

**Architect Glen Coben** and restaurateur Quentin Dante had met before, but when they embarked on their first project together—an upscale Greenwich Village Chinese eatery called Yumcha—they took a little road trip—to Paris and London.

“At L’Atelier de Joel Robuchon, we saw how an open kitchen and counter seating could be applied to a chic setting and highly refined fusion cooking,” Coben says. “In London, we spent time at Hakkasan and Yauatcha, two of the city’s hottest Chinese restaurants. We got a great sense of contemporary design using Chinese elements.”

Coben, who started his New York City namesake firm after a stint with David Rockwell, and whose solo design projects include Manhattan’s Flatotel and Riingo restaurant, learned his lessons well. Yumcha successfully merges spare lines and Chinese opulence in a style he laughingly dubs “Bau-Mao.” Dante and his partners allotted \$850,000 for the construction and design of the entirely gutted 1,400-square-foot space. “The project was full of surprises,” Dante says. “I redesigned it in my head almost every day and Glen was right there with me.”

When a feng shui consultant called for mirrors, for example, the team asked if hidden mirrors counted. While some Chinese traditions are more directly honored—red makes dramatic appearances in the space’s architecture and on seat cushions—other familiar touches remain subtle. Bamboo’s here, but it’s in the flooring; Chinese coins are used to attach the rods of Coben-designed lights to the ceiling. Even the room’s visible mirrors offer a surprise: they reflect not what’s behind the guest, but what’s off to the side.

*Right: Yumcha’s façade. Opposite page: Clean lines and an open kitchen define the dining room.*



# modern

Bringing 'Bau-Mao' to Greenwich Village



Below: Signature Chinese red punctuates the space. *Opposite page:* Details like the lotus-shaped cutout behind the bar hint at the importance of tea to the Chinese culture.



## Yumcha

New York City

Owner: Quentin Darré

Architecture/Interior Design Firm:

Glen & Company, New York City

Architecture/Interior Design Project

Team: Glen Coben, Evelyn Sherwood,  
Nicole Tura Bush, and Randa Kort

Contractor: K&G Construction

Consultants: Archetype Consultants and  
Pascoe Jacobs, Inc.

Lighting: Glen & Company

Chairs and Stools: United Chairs

Fabric: Duralee

Tables and Custom Light Fixtures:

K&G Construction

Flooring: Architectural Flooring

Resources

Bar Top: Corian

The bar back's sliding cabinet features a lotus-shaped cutout, which hints at the importance of tea to the culture (and the restaurant's name which means "drink tea" in Chinese) by revealing teapots and implements. "We were aiming at a nod to some of the masterpieces of Chinese constructivist design," explains Coben, "and so we set the tone with these kind of touches. But the space also fulfills its goal to function as one that's comfortable and casual at the same time, and that makes a strong design statement." hd

