

## Projects → Restaurants

## Comedor Brings Chic Mexican Dining to Downtown Austin

Lauren Jones • Photos by Casey Dunn • January 27, 2021



Large guillotine doors blur the lines between Comedor's dining room and courtyard

Austin and Tex-Mex go hand-in-hand, but [Comedor](#)—the brainchild of co-owners Phillip Speer and William Ball—takes a high-end approach to authentic Mexican cuisine. Bone marrow tacos with smoked butter and Texas hoja santa-pecan gremolata are the menu standout, and the restaurant's architecture exhibits just as much sophistication and welcome surprise.

Seattle-based [Olson Kundig](#) acted as the design architect, transforming the 4,700-square-foot downtown corner lot into an alluring hub that caters to both indoor and outdoor dining via a series of guillotine doors, operated by a custom hand crank. "We're known for kinetic design," says Bob Jakubik, the firm's director of architectural operations. Charcoal-colored brick, glazed glass blocks, a dramatic double-height dining room, and centuries-old reclaimed brick juxtapose the surrounding limestone façades and lend a tactile, handmade quality, while blackened steel and plaster greet visitors inside.



Comedor inhabits a corner building in Downtown Austin's trendy Warehouse District

From the street, Comedor's appearance offers little evidence of what lies beyond. There's no sidewalk seating, but instead a sheltered inner courtyard, minimal signage, and no direct views in as the entryway is unveiled slowly and intentionally. "The design purposefully turns inward to entice you and gives that sense of mystery, while the courtyard is pleasant and protected from traffic," says Navvab Taylor of [McKinney York Architects](#), the local architect of record. The two firms worked together to execute the design with the city's requirements in mind, which called for transparency and an active streetscape.

The main dining room, which features 24-foot ceilings and custom spoon-shaped light fixtures, lends way to the courtyard, where brickwork, discovered during construction and once part of an 1800s building, creates "texture and a layer of history," Jakubik says. Acacia and Palo Verde trees placed alongside a small foundation and climbing ivy make it a true oasis within the lively city.



A modern, industrial ethos informs the double-height restaurant