



LAS VEGAS SUN

LOCALLY OWNED AND INDEPENDENT | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2012

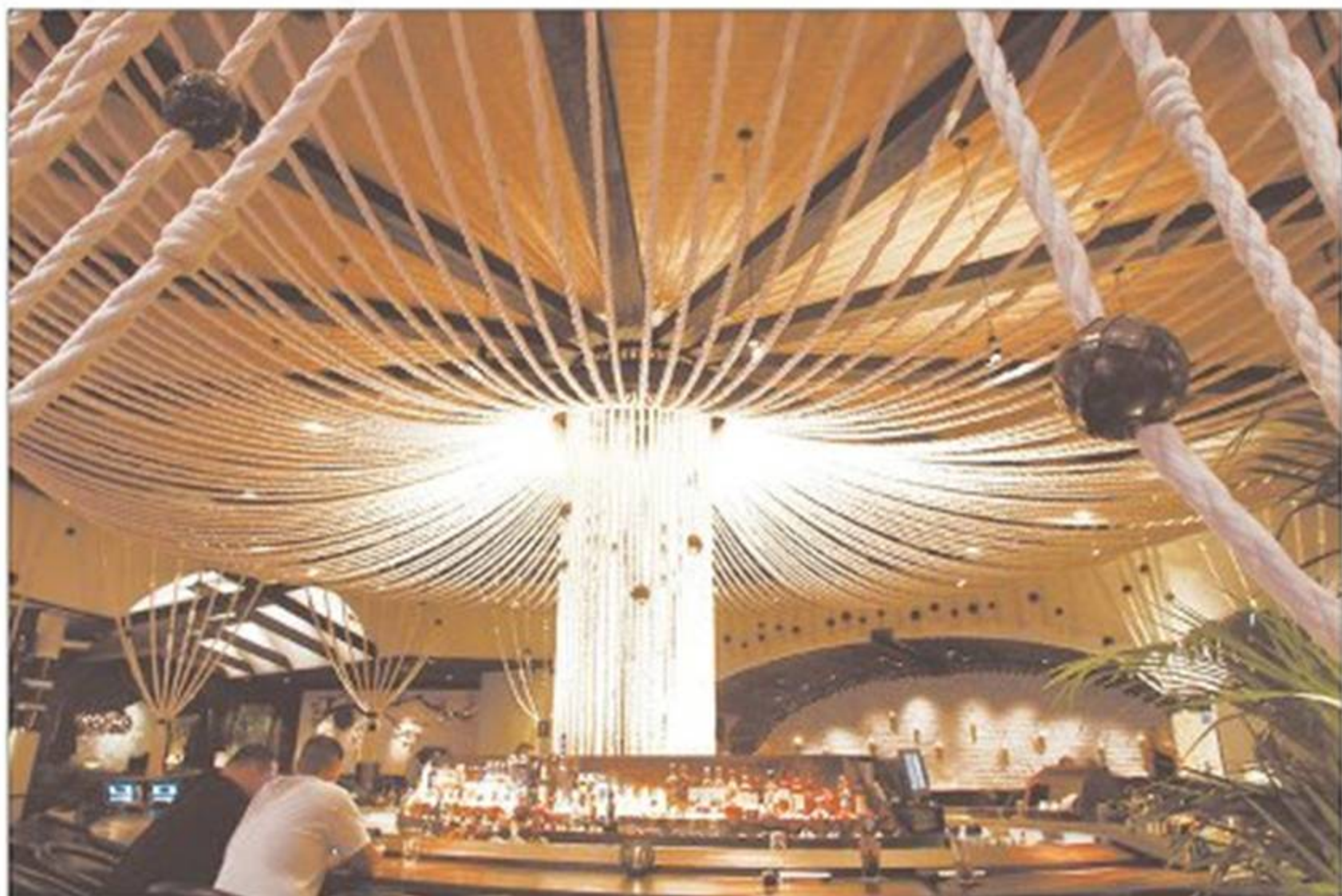


PHOTO BY SAM BROWN

A rope canopy hangs over the bar at Javier's in CityCenter's Aria. The angle of the ropes is meant to guide people to the bar.

THE STRIP

VISUAL FEAST AND GOOD EATS

Chain saw art, ropes create unique atmosphere at Javier's



Oregon artist J. Chester Arnold used a chain saw to carve this mural based on a Mayan creation myth for Javier's. It took 600 hours to create.

By Ross Stevenson

This story was published on vegasinc.com at 2 a.m. Nov. 30.

