

Making **WOW** Architecture Possible

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Comedor Restaurant

Architects Olson Kundig used glass brick in the Comedor restaurant in Austin, Texas to create a sense of intrigue, enticing pedestrians inside.



The Comedor is a modern Mexican restaurant situated on the busy corner of Fifth and Colorado in Austin's business district. From the outside, the Comedor restaurant in Austin, Texas is minimalistic, to say the least. Black brickwork and doors are understated, almost utilitarian, giving nothing away.

Inviting yet Mysterious Exterior Leading to an Urban Oasis

In contrast to the stark blackness, sections of glass brick catch the attention of pedestrians. Distorted shapes, vague movement and hazy colours glowing through the translucent glass brick invite pedestrians to wonder what is hidden inside. The mystery is enticing, which is exactly the effect the architects from Olson Kundig were looking for.



“It’s meant to be a process of discovery upon entering the building,” says Navvab Taylor of Mckinney York Architects, the on-site architect firm for the project. It was important to the owner to create a sense of mystery and not give away the view of the interior.”

Even the brass lettering of the name of the restaurant is obscure, its curvy forms suggesting multiple readings. But upon entering the building, customers are transported into another world, a sort of refuge or sanctuary, miles away from the busy street outside. The bar and dining area are sophisticated and modern with an industrial vibe, soaring ceilings and natural light. Massive hand-cranked glass doors lead to a brick-walled courtyard containing Palo Verde and Acacia trees and a small fountain. Truly an urban oasis.



Bringing the Vision to Life with Vetropieno™ Solid Glass Bricks

Seves glass bricks were integral in bringing to life the vision of the owner and architects. To create the sense of intrigue, the architects specified Vetropieno™ solid glass brick. Vetropieno™ solid glass brick creates the distorted view that was needed for the effect while still providing significant impact resistance for this wall facing a busy street. The Vetropieno™ could also be coursed (approximately) with the black modular brick as these are toothed into each other at the perimeter.

The city of Austin requires a certain percentage of transparency on exterior façades. The glass bricks perfectly fulfilled this requirement, allowing glimpses of the interior while still protecting privacy.

Navvab has high praise for the working relationship with Seves Glass Block: “Tony Kava of Seves Glass Block was very gracious with his time, helping us through technical aspects and detailing the wall assembly, and sending us samples that we could present to investors and the building officials.” The service and technical know-how of Seves Glass Block was as integral to the success of the project as the bricks themselves.

The Outcome

The restaurant consistently receives accolades from both critics and customers. The food – a modern take on traditional Mexican, is phenomenal, but the architecture and ambiance also receive their share of credit for the exceptional dining experience. Customers use words such as “stunning,” “sophisticated solitude” or “hidden gem,” to describe the space. The street-facing glass brick wall is intrinsic to the process of discovery and contributes to this wonderful dining experience.



To find out how Seves Glass Block can help make your project stand out, contact our design team today!