



Berlin. "It's not that I'm anti-round," he clarifies. "But round is more expensive. Round is always my second choice."

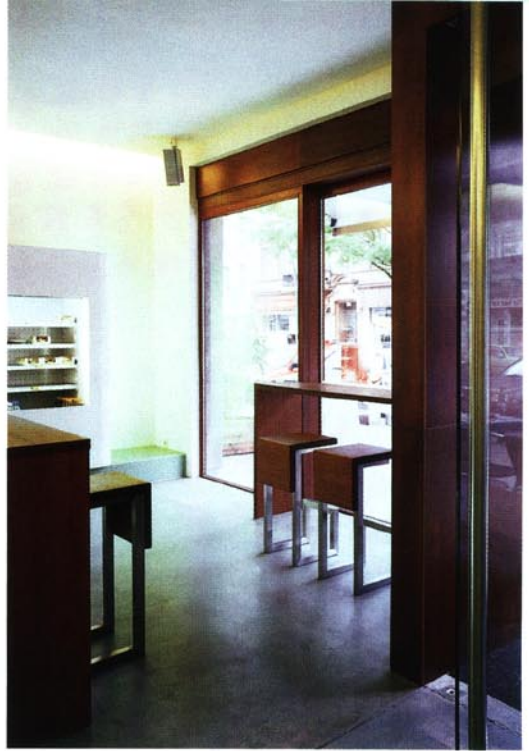
Not so for the owners of this 1,100-square-foot café in the city's western Schöneberg neighborhood. Intrigued by **Drewes + Streng** Architekten's

## Looking Sharp in Berlin

FRANK F. DREWES DIDN'T want round corners on the sandwich refrigerator.

"My first choice is rectangular," he says, meaning not just refrigerators but everything design-related. And that preference is clearly on display at Baltas, a gourmet coffee and sandwich shop in

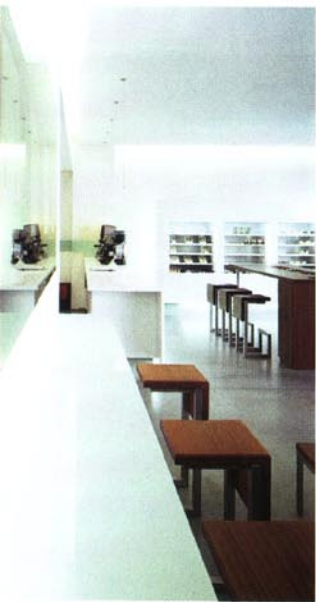
overall style, they nevertheless insisted that Drewes bend a bit. And ironically, it turns out, all the orthogonal architecture and sharp-cornered furniture draws attention to the few curves that are present—and the establishment's leaf logo in particular. →



From top: Frank Drewes designed all the furniture at Baltas in meranti wood and stainless steel. The service table is built to hold coffee lids, napkins, and condiments.



Item	Medium	Tu Gr	Item	Medium	Tu Gr
Coffee	1.90	2.30	French Vanilla Cream	2.40	2.80
Coffee with almond	1.90	2.30	French Cappuccino Cream	2.40	2.80
Espresso	1.60	2.00	Chocolate	3.30	3.60
Espresso Macchiato	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Macchiato	3.30	3.60
Cappuccino	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Cream	2.30	2.70
Cappuccino Macchiato	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Cappuccino	2.30	2.70
Latte Macchiato	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Latte	2.30	2.70
Cappuccino	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Cappuccino	2.30	2.70
Hot Chocolate	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Latte	2.30	2.70
Soft Chocolate	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Cappuccino	2.30	2.70
Milkshake	2.20	2.50	Chocolate Ice Latte	2.30	2.70
Hot Chocolate for kids	1.50	2.00	Chocolate Ice Cappuccino	2.30	2.70
			Chocolate Ice Latte	2.30	2.70
			Espresso Extra	0.80	0.80
			Tea	1.60	2.00
			Special Filter with Fat	1.40	1.90



As a starting point, Drewes says, he stripped everything that remained of the previous bar in order to “neutralize” the space. The new envelope is simplicity itself. White-painted walls, a concrete floor tinted light green, and window frames of *meranti*, a dark tropical hardwood, embody the restrained color scheme. It’s white for cleanliness, green for freshness, and brown for coffee.

