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A Little Bit of Magic

RESTAURATEUR GIORGIOS BAKATSIAS SHOWCASES HIS DESIGN-FORWARD FAMILY OF RESTAURANTS.

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When it comes to designing a successful interior for each of his restaurant ventures, Giorgios Bakatsias says it all has to do with the vibration of a space. “The way you feel when you enter a room is all about the energy it exudes,” says Bakatsias. “That’s the part I love about designing my restaurants. I want to create a positive energy and vibe that can be felt throughout.”

For Bakatsias, his love of architecture and design began when he was a young boy living in the small village of Karista, Greece. “I was always a great observer,” he says. “It was a gift for me to grow up in that village and walk with my mother every day looking at the stone and wood and gold details, the art, and the architecture. The whole village ambience was spectacular.”

After immigrating to the United States at the age of twelve, Bakatsias worked at his family’s diner in Durham before eventually obtaining a culinary education while working in the kitchens of Paris, New York, and the Mediterranean. Those experiences, coupled with his Grecian childhood, are what shaped his love of food, culture, and interior design. It was a natural segue for Bakatsias to begin developing his own concepts and restaurants years later as part of Giorgios Hospitality & Lifestyle Group, including Vin

LEFT: The dining room in Parizade, Bakatsias’ flagship restaurant in Durham.

MIDDLE: Restaurateur Giorgios Bakatsias in his Rosewater dining room, in Raleigh.

RIGHT: Osteria Georgi is Bakatsias Italian restaurant in Chapel Hill.

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Rouge in Durham and Gatehouse Tavern in Wake Forest, along with eleven others in the Triangle area.

What's most impressive, however, is that unlike many other restaurateurs, Bakatsias develops the interior design concept of each project himself, from start to finish. "Travel influences so many of my interior design choices," he explains. "Looking back on how I grew up, I was surrounded by nature, so I've always had restaurants that incorporate gardens in indoor and outdoor spaces." Such is the case with Bakatsias' newest restaurant concept, Rosewater Kitchen & Bar. Located in the Park District of North Hills, the restaurateur incorporated a lush alfresco garden for patrons to enjoy while dining and imbibing the restaurant's notable craft cocktails and farm-to-table fare. "Rosewater has an enormous amount of energy that comes directly from the garden atmosphere," says Bakatsias of the design.

For the holiday season, Bakatsias put together a thoughtful table design in his Rosewater dining space, showcased here, proving that food, design, and entertaining go hand in hand. Whether it sparks ideas on throwing your own design-minded dinner party or inspires you to host a reservation with the staff at one of his beautiful restaurants, the thoughtfulness Bakatsias puts into every fabric, chair, and material choice results in an amplified, ambient experience that keeps diners coming back time and again. For Bakatsias, pairing good food, positive energy, and great design creates a little bit of magic. ♦

LEFT & TOP LEFT: Bakatsias showcases his love of design by creating an intimate, thoughtful, and magical table setting at Rosewater for the Great Gatherings issue of *Home Design & Decor*.

TOP RIGHT: View of the kitchen in Kipos Greek Taverna, located in Chapel Hill.