

# HERE

*Neighbourhood Magazine* **OSSINGTON**

# HERE

Who makes Oss?  
Why here?  
How did we get here?  
What comes next?

## HERE HERE

### PUBLIC ADDRESS WITH HULLMARK

**DURING FOUR DAYS, FROM OCT. 2–5, 2019 PUBLIC ADDRESS DOCUMENTED THE PEOPLE, BUILDINGS AND BUSINESSES THAT DEFINE THE *Ossington community*. THEY INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED TENANTS, BUSINESS OWNERS, PASSERSBY AND LEARNED ABOUT THE RICH *history* OF THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD. HERE'S WHAT THEY FOUND.**

Photographs by Cristian Ordóñez & Ben Rahn/A-Frame

#### THANKS TO OUR COLLABORATORS

Academy of Lions, Audax Architecture, Bellwoods Brewery, Doublenaut, Fresh City Farms, Golden Turtle, Hariri Pontarini Architects, Jimmy's Coffee, La Banane, Loversland, MisfitStudio, Pilot Coffee Roasters, Reigning Champ, Ride Cycle Club, Superpoint, Tiger of Sweden, Town Moto, V de V

"CULTIVATING WHERE WE WALK BODIES about the

Amber Joliat  
Creator of MISFIT  
88 Ossington

MUHAMMAD ALI  
CASSIUS CLAY JR.  
The People's Champion  
vs  
TORO GEORGE  
TO'S OWN CHUYA

NO PARKING  
12:00AM - 7:00AM  
EXCEPT BY PERMIT



# BUILDINGS AREN'T DESIGNED TO *change.*

Bricks, mortar, concrete and wood stuck together with one thing in mind. A tall tower to spot fires across the city. A boxing gym to train fighters. A garage to fix cars. But we change. Some buildings adapt. their histories give shape to new ideas. Others fall, making room for new structures to keep pace with culture.

Architecture—what we save and what we build—reflects what we value. We like buildings with history. We like details. We like unexpected combinations.

A wedding dress and a motorcycle. A workout and a cuban. A sweatsuit and a swedish suit. We like seeing something familiar used in an entirely new way. A garage turned brewery. A rooming house turned boutique. A neglected street turned destination.

Ossington isn't just the buildings, it is spaces in between. It's the people who call this neighbourhood home, who come here every day to work, shop, eat and celebrate. It's the slice of pizza on a Friday night, the Saturday morning yoga, and the Sunday morning coffee. It's the generations of history that have shaped the neighbourhood and the creative optimism that drives its current iteration.

Ossington wasn't designed to change, but it did. If we're lucky, it's not done.



# THE ARCHI- TECT

12

## OSSINGTON

has lived many lives, most recently as a pop-up space near the corner of Queen West. Its next incarnation, designed by internationally awarded firm, Hariri Pontarini, signals a shift for the architectural ambitions of the site and the neighbourhood as a whole. What makes this project—and Ossington—so special? Siamak Hariri, Founding Partner at Hariri Pontarini, has a few ideas.



Camera Bar and Stephen Bulger Gallery, 2005 ↵

**"I think that's what was most interesting to us: the vision. It's not about the type of building or the use, it's about how the building is a lever for our clients, helping them get to where they want to go. "**

**Tell us about the genesis of 12 Ossington.**

The story goes back to Atom Egoyan and Hussain Amarshi and their little building called Camera, on Queen West. Jeff [Hull] mentioned that he had always loved the building, especially how it's kind of a hybrid—it feels new while retaining this old texture.

Camera was all about unveiling and getting to the soul of the building, of the neighbourhood. Back then the space was a business, a hardware store on Queen. There was a pleasure in removing some of the old layers, the metal siding, etc. and discovering a whole history and texture beneath.

**It feels like the neighbourhood has a lot of texture.**

Yes, it's extraordinary what Hullmark is doing with the focus on this neighbourhood. We had a conversation about what it means to do something "Toronto." You know, Toronto is really craft-based. At school we used to celebrate the work by tradesmen, by craftsmen. That is our real history. And if you look at Ossington, you see it everywhere. You see these remnants, as you do on Queen Street, of this kind of work, what was then considered bread and butter work. Each of these tradesmen put a little bit of love into their buildings and that translated into a

texture, a feel. And you look now and think "my goodness, what have we lost?"

