

2024 ISSUE NO. 3

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VERDAD

LUCKY CAT

STK

HENRICO

the
Blueprint

ARIA GROUP ARCHITECTURE + *design*





STK
Charlotte, NC
Photo by LunahZon

“Over the course of our 35 years in business, Aria has always been dedicated to story: communicating a narrative from our clients to their guests. With this goal in mind, we launched the Aria Brand Studio. We’ve helped clients launch new brands, refresh established visual assets, and reimagine their potential. We use our creativity and expertise to embody the client’s point of view in the architectural details, interior finishes and branding. From high-energy nightlife concepts to relaxed, fine dining to sprawling sports facilities, we drill down to the core of our clients’ identities and craft a space to match.”

-Chris Hamer, President

Featured Projects

ON THE COVER

Verdad
Austin, TX

Photo by Steve Chenn
Plaster Installation by Paul Punke



VERDAD

TRUE MODERN MEXICAN

Austin, TX | Architecture & Interiors | Opened December 2023

A new concept from Perry's Restaurants, Verdad lives up to its name. Truth and authenticity are at the heart of this celebration of Mexican food culture. Working closely with the Perry's team from the concept's inception, Aria designers crafted an intertwined design and brand identity —weaving them together seamlessly. Extensive research and mutual passion for the core concept has brought about a comprehensive identity with a distinct point of view. Verdad, beyond a name, is a guiding philosophy for the brand: a menu and an environment which take their cues from Mexico's historical and modern influences.

The central bar sets the visual tone. Seamlessly flowing from the floor to the bar die, a sprawling custom flooring installation envelopes the bar in a graphic pattern. The abstract organic shapes and colorful terrazzo pay homage to indigenous artistic forms and the rich hues associated with contemporary Mexican floral

embroidery and handicraft. This striking focal point draws the eye to the centralized gathering space.

An exposed kitchen engages guests in the communal experience. Tableware and artifacts are woven into the décor, putting the process of food preparation on display. There is an immediate sense of passion and purpose which flows from the cookline into the dining space. Another exclusive experience is the semi-private Agave Table, offering an intimate and immersive dining space to connect with friends and family. The seamless atmosphere encapsulates the beauty of making and sharing a meal — of nourishing soul and body. It highlights food and dining as an active and common experience, celebrating Mexican traditions around dining and the close collaboration between Aria's project team and Perry's to bring this concept into being.

[See Project Gallery](#)

Scope Architecture, Design, and Branding Seats 333 Square footage 10,312
 Contractor International Contractors Inc. Kitchen Consultant Texas Metal Equipment Co. MEP Engineers Henderson Engineers Structural Engineers Hart, Gaugler & Associates, Inc. Photography Steve Chenn, Jordyn Hunter



Project Team Paul Nagtalon, Architectural Designer • Shellie Halkyard, Project Coordinator • Jordyn Hunter, Senior Designer • Brian Zielinski, Associate • Megan Walsh, Principal

“At its heart, Verdad is a celebration of history within this incredibly modern and fun atmosphere.”

- Jordyn Hunter,
Senior Designer

“Building Verdad’s brand identity alongside the architecture and interior meant we were able to work with Perry’s from every angle, developing each element to form a cohesive story.”

