

February 2018

# bar

Developing premium bar excellence

BAR MAGAZINE

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## The Perception bar

CHEVRON PATTERN FLOORING BY HAKWOOD

INSIDE: PUNCHES • TECHNOLOGY • LIGHTING • BEER AND FOOD PAIRING



Baba Interiors photography by Julian Franklin. Drinks photography by Marc Millar schnappsphotography.com. Other hotel interiors photography by Gareth Gardner garethgardner.com.

# Look east

A LEVANTINE-INFLUENCED BAR AND RESTAURANT HAVE OPENED IN EDINBURGH.

Baba Bar



Baba Restaurant



The Library

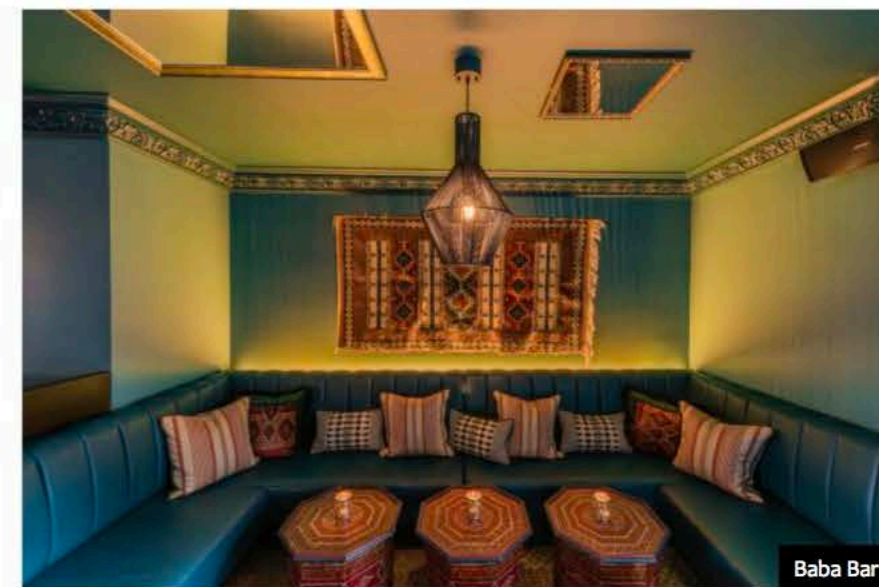
The flavours and styles of the eastern Mediterranean infuse the food, cocktails and design of new bar and restaurant Baba in Edinburgh. It has been created as part of the £25million transformation of the former Roxburghe Hotel in Edinburgh's Charlotte Square into the city's second location for The Principal hotels. Made up of seven Georgian townhouses originally designed by leading 18th-century architect Robert Adam, the Grade II\*-listed building retains many of its striking original features but with a contemporary look created by hospitality design specialist Goddard Littlefair with consultant Katherine Arnold and Robbie Bargh of consultancy Gorgeous Group.

They were set the task to create a new destination bar and restaurant within the hotel, working with Jonathan MacDonald and Daniel Spurr of acclaimed Glasgow restaurant Ox and Finch. The result is Baba, or "BABA" as they prefer it, which is built around the idea of a Mr Baba, a fictitious character based on a vintage photograph found in a souk in Turkey. His face provides the backdrop to the bar counter as a large mural and also recurs in the interior design and branding.

Turkey along with other eastern Mediterranean countries such as Cyprus, Lebanon and Greece – part of the historical region of the Levant – inspire the cuisine



Pistachio Julep



Baba Bar



The Garden



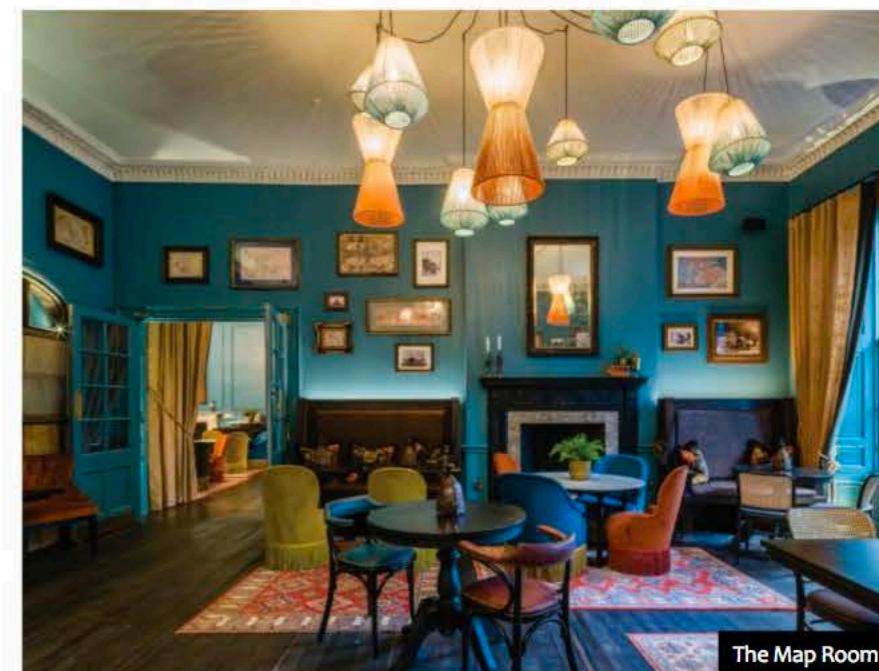
Olive Oil Negroni

## Contact

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[www.baba.restaurant](http://www.baba.restaurant)

in the restaurant. Under head chef David Barnett, it ranges from kebabs to kofta, including Scottish-influenced dishes such as haggis and harissa kibbeh.

Levantine flavours have also made their way onto the cocktail menu, under bar manager Astrid Carleton, with twists on the classics such as a Bloody Mariam with vodka, spicy harissa paste, ras-el-hanout spice mix, sumac spice, lemon juice, tomato juice, olives and vegetables pickled with za'atar herbs. The Olive Oil Negroni combines Sacred Juniper Gin and Absenteroux Vermouth, Campari and Sacred Rosehip Cup with extra virgin olive



The Map Room

## Behind the scenes

**Interior design:** Goddard Littlefair

**Main contractor, fixed furniture:**

Thomas Johnstone

**Architect:** 3DReid

**Bar consultant:** Gorgeous Group

**Lighting design consultant:** Susan Lake

Lighting Design

**Curtains:** Osborne Heath

**Artwork:** Artiq

**Furnishings:** Restoration Hardware,

OKA, Andy Thornton, La Maison Chic,

Reclaimed Bespoke, Tinek Home, Pure

White Lines, The Contract Chair Co,

Maison Du Monde, Taylors Classics,

Lasso, Revivalist

**Map Room lights:** Janie Knitted Textiles

**Ironwork:** Made By The Forge

**Lamps:** Alexandra Raben

**Rugs:** Nemetnejad Brothers

**Lighting:** Visual Comfort, Bespoke

Lights, Pholc, The Lighting Company,

English Salvage

**Fabrics:** Pyton, Lelièvre, Samuel & Sons,

Abbott & Boyd, Kobe, GP&J Baker



Mr Baba behind the bar



Baba Restaurant

oil, while the Pistachio Julep mixes Maker's Mark bourbon, brandy and mint with chocolate spirit and pistachio.

For an alternative to an Espresso Martini, the bar offers the Arabica-Pick-Me-Up which is a frozen shot of Dark Matter Spiced Rum from Scotland with aged Semillon raki infused with coffee. Just as much thought has gone into the non-alcoholic options such as the Sumac & Mint Limeade made with Persian white lime, sumac, mint, preserved lemon and "honey pomegranate molasses". The wines have also been sourced from the eastern Mediterranean, including Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece.

Levantine influences carry through to the interior design against a canvas of the 18th-century architecture, points out Will Hutchings of Goddard Littlefair. "We incorporated a number of period elements that paid respect to the building such as Georgian-era tiling designs as well as architectural salvage elements that linked other key spaces. We then alluded to the Levantine-influenced food offer with, for example, a series of rugs fitted to the walls like tapestry artworks and via the richness of the colour scheme which includes aubergine, teal and peacock leather armchairs, with the whole concept overlaid with a bold and contemporary freshness."

With its own street entrance round the corner on George Street, Baba's bar is furnished with banquettes with aubergine leather backrests, hung from scaffolding

poles, as well as reclaimed cinema seats plus contemporary stools lining the bar counter. The bar itself has been refurbished with a re-finished, dark-stained timber front and re-used zinc top, retaining signs of ageing and character from its previous life. A new gantry above the bar counter has been built out of mesh cages and more scaffolding poles to provide storage. The ceiling is painted in a rich teal tone, with multiple framed mirrors attached, while the new poured concrete floor has been decorated with a stencilled repeat motif. Four wall lights with timber-panelled shades play with light and cast intriguing shadows.

As well as the main restaurant, Baba features semi-separate spaces suitable for private dining, dubbed The Map Room, The Salon and The Library. The hotel also features The Garden, another destination for all-day food and drink that has been

created out of a central courtyard space. Now with a glazed roof and filled with trees and plants, it is a light-filled area inspired by hothouses and orangeries on country house estates, with Art Nouveau peacock chairs and a reclaimed green-painted workbench at its centre.

With its high-quality cuisine and cocktails and the plush, elegant interiors, Baba is designed to appeal both to hotel guests and to Edinburgh locals, says Katherine, a former partner at Gorgeous Group and now a partner at Baba. "We believe with Baba we're bringing something genuinely new and inspiring to Edinburgh's thriving restaurant and bar scene and to visitors. We have travelled all over the eastern Mediterranean looking for inspiration for both the menu and design to capture and create a unique environment and menu for people to indulge in."