It takes more than good food for a restaurant to succeed on the Strip. Atmosphere can be equally important. Many local restaurateurs import the country's top designers to create restaurant settings that are just right. One such designer is Peter Bowden, director of design and development for Dodd Mitchell, a global design firm. He is the mastermind behind Javier's, a new high-end Mexican restaurant in CityCenter's Aria. The 9,000-square-foot restaurant opened this fall. Bowden said one of his biggest challenges was making the restaurant stand out from the nearby casino while still providing an intimate setting for diners. The restaurant's centerpiece is a 3,000-pound, chain saw-carved wood mural that portrays Mayan myths and Mexico.

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How downtown can become a true city core

This column first appeared on lasvegassun.com at 4:25 p.m. Nov. 28.

About six months ago, we devoted this column to all things downtown and its resurgence. I've been dividing my time between that assignment and the rest of my job as a Sun columnist. Splitting my time



J. PATRICK COOLICAN

this way has been less than ideal, so I'm relinquishing this spot to a colleague. I'll still keep my eye on downtown and write about it when the spirit moves me. It's been fun and educational, and hopefully I got the ball rolling.

The rest of the Las Vegas Valley, from the Strip to the suburbs, was built by rich people and corporations and their handmaidens in government — a top-down, oligarchic approach. As a result, despite our reputation for libertarianism and liberalism, the valley can feel pretty con-

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THE SUN'S MOST READ STORIES

These were among the most read stories on lasvegassun.com on Friday.

- 1 Shrinking volume, rising prices for farmed-out horses in Nevada.
- 2 2012 Miss Universe photo: lingerie shoots Miss Nevada hopefuls Color at Caesars.
- 3 Pezquize knows fourth fight with Marguez could settle past arguments.
- 4 Las Vegas celebrates 79th anniversary of 'Rapeal Day.'
- 5 Driver in fatal bus stop crash pleads not guilty.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Governor to release budget requests

By Davis McGraw-Schwartz
A version of this story was posted on lasvegassun.com at 2 a.m. Wednesday.

CARSON CITY — Gov. Brian Sandoval will release full agency budget requests, his chief of staff said Thursday afternoon, reversing his administration's position a day after the Las Vegas Sun revealed millions of dollars in agency spending requests were being kept confidential. In an interview, Gerald

Gardner said he anticipates that "items for special consideration" — which had exceeded his office's budget cap — would be released "no later than next Friday."

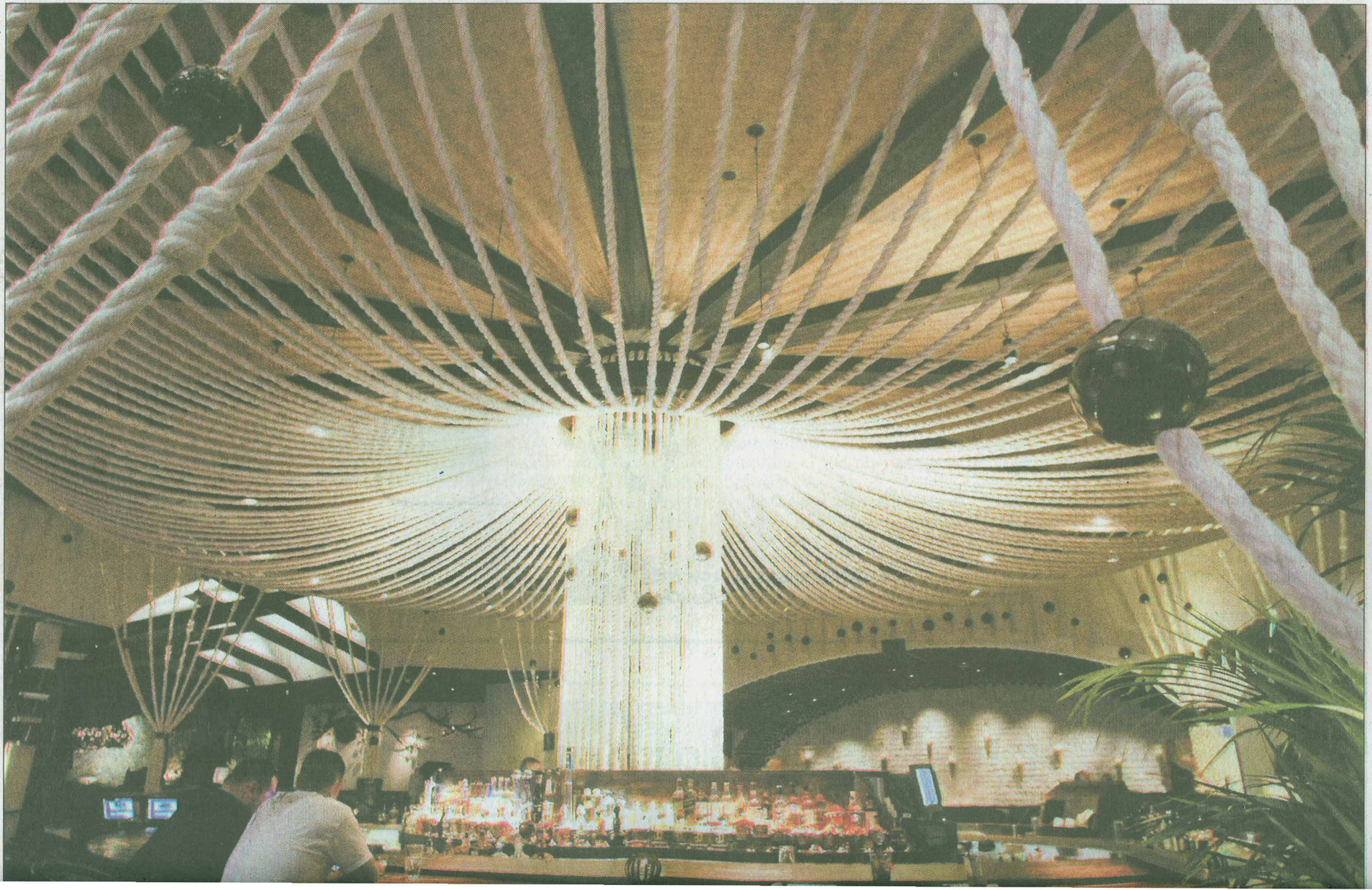
He said Sandoval's review of the budget requests "was nearing completion." Gardner said Sandoval has maintained that he did not want to release supplemental budget requests while the administration was still reviewing agencies' proposed