- Megan Walsh, Principal



ARIA brand STUDIO



Austin, TX | Branding

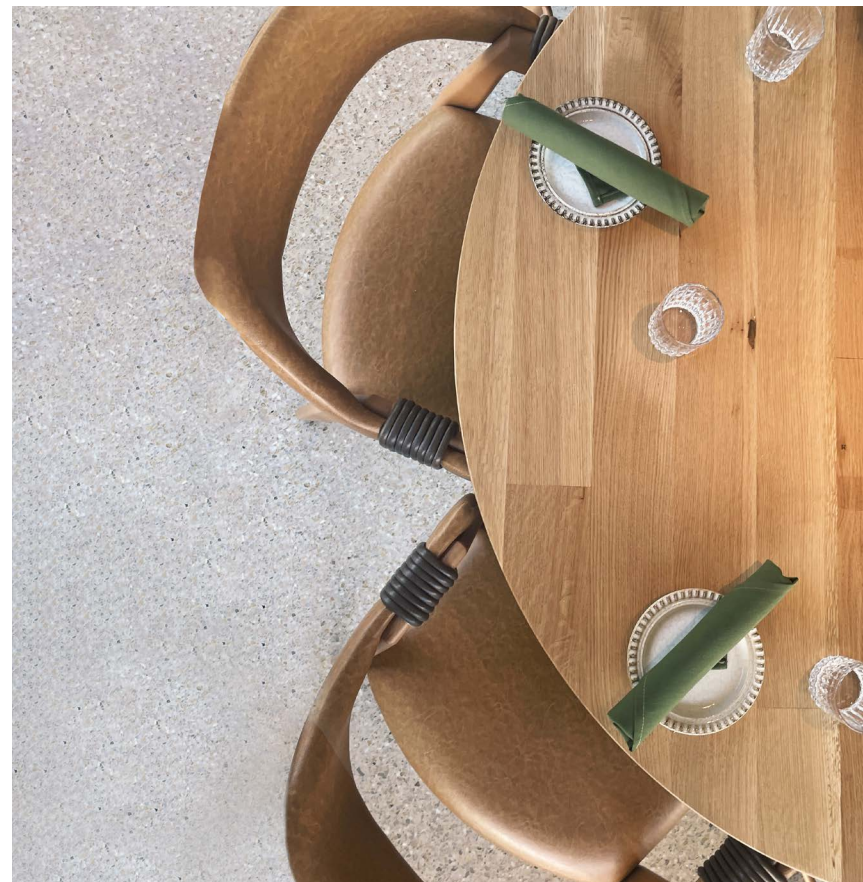
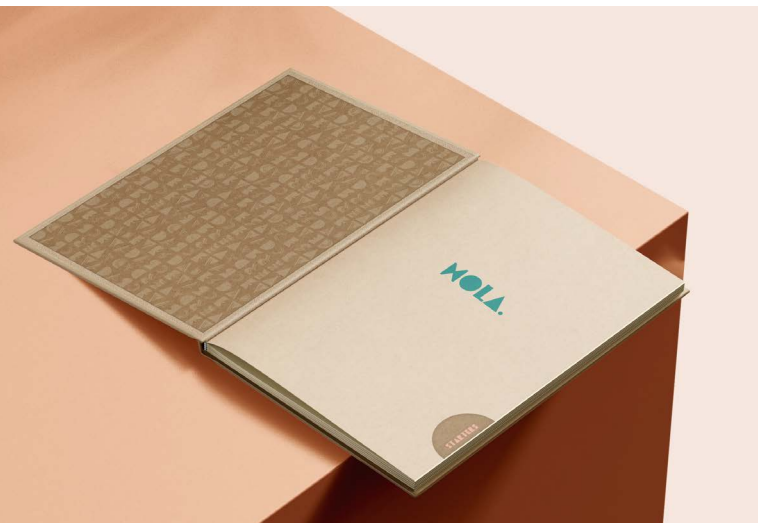
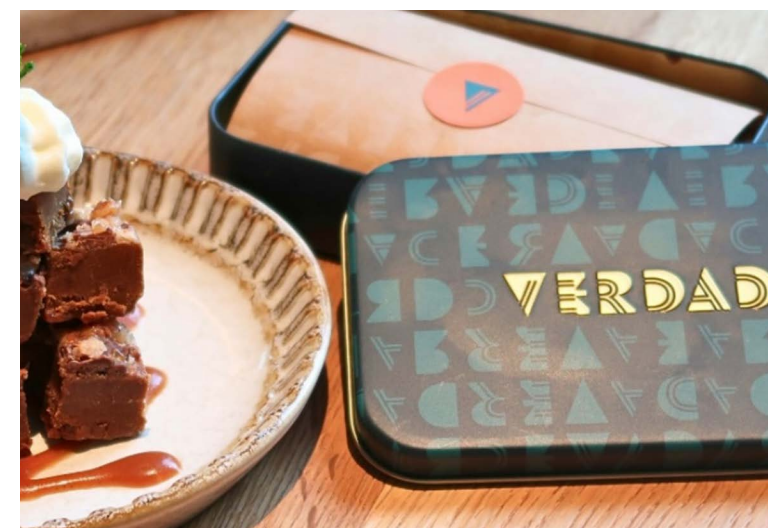
In addition to the architecture and interior of Verdad, the Aria team developed the branding for this new concept from scratch. Working with the team at Perry's simultaneously on the design and brand identity, it was important the two intertwine seamlessly together. With one team crafting both aspects, intention and execution intertwine, feeding into each other and adapting as the project grew. The concept, an exploration of modern Mexican food culture in Central Austin, prompted an exploration of the country's visual and cultural history. Establishing brand goals and a point of view with Perry's, designers delved into research, looking to represent Mexico's long and complex cultural story with integrity and nuance.

