



A Bohemian Rhapsody

Loa bar is a homage to Natural Bounty and Cultural Influences of New Orleans

The distinctive style of **International House** and **loa bar** reflects the artful collaboration between owner **Sean Cummings** and designer **LM Pagano**, who defines her own style as, "pristine but tattered grace, with unexpected moments vital to creating a unique sense of time and place." The hotel and bar present a sensual yet restrained state of glamour, in step with the worldly sophistication of their core clientele and the idea behind the bar program itself: steeped, percolated, and distilled for 304 years and counting, New Orleans culture is a joyful one of ritual, romance, food, and drink - unlike any other. This bar menu at loa not only draws from the region's natural bounty, but also from Sicily to Senegal, Venice to Vietnam, and Haiti to Havana. It employs coastal ingredients and stories from the marvelous mosaic of humanity flavoring this city in every way."

Against the stone gray palette and classical architecture of the hotel, loa is a welcome annex just off the soaring lobby. Pagano curated the furnishings with great intention. Gracing the ceiling is an exquisitely deconstructed chandelier that animates nearly the entire view above. This piece is a custom collaboration between Pagano and one of her favorite lighting artists, Peter Manukyan. Dim candlelight offers the other glow, for it softens not only the features but the defenses.

Languid, pristine white sheers veil the floor to ceiling windows and bustling cityscape beyond, a local response to New Orleans' hot, semi-tropical climate. They not only reference mosquito netting but a romantic whisper of a coastal breeze and hint of fine, sheer lingerie.

A published jazz singer, impossibly eclectic fashionista, and designer of sailboat interiors for rebels like Nicholas Cage and Matthew Perry, Pagano is at her best with Boho pattern and texture. Here she chose a rich array of textiles that, like the bar program and hotel, reflect the coastal places that have shaped this city - architecturally, culinarily and culturally, drink in hand. "Out of Africa." Bohemian vintage. European romance. Island ways. Yet today, with deft modern twists, such as simplified lines and absence of ornament. Most prevalent is a burnished, amber rose velvet seen throughout the public space - bar stools, multiple sitting chairs, sinuous sofa. This seating is set to a stage of indigenous oak flooring, protected by a time-worn array of throw rugs that speak this city as sophisticated bohemia - a creative port town that has gifted the nation remarkable architects, chefs, musicians, writers, poets, actors, painters, and more.

The gray velvet chairs, charcoal chenille sofa and Sistine Chapel-esque gray / taupe built-in love seat are Italian fabrics that delight sight and touch. Patterned mudcloth from West Africa punctuates the palette on accent ottomans in the bar and celebrates the many influences from Senegal and coastal Africa generally which have flavored New Orleans for 304 years. It is this "gumbo of humanity" and what they have created that has drawn Pagano to New Orleans for decades.

Purposefully placed are four eye-catching elements - a chalky white Mediterranean urn, presenting a time-worn patina and vast influences of Sicilians and other immigrants to this city from town that dot that great Sea; the ecclesiastical altar with its statuary marble-top newly lit from below; and three cathedral-window shaped mirrors that are a visual homily about the religiosity and spirituality of New Orleans and a striking 19th-century French settee composed of water gilt gold, plastered carved wood, and original caning that has been reupholstered with 100% silk aqua teal. It is a personal gift from Ms. Pagano and comes from her then home, deemed by one publication as "the only New Orleans style home in LA".

The copper bar is faced with zebra wood from West Africa, patterned to complement the king's chair from Ivory Coast, a fertility bed from Senegal, and the mudcloth. As Ismael Lo's Dibi Dibi Rek plays from the bar's similarly curated playlist, it is easy to understand why these pieces are an homage to the Senegambian influences that have shaped this city since 1721 and continue to flavor it in every way today.

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