



## **HBA San Francisco Honors Elegance of Simplicity in Bold, Minimalist Design of Makoto Vail** *Interiors complement sushi master's innovative take on traditional Japanese cuisine*

**SAN FRANCISCO (March 11, 2024)** – Award-winning hospitality design firm [HBA San Francisco](#) has completed the design of [Makoto Vail](#), the newest restaurant from acclaimed Chef Makoto Okuwa and the sushi master's first restaurant in Colorado. The 110-seat restaurant is located within the Grand Hyatt Vail, a luxury ski-in/ski-out resort nestled along the banks of Gore Creek at the base of Vail Mountain.

HBA San Francisco's design for Makoto Vail reflects a dynamic synthesis of tradition and modernity with authenticity and a sense of place, where the heritage of Japanese interiors harmoniously combines with accents of wabi-sabi character and natural forms in a palette informed by Vail's stunning natural landscape. Beauty is in the material of the all-wood aesthetic. Dark metal highlights the restaurant's modern qualities, balancing warmth and simplicity within the clean interior architecture.

"We sought to create a design that blends with the surrounding landscape and celebrates the perfectly imperfect shapes sculpted by nature," said HBA San Francisco Senior Designer Joelle Henning. "Like the philosophy of Japanese cuisine, the overall expression of the interiors is simplistic, pure and refined, where minimalism is an art form, the essence of the material boldly shines, and the breathtaking Alpine views draw the eye."

At the entry, large shoji screens offer a filtered glimpse into the experience within. White oak envelops the bar and lounge space, establishing a feeling of mountainside calm. Illuminated screening elements at the ceiling diffuse a poetic rhythm of ambient light between wood slatting, while a suspended grid-like wooden structure contributes to the intimate ambiance. Limestone extends at the flooring beneath with a hammered-like finish that brings out the honest quality of the material.

Sleek, dark metal at the bar wall underscores the showpiece at the center: a large-scale original work by artist Jacob Hashimoto. A Colorado native, Hashimoto is known for creating complex worlds from a variety of modular components, from bamboo-and-paper kites to model boats and AstroTurf-covered blocks, yet still remaining deeply rooted in traditional materials and Japanese handicrafts. Commissioned by Kevin Barry Art Advisory, Hashimoto's work for Makoto Vail, a dynamic installation composed of paper and string, is an abstract nod to the surrounding Gore Range in the Rocky Mountains, embracing the wabi-sabi design narrative.

The ceiling feature from the bar and lounge area continues into the main dining room. Slatted timber walls distinguish the spaces while maintaining sightlines for a fluid spatial sequence. An open kitchen with a sushi bar sits prominently on the right, where diners can view the theater of the restaurant. The bar face tile recalls the resilience found in nature in contrast to the polished stone countertop. Warm, leather-like upholstery is tailored with clean lines and curvilinear forms inspired by nature. Timber tabletops preserve a subtle live edge, a gentle gesture of tactile purity. Nana doors reveal the beautiful scenery beyond and provide access to an indoor-outdoor, temperature-controlled terrace for year-round dining.

At the restaurant's rear is a private dining room for dinners and gatherings of up to 10 guests. Sculptural lanterns overhead cast a soft glow when day turns to night. A shelving unit against a backlit shoji screen showcases a curated collection of pottery and ceramics.

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## **About HBA Americas**

With a primary specialization in hospitality design, HBA Americas transforms the built environment with narrative-driven spaces that evoke emotion, bring a sense of wonder and inspire discovery. Each project for HBA Americas is a new opportunity to develop one-of-a-kind creative design solutions with integrity and collaboration. Boutique in its approach while international in reach, HBA Americas has offices in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco and is enhanced by the depth of skill and resources of a global company. HBA Americas has been honored by Interior Design's Best of Year Awards, Hospitality Design's HD Awards, and Boutique Design's Gold Key Awards, to name a few. For more information, visit [www.hba.com](http://www.hba.com). Follow HBA on Instagram: [@hirschbednerassociates](https://www.instagram.com/hirschbednerassociates), LinkedIn: [@HBA/Hirsch\\_Bedner Associates](https://www.linkedin.com/company/HBA/Hirsch_Bedner_Associates) and Facebook: [@hirschbednerassociates](https://www.facebook.com/hirschbednerassociates).

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