As the brand tone and voice began to take shape, the design team developed a visual identity inclusive of logos, color palette, typography, and brand patterns. Designs for branded elements

such as menus, packaging and uniforms, were carefully considered with the interior design for a comprehensive and fully realized brand identity. Common visual elements are featured in both physical form and brand collateral seamlessly integrating brand and design in the restaurant space. Colors and visual textures mimic the natural materials and deep colors of traditional Mexican handcraft, from adobe to fiber weaving. The design team approached the logo, typology and brand assets from this perspective as well, calling to mind both the vibrancy of modern Mexican art and the natural landscapes across Mexico, from the Sonoran Desert to the Baja Coast.

To round out the guest experience, Aria designers curated every detail: choosing tableware and serving ware – even selecting the music to ensure the vibe of the space aligns with Perry's goals.

[See Project Gallery](#)



Branding Team Jordyn Hunter, Senior Designer • Megan Walsh, Principal
Scope Logo, Signage, Tableware, Retail Packaging, Menu Design, Print Collateral, Uniforms, Music Curation

**Designs are conceptual & do not represent final products by client*



Miami, FL | Opened February 2024

Building on the style of Lucky Cat's original London location, Aria worked to maintain the spirit of the brand while adapting it to take a foothold in Miami's prolific nightlife scene.

Inspired by the jazzy, late-night Kissas of 1940's Tokyo, Lucky Cat is an exercise in understated opulence. It is a space defined by details, weaving together Japanese artistry and Asian-influenced elements of classic luxury, to create an immersive dining experience. Always aiming to complement the elevated character of the restaurant concept, the design plan was conceived to be the perfect stage on which Lucky Cat's commitment to culinary craftsmanship could shine.

Delicately draped linens delineate the entry in a modern nod to traditional rice-paper shoji screens. Warm wood tones and natural textures give the walls and furnishings a timeless, enduring quality. Rich upholstery in deep jewel hues and chic, custom brass details weave a thread of subtle sophistication

throughout the space, giving guests the sense they have entered a luxurious hideaway. Intricately designed light fixtures pair with Art Deco-style lanterns to give the bar and dining spaces a warm, diffused glow.

With care and precision, Aria's designer team curated pottery artifacts and custom pieces of artwork referencing Asia's artisan craftwork and the considered Lucky Cat aesthetic. Custom-made ceramic cats line the walls, while hand-painted vintage Japanese fans are displayed alongside an extensive wine and sake collection. An assortment of decorative knives illustrates the development of simple tools into implements capable of refining the smallest details and achieving the precise and time-honored technique prized in Asian cuisine.

The chef's table, partially veiled by another shoji screen-inspired divider, draws guests' attention, giving an enthralling glimpse into the kitchen-theater for a truly shared culinary experience.

[See Project Gallery](#)

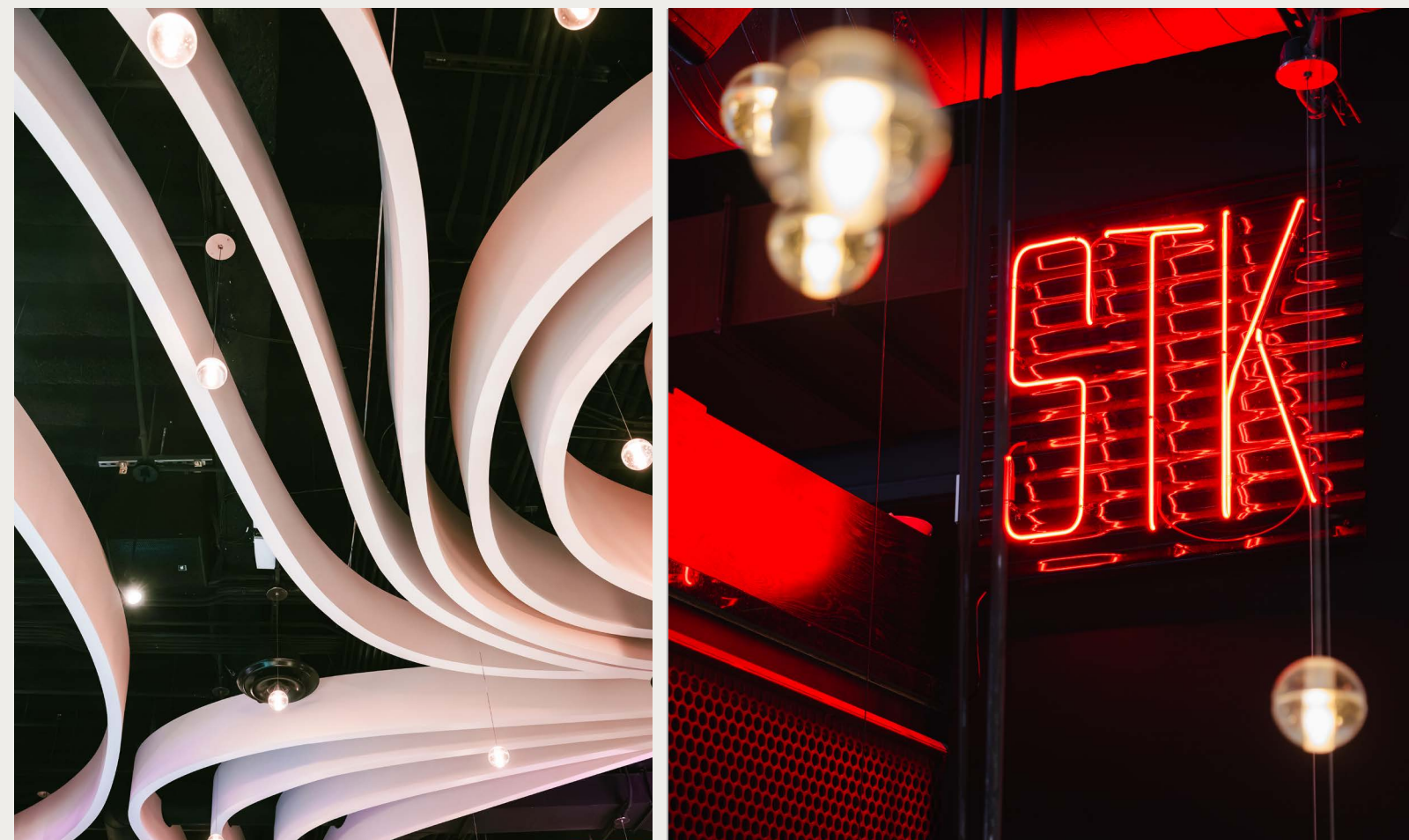
Scope Architecture & Design Seats 162 Square footage 7,147
 Contractor Shawmut Design and Construction Kitchen Consultant Katz Company
 Engineers Henderson Engineers, Hart Gaugler & Associates, Inc. Photography Kris Tamburello, Courtesy of GRNA



“Every vantage point contains another piece of the story and they all come together in this rich and intimate experience.”

- Liz Neuffer
 Project Designer

Project Team Pete Cotsilis, Project Coordinator • Kristin Mrozinski, Project Manager • Elizabeth Neuffer, Project Designer • Dave Nash, Principal • Megan Walsh, Principal



Charlotte, NC | Opened October 2023

“We wanted every guest to feel like they were experiencing the heart of the action at STK, like every seat in the house offered a unique moment and perspective.”

- Jennifer Ambrose,
Project Designer

Aria Group's first completed STK project brings our client's signature "vibe-dining experience" to the heart of Charlotte's Uptown neighborhood. Working with The ONE Group, the existing space was transformed into an elevated and vibrant two-story restaurant with a large outdoor patio.

High contrast black and white tones throughout tie the different spaces together and highlight the architectural elements in the restaurant. Undulating ribbons hang from the ceiling and weave between spaces, guiding the guest's eye around the main level and up to the mezzanine. One of the most striking elements is the back bar, which spans the double height space and is adorned with "horns", a nod to the brand's mascot. The raised dining area features large round booths as

well as graphic neon signage and an electric water vapor fireplace that washes the room with a pink glow.

The mezzanine level offers a more intimate experience with a small bar, pool table and private dining rooms partitioned by red glass.

Screened by a custom ribbed façade structure that wraps the exterior and continues to the interior, the outdoor patio creates a truly unique dining experience for the area. The circular patio bar, covered pergola, and red bull sculptures add a dynamic and playful feel to the streetscape.

STK Charlotte is a high-energy and expressive restaurant that is sure to leave a memorable impression.

[See Project Gallery](#)

Scope Architecture & Design Seats 421 Square footage 6,814 Contractor Swinerton Engineers Dependable Guidance Consulting Engineering, PLLC Consultants Landmark Kitchen Design Photography LunahZon Photography

Project Team Annalise Zorn, Architectural Designer • Flor Hernandez, Interior Designer • Ana Hernandez, Project Coordinator • Jennifer Ambrose, Project Designer • Ilias Saoukbaev, Project Manager



Glen Allen, VA | Opened December 2023

“Henrico really demonstrated our technical capabilities — how well we can manage all the moving parts in such a large and complex project.”

- Martin Kurdaliev,
Architectural Designer



Project Team Martin Kurdaliev, Architectural Designer • Olga Ratajski, Senior Designer • Michael Velko, Project Architect • Brian Zielinski, Associate • Neal Thompson, Senior Associate

The Henrico Sports & Events Center is a state-of-the-art event and athletic complex featuring 12 basketball courts, equivalent to 24 volleyball courts, and a massive Event Space. The building's tilt-up construction, a building process involving on-site concrete fabrication and assembly, adds durability and strength to the structure while allowing for a shorter construction period. The concrete panels provides an industrial aesthetic and large-scale proportion to the interior and exterior of the building. Exposed concrete walls and polished concrete floors add texture while maintaining the open, industrial feel. The simple and sporty color palette is offset with warm wood millwork elements sprinkled throughout.

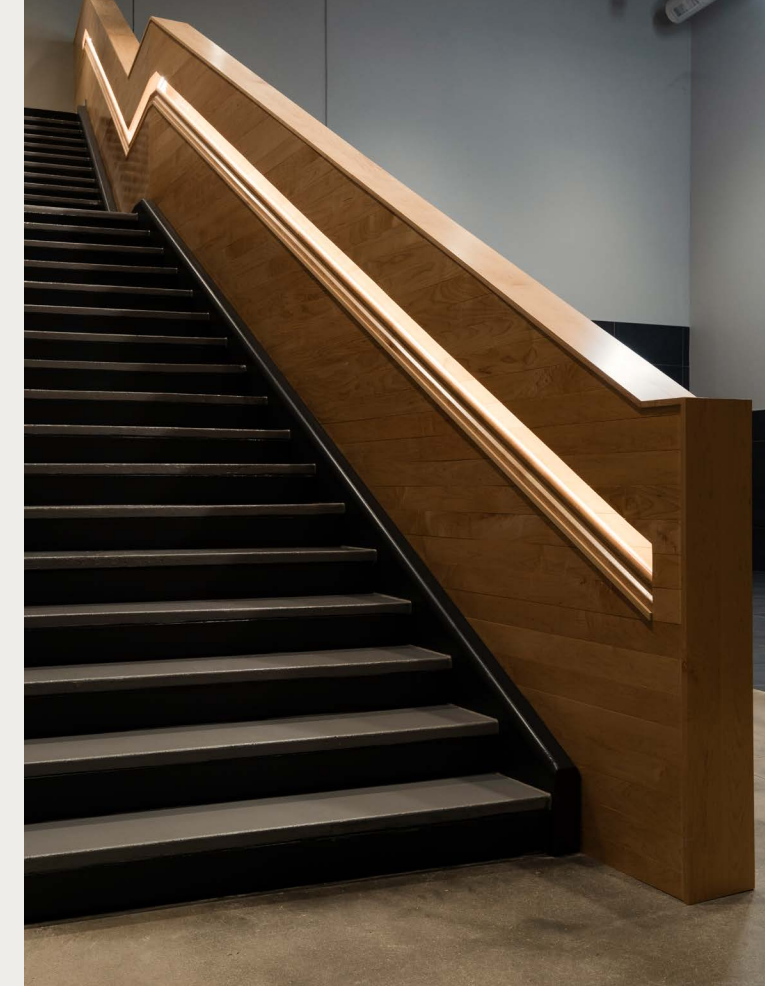
The facility's central program is anchored by a main bar and dining area with a concessions and lounge space leading into the gymnasium. With the expertise

of acoustical consultants, the open spaces received wall and ceiling treatments including perforated metal panels, sound blanket upholstered wall panels, and a floor to ceiling vinyl curtain to minimize echo, and maintain acoustical separation between the vast, open spaces. This community building is a sought-after spot for sporting and entertainment opportunities, already having garnered thousands of visitors and millions in local economic impact since its opening.

Knowing this facility would see an incredible number of visitors, our team approached this project as an opportunity to prove our technical capabilities alongside our design sensibilities. Even on a project of this scale, Aria's team poured attention into the smallest of details to present a unified, polished vision.

[See Project Gallery](#)

Scope Architecture & Design Square footage 185,000
 Contractor EDC Construction Engineers Martin and Martin Consulting Engineers
 MEP WT Group Civil Engineers Koontz Bryant Johnson Williams Kitchen Consultant
 Victor Products AV/LV/Acoustics Solotech Photographer Thibaud Guerin-Williams



Sneak Peak

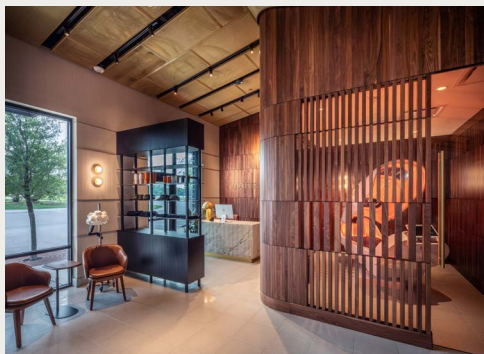
THE BLUEPRINT 2024 FUTURE ISSUES



LAVAZZA
Naperville, IL



COOPER'S HAWK
Bloomington, IL



MATTR BIOWELLNESS CLUB
Austin, TX



Photography by Jordyn Hunter

TEXAS MONTHLY

Verdad makes a "stunning addition" to the Austin dining landscape. With incredible design and an extensive menu, this new offering from Perry's Restaurants brings a modern feel that puts it a step above the rest.

