary teams. Kasa Moto is the latest venture in the continuing creative relationship between interiors firm Denizens of Design and the architects at DS Studio.

“We don’t dwell on ownership of ideas or the architecture/designer distinction,” says Fashina. “The design process is layered, dynamic. We sketch together virtually, making decisions together in real-time. It’s a more fun and creative process, but it’s also more efficient and equitable.” The two firms have been collaborating since 2018. “We don’t lose time navigating hierarchies,” says Sarhane. “Working in collaboration with a common goal is to the benefit of the collective as well as the individual practices.”

Commercial design projects for luxury hospitality can be challenging due to economic pressures in production, the ever-present need for profitability, and globalized customers with increasingly demanding tastes. A design team who can meet these needs, while simultaneously addressing emergent regulatory, building and safety requirements, is rare indeed. The Denizens and DS Studio team has elevated the Kasa Moto experience, improving flow, honouring design heritage, leaning into contrast, and leading with collaboration.

## — PRESS CONTACTS

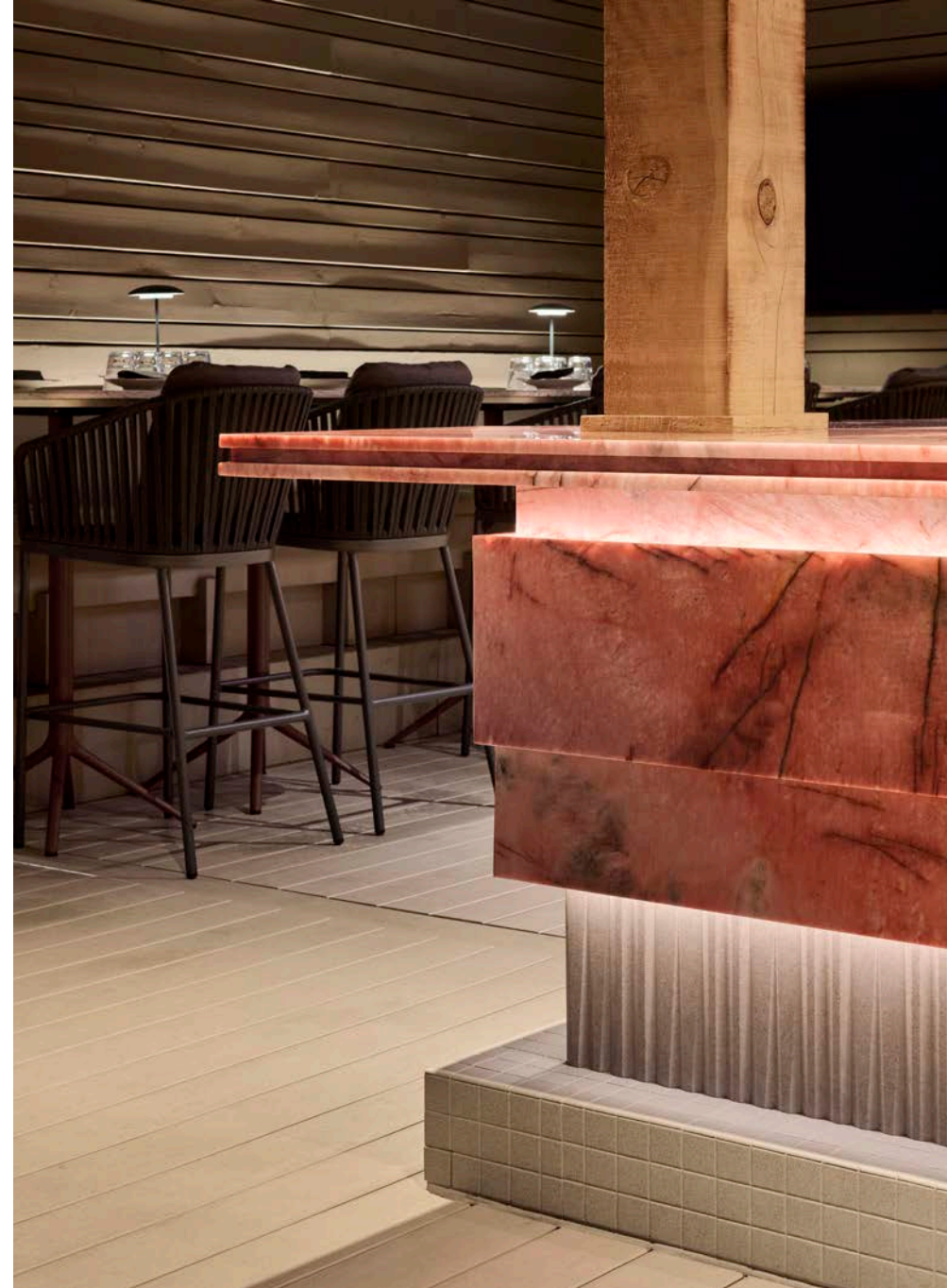
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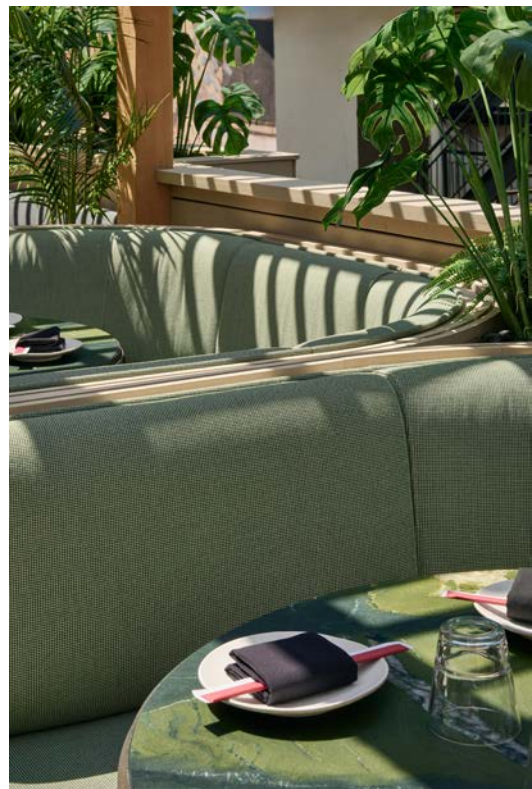
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# DENIZENS / DS STUDIO

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## ABOUT DENIZENS

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**Denizens of Design inc.** is a full-service interior design studio specializing in public and commercial spaces centered around building community – including spaces for dining, gathering, working, relaxing, learning and creating.

The word 'denizens' – interpreted as a way of life without boundaries – inspires the design process. Denizens has worked with developers and private clients across the globe: from Toronto to New York, Mexico to Spain. Their approach creates empathetic spaces, engaging in new ways of thinking and working by connecting with people and communities. Visit [denizens.ca](http://denizens.ca) for more information.

## ABOUT DS STUDIO

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**DS Studio inc.** consists of architects and urban designers dedicated to creating vibrant spaces that enrich and galvanize communities. By applying our understanding of how different cultures and people use space for their daily rituals, we aim to build environments that uplift the lived experience, shared with strangers, neighbours, friends, and family. With community building at the core of our work, we help private and public investors – from cities and businesses to homeowners – create enduring and inspiring environments. Visit [dsstudio.ca](http://dsstudio.ca) for more information.

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

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