**How does 12 Ossington fit in?**

There's a vision of the future of Ossington, and in many ways 12 Ossington is the crown jewel. That was the assignment Hullmark pitched to me. They wanted it to be interesting, they wanted to convey the spirit of the neighbourhood, all while embodying principles of good architecture. It needed to feel like something very special for and of the neighbourhood. That's not easy to do!

I think that's what was most interesting to us: the vision. It's not

"We wanted this to be a part of Ossington. It should feel like it specifically belongs here."



about the type of building or the use, it's about how the building is a lever for our clients, helping them get to where they want to go. When a client comes to me with that kind of aspiration—to be the crown jewel of the neighbourhood—it makes the whole project fun.

**What does that mean, to be a part of the neighbourhood in that way?**

It goes back to the Camera project and that idea of uncovering, of texture, of doing something that both fits but also has an edge. That's what a really good building should do; it should feel like it has always been there, and at the same time, provoke you to look twice.

We wanted this to be a part of Ossington. It should feel like it specifically belongs here. If you were to say to me "I feel like it's part of Ossington," I would be happy with that. But at the same time we want our peers to find it interesting, and that's the intersection we're aiming for.

Hullmark approaches this idea very deeply, philosophically. To them,

it's part of a larger idea, which is that the most interesting people or things are often the quiet ones. That you have to scratch beneath the surface to get to know and appreciate them. Like a good work of art, it should be both quiet but at the same time engaging. This is really what we tried to do with this small little jewel on Ossington, which at the same time had to be a commercial project. And that's the challenge I took on with zeal and ardor.

**Ossington has changed a lot over time. How do you view that change?**

There is something really interesting about architecture that's a bit "gritty." I like this. This building, if we do it right, should feel like it has a grittiness, which I don't see as a negative word. I see it as a positive word. There is a texture to this neighbourhood that is unpretentious, down-to-earth. It has patina. The materials we're using are not precious, to the point where they repel you with their ostentatiousness. There's a kind of simplicity, a matter-of-factness.

It feels approachable and honest. This is what I was really hoping for with this project.

**How is that reflected in 12 Ossington?**

We're using a sand cast brick, which has a certain texture. We're using metal windows with steel patina. The upper volumes of the building are very light, they just blend in with the sky. So you get this kind of juxtaposition of old and new, light and heavy, textured and immaterial, against something that's quite solid and material. And all of this was very deliberate.

Not to mention that the arch is something you don't see anymore, it's exciting to bring it back. It's, in some ways, the signature of this project.

Jeff Hull is really sincere. We wanted this sincerity to come through in the building, in the work. There are not a lot of people who are sincere. A lot of people say "we want to do something great." But it's the sincerity that sees things through.

**Jonathon Poon** ↘  
**Favorites / Superpoint**  
141 & 184 Ossington

"We have access to so much in this city it makes no sense to put ourselves into a box in terms of food, beverage, music or aesthetics. An Italian restaurant can serve spring rolls and a Thai restaurant can look like it doesn't belong in Thailand."



*Favourite type of pizza?*  
"Without a doubt it would be New York style. For me it's the perfect ratio of crust and toppings."



**Kish Raveendran** ↑  
**Tiger of Sweden**  
56 Ossington

*Best time of day?*  
"5:00-8:00 pm because all the different types of businesses are open and the streets and people are coming out to celebrate a milestone or just great foods and cocktails."



**Sarah Keenlyside & Brandon Olsen** →  
**La Banane**  
227 Ossington

"If you visit other countries, it's striking how focused they are around their own specific historic cultural identities and traditions, and it makes sense since that's where they originate. But here we're made up of so many different cultures and I think that contributes to our openness to try new things and adapt or incorporate them to our way of life."



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"Community is crucial to Town Moto. Now that Ossington has grown, people have moved in and out of the neighbourhood, there are several more businesses, and a new weekend crowd. I may no longer know everyone's name, but I still have a feeling of family with many of our neighbors and that is the best part of coming to work."



**Marika Thoms** ↑  
**Town Moto**  
132 Ossington

*Ideal motorcycle cruise?*  
"Motorcycling can make even the most regular commute an enjoyable experience. I really enjoy a late night, mid week solo ride on the Gardener. The highway cuts through the skyscraper lights, a breeze comes off the lake, I listen to music in my helmet and it can feel like a video game. It is a sure fire way to fall in love with your city."



**Amber Joliat** ←  
**Misfitