

# CS Interiors

## DRAMA WATCH

THE SPRING ISSUE

INSIDE AN ART GALLERY ABODE

REALTY CHECK: MICHIGAN'S FIRST-RATE  
SECOND HOMES

TRENDING NOW: GRAPHIC FLORALS,  
ANGULAR ACCENTS AND MORE

& MEET CONCRETE'S NEWEST CRAFTSMAN!





HOME FRONT  
DESIGN



## Gastro Havens

At these three new places to grab a bite, the design is as delicious as the cuisine.

By Thomas Connors

### Yusho

Like an enticing amuse-bouche, successful restaurant design is always a good indicator of what to expect from the kitchen. Yusho, Matthias Merges' Japanese eatery in Avondale, serves up deeply satisfying *yakitori*: basic grilled dishes that remind you that every meal should be a celebration. Manifesting the care the Charlie Trotter's alum gives to preparing even the simplest fare, the restaurant itself possesses a solidly *built* appearance. "This isn't a super-refined space," says Merges' wife, Rachel Crowl, who designed the interior with her partner at fcSTUDIO, Julie Fisher. "We wanted to embrace the industrial nature of the space and aesthetics of the food in the design by keeping it very tactile and utilitarian. We added splashes of color to incorporate some whimsy in line with our love of Japanese anime."

With a long, narrow space in front and a high-ceilinged area in back, Yusho is larger than Japan's *yakitori-ya*, which are generally tiny, artless dining destinations with a few stools. But thanks to the material palette Crowl and Fisher draw from, Yusho has a welcoming, workaday vibe. The architects left the exposed masonry and existing rafters as is, then sourced reclaimed timber to top the bar and frame booths. They installed a soffit to connect the two spaces, cladding it (and the bar front) with industrial felt to absorb sound. A disparate collection of pendant lighting—from West Elm and local industrial suppliers—vividly punctuates the space.

Noting "this wasn't a \$2 million project," says Crowl, she hit Craigslist for midcentury furniture and service pieces whose lines jive with the straightforward functionalism of their food program. Kenny Kinzler of Kinzco proved a particularly good source for chairs by Lawrence Peabody, Arne Vodder and Shelby Williams, while Chicago designer Greta de Parry fashioned the concrete and steel bar stools. These seats, along with the other participating pieces, come together to form a destination with an appetizingly authentic aura. 2853 N. Kedzie Ave., 773.904.8558, [yusho-chicago.com](http://yusho-chicago.com)

**YUSHO HUNGRY**  
Above: fcSTUDIO created an appetizing dining area at the new Yusho in Avondale.



### Bleeding Heart Bakery

We already know that owners Michelle and Vinny Garcia make most conventional cupcake purveyors seem like sissies. So it's no surprise that when the tatted twosome opened their second outpost of Bleeding Heart Café and Bakery on Chicago Avenue this past fall, the place was anything but lavender and lace. Playing off the couple's "Punk Rock Pastry" attitude (expressed in a mural by graffiti artist Mark Zee, aka Z Spot Ink), architects Jay Keller and Irene Yuen of Space Architects + Planners fashioned a riotously retro space for the Food Network veterans. After exposing the brick walls and laying a polished concrete floor, the Space duo ordered standard restaurant furniture and fixtures from E-J Industries, Waco Manufacturing and Avenue Metal, detailing the digs with black and white tile, boomerang-themed Formica and glitter-flecked vinyl. Call it the anti-Sprinkles. 1916 W. Chicago Ave., 773.904.1414, [thebleedingheartbakery.com](http://thebleedingheartbakery.com)



### Caffé Streets

Thanks to the delicious espresso and inspired interior design, you can bet no one leaves Caffé Streets dissatisfied. Architect Brent Norsman has packed a lot of look into this compact Wicker Park space, which specializes in hand-crafted coffee brewed with beans from Counter Culture and Intelligentsia, among others, and sweet and savory pastry offerings from local bakeries. Marbled bamboo covers the custom tables, stools, walls and, most notably, the ceiling—where its layered formation references the artful swirls the baristas whip up. Actual streetlamps with modified bulbs (from Gladiator Lighting) are suspended above the coffee-making station, which Norsman took particular care in devising. "It's a small space and with two baristas in there, everything had to be set in the right place. We designed every last detail to make it a highly efficient machine." And a great place to fuel up. 1750 W. Division St., 773.278.2739, [caffestreeets.com](http://caffestreeets.com)

YUSHO PHOTO COURTESY OF MATRINA WITKAMP; BLEEDING HEART BAKERY PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC HAUSMAN; CAFFÉ STREETS PHOTO COURTESY OF NIKOLA ZLATKOVIC