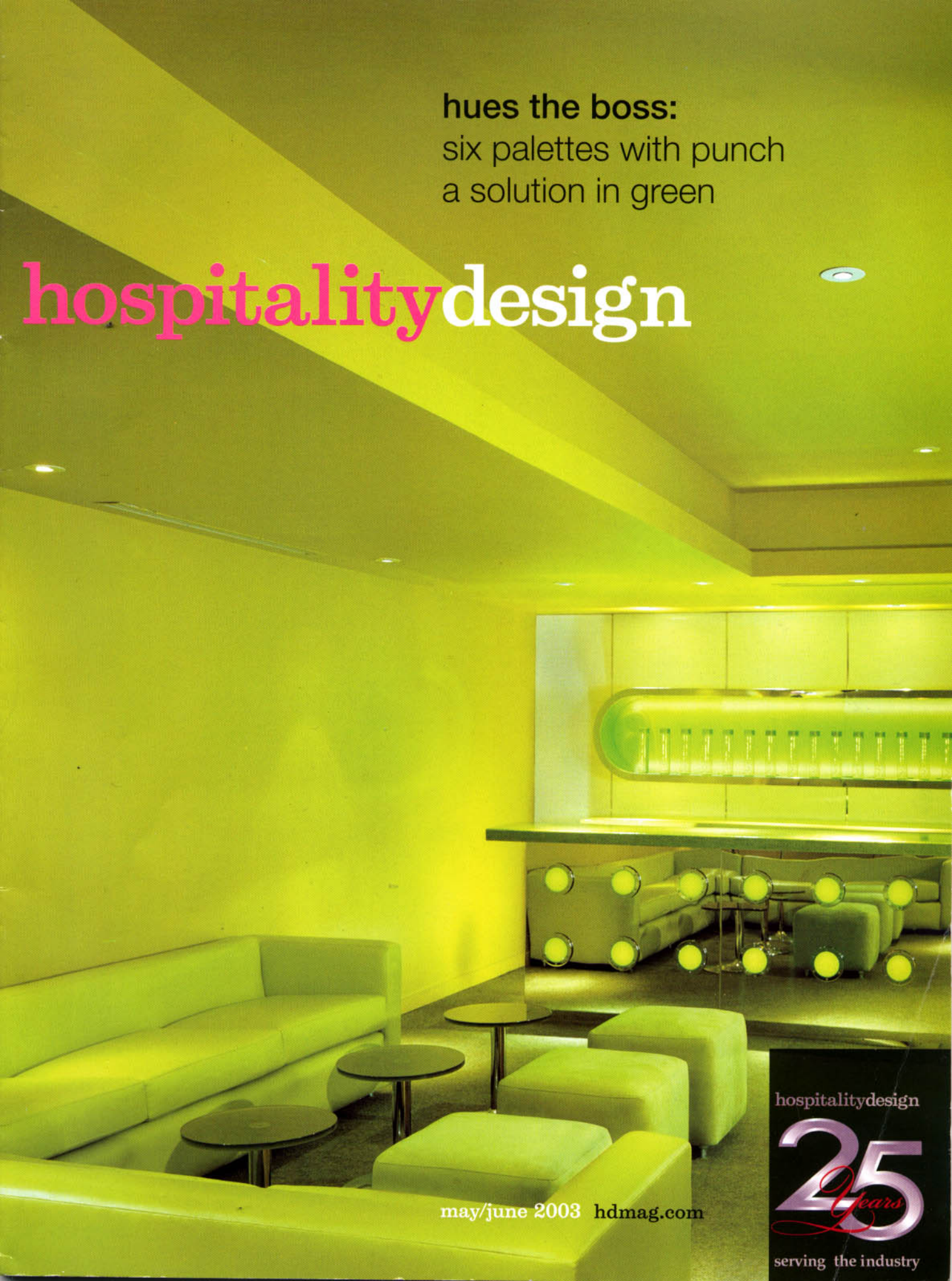


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the color of sin

The decadent romance of old Boston inspires a new décor

Heavenly white marble. Lusty red chenille. Black faux leather. The colors and textures of new Boston nightclub Saint evoke an old speakeasy's rendition of sin. "Originally, the concept was a modern speakeasy. That evolved into a boutique 'nitery,'" says the creator of the space, Boston-based designer Stephen Sousa whose firm bears his name. Appropriately, the location nestled beneath the Copley Square Hotel was also once home to a smoky 1950s jazz club (Billie Holiday frequented) and more recently Café Budapest. Given that history, coupled with Boston's colorful flapper-and-bootlegger past, the themes of decadence and salvation came easily.

But turning the themes into a cohesive interior design that unifies the 7,600-square-foot space begged a unique solution, says Sousa, who also designed Boston bars Tonic and Sky. "I had to reinterpret what that [type of] nightclub would be now. We faced tying the rooms together with some sort of dialogue."

The result was three, color-driven lounges ranging from white to blue to hellfire red signifying Purgatory, Heaven, and Hell. And the color-coding provided the common thread.

By Holly Gordon
Photography by Bruce Martin and Michael Webber



Above: The circular entrance of Saint, where guests decide to enter Heaven or Hell. *Left:* The designer's idea of Heaven included blue sapphire columns and a ceiling of wavy mirrors. *Opposite page, left and right:* Two views of white-clad Purgatory.



After entering down a stairwell, guests can pause in a round central hall—this transitional space Sousa says, “creates a threshold between street and nightclub.” Here patrons ponder their path through the club: This is Purgatory, of course, with white marble floors, woven mesh (similar to a mini chain link fence) cascading down silver plaster walls, and white columns adorned with shiny steel balls painted white. To either side is one of two doorways leading to Heaven and Hell.