Drewes designed all the furniture himself, in *meranti* mounted flush on stainless-steel legs. To allow greater flexibility of configuration, most pieces are freestanding, including the 8-foot-long *meranti*-topped service table opposite the coffee bar. The

only stationary elements in the room are a bar table by the window and a glass-topped counter built into the back wall. A black mirror hangs above the counter, so patrons can watch the activity behind them.

Since the owners of Baltas hope to roll out their concept as a chain, Drewes designed a look that can be adjusted in different locations. The mobile furniture plays its part. In addition, the Berlin café serves as a testing ground for art and accessories: an enlarged photograph of bread and soup and the leafy lemon trees in tin cube planters.

The biggest metamorphosis occurs at dusk,

when the fading light softens the café’s straight lines. Paper-shaded candles appear on tables; filtered fluorescents, installed behind the sandwich refrigerator, emit a soft green glow; and the ceiling cove’s white fluorescents shift to red.

For now, at any rate. To fine-tune the mood, Drewes says, he could easily change the light or paint a wall: “But it’s important,” he adds, “to remember the difference between contemporary and trendy.” —*Otto Pohl*

CUSTOM FURNITURE, SHELIVING: **BERND RIEGER**, ARCHITECT OF RECORD; **FRITSCHÉ-LAMPRECHT-PEITZMEIER ARCHITEKTEN UND INGENIEUR**, GENERAL CONTRACTOR; **SAGE ENTERTAINMENT**.



*Clockwise from top right: Built into the ground level of a 1969 apartment block, the storefront windows slide open on warm days, and the café spills onto the sidewalk. The rear wall’s black mirror features rectangular insets intended to display photographs or written statements; the enlarged photographic triptych of bread and soup is by Diephotodesigner, a collaborative. The rear counter is glass-topped MDF.*



text: otto pohl

# A German Lesson

Designing part of  
Berlin's Ku'damm 101  
was a hospitality-project  
education for Ascan  
Tesdorpf and Vogt +  
Weizenegger





HOTEL

**Now the third most popular** tourist destination in Europe—behind only London and Paris—Berlin is unquestionably booming. About 30 high-end hotels have opened in the last four years, and dozens more are scheduled for 2004. While most of the large chains are concentrating on former East Berlin, however, Hotaka is pursuing

opportunities farther west.

The company, which already owned three Berlin hotels, recently purchased two adjacent unfinished apartment buildings at number 101 on the Kurfürstendamm, once West Berlin's main shopping street. Hotaka then hired Swiss design firm Kessler + Kessler to develop the Ku'damm 101 concept: a

young, hip, and urban hotel at a three-star price. The Swiss, in turn, brought in two young German firms to handle key areas.

Ascan Tesdorpf Architekt took sole responsibility for the interior architecture of the lobby, while Vogt + Weizenegger focused on furniture and fixtures. Ascan Tesdorpf also helped design the breakfast



room, seven meeting rooms, and 171 guest rooms, overseen by Kessler + Kessler. For both firms, Ku'damm 101 was a first opportunity to expand into hospitality interiors. (Tesdorpf, an architect, had first branched out into restaurant interiors; Oliver Vogt and Hermann Weizenegger are industrial designers who'd started out with

items as varied as towels and porcelain before moving on to contract furniture, an art gallery, and shops.)

It wasn't an easy introduction. Stuck with an existing concrete shell and a ground level filled with load-bearing columns of different shapes and sizes, Ascan Tesdorpf and Vogt + Weizenegger somehow

