

SCENE

Doing Cool on a Budget

How a chance meeting at Benitz Bistro between architect Paul Kariouk and co-proprietor Meghan McManus led to the brilliant - and cheap! - renovation of b/Side Wine & Small Plates

1 Kariouk, who lives in the neighbourhood, stops in at Benitz Bistro for the first time in April. He gets chatting with McManus, who mentions that she and Benitz Bistro owner Derk Benitz have decided to open a wine bar in the building next door.

2 The new collaborators decide then and there to renovate and launch b/Side in six months.

3 The building was formerly an interior decorator's showroom, and the previous tenant has left large mirrors on the walls and ceiling. Kariouk decides to salvage the mirrors and make them a central part of the new design.

4 The collaborators opt to make the room dark but with one simple luminous feature. (Actually, not so simple.) The luminous effect is made by using two layers of material: mirrors are glued along two walls, with an interior wall mounted a few inches in.

7 B/Side opens on schedule at the end of September. The photographer gets this neat view of the room by photographing its reflected image in two mirrors mounted on the back wall of the wine bar.

6 Black fabric on the lower walls and ceilings deadens sound, so it never gets too noisy.

5 That interior wall consists of glass panels backed with translucent paint and pasted with random squares and rectangles of silver leaf. The space in between the two layers is lit from within, so the light bounces off the silver leaf to create "ghosts."

