

Modern Luxury

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From top: "We wanted to convey the idea of waking up in the morning," says Morning Glory designer Paul Basile of the restaurant's pink acrylic backlit starburst that, when activated, features an animated roving eyeball at its center; his firm, Basile Studio, logged over 400 hours carving the Douglas fir booths to make them perfectly ergonomic.



THE BREAKFAST CLUB

Prepare to be tickled pink over Little Italy's latest sceney brunch spot, where the decor nearly outshines the omelets.

*By Ann Wycoff
Photography by Zach Benson*

"No guts, no glory," the saying goes. That's a pretty apt description for the stop-you-in-your-tracks design of San Diego's newest daytime-only restaurant, Morning Glory. As much an attraction as an eatery, the eye candy—and there's *lots* of eye candy, much of it millennial pink—is as gutsy as it gets. The setting is swimming in a blitzkrieg of Instagrammables, from the giant pink acrylic and copper starburst above the bar to the dancing articulated windows that unfold and undulate like flower petals waving in the breeze. There's pink-veined onyx table slabs and crushed velvet banquettes with flocked diamond trim, lipstick pillow booths and a Moët & Chandon vending machine serving rosé bubbly, of course. And the more you look, the more you see. The details are just as compelling: quilted leather and suede stools with brass tulip bases, tabletop inlays of green marble and an etched mirrored ceiling reflecting the glassware and dainty cake stands. Come 10AM on a Tuesday and the restaurant is in full-throttle party mode (shuttering by 3PM), filled with diners perusing neon pink-and-black oversized menus and servers whizzing



Clockwise from top left: Morning Glory's back dining area sits under a custom awning originally inspired by retro 1980s glass brick walls; a detail of the restaurant's "lipstick" booths; the craft cocktail bar is situated below a chandelier soffit, and seats look out at the eatery's undulating windows—"they're like fingers moving to catch the eye of passersby," says Basile.

across the pink-and-green checkered terrazzo tile floors delivering Japanese soufflé pancakes.

Helmed by innovative San Diegan design firm Basile Studio (basilestudio.com), with cutting-edge hospitality group Consortium Holdings (consortiumholdings.com), Morning Glory is the prolific duo's latest in a series of wow-worthy openings (past debuts included quirky maritime Ironside Fish & Oyster, the bottle shop-meets-speakeasy Raised by Wolves and the fur-clad art deco steakhouse Born & Raised). Basile Studio founder Paul Basile's homage to Frank Lloyd Wright (he owns a La Jolla house designed by a Wright apprentice) appears via a massive, custom chandelier soffit based on a silhouette of Wright stained glass, and in the brass cage globe surrounds that hang above the polished titanium bar. The back booths, arguably the hottest seats in the house, are an ergonomic marvel of shaped wood and testament to a whopping 400 hours of carving. Greenery cascades from the lattice above, and alienlike Entler glossy-pink ceramic lamps peer down at diners.

It's a *lot*. And that's putting it mildly. But that's how Basile likes it. Morning Glory can be considered a peek into his wildly creative brain, and perhaps a glimpse into the future of design too. Basile Studio boasts 60 team members—architects and designers who create models above a giant warehouse, where below a fabrication team makes magic, forming metal, cutting stone, carving wood and turning Basile's most fantastical synapse firings into on-premise realities. This unusual merging of designers and fabricators under one roof leads to evolutionary delivery for the firm's projects, as clever betterment changes are often made during the process itself. To wit, Basile's most recent hires are an electrical and robotic engineer. "I truly believe that interactive architecture is the future," he bellows over the sound of a laser cutter. All we can say is glory be. 550 W. Date St., 619.629.0302, morningglorybreakfast.com ■