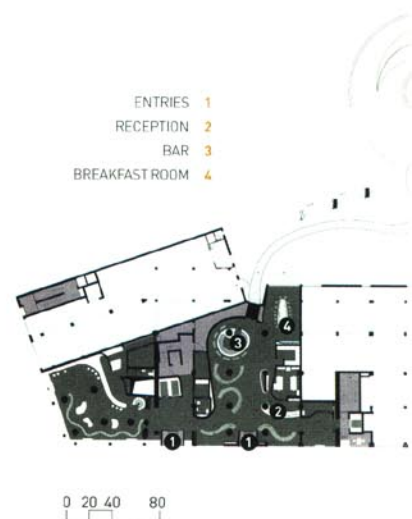
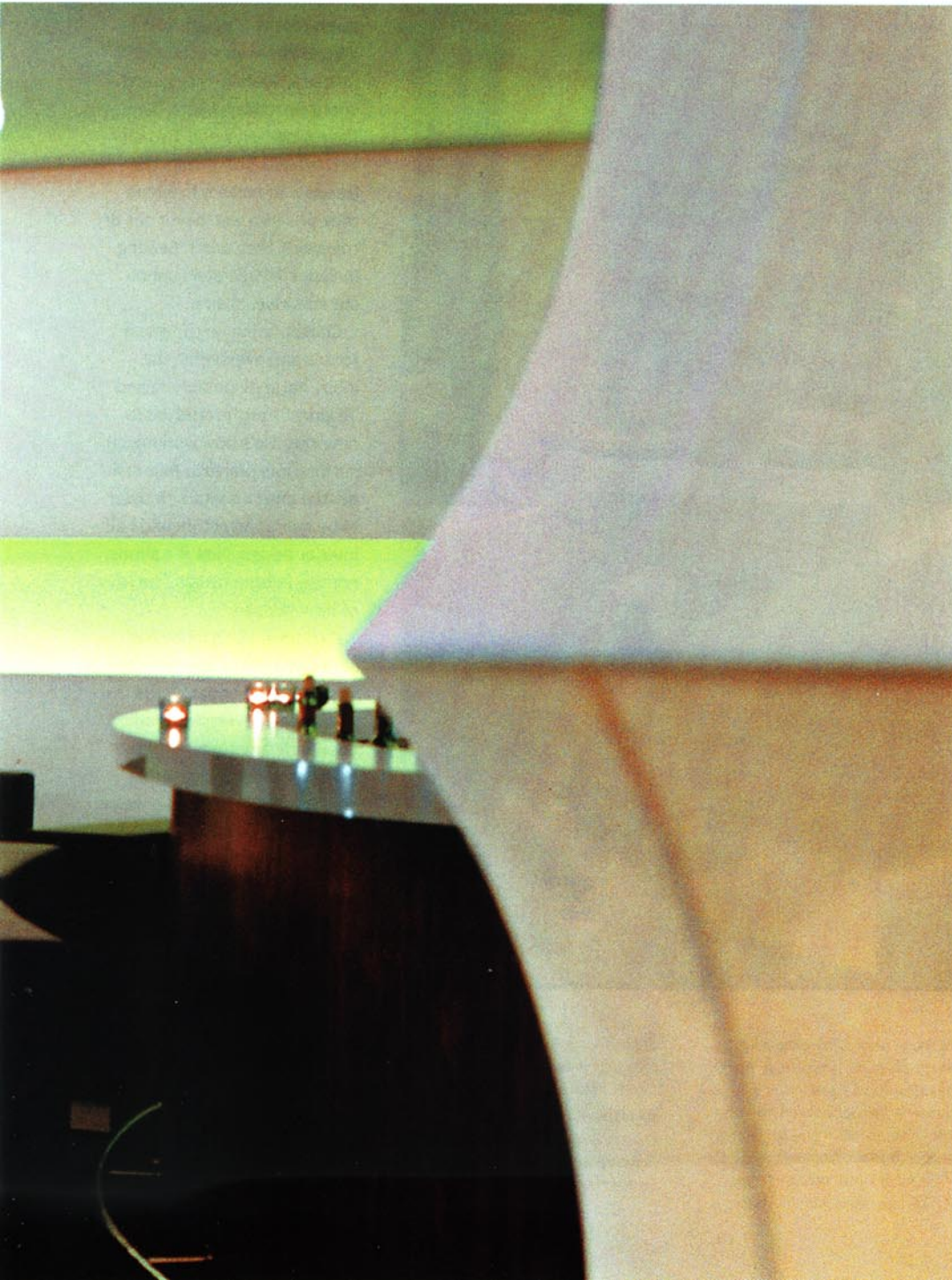
had to produce a stylish hotel lobby. "The space was like a car with five wheels, completely devoid of logic," Tesdorpf remembers. Ultimately, those deficiencies became strengths.

After rounding off the columns to the same size, the team enclosed them in steel frames and stretched off-white spandex over each frame's four hoops. Low-wattage fluorescents, installed inside the fabric, transform the columns into glowing, Isamu Noguchi-esque lamps that set the tone for the entire 3,700-square-foot lobby. Tesdorpf describes the look as "contemporary retro future." →

**Previous spread, left:** At Berlin hotel Ku'damm 101, architect Ascan Tesdorpf worked under the supervision of Kessler + Kessler to design the guest rooms. A custom steel-alloy reading light is screwed into a custom headboard with a rubber inlay. Photography: Otto Pohl.

**Previous spread, right:** The front entry features a coated-steel version of the hotel's apostrophe logo. Photography: Otto Pohl.

**Left:** Spandex-covered steel frames, internally lit by fluorescents, hide irregular columns left over from the unrealized apartment building. Vogt + Weizenegger's wool-covered custom seating can be rearranged or removed. Photography: Daniel Kessler.





**Top, from left:** The apostrophe logo reappears on custom ceramic dishes in the breakfast room, furnished with molded-plywood chairs by Arne Jacobsen; photography: Daniel Kessler. Acoustic tile lines the lobby's ceiling cutouts; photography: Otto Pohl. **Center, from left:** The walnut-clad

reception desk is trimmed with a high-pressure laminate. In the breakfast room, Tesdorpf and Kessler + Kessler painted the concrete column. Photography: Daniel Kessler. **Bottom, from left:** The light in the lobby's wall recess changes periodically, along with the text;

photography: Otto Pohl. Flooring in the lobby is asphalt tile; photography: Daniel Kessler.

**Opposite:** A guest room's plywood chair is also a Jacobsen design. Flooring is rubber. Photography: Daniel Kessler.

Ribbons of upholstered custom seating encircle the columns and snake across the asphalt tile floor. Walnut furniture unifies separate zones—the lozenge-shape reception desk ties in to the oval bar and a teardrop-shape table in a small adjacent meeting room.

The three principals agreed that the lobby should contrast as much as possible with the compact rectilinearity of the guest rooms. Though Vogt + Weizenegger wasn't involved upstairs, custom case goods continue to play a part: Take the molded-plywood TV cabinet. Wheels give guests the freedom to move it to where they prefer to watch—or out of the way if they don't. Seating includes 1950's-style upholstered swivel chairs.

Collaborating on the guest rooms and overseeing the lobby has indisputably raised Tesdorpf's profile and led to new jobs. He's now working on six interiors projects: four residential and two retail. "It used to be half architecture and half interior design. Now it's almost entirely interior design," he says of his workload.

Ku'damm 101's lobby has similarly yielded new work for Vogt + Weizenegger. "Right now, we're developing a concept for a super-economical guest room for a large hotel chain," Vogt says. "When we've solved that one, we'll be ready to do a whole hotel." 🍷

PROJECT TEAM (ASCAN TESDORPF ARCHITECT): SANDRA SEIFERT; SANDRA FREITAG. CUSTOM READING LIGHT (GUEST ROOM): BAULMANN LEUCHTEN. CUSTOM BED (GUEST ROOM), CUSTOM TABLES (BREAKFAST ROOM): TISCHLEREI HÄRTIG. CUSTOM SEATING (LOBBY): COHRS WERKSTÄTTEN. CUSTOM CERAMIC TABLEWARE (BREAKFAST ROOM): KAHLA. CHAIRS (BREAKFAST, GUEST ROOMS): FRITZ HANSEN. FLOORING: FREUDENBERG. WINDOWS: SCHEFFER. LIGHTING CONSULTANT: AGLICHT. PROJECT MANAGER: BAUPLANUNG STOEßEL. BUILDING ARCHITECT: KADEL, QUICK & SCHEIB. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: SCHROBSDORF BAU.