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VISUAL FEAST AND GOOD EATS

Chain saw art, ropes create unique atmosphere at Javier's

By RON SYLVESTER

This story was published on vegascinc.com at 2 a.m. Nov. 30.



Oregon artist J. Chester Armstrong used a chain saw to carve this mural based on a Mayan creation myth for Javier's. It took him six weeks to create.

It takes more than good food for a restaurant to succeed on the Strip. Atmosphere can be equally important. Many local restaurateurs import the country's top designers to create restaurant settings that are just right. One such designer is Peter Bowden, director of design and development for Dodd Mitchell, a global design firm. He is the mastermind behind Javier's, a new high-end Mexican restaurant in CityCenter's Aria. The 9,000-square-foot restaurant opened this fall. Bowden said one of his biggest challenges was making the restaurant stand out from the nearby casino while still providing an intimate setting for diners. The restaurant's centerpiece is a 3,000-pound, chain saw-carved wood mural that portrays Mayan myths and Mexico.

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JAVIER'S, FROM PAGE 1:

HINTS OF RELIGION INCLUDED IN SPACE

What design challenges did you face working with such a large footprint?

Creating an intimate feeling in such a large area is a challenge.

Visually, we try to get something to grab your eye, whether it's a unique texture, an interesting character or something you haven't seen before. You have to keep people engaged.

We try to create vignettes. There are arches so you can see into the space. You have the menu board and the wooden tree, all meant to draw you in. One element you see from across the casino is the ropes hanging like a canopy over the bar.

The thick white ropes frame the bar like a curtain. How did that concept come about?

That's more of a theatrical concept: How can we visually pull someone from 200 feet away into the space?

The ropes angle up, kind of like eyelashes, to direct you. We pulled out the bar from what it used to be, so people have to look in.

It's like a beacon for the Aria. There are a lot of little bars here, but nothing like the Cosmopolitan's Chandelier Bar. We wanted that one anchor spot.

The hostess looks like she's under a spotlight. Why?



The chain saw-carved wood panel is largely based on a Mayan story, but it blends in modern Mexican history, Catholicism and Christianity.

PHOTOS BY SAM MORRIS

The hostess looks like she's under a spotlight. Why?

The idea is to have a glowing person on the other side of the entrance accept you. It was originally going to be made out of wood, like a confessional.

There are these little hints of religion throughout the space. The arches are a little like a Spanish chapel. It is grounded in the Mexican culture, which very much revolves around Catholicism.

Initially, we had a lot of crosses in the design, which we'd never done before. But in Las Vegas, you get such a broad mix of people, we pulled that out.

Some have compared the bar to a roulette wheel. Was that your inspiration?

I've heard the roulette wheel, too. But our inspiration was a small piece of pottery. We built a bigger version of it for the bar.

There are a couple of interesting features. The way the ribs come up underneath the bar gives women a place to hang their purses. We also have charging stations hidden in the bar. That's one of the problems you have these days: you want people to stay at the bar, but their phone batteries start to die and they have to leave to go back to their rooms to recharge them. We thought: What if we gave them chargers?

At each end of the restaurant, you have big elements: a large private dining room and an oversized mural.

