



Hunter



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HOURS. Thur-Sat 24 hours

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HUNTER BAR HAS been around in various forms for 30 years, but for the last six it has been run as a chameleon nightclub and bar by George Poulos, who also owns nearby **Forbes Hotel**. Operating 24 hours Thursday to Saturday, the 400 capacity basement space (two bars, with a 50 capacity function suite) was starting to look tired. In terms of wear and tear, this place had run the *City to Surf*, stayed up for two days and then gone 10 rounds in an amateur boxing ring wearing a ballet skirt and Dame Edna specs.

"Per square foot of space, we'd have to be one of the busiest nightclubs around," says George. "There's so much going on in the space, it gets amazingly busy and after six years, we really needed to do something."

What he did was shop for designers, using *Industry* magazine to help formulate ideas. He found Greg Natale Interior Design and instantly "got" Greg's vision for a

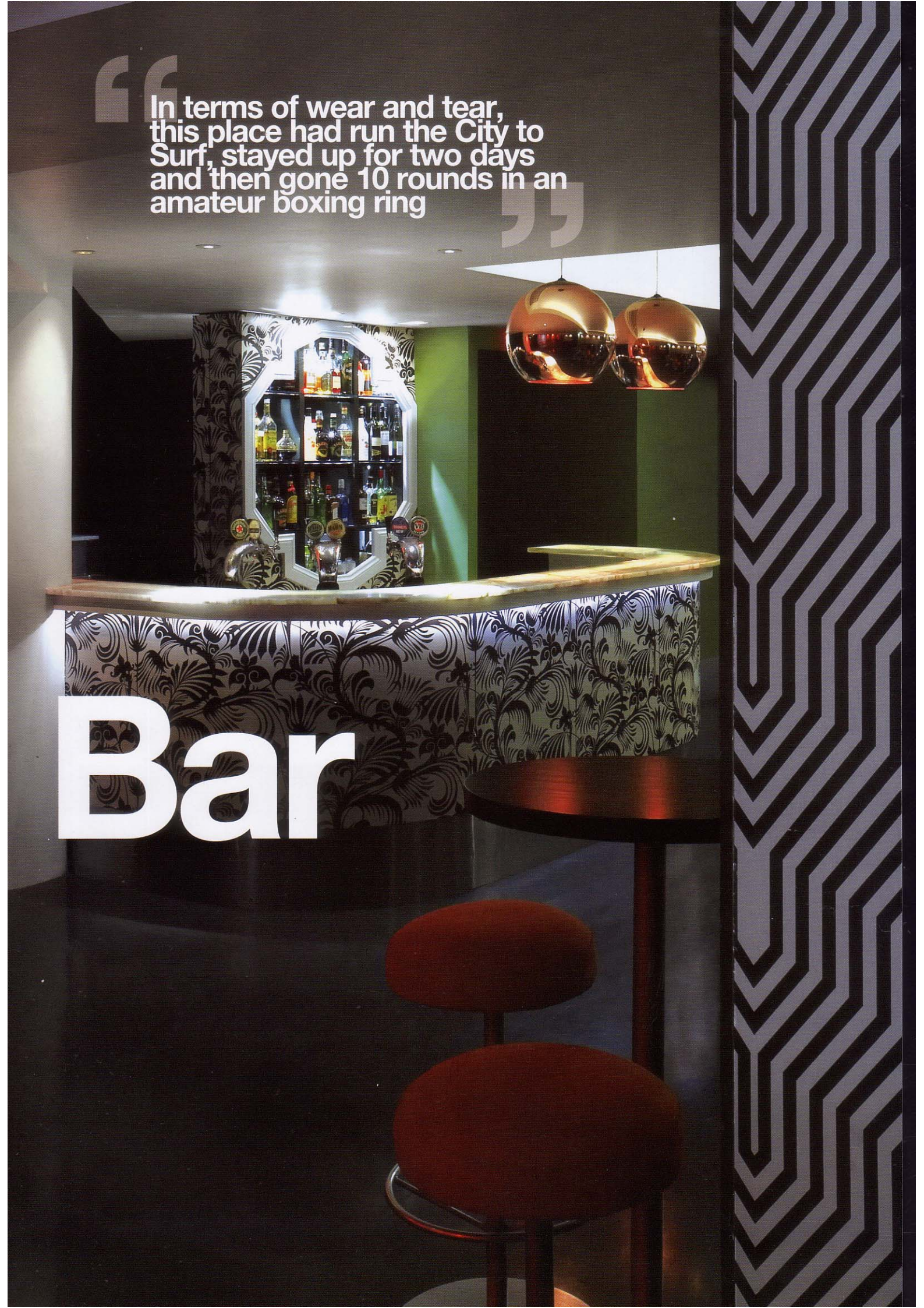
refurbishment. "The space had good bones. We really just came in and freshened it up," surmises Greg, who is an alumni of SJB Interiors, the firm who originally planned the space.

Known for his bold use of pattern and print, Greg introduced wallpapers (sealed with acrylic to make them wipeable) and strong patterns for bar and DJ booth cladding and upholstery. "We mixed it up with geometric and organic prints," he says. "Greg had to keep pushing me on the organic print, as initially you're just getting small swatches and you can't see the big picture," remembers George with a smile. "You need someone with a vision to tie it in with the rest of the scheme."

Greg also brought in natural tones to this underground venue, including lots of green, from the walls to the "very expensive" fish scale tiling on the backbar. "Green's great!" ▶

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Bar



enthusies Greg. "It's a colour of nature and added to the subterranean atmosphere."

The existing copper wall was tied in with new Tom Dixon 'Copper Ball' pendant lights, sprayed chairs and complementary upholstery colours. "Copper just lifts the whole thing and gives it an accent," says Natale.

Aside from these arresting aesthetic tweaks, it was a case of being as flexible with the design as with the venue's operation; existing furniture was re-sprayed and added to with softer ottomans and banquettes, with all freestanding furniture packed away for night trade in the shuttered kitchen/storage space. The lighting traverses the full spectrum, from subtle recessed lighting with realistic colour rendering for dining, to Clay Paky disco fixtures.

The surroundings may have been substantially beautified, but George is keen that Hunter Bar respects its heritage and remains "a bar without attitude". He concludes; "People in the City have been fleeced for too long." ■

Selected Suppliers.

designer.	Greg Natale Interior Design 02 8399 2103
lighting.	<i>(architectural)</i> Euroluce 02 9743 6099 <i>('Copper Ball' by Tom Dixon)</i> De De Ce 02 9360 2722 <i>(Globe SUN spot)</i> JSB Lighting 02 9571 8800
bar.	<i>(White Calcutta Marble)</i> Granitex 02 9560 6869
tiles.	<i>(custom feature wall)</i> The Pugmill 08 8443 4544
wallpaper.	<i>(Osborne & Little)</i> Mokum Textiles 02 9537 0591
upholstery.	<i>(Black Macrosaue)</i> Warwick Fabrics 02 9518 8688 <i>(ottomans - Emerald Cut by Kelly Wearstler)</i> Orient House 02 9660 3895
paint.	Dulux 13 23 77