In a leaping juxtaposition from the entrance, Hell (also known as the Bordello room) is deeply, darkly red. Lusty scarlet hues cover every corner including the ceiling. Red chenille-and-mohair backed barstools, maroon Old World carpeting, and elaborately ornate gold mirrors abound. Black faux leather banquettes stretch along walls covered in crimson fabric; honey-colored, backlit, stained glass lines the bar. Two “VIP pods” hide behind sheer drapes; their walls are covered in either silver or gold venetian plaster. Each nook appears overflowing with plush beds, seducing loungers.

On the other side of Purgatory lie the pearly gates where Heaven features luminous floor-to-ceiling sapphire columns, which stand guard over a “communal” coffee table. Heavenward, wavy ceiling mirrors—reminiscent of a carnival—add depth and movement to the space. An LED backlit indigo base anchors a bar lined by ebony, harlequin-backed stools.

Sousa views the project as a bold departure from what’s come before, but with a smart design cause. “We were trying to reinvent the nightclub,” he says, “especially in the Boston demographic where a lot of minimalist design gets dated very quickly.” **hd**

Opposite page: Black faux leather banquettes hug the perimeter of Hell. *This page, top:* Hell is red from head to toe boasting red chenille-and-mohair backed barstools and maroon Old World carpeting.

Saint
Boston

Owner Brian Lesser

Architecture/Interior Design
Sousa Design Architects, Boston

Project Team Stephen Sousa, AIA;
Eric Luciano, Caitlin Donovan

Contractor CAFCO

Lighting Chimera, Michael Eberle

Flooring Plynyl

ENTRY
Carpet Durkan Patterned Carpet

Wall Covering MDC Wallcovering

Drapery Cascade Coil Drapery Inc.

Couch Bernhardt Design

Couch Fabric Knoll and Forza

HELL
Carpet Durkan Patterned Carpet

Chair American Chair & Seating

Chair/Ceiling Fabric Zimman’s Inc.

Wall Fabric Clarence House

Drapery Beragamo Drapery

HEAVEN
LED Lighting Color Kinetics

Banquette Fabric Dorian Bahr

Chair Fabric Beragamo

Bar Top Concrete Jungle

Flooring Marathon

Wall Covering MDC Wallcovering

Light Fixtures Chimera