

# **RALPH GENTILE • ARCHITECTS**

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## **Red O Newport Beach is the Second California location for Mexican Cuisine by Rick Bayless**

Fashion Island, Newport Beach, CA – November 20, 2013 – Master Chef Rick Bayless along with his partners, Rick Testa and Michael Dobson have opened their second flagship Red O Restaurant in Newport Beach, California. The award-winning interior decorator Martyn Laurence Bullard, teamed with Ralph Gentile Architects, the architects for the first Hollywood location, has created a stunning new Mexican restaurant experience at Fashion Island.

“Working with two very creative personalities that couldn’t be more different was a really rewarding experience for me personally,” remarked Ralph Gentile, principal. “Rick is the nicest, warmest, most genuine person I have met from the world of celebrity chefs. Martyn Laurence Bullard has all the wit and energy he displays on *Million Dollar Decorators* and it’s not an act - he’s all that and more!”

With the addition of Bullard, the team’s challenge was expressing the Red O concept in a new space, using new design concepts, and continually maintaining a high level of finish and consistency. Sergio Osorio, the senior associate responsible for running the project, added, “the results show how much more a client can achieve when the team knows each other, everyone is a true professional, and the chemistry is right.”

“Martyn has created a truly unique mélange of Moroccan, Spanish, and Mexican influences.” continues Gentile. “The restaurant is a sequence of experiences that transport the guest from a mall environment to somewhere exotic but familiar, exciting but relaxed, lively but casual and does it with sophisticated style.”

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Guests enter the restaurant through a pair of massive solid oak doors leading into a host area featuring a dramatic tented tequila room where 200-plus bottles of agave spirits are each displayed in their own niche.

Beckoning through an archway is the peninsula bar featuring a truly grand chandelier and exotic tile and mirror wall. Lined with hand-carved mashrabiya panels—a popular Moorish feature—and backed with mirrors, the wall finishes include deep reds, bronzes and silvers. Pierced pendants add sparkles of light throughout. The stone bar top, custom-designed bar furniture, and a variety of lounge areas provide a wonderful setting for cocktails and casual grazing.

Passing through another tiled archway, guests enter the main dining room with its center garden of full-size mature palms and exotic planting. Guests can select from a variety of seating choices including intimate corners, large circular booths and comfortable banquettes. The very active display kitchen features prominently behind glass, and large arched windows reveal the covered patio and natural light.

The 1,500 square foot patio features patterned tile floors, a grand fireplace, canvas curtains and heaters to warm up chilly evenings. A large Moorish keyhole shaped mirror hangs above the mantel, and Moroccan influences continue throughout the space. A moveable partition system allows large groups to section off the patio for private functions.

In the restrooms, copper basins, concrete patterned floor tiles, and extraordinary tile work imported from Mexico complete the Moorish experience. The mall landscape was reworked to be in tune with Mexican references including large agaves and Sonoran species.

The project presented several challenges to design team," remarked Gentile, "including how to achieve a high level of finish with many different types of exotic materials, while striking the right balance of casual sophistication."

Acoustic issues were mitigated with sound-absorbing ceiling and wall treatments and construction. The display kitchen glass storefront was designed to provide a glimpse into the interior but also allow the restaurant to fully open the doors and windows to the outside. The patio required a weather enclosure for warmth and protection from the elements, but one that also added an element of ambience.

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Betty Ann Castaneda and Jen Ozai of The Ruzika Company designed the lighting systems throughout the restaurant to coordinate levels of ambient, task, and accent lighting. Lighting issues included the tequila bottle niches, the wall finishes including the back-lit mashrabiya panels, and illuminating the partially transparent draperies. "A particular challenge was providing enough task lighting in the showcase kitchen while maintaining the lower levels preferred in the dining area," remarked Castaneda. "By lowering a soffit and using only LED downlights, decorative pendants, and a great lighting control system, we successfully achieved this balance."

An added bonus to the team was Rick Cooley, of Algier-Triton, who fabricated all the pendants, sconces, and the magnificent chandelier in the bar. "We were very lucky to have Rick," remarked Gentile. "We worked with him in Las Vegas and San Diego and complex custom work is his specialty. In this project he really hit a home run."

**About Rick Bayless:**

Master Chef Rick Bayless is a James Beard Chef of the Year recipient and popular television personality well-known for winning Bravo's *Top Chef Masters* in 2009. His innovative Mexican cuisine has garnered fans across the country and especially in his hometown Chicago.

**About Martyn Lawrence Bullard:**

Martyn Lawrence Bullard, of *Million Dollar Decorators* fame, has created elegant interiors for celebrities including Cher, Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne, Edward Norton and Christina Aguilera. For more information, please visit [www.martynlawrencebullard.com](http://www.martynlawrencebullard.com).

**About Ralph Gentile Architects:**

Ralph Gentile Architects is a small, yet dynamic architectural and interior design firm in Los Angeles, specializing in restaurant, night club, hotel, spa, and retail store design. Since 1989, the studio has established a national reputation for highly creative and provocative design solutions for some of the finest clients in the hospitality, gaming, and restaurant industries. For more information, please visit [www.rgastudio.com](http://www.rgastudio.com).

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