

URBANJOBS UNVEILS ESCA: A CONTEMPORARY MEDITERRANEAN DINING EXPERIENCE

Esca embodies Mediterranean sophistication through spatial rhythm and flow, led by the culinary artistry of Michelin-starred chef Osman Sezener



URBANJOBS, the multidisciplinary design studio celebrated for its material-driven approach to interiors, has revealed Esca, a 189-seat Mediterranean-inspired restaurant at İstinyePark in İzmir. Situated within one of İzmir's most vibrant lifestyle and shopping destinations, the project embodies the city's lively and diverse spirit. Central elements of Mediterranean culture – conviviality and the elegance of simplicity – are expressed through a spatial narrative that employs tactile raw materials such as stone and wood.

Rooted in a philosophy of simplicity and honesty, Esca invites guests to experience a menu centred around seasonal ingredients, guided by the expression 'Worldly Flavours, Mediterranean Heart'. This ethos is mirrored in the restaurant's bespoke interiors, where an atmosphere of elegance and warmth harmonises with the culinary journey from start to finish. Michelin-starred Head Chef Osman Sezener draws on his extensive experience to create dishes designed for sharing, reflecting both locality and seasonality, a vision that directly informs the restaurant's concept. Together, the menu and space embody freshness, restraint and a strong sense of place.



Esca unfolds across four distinct areas: a private dining room, bar seating, a terrace and an outdoor space. Guests enter through an enclosed windbreak, which opens directly into the main hall. From there, circulation flows through the central bar—spread across two levels—before arriving at the private dining area.

The restaurant's façade interacts with the architectural style of the mall, while the charm of İzmir – characterised by a relaxed, coastal feel – inspired the design, allowing the restaurant to stand out beyond its commercial environment. Using natural materials, creating a sense of openness and flooding the space with light, Esca forms a strong connection with its surroundings.

URBANJOBS was provided with the space in a shell-and-core condition, featuring an inefficient and irregular layout. The studio viewed this challenge as an opportunity to introduce spatial reconfiguration and proportional adjustment, transforming these constraints into a coherent plan where technical areas, such as the main dining hall and service functions, coexist seamlessly. Despite its complex starting point, the final layout feels both functional and fluid. Considerable attention was paid to flooring transitions, integrated shading and enclosure strategies that conceptually blur the boundaries between inside and outside, ensuring guest comfort throughout the year.



Primarily centred around a terrace space, which functions as the main dining hall, Esca's layout incorporates a private indoor dining area, evoking the feeling of being outdoors while still offering the charm of an interior. The terrace is semi-covered and designed to feel like an extension of the interior, rather than a typical, exposed outdoor dining area. Moving through the space, visitors transition from the enclosed indoor entry and private dining section to the expansive terrace, which offers the sensation of an indoor salon as a surprising inversion. With 360-degree access, the central bar creates a lively and engaging experience for guests.

Guests enter through the interior, with a view of the central bar, which flows onto the terrace. Creating a dynamic focal point for guests, the bar sits at the centre of the restaurant, offering 360-degree access and dual-level flooring around its circumference. Views are carefully layered between areas, ensuring a continuous dialogue between interior and exterior.



Esca's colour palette takes inspiration from the welcoming spirit of Mediterranean people and the local flora, using complementary natural, earthy tones, stone hues and warm wood shades that anchor the space. Wood and plaster finishes help soften the atmosphere and give the terrace an indoor dining room feel, while luxurious materials and refined surfaces, such as marble, enhance the dining experience.

Natural light floods the terrace throughout the day, transporting diners to the Mediterranean, while layers of additional artificial lighting are integrated into the space to add warmth and intimacy during the evening service. Custom lighting solutions are also incorporated into the bar and dining areas to emphasise various material textures and create distinctive moods at different times of day.



The restaurant offers guests a fully bespoke dining experience, with serving counters, seating areas and lighting all individually designed. Each element has been crafted specifically for the space, aligning with the restaurant's Mediterranean concept. Throughout the project, URBANJOBS carefully sourced materials from its local network of Turkish suppliers to minimise the environmental impact of the design. For the finishing touches, URBANJOBS introduced a subtle curation of art and styling to enhance the Mediterranean ambience. Decorative elements have been kept to a minimum, allowing the materiality and spatial design to take centre stage.

Reflecting on the design process for Esca, Murat Dede, Founder of URBANJOBS, says: "Normally, we enjoy developing a brand's identity and interiors side by side, letting each inform the other. With Esca, the interior came first. We began by shaping an atmosphere of light, texture and materiality and from this, Cansu Merdamert drew out the brand identity – its colour palette, logo and even the menu design. In this way, the graphic language was born from the space itself, as though the restaurant's character was already present in the architecture, waiting to be revealed."



Whilst Esca is rooted in İzmir, its spatial and conceptual framework has the potential to be adapted for further contexts. URBANJOBS' bespoke approach to designing restaurant spaces allows for flexibility in future branches.

With Esca, URBANJOBS has created more than just a restaurant: it is a seamless blend of cuisine, architecture and atmosphere that captures İzmir's spirit while presenting a model that can extend well beyond its local environment. By grounding the project in honest materials, light and conviviality, the studio has designed a space that feels timeless yet modern, intimate yet spacious. Esca stands both as a celebration of place and a reminder of how design can elevate the dining experience into something truly memorable.

Notes to Editors

Address

İstinye Park AVM

Bahçelerarası Mah. Şehit Bnb. Ali Resmi Tufan Cad. No:3, Bağımsız Bölüm No: Z95

35330 Balçova/İzmir

Türkiye

Photography Credits

İbrahim Özbunar

About URBANJOBS

Founded in 2017 by Murat Dede, URBANJOBS is a multidisciplinary design studio known for its thoughtful, material-driven approach to spatial design. URBANJOBS approaches space not merely as a form, but as a holistic experience shaped by material, texture and light, completed through user interaction. Based in Istanbul, its design approach ensures that spatial composition is both legible and fluid while meticulously crafting sensory layers to build an atmosphere. A unique spatial language is developed in every project, from door handles to custom-designed furniture. Founder, Murat Dede, says: “The true power of design lies in its ability to create an experience. Design is not merely about form; it is a proposition about how a space will be lived in and aged over time.”

Today, some of Istanbul’s most prominent gastronomy and hospitality venues—such as Batard, Zula, Momo Bebeköy, Momo Beach and Clove, and Saku, the rising star Scalla, and many more—have come to life through URBANJOBS’ designs. Their portfolio extends internationally, featuring projects for world-renowned restaurateur Alan Yau, Italian dining giant Obicà, luxury chocolatier Butterfly, and iconic brand Johnnie Walker.

Beyond the F&B spaces, URBANJOBS designs retail, residential, and office projects, creating unique identities for brands such as Beymen, Getir, İş Bankası, Assembly Buildings, Kolektif House, Doğuş, Nef, and Renault.

Most recently, URBANJOBS was selected as a winner in Excellent Architecture – Interior Architecture Public at the German Design Award 2026 and a Special Mention as Best Young Interior Design Firm in the 2025 Architizer A+Awards, selected from thousands of entries across more than 90 countries.

Currently, URBANJOBS is designing a new project for Michelin-starred chef Osman Sezener, bringing its hospitality expertise to new levels and locations. With a timeless design philosophy, URBANJOBS merges spatial organisation with the nature of materials and the user experience, crafting a distinct spatial language in every project.

www.urbanjobs.istanbul

Press Information

For further information and hi-res images, please contact Tomorrow PR:

Maggie Scaife

maggie@tomorrowpr.co.uk