The chain saw-carved wood panel is largely based on a Mayan story, but it blends in modern Mexican history, Catholicism and Christianity.

Why?

We try to give people something visually interesting and different every 10 feet or so. It keeps the action moving. It's all about keeping energy within the space.

We took this long linear space and created interesting moments along the way. Because the restaurant is shaped like a kidney bean, you have all these opportunities to look through the space from one end to the other.

What is the story behind the mural?

It was inspired by 3-D dioramas and European relief art.

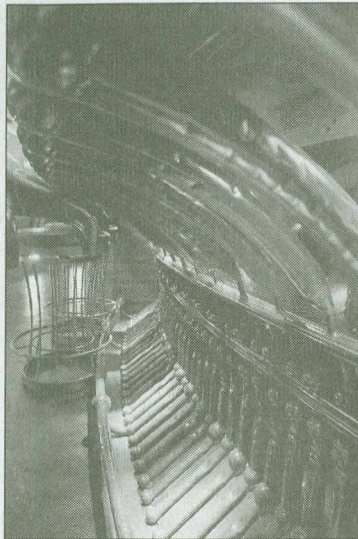
We went back to the Mayan story. The history of Mexico and Central America all goes back to the Mayan creation myth, and that's the basis for most of the panels, blended with modern Mexican history, Catholicism and Christianity.

I asked J. Chester Armstrong, the artist from Oregon, to pack as much Mayan creation myth, modern history, imagery and interwoven story lines into each square inch as possible.

How long did it take him to create?

He did it in six weeks. It's really amazing that it was done with a chainsaw.

It was originally something my metal artist, Scott Brown, was going to create. Then Dodd Mitchell came in and said, "I love the concept for the space,

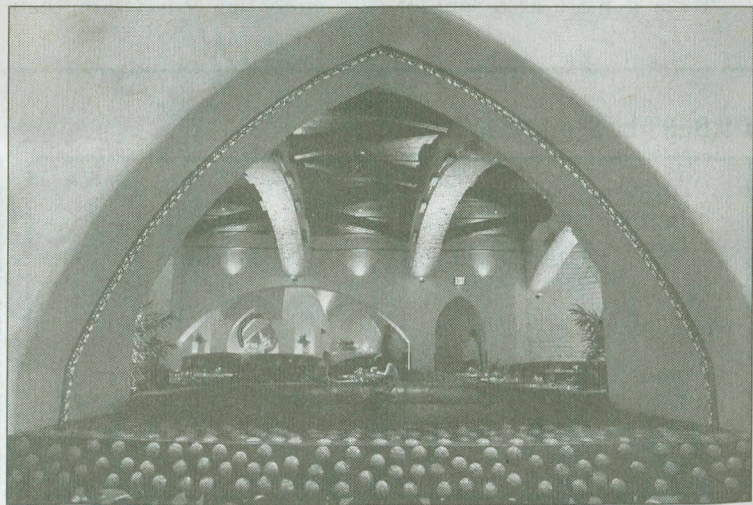
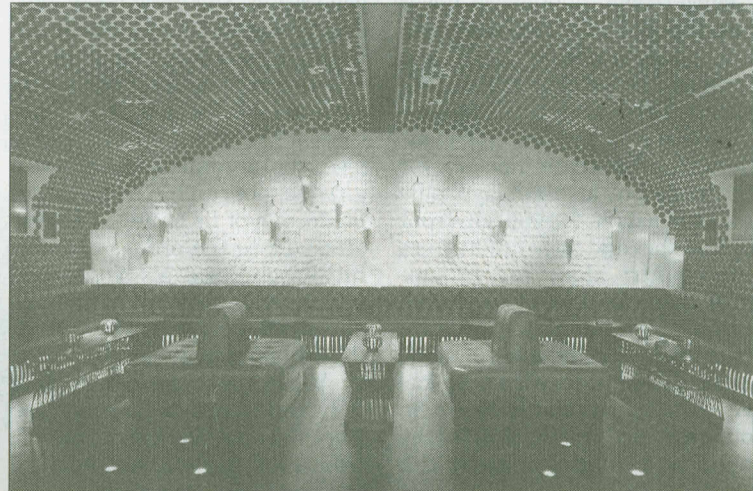


The ribs underneath the bar can hold women's purses.

but we're going to do it all out of chain saw art." He loves taking normal things and bringing it to a level people have to pay attention to.

Wood is the medium that people think of as eagles and grizzly bears taken from logs and standing on the side of the road. This creates something that no one has ever seen. He wanted to do something so different, people would just scratch their heads.

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The design of Javier's was built to "give people something visually interesting and different every 10 feet or so," meant to keep action moving and keep energy within the space, designer Peter Bowden said.