



Press release:

Haldane Martin designs Swan Café – Cape Town’s first authentic French crêperie

Swan Café

Cape Town
Opened May 2018

Haldane Martin has designed a new café for Cape Town: a traditional French crêperie called Swan Café, nestled in the hub of the bustling east city precinct. Elegant, feminine and atmospheric, the café brings to life the charm of Paris in a space that’s completely unique to the Mother City.

The blue swan logo at the core of the graphic identity designed by Heidi Chisholm is also the central interior design concept. Owner Jessica Rushmere has always identified with the swan. A graceful and majestic creature with mythological significance, these attributes play into the brand identity and the interior design, using the swan as an emblem and feminine oval shapes throughout.

Leonardo da Vinci’s “Leda and the Swan” transformed into monochromatic dark blue and white on the front wall forms a centrepiece wallpaper feature. The famous Renaissance painting tells the controversial tale from Greek mythology of how Zeus disguised himself as a swan to seduce the unsuspecting Leda. On the back wall, Jean-Léon Gérôme’s “Leda and the Swan” shows the curvaceous nude bathing in the lake with the swan and their half-mortal, half-divine offspring flying above. Mythology and symbolism associated with love, music and poetry are also typically French characteristics.

France is the home country of its owner. The blue, red and white of the French flag is artfully interpreted into dominant dark blue, grey, pinkish timber finishes and dashes of red highlights. The colour scheme extends to the waiters’ uniforms, crockery and merchandise on display.

The last brand attribute that the space conveys is typical of Parisian attitude, playful, cheeky, sexy and oozing with French flair. From the wallpaper pattern with its repeated swan motif that doubles up to reveal a nude woman in the negative spaces, to large-scale murals of voluptuous nudes.

Furniture, lighting and finishes pick up the brand’s signature colours. The furnishings pay homage to traditional French cafés, with marble bistro café tables and bespoke chairs, a contemporary steel and wood version of a bistro chair typology in striking red. Linear seating layouts draw people into the space, with a large couch nook at the back formed from casual couches upholstered in denim and pinstriped denim. Light pinkish toned timbers are used in



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table tops and shelving.

Copper and brass metallic vintage lights hang throughout, with brass pendants above the main counter, egg-shaped feature lights at the back wall, and single Edison globes above the seating. Bird cage lights in copper with red cords reinforce the avian concept.

Custom blue and white hexagon tiles with the swan logo decorate the entrance set into simple concrete screed flooring, with a large “Bonjour” doormat welcoming customers. Blue feather-shaped ceramic tiles create a handcrafted detailed finish on the main bar and back bar wall in the open-plan kitchen, where crêpe-making is on show in the front of the café. A rounded chalkboard for quotes or menu specials is flanked by a wire and plywood adjustable shelving system on each side displaying the beautiful crockery. The same shelving system appears deeper in the space for displaying branded tins of tea and accessories that are for sale.

The long working space opposite the corner entrance creates a strong visual impact from the street and as you enter. This is framed with an overhead bulkhead, which hides the ventilation system. The bulkhead is made from a perforated, patterned, acoustically treated board in dark blue. The carefully engineered acoustics creates the perfect balance of a lively yet conversational atmosphere.

In the bathroom, blue and pink swan wallpaper forms a feature with white Victorian tiles below and a simple arched mirror, signposted “Toilette”.

Sophisticated and inviting in both its interior design, menu and ambience, all of which pay extreme attention to detail and reinforce the concept behind the brand identity, Swan Café is a must-visit destination venue in Cape Town’s rapidly burgeoning creative district, as well as providing a regular favourite stop for a quick tea or coffee and a bite for locals.



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Please credit:

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

Photography by [Micky Hoyle](#)

Copywriting & press release by Sarah Jayne Fell: www.onedaycompany.co.za

Graphic design by [Heidi Chisholm](#)

Wallpaper: [Cara Saven](#)

Tiles: [De Kleipot](#)

Upholstery: [Leon @ 219](#)

Feature Lights: [Hoi P'loy](#)

Shopfitting: [WoodSpec](#)

Catering Equipment: [JAG](#)