[READ MORE](#)

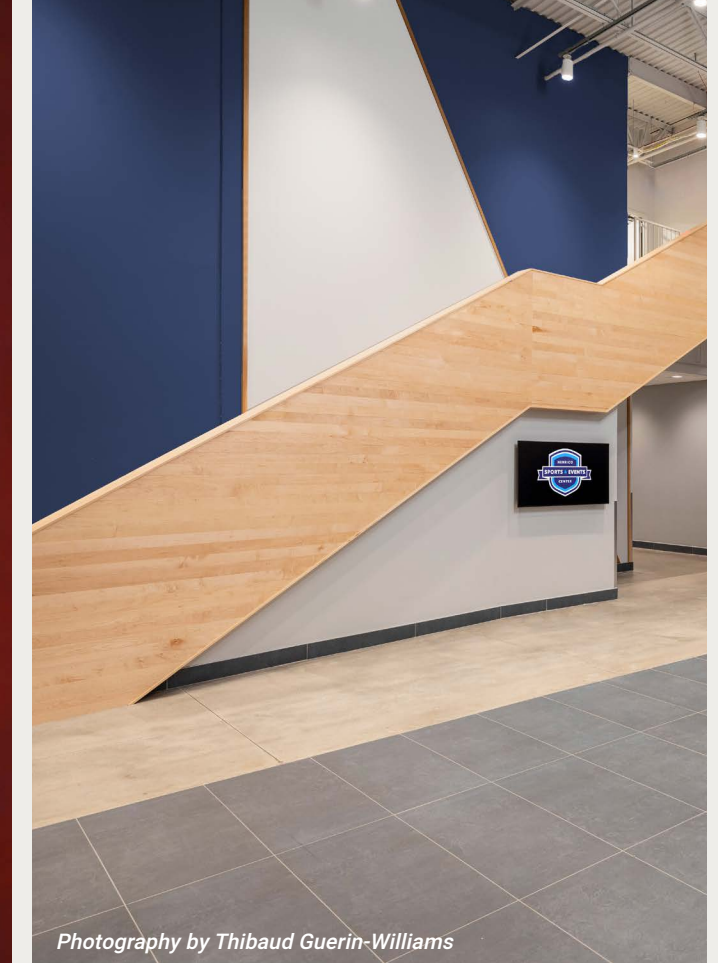


Photography by Aria Group

FORBES

In one of America's top food cities, Lucky Cat stands out from the crowd for all the right reasons. With moody, refined decor and master culinary craftsmanship, it's no wonder it landed on Forbes' list of dining musts in Miami.

[READ MORE](#)



Photography by Thibaud Guerin-Williams

VIRGINIA BUSINESS

Booking 46 weekends of tournaments in its first year open, the Henrico Sports & Events Center has helped Richmond on its way to becoming a sports tourism destination.

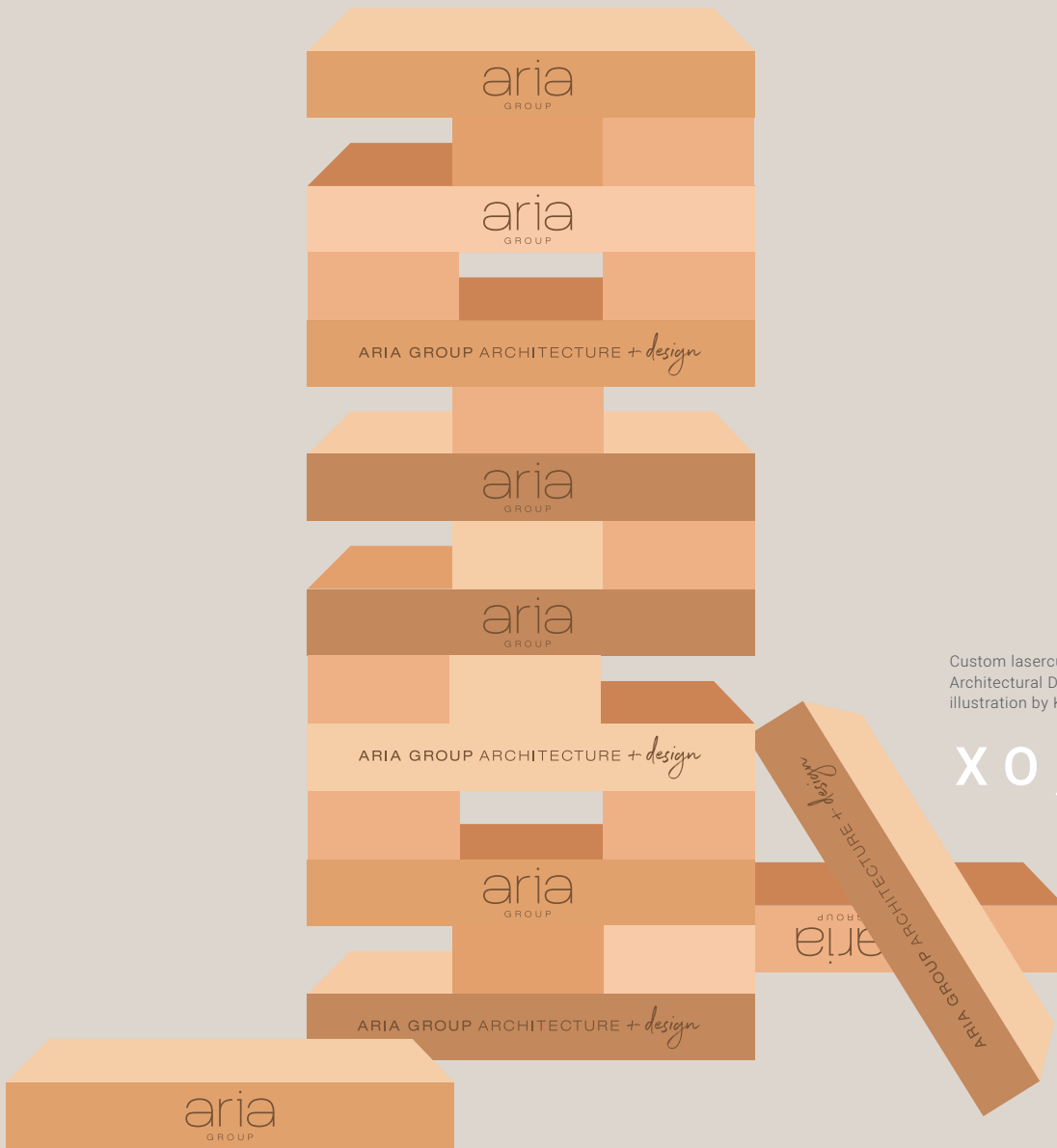
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IN THE Press

Fun at ARIA GROUP



From left: Aria's Summer Olympics Field Day; A custom Jenga set lasercut b Architectural Designer Adrian Chavez; Aria's FC Studio Summer Outing; a Maker's Market showcasing the handiwork of Aria's talented team; Aria's softball team at the Opportunity Knock's Classic fundraiser; Aria's WP Studio Summer Outing



Custom lasercut Jenga set crafted by Architectural Designer Adrian Chavez, illustration by Katie Pach.

XO, *aria*

The Blueprint is produced in-house by Katie Pach, Sara Armeanu, Emma Phillips, Brooke Johnson, Lauren Wissman, and Megan Walsh