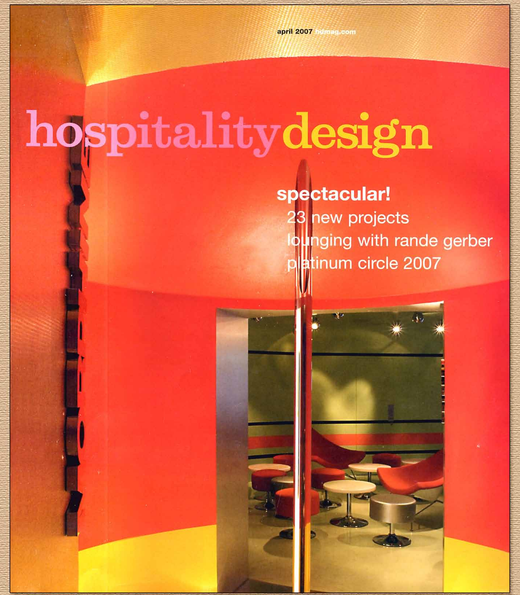


# hellenic hospitality

Modern makeover for a traditional Greek taverna

**Creating a decidedly modern** version of a traditional Greek taverna in a New Jersey suburb may seem incongruous, but for New York City-based Tony Chi and Associates, the design of Axia Taverna was a natural translation of the Mediterranean sense of community.

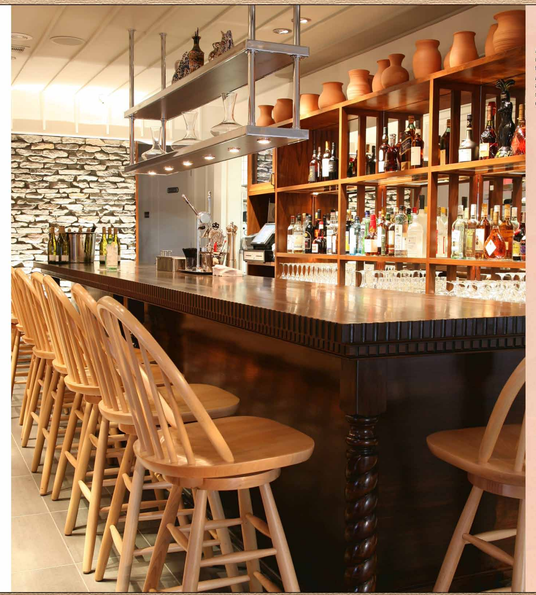
Hiring Chi to execute the design of Axia, which opened in Tenafly, New Jersey, last fall, was natural. Not only has Michael Parlamis, who owns the restaurant along with his son Alex, collaborated with Chi on a number of other projects in the past, but with a menu centered on updated Greek cuisine, designing a space both contemporary and warm with subtle references to Greek culture was key—something Chi had successfully mastered with Pylos in Manhattan several years ago.

Like the menu's focus on shareable plates, Axia ultimately "drives on the idea of a group of people coming together in a convivial environment and sharing meze," says Nelson Bicol, Chi's key designer for the project. "We wanted to make the space open, with lots of glass and big doors that open out to let the community in."

Creating this outside exposure was no easy feat. In its prior incarnation, the restaurant's dining room was higher than street level. To solve this problem, the designers implemented a split-level configuration. Behind a canopied veranda, where diners eat alfresco in blue canvas director's chairs, glass garage doors offer an alluring peek into the restaurant and its freestanding circular fireplace. Once inside, a few stairs lead up to the bar level, where Bicol says walls made of stacked, elongated flat river rocks "add texture and warmth."

A remarkable walnut and glass wine rack separates the bar from the dining area "to make it feel like a loft home rather than a traditional home that is compartmentalized," he adds. Up a full flight of stairs lies another more intimate dining room; white walls, shutters, and familiar walnut tables and chairs consciously remind diners of the restaurant's heritage. hd

*Left:* A freestanding, circular fireplace crates up Axia Taverna. *Above:* The restaurant's inviting glass and wood entrance.



*Left:* A wall of stacked river rocks adds texture in the bar area. *Opposite page, far left:* A walnut and glass wine rack separates the bar and dining area.

**Axia Taverna**
Tenafly, New Jersey

**Owner** Michael and Alex Parlamis

**Architecture Firm** William Figdor Architecture, Maplewood, New Jersey and Michael F. Parlamis, PE, Tenafly, New Jersey

**Architecture Project Team** William Figdor and Michael F. Parlamis

**Interior Design Firm** Tonychi and associates, New York City

**Interior Design Project Team** Nelson Bicol, Tim Hsieh, and Michelle Yoo

**Contractor and Purchasing Firm** Frank Parlamis, Inc.

**Lighting Consultant** ARC Light Design

**BAR AREA**

**Bar/Back Bar/Wine Cases** Hermes Construction

**Flooring** Marino Marble

**Stone Wall** Pavvaico

**DINING ROOM**

**Custom Banquette and Tabletop** Hermes Construction

**Chairs** Walsh Simmons Seating

**Glasses and Silverware** Fortessa, Inc.

**Stucco Walls** NY Rainbow

**TAVERNA PATIO**

**Portico Dining Chair and Barstool** GAR Products

**Fireplace** Malm Fireplaces

**Glass Railing** Galaxy Glass

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