

A man with short brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt, is sitting on a plush red sofa. He is leaning forward with his chin resting on his hand, looking directly at the camera. In front of him is a dark, rectangular wooden table. The background is a heavy, vertically pleated red curtain. The lighting is warm and focused on the man and the sofa.

# Big City DESIGN in a Quiet Way

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Douglas Riddle  
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# A Revolution in Design

Louisville is without a doubt a foodie paradise. In this wonderful oasis of flavors and dining destinations we call home, there's something for every inclination your palette might have. Louisville continually births these amazing options. It is part of the great culture of the city.

As part of the ritual of "going out," more often than not, we ask ourselves, "What should I wear to this place?" Wouldn't it be nice to be able to go experience the exquisite tastes of fine dining, in all of its breadth of food, drink, and atmosphere, and not have to worry about what to wear?

Furthermore, what if this fantasy restaurant had an unassuming back door, which led you up an oxblood red stairwell with deep red walls, past a charcuterie and cheese kitchen, to an entirely different destination? What if it had a speakeasy-style lounge with big, comfortable couches, a swanky bar, dimmed lighting and a charming stage for pop-up performances by some of the best in the business passing through our city?

Well, this place is here. It's Butchertown Grocery, and it is open and ready for you to come through its doors, explore, dine and enjoy.

In the heart of the Butchertown neighborhood, accomplished attorney and businessman Jon Salomon, famous executive chef Bobby Benjamin, chart-topping musician Patrick Hallahan, drummer of My Morning Jacket, and an unassuming creative designer turned the shell of an old grocery store building into the city's best new dining destination. "Casual fine dining" is what this place is all about. But don't be fooled.

The atmosphere was meticulously created by Douglas Riddle, President and COO of Bittners and his team, Chad Cobb along with Sara Robinson. Bittners is an award-winning,

nationally renowned design firm that we are fortunate to have located right here in Louisville! Its nuances subtly sneak up on you, like good design should. Riddle didn't want anything to really stick out individually; he wanted it to blend seamlessly together.

The fact that Riddle was the designer of the project is enough alone to make headlines. He only takes on about two projects a year and most always out of town. He was excited to create the design for Butchertown Grocery because of the great personal relationships he already had with its owners. Riddle knew they would trust him to get creative and do what he does best.

However, Riddle is quick to make clear that this was absolutely collaborative. "The project has really been a team thing from the beginning because all of the owners are very passionate about this project," Riddle expresses. "You know, one's a rock star, one's a celebrity chef, and the other is a big time lawyer. We're not short of opinions! But they're great guys, and I love their input and their passion for it. And we all worked really well together. We all sort of got where each of us was coming from, and I think, from that, is why it's turned out so great."

The inspiration for the space came while Riddle, along with the partners, visited The Odeon restaurant in Tribeca, a famous restaurant many may recognize from their red neon sign featured in the opening credits of vintage Saturday Night Live reruns. It's unique decor, cozy banquettes, chrome accents and great vibe started the creative design process for Butchertown Grocery.

The space is unbelievably rich in multi-layered textures. When you enter the first floor, there are so many different feels to the space. The first thing you notice is the floor itself. Old World porcelain mosaic flooring is seen throughout.











Photo by Baron at Circle Star Theatre, San Carlos, CA 12/1967















Modern “Cab” chairs, recognized as one of the significant chair designs of the 20th century, are matched with Carrera marble-top tables, giving the perfect canvas for showcasing the culinary delights a patron is about to experience.

A u-shaped “chef’s bar,” where friends can sit and watch the chef create culinary masterpieces, features a custom, reclaimed wood bar handcrafted by Bittners’ own master craftsmen. The rich, dark wood used to make the unique bar came from historic whiskey row in Louisville and are flanked with comfortable leather stools.

When you look up, you see the exposed brick walls, original to the building, and old historic wood beams. These wonderful elements pay homage to the beauty of this historic building.

One of the most eye-catching elements of the space is that you can see directly back into the restaurant’s kitchen – you have a front-row seat for all of the action. Finally, the original artwork and the gobo light designs adorning the walls bring everything together.

The fun continues as you ascend the oxblood red back staircase to the second floor lounge, bar and performance space. It’s got a swanky feel, with plenty of comfort and style, and feels like a hip social club where famous rock stars might hangout.

Deep hues of dark browns, reds and grays abound. Natural wood, comfortable couches and a completely new, enlarged bar set the mood, with help from the perfectly placed stage in the corner. Off in the corner of the second floor is the VIP room featuring a large red velvet banquette. It’s cozy feel and closeness creates the perfect space for intriguing conversation.

“We wanted to keep the downstairs approachable but elegant and keep the upstairs rustic with notes of elegance,” says partner Patrick Hallahan. “It’s focused on cocktails and hanging out, with a charcuterie and cheese program. We wanted it to feel like you’re in your friend’s living room listening to your favorite records.”

While you are waiting for a table downstairs, you can enjoy a drink upstairs, or after you have dined, you can hop upstairs to enjoy a completely different experience. Owners plan to have performances of music, comedy, spoken word and

more upstairs. “So many times I’ve been asked, ‘Where’s a small place I can try out new material?’” says Hallahan, “And we’re going to be able to offer that at the turn of a dime.”

As Riddle reiterates, the space is about living. It’s about the food and the drink, the performance space upstairs and about a neighborhood vibe. He hopes everyone who comes in feels comfortable. “Someone said to me the other day, ‘What do I wear? Do I need to get something nice?’ And I said, ‘No! Wear what you have! I will be here a lot, and I will be in jeans and a t-shirt!’”

“The space has a moodiness about it. A great vibe where you would expect to see a rock star, poet, politician, an artist. It reaches out to people from all walks of life. It’s all about community, friends and neighbors.”

**Douglas Riddle, President & COO, Bittners**

Butchertown Grocery is open for brunch, lunch and dinner. Their delicious and diverse menu is available on the website, [butchertown-grocery.com](http://butchertown-grocery.com), along with information on reservations, special events and more.

Riddle’s vision sums it up best. “The space has moodiness to it, a great feel and vibe. A place where you would expect to see a rock star, a poet, a politician, an artist. The space reaches for people from all walks of life. From power lunches to family dinners to partying with your friends, it’s all about the community and neighbors. It’s big city design in a quiet way.”











Bobby Benjamin  
Executive Chef & Partner





Joseph (from Men in the Cities), lithograph by Robert Longo, 1979





