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First look at Afroditi Krassa's design for Lucky Cat, Gordon Ramsay's latest venture



The bar will feature a 'cat wall' of over 300 maneki-neko cats



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“There’s a lot of restaurant design now that’s trying to grab people’s attention with bright colour, the Instagram thing,” muses the interior designer [Afroditi Krassa](#). “We wanted to bring a feeling of darkness.”

She’s talking about her work on the interior of Gordon Ramsay’s latest venture, the pan-Asian restaurant Lucky Cat, which will replace the recently closed Maze at the London Marriott Hotel in Grosvenor Square, this summer.

Her concept for the restaurant, far from the maximalist, pattern-packed spaces she refers to, was inspired by Japanese kissa bars - late-night drinking and dancing dens that became popular among the affluent young people of Tokyo in the 1930s. Her aim was not to replicate them, but to capture their unique ambience: “These were fun places where you could let your hair down, go into a slightly different world,” she says.



One of the chef's tables will have a ceiling covered in 80 handmade uchiwa paper fans from Japan

That feeling will start right at the entrance of Lucky Cat: “You should feel you’ve gone to a glamorous time in the past, not something cliched and bling,” says Krassa. The colour palette is suitably nocturnal - materials used include glossy black bamboo panelling, indigo-dyed fabrics and distressed leather seating, and low-level lighting will complete the mood, picked out by the odd bit of neon for a shot of urban cool.

There will be several knockout design features: this is the project with the most bespoke elements that she has worked on during her 17 years in the business, says Krassa. The bar will be faced with bamboo panelling clad in hand-cast brass; the ceiling of one of the chef's tables will be covered with 80 handmade uchiwa paper fans from Japan; and there will be a spectacular ‘cat wall’ in the bar comprising over 300 individually handmade ceramic maneki-neko cats, the traditional symbols of good fortune after which the restaurant is named. Other feline details will be subtler: diners will only notice the little cat-motif tiles in the sushi area if they’re sitting right next to them.



Afrodit Krassa

The whole interior has been designed so that there isn't a bad seat in the house: "Wherever you sit, there will be something to see," says Krassa. "Each space has its own intimacy and character." Her personal pick of the seats, however, will be the chef's tables, where guests will be able to choose from bespoke menus and witness the chefs at work. "You'll be sitting almost in the kitchen; it's such a privileged space," she says. "I love the theatre of it, watching the chefs. It's energising and unique." Not, one imagines, unlike the restaurant interior itself.

Lucky Cat will open this summer; to sign up for more information, visit luckycat.co.uk