

brand and beauty

In this issue, we present four interiors that all illustrate how beauty can be an intrinsic element in conveying a brand's message. Pritzker Prize laureate Zaha Hadid designed the sculptural, dynamic interior of the Stuart Weitzman Milan flagship (page 44 and cover), Los Angeles firm Commune Design meticulously detailed the boutique for menswear designer Derek Mattison (page 48 and this page), and New York's Jaklitsch/Gardner Architects conveyed the client's design vision of elegant simplicity in a Marc Jacobs Beauty store (page 52). While the first three interiors are retail, we showcase one additional extraordinary space: Parisian restaurant Monsieur Bleu (page 56) by Joseph Dirand, a gorgeous brasserie that exudes grace and beauty.

A skylight was retrofitted to have a faceted, geometric form. Brass panels lining the walls reflect both natural and LED lighting within the linear space. Custom steel planters create a hanging garden.

Mattison

A menswear boutique by Commune captures Southern California's edgier side

By Russell Fortmeyer
Photography by
Spencer Lowell

Exuding civility in the middle of a hectic city, the men's clothing store Mattison is a study in refined understatement. With a vine-covered facade, diminutive sign, and black-trimmed windows and door, Mattison fits well within a relatively quiet block of high-end retail establishments located where Melrose Avenue meets Melrose Place in Los Angeles.

That restrained, elegant sensibility is what Los Angeles-based, multi-disciplinary design firm Commune focused on in realizing the vision of Derek Mattison, the designer behind the eponymous menswear line that launched in 2012. Commune had developed a rapport with Mattison while renovating his house. "Derek's idea was that the store would be Christian Dior meets California, so we started

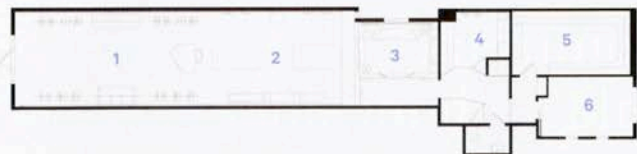
looking at Big Sur and how Dior could become more handmade, warmer, and earthier," says Pamela Shamshiri, a founding partner of Commune.

Hard edges transition to softer surfaces

Shamshiri says Commune was inspired by Mattison's use of precise details in his clothing—buttons, lapels, stitching, and seams—and the strict color palette of grays, deep blues, and blacks. To begin, the walls and ceiling were painted matte black, with the existing wood floor refinished and painted a low-sheen black. This created a neutral space that also played on Mattison's interest in the darker side of California—think David Lynch—rather than a beach vibe.



Section and Floor Plan



- 1 Retail space
- 2 Hanging garden
- 3 Dressing area
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Office
- 6 Tailor and storage



Mattison

Designer **Commune Design**

Client **Mattison**

Where **Los Angeles**

What **1,700 square feet on one floor**

Cost/sf **\$325**

For a full project source list, see page 68 or visit contractdesign.com.

Commune covered walls with eight-foot-high, 1/8-inch-thick brass panels, which required a six-step finishing process, involving an acid treatment and oxidation over a few days before sealing in a subdued finish, resulting in a look that is between polished and antiqued. The panels reflect the clothes that hang in front of them, providing depth to the space.

The use of brass continues in the system Commune designed for displaying clothes. Brass rods thread through a series of welded steel bars, forming both hanging racks and support shelves made of Claro Walnut to display folded clothes. "With the walls being somewhat machined and more sterile, all of these other elements can stand out for display in a good way," Shamshiri says. "We wanted to balance the machined with the handmade, with some custom details where one can sense the hand of the artisan at work."

In thin gaps between the brass-paneled walls and the ceiling, lighting designer Sean O'Connor specified strips of white LEDs that run the length of the store on both sides. The linear quality of the space is further heightened by two acrylic-lensed, fluorescent cove lights that run in parallel from the front to the rear of the store.

At the back of the store, sliding steel-framed doors fitted with antique, mirrored panels reveal the main dressing room, which shifts in tone from the harder edges of the store's primary space to a cozier feel inspired by the 1940s-era Parisian apartments of architect Pierre Chareau. A fireplace, built-in bookcases, full-height velvet drapes

Key Design Highlights


Inspired by Mattison's clothing, the designers created a space that contrasts machined with handmade elements.

LED strips and cove lighting emphasize the linear form of the retail store.

Shiny brass panels and rods stand out against matte black surfaces within the main retail area, accented with walnut shelving and furnishings made by local artists and craftspeople.

A cozy dressing room with a rounded sofa feels residential.

Brass rods form custom display systems for both hanging and folded clothes, and the clothes are reflected in the brass wall panels (this page). The dressing area (opposite, top) was inspired by Parisian apartments from the 1940s and has a decidedly softer feel than the main retail space. Mattison's simple storefront with subtle signage (opposite, below) fits within the context of high-end retail stores along Melrose Place.



with linen sheers, and a rounded, Royère-style sofa create a private space for fittings. A custom rug created by NIBA Rugs incorporates the store's double-T logo. And a narrow, milk-white LED strip vertically delineates the seams of full-height mirrors in both the main dressing area and adjacent hallway. "The distressed mirrors and fireplace in the fitting room give the space a touch of classicism, while the lighting concept throughout makes the space feel very modern," Mattison says.

A product of Southern California

Commune has developed a network of local and regional craftspeople who collaborate on many of the firm's projects. For Mattison, the metal

system was made by Rojas Fabrication, while sculptor Alma Allen created the wood shelves. Allen also designed the large walnut desk in the center of the store, which sits adjacent to a vintage Dan Johnson chair and a classic lamp found at JF Chen, a local gallery and showroom. Another Allen walnut piece is a display platform for shoes and accessories toward the back of the store.

Taken together, the crafted interior is a reflection of Mattison's taste and a vision of Southern California dreamy elegance. "I knew I wanted the aesthetic to resonate high-end," Mattison says. "And I wanted it to feel California, and Commune understood both incredibly well." ❖