

Underground Jewel

You likely won't see any molls in here, but The Upright certainly has plenty of beautiful speakeasy vibes, thanks to VERSA

By **Megan Swoyer**



DOWNRIGHT PRETTY A clubby feel with a variety of seating styles adorns The Upright. – Photo by **Sally Matak**

Designer Jen Childs sensed serendipity at work when she met Chef Jared Gadbow at a fundraiser. “Jared had just moved back to Michigan from New York and my husband, originally from Michigan after working on a project in Shanghai,” says Childs, whose company, VERSA interior design, is looking for a designer for a restaurant and speakeasy-style bar he wanted to open in Detroit. “He wanted perspectives,” Childs recalls.

She and her husband/business partner, Nick, visited the building (the historic building is a former film-production event venue that’s located across the street and once was a renowned film production studio). Nick and potential.

“The ceilings were incredible,” Childs enthuses, and says she began design work on the project almost in Reel, opened in 2020 to rave reviews. At the end of 2021, the lower-level Upright bar, shown here, made

Upright to feel intimate and classy, and almost like you had discovered a secret spot that had always been says.

Working with a small space of no more than 500 square feet, Childs fashioned a clubby feel with different banquette. "I love the back bar and the wood and the beautiful bronze mirror (all built by BJ Construction (from The Detroit Wallpaper Co. in Ferndale)," she says. They found an antique door at Hamtramck's Wood a bit of a rustic feel, with open ceilings and concrete floors, which relates to the main restaurant upstairs

Childs, who obtained an interior design degree from George Washington University and a master's in history Savannah College of Art & Design, says the project was right up her alley. "We didn't want to overdress it shares, adding, "We didn't want to cover up what was there." The designer says she relished her time spent historic buildings in Detroit are just waiting for someone to do something with them," she asserts.

More Information: versa-design.com. For more information on **Oak & Reel** and **The Upright**, visit [oal](#)
