

METROPOLIS

On the California Coast, Restaurant Jeune et Jolie Blends Classic French Design with a SoCal Feel

Designed by L.A.-based firm Bells + Whistles and located in Carlsbad, the restaurant respects its local vernacular while using elements of 20th-century French hospitality design.

by [Jessica Ritz \(https://www.metropolismag.com/author/jritz/\)](https://www.metropolismag.com/author/jritz/)

April 17, 2019



Courtesy Kyle Sebree

Importing elements of classic 20th-century French hospitality design into a hyper-casual Southern California surfing town might not sound like the most organic endeavor, but Barbara Rourke and Jason St. John of L.A.-based design firm [Bells + Whistles](https://www.allthebellsandwhistles.com/) (<https://www.allthebellsandwhistles.com/>) were up for the task when creating [Jeune et Jolie](https://www.jeune-jolie.com/) (<https://www.jeune-jolie.com/>), a new restaurant in downtown Carlsbad, California.

“When you think of French restaurants, you think of dark red booths and brass,” Rourke says. “We tried to take those things and do them in a new way. So, instead of Bordeaux color booths, we did rosé colored booths,” along with heavy doses of natural light and a bright palette.

Rourke and St. John—who have an extensive hospitality and retail [portfolio](https://www.allthebellsandwhistles.com/ourwork) (<https://www.allthebellsandwhistles.com/ourwork>)—understood the aspirational references Jeune et Jolie owner John Resnick and chef Andrew Bachelier wanted to incorporate while respecting the town’s vernacular. The restaurant’s ownership and culinary and design teams were also behind the popular open-fire, American-focused [Campfire](https://thisiscampfire.com/) (<https://thisiscampfire.com/>) restaurant a few doors down from Jeune et Jolie. “We knew we wanted it to be the little sister restaurant to Campfire,” says Rourke. “They had to speak to each other, and this French restaurant had to feel at home in Southern California.” Jeune et Jolie would be approximately one-third of Campfire’s size, making the attention to detail intense.



“Jeune et Jolie speaks to the language of French design completely,” St. John adds. Nonetheless, there’s a SoCal inflection at play. “It has all these beautiful undertones of being feminine, but edgy—like young teenage angst, and a bit punk.”

Courtesy Kyle Sebree

The setting is a standalone building that had previously been a well-worn karate dojo. For starters, the designers replaced the entire facade and created a patio. Among chef Bachelier’s requests was an open kitchen, which now includes a custom [Hestan](https://commercial.hestan.com/) showpiece range for his French-accented eclectic cuisine. For the interior, “we didn’t want there to be a separation of anything,” St. John notes. Views throughout the restaurant, from the buzzing bar to the intimate booths in the back of the dining room, are oriented toward the kitchen to see “the show that happens there.”





Courtesy Kyle Sebree

And yet zones in the 2,000-square-foot space allow for varying experiences. The bar top and tables feature a custom terrazzo blend made by a local fabricator. (All Bells + Whistles projects use local craftspeople as much as possible.) Owner Resnick collected much of the art that's hung salon wall-style, and the [bathroom](https://www.instagram.com/p/Bu7HDxaAJqv/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet) (https://www.instagram.com/p/Bu7HDxaAJqv/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet), which was designed in collaboration with graphic designer Pete Panciera, is a stand-out part of the restaurant thanks to its bold graphic wallpaper print and fanciful tile work. Diners get the additional treat of eating from delicate [Felt & Fat](https://www.feltandfat.com/) (<https://www.feltandfat.com/>) porcelain dishware.

Jeune et Jolie makes for a cultural Rorschach test of sorts. Think: If the local surfers and skaters went to France and fell in love with that country's culinary culture, and came home to create a place that's simultaneously special and comfortable for their crowd.

As St. John observes, the restaurant can come off as being “run by kids, but with a refined beauty. It has this juxtaposition.”

[Show Caption](#) ▼