



WELL GROOMED DESIGN

By MAURI ELBEL Photography by DROR BALDINGER

The new Birds Barbershop on 183 and Anderson Mill opened its doors just last year, but thanks to an artful design by Mark Odom Studio, it blends in flawlessly with the existing neighborhood.

Inside the chic space, sunlight bathes over graphically painted walls featuring black and white linear patterns and bold pops of color that abstractly hint at a circuit board and wires.

“The clients wanted graphics that reflected technology and a connected, tech-friendly space,” explains Katie Bingham, Mark Odom Studio’s principal architect who collaborated on the design along with Mark Odom, owner, and designer Andrew Horne.

Like each of Birds Barbershop’s six locations, the new 1,100-square-foot North Austin shop strives to be as unique as the concept behind the hip Austin-based chain where high-quality, affordable haircuts don’t require an appointment but come with free Shiner beer.

When the owners of Birds Barbershop were searching for an

architect to bring a higher level of expression to their brand through design, they turned to Mark Odom Studio.

“Our first priority was to create a more standardized approach to design and documentation for their new shops while maintaining the urban and artistic identity they’re known for,” says Odom. “Our goal was to understand their methods, harness the creative ideas, elevate quality and produce concise design concepts that their clientele would soon associate with Birds Barbershop, even as those ideas evolved over time with new stores.”

Beginning the process with a roundtable discussion to come up with a concept that would fit in with the North Austin shop’s neighborhood, home to numerous tech companies and campuses, and appeal to its future clientele, the decision was made to center the design around technology.



With clear goals defined, the tech theme remained the central driving factor in decisions spanning materials and art to design details. Since the shell of the building was irregularly shaped, Mark Odom Studio approached the design from an art installation standpoint, creating a center island workspace for stylists which resulted in the ability to gain natural light from both sides of the shop.

Designer Joel Mozersky and artist Phillip Niemeyer were brought in to contribute to the creative process. While Mozersky offered honesty of expression and refined edits, Niemeyer filled the space with the movement of color along his rhythmic painted walls that complement the overhead bungee art installation wrapping the space.

“The challenge was finding out how to do something creative and impactful on a budget and quickly,” says Odom.

The collaboration not only yielded a visually kinetic space within tight parameters, but produced a successful design despite the project’s tight budget envelope, thanks to the relatively low cost materials like bungee cord and painted graphics. Together, the installation and graphics encourage the eyes to move around the space in an undulating pattern, yielding big design results in the small space.

Overall, Odom credits the design’s success to a solid working relationship and clearly-defined goals.

“Birds has a really great group that believes in their product and is always trying to go above and beyond,” says Odom. “Throughout the process, they challenged us and we challenged them.” ❖

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DESIGNER Joel Mozersky Design
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ARTIST Phillip Niemeyer
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It didn’t take long for a creative client-design collaboration to take shape, with both parties working side by side to come up with an interior space that married art, architecture and function. As ideas and inspiration evolved throughout the process, Mark Odom Studio’s job was to simply listen and edit.

“The solution to design problems is not often about the designer but rather the product or environment which he or she is designing around,” says Odom.