



PHILOSOPHY BY ANTOINE PINTO

As a designer of hotel and catering concepts, Antoine Pinto has a keen eye for interior design, decoration, and gastronomy, but he is also a painter and sculptor. In 1980, the Besser guide – the German counterpart of the Gault & Millau - chose him as one of the best hundred cooks of Central Europe.

He is an artist in heart and soul, and by education, but he also seduces the true gourmet with his kitchen. The “made in Pinto” spaces are both eye-catching and mouth-watering. Having created about a hundred concepts for spaces like restaurants, brasseries, bars, cafés, and discotheques, not to mention numerous boutiques, shops, show rooms, and private homes, he is best known as the designer of the Dock's Café, Het Pakhuis, La Quincaillerie, Pasta Commedia, and Genva les Bains.

More recently, four more spaces in Ostend, including the Ostend Queen, were added to this list. And in Brussels, he recently created the Museum Brasserie & Museum Café in the Museum of Modern Arts, and the Sofitel Louise. Not forgetting of course, the two Belga Queens, where he signed for the whole concept, ranging from interior design to gastronomy.

With the Belga Queen concept, Pinto has shown that he has so much more to offer. Rumour has it that other cities will follow... “The secret of my success ? There's no magic trick... I just offer more pleasure, more dreams, and more quality, for the same price...”

Sounds like something that the 21st century needs, somehow...



PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT - MIDI STATION

Antoine the designer, Pinto the artist. Yes, of course, everyone knows Antoine Pinto. Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, Ostend... all of them home to his creations. England, Brazil, Portugal, Lebanon... some other playgrounds of his. So what has he got to offer next? A new concept? Obviously. Something out of the ordinary? Without a doubt. Impressive, in any case. Abroad, probably? Not really...

Antoine Pinto, who is very much attached to our country, has the pleasure, and above all the nerve, to present us today with a 2000m², versatile space at the foot of the Thalys and the Eurostar. He has set his sights on the Midi, and for thousands of travellers, tourists, people from Belgium or Brussels, Flemish or Walloon, this will be the crossroads of their encounters. Antoine Pinto proposes the Midi Station to you.

Midi Station is a place of diversity and superlatives. Not to please the ego of its designer, but simply because everything is large-scale in this huge place. But let's start with a quick visit. On the bottom floor, there's a secured, open car park for hundreds of cars. When you leave the lift, you go to the centre of the straw-coloured building that shelters your car. After crossing the covered and heated terrace, you are welcomed by a luminous table mounted on huge pots. Open spaces, birches six meters high, Mediterranean succulents, a bar, restaurant, cloakroom, a central dancefloor with the latest in DJ and VJ equipment, armchairs to sprawl in, tables to sign contracts on, slopes to read your paper or check your mail on, scientifically studied acoustics, a perfect sound, amazing bathrooms, a VIP cigar bar, a private bar, tables on mezzanines, interior terraces, and a genuine winter garden.

So, where are we exactly? In Brussels of course, but in a place that other capitals will soon be envious about, because they have nothing more to offer their visitors than the traditional station buffet.

Antoine Pinto has taken up the challenge to develop the central part of the building that covers the 2000m² of the Vinci Park, which accommodates the vehicles of the station's users and connects the rue Ernest Blerot to the rue de France.

BREAKFAST PASSAGE

First challenge: there's a right of way involved. From sunrise to 7.30 p.m. the Midi Station is a passageway along two sidewalks that cross the site. The visitors have a choice: they can either take a break or move on. But what the Midi Station has to offer should make this choice easy. A kitchen open until 12 p.m., possibility for breakfast, a traditional baker's,... Enough to tempt the masses.



FOR ALL TASTES

The kitchen – or should we say kitchens – is stretched over 20 meters. A baker's, pastry shop, cold, warm, meat, fish... Every area has its own cold store. The possibilities are endless, ranging from a basic grill to a special hot plate heated by charcoal.

Antoine Pinto comments: "What I offer here is a straightforward kitchen, without a fuss, not too far-fetched, but with very fresh products and an unequalled variety. What is new, for example, is the fact that clients can choose between ways of cooking or that they can choose between a Norwegian or a Breton lobster from the crustacean pond".

SPACES

By splitting up the spaces of the Midi Station in a subtle way, Antoine Pinto creates breathtaking perspectives combined with vital elements of surprise. A single glance will not be enough to catch all the diversity on offer. At the left, opposite the dancefloor – because the Midi Station will also host the Brussels nightlife, every day, from 11 p.m. to sunrise – an enormous bar, that looks like it has been cut from a single block of granite, reflects the numerous leds to create a harmonious play of pearly, colourful, northern lights. Back at the centre, where the lighting reminds of wild nights, looking through the dome, you can see the stars.

APPOINTMENT

The project is dantesque. Pinto is the first to admit this: "the concept is of course bigger than the Belga Queen, and I consider this as my most important project". Convinced by the international potential of Brussels, Antoine Pinto could no longer bear that there wasn't a place to be the symbol of that. A Brussels flagship, where you can eat, do business, or just have a chat over a good glass any time of day. The icing on the cake for the European capital.

Deliberately, we haven't mentioned the nine million euros behind this investment, or the luxurious design of the VIP bar, the thick Pinto carpets (designed by himself, like most of the furniture, and manufactured all over the world) that muffle the steps in the cigar bar, the papers and magazines that are distributed daily, the variety of the lavatories using the newest in water and led technology, the mezzanines allowing to take in the unique atmosphere of the place, the grand piano protected by a huge lantern more than four meters high, the acoustic pillars designed to soften the voices and let the music rise above them.

Maybe we haven't mentioned all that deliberately, because this really is a place to be seen rather than to be talked about. We can only welcome you there.

It is up to you to discover the Midi Station.