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## CLEVELAND CALLING

Call it a cleansing of the palate: Zachary Bruell, owner of Z Contemporary Cuisine bid adieu to the '80s glittery excess and called in Mark Schwartz and Joyce Nesnadny of Cleveland-based Nesnadny + Schwartz to redesign his restaurant. "We knew and loved the restaurant, so for us the project was a double win," says Schwartz.

Culinary sophistication has always been plentiful at Z Contemporary Cuisine. But now style has taken a fresh new turn. Our idea was for an identity system that could accommodate lots of interpretations," explains Schwartz. The letter Z's clean, angular lines became the central motif from which every visual element evolved. The team photographed food arranged in a Z pattern, set up an on-site desktop publishing system that prints out new menus and wine lists as needed and designed a cloth-bound portfolio style menu folder. Vellum menu inserts echo glass blocks used in the restaurant's interior and, in a playful nod to the less pretentious '90s, brightly colored rubber bands stretched through metal grommets into a Z shape hold the menu in place.

Since the budget was tight, all work was assigned to local vendors, with 83 percent of the costs arranged through trade. "In an effort to be economically and environmentally sound, we even found a way to use up 20,000 boxes of old matches," explains Schwartz with pride, "We designed four different Day-Glo colored labels, each containing copy about recycling, that were adhered to the boxes until the inventory was depleted."

In yet another variation on the restaurant's theme, sinuous grapevines in the foyer were coaxed into a big meandering Z. "Instead of going to a sign maker, we went to a florist. The grapevines subtly pick up on the menu, the stationary. It's there and it's not there."

Subtlety comes as a matter of course at Z Contemporary Cuisine, with its 24-piece identity system that gradually reveals itself over time. "Being obvious," adds Schwartz, "is not our forte."

