



Truth Coffee HQ interior by Haldane Martin

Buitenkant Street, Cape Town

Truth Coffee approached Haldane Martin in 2011 to design the interiors of their cafés, including their new 1500m² headquarters in Cape Town's Fringe Innovation district.

The brief was to deepen Truth Coffee's brand identity and promote their coffee roastery business through interior design.

Haldane Martin immediately came up with Steampunk as an appropriate conceptual reference, as both coffee roasters and espresso machines display elements of romantic, steam-powered technology. Steampunk's obsession with detail and sensual aesthetics also captured the essence of Truth Coffee's product philosophy: We roast coffee. Properly.

David Donde, the main face behind Truth, loved the idea, as this Victorian futuristic fantasy style and literary philosophy resonated strongly with his "maverick inventor" personality. Donde worked closely with Haldane Martin throughout the design process, often physically building, with the help of one of his business partners Mike Morrith-Smith, some of the many designs that Haldane Martin developed for them.

A three-storey, turn of the century, warehouse building on Buitenkant Street in Cape Town was chosen by the Truth partners to be their new headquarters. The building was stripped back to its bare bones, exposing beautiful cast iron pillars, Oregon pine roof trusses and floors, and the original stone and brick walls. Haldane Martin also opened up the ground floor façade onto the busy Buitenkant Street with a series of tall steel and glass doors. Most of the building's natural, aged patina was kept intact and complemented with raw steel, timber, leather, brass and copper finishes.

The two top floors were converted into a creative studio office rental space. The 600m² ground floor was kept as Truth's headquarters and needed to include a 120-seat restaurant, café, bar and kitchen, their newly acquired 3-tonne Probat roaster, a barista trainee school, public event space, coffee bean warehouse, espresso machine workshop, management office and restrooms.

The huge, fully functioning vintage roaster became the kingpin for the space. Once this was centrally positioned on the ground floor plan, everything else fell naturally into place. Haldane Martin surrounded the roaster machine with a circular steel shelving structure - 6m in diameter - reminiscent of a Victorian gasworks.

The leather-top main bar, clad in pressed tin ceiling panels, is located symmetrically in front



of the roaster shelving. Purpose-designed overstuffed, leather and steel chairs, barstools and copper-clad tables create a formal raised dining area in front of the bar. A series of five horseshoe-shaped, deep buttoned, high backed, banquet seats run down the right-hand wall of the space. Each private banquet seat surrounds a leather-clad, long, narrow, profile-cut steel table.

A small cocktail lounge of blue leather Chesterfield couches and a crazy pipe bookshelf is located behind the original industrial lift and a raw steel staircase that leads to the upper floors.

The front café space is dominated by the longest table in Cape Town, a 7.2m long communal table with swing-out stools. It was built from industrial pipe, malleable castings, and a table top made from Oregon pine reclaimed from the building's stripped-out ceilings. A flickering candle bulb lighting and power cable installation hangs over the table, cleverly providing laptop and cellphone charging access for the café patrons.

Further café seating is provided by the vintage French worker chairs. The over-scaled cog teeth on the edges of the café tables tops encourage groups of patrons to engage tables together to facilitate larger informal gatherings.

The barista coffee school is located in the front right-hand corner of the space and has a coffee and sandwich hatch that opens onto the pavement for passing pedestrians. Vintage steel stools and worn school desks placed on the sidewalk create the ideal environment for a quick coffee break for the creative entrepreneurs that work in the area.

The kitchen, public event space, coffee bean warehouse, espresso machine repair workshop and management office is located towards the back of the space

The owners of Truth Coffee demonstrated their understanding of the value of taking a concept all the way through to the finest details by allowing Haldane Martin to treat the restroom spaces with the same Steampunk aesthetic – exposed copper pipes, Victorian tap levers, pull chains and floor tiles, spun brass basins and brass shaving mirrors. The Little Hattery also created the most outlandish Steampunk uniforms and hats for the eccentric staff to complete the look.

With the exception of the authentic vintage fixtures, all of the furniture was specifically designed for Truth Coffee by Haldane Martin and his interior design team.

The result is an iconic space with true Steampunk character.



In 2015 Haldane Martin won a Gold Loerie award for the interior design for Truth HQ. The Loeries is Africa's most prestigious brand communication awards, featuring all sectors of advertising, marketing and communication. The Haldane Martin design studio was also ranked second overall in Communication Design by the Loeries as well as in the small agency category. Please find more information on this here:

<http://haldanemartin.co.za/haldane-martin-wins-gold-loerie/>

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Please credit:

Interior designed by Haldane Martin: www.haldanemartin.co.za

Photos taken by Micky Hoyle