



WÖLFFER ESTATE
VINEYARD

THE MAKING OF WÖLFFER KITCHEN

An Interview with Nick Martin, Principal of [Martin Architects](#)

Wölffer Kitchen is co-owned by siblings Marc and Joey Wölffer, but Joey took the lead on the aesthetic look of the space. How did you and Joey work together? What was it like collaborating?

Joey had a clear vision for a place that would offer a European sophisticated yet clean experience. The collaboration was a wonderful, organic process. It was a pleasure working together bouncing ideas back and forth, finding the purist concept in form and material through the details.

What was the inspiration behind the design? Was there any significance to the gold palette?

Inspired from a trip to Paris, the gold palette was an original vision of Joey's, evocative of the old world. The layered golden hue establishes a warm ambience similar to the glow of white wine and precious metals.

We also were conceptually inspired by the method and history of winemaking, using thematically rich materials. Oak barrels bound with steel straps, glass bottles and cork are all instrumental to the production of wine. The design of Wölffer Kitchen reflects this process by using the same materials in the definition of an open, uncluttered modernist architectural space. The objective was to suggest aspects of a sleek, urban wine bar, but also evoke the farming and equestrian heritage that are so much a part of the Wölffer brand.

What materials were used? What craftsmen and/or artisans did you contract with?

The material palette consists of steel, glass, cork and weathered wood. Natural and aged textures are contrasted with refined counterparts. For example, the rusted Cor-Ten steel panel railing around the outdoor seating finds its counterpart in the steel framing at the bar, window façade and pendant lamps. A light-colored timber floor juxtaposes the glow of the painted golden-ochre ceiling. The smoky and distressed surfaces of antique mirrors establish a dialogue with the crisp geometry of frameless glass shelving. Glazed marbled cork wall panels are texturally similar to the swirling patterns of the mirrors.

Master builders Nick and Nunzio Zappola worked tirelessly with a team of craftsmen to coordinate the entire job in just 87 days. The reclaimed wood, cork, brick and metals were all refinished by finishing artist Pete Ryer. Artist Scott Hewitt hand-painted the murals, including the richly colored mural up front, which is based on the Summer in a Bottle wine label created by UK-based IWANT Design for Wölffer Estate Vineyard. Local glass workers, wood flooring specialists, faux finish painters, electricians and others collaborated to actualize the space, from the first napkin sketch to the last detail by Martin Architects.

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A SUSTAINABLE VINEYARD IN THE HEART OF THE HAMPTONS

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Why open the front completely?

A key target of the project was to modify the space from the original dark pub into a light-filled open and inviting modernist space. And an appealing feature of the village is its emerging sidewalk dining culture. Opening the front of the restaurant not only provides an abundance of natural light, but it also establishes the strongest possible connection with the lively activity on the main street of Sag Harbor, particularly in the spring, summer and early autumn months. The interior activities are presented as a stage set and the framed view of the street for those inside provides interest. Furthermore, the proportions of the bi-fold doors coordinate well with that of the historical façade.

How long did you have to complete the project? What was the process?

The restaurant was conceived, designed and constructed in under six months. The goal of opening the doors in Summer 2015 necessitated prompt decisions, tight coordination and collaboration with the general contractors, Zappola Construction, and Marc, Joey and Joey's husband, Max Rohn, who is general manager of Wölffer Estate, who was deeply involved and instrumental in the project.

It was a gut renovation: what was the complete scope of work?

The restaurant was structurally restructured: all new windows and doors; interior refinished completely; all new electrical, HVAC and millwork; and built-in furniture. The result was an all-new space that is larger, taller, brighter and more open than before.

Were there any unique challenges about this project?

Add a tight project schedule with a complete restructure and a goal of opening at the start of the Hamptons summer season and you have plenty of challenges! But the prime challenge was to ultimately deliver a sophisticated, open, modernist environment worthy of the Wölffer legacy.

How does Wölffer Kitchen fit in your portfolio? Are most of your projects local? Is this the closest to home?

Martin Architects has experience on several commercial projects. I personally have worked on a number of well-known spaces in my past, including the Guggenheim Museum addition, Steuben Glass gallery and the Nicole Farhi flagship store, prior to establishing Martin Architects. Our projects are predominantly high-end modern residential but have grown to include gallery, restaurant and retail spaces. We pride ourselves on our deep focus on and respect for our clients' cultures and inspirations. We are committed to providing quality, crafted work, each unique regardless of the type or location.



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What do you think of the finished space?

We are pleased with the collaboration and final environment created. Within a quick turnaround with a fantastic client and with gifted builders and craftsmen, we were able to successfully transform a dark, closeted space into an open, inviting modern place worthy to continue the Wölffer legacy.

Is there any one particular thing you hope people notice about it?

The bi-fold façade and the cantilevered back-lit glass bar shelving are details we are proud of. We thank our wonderful client, the Wölffer family, and the family of craftsmen who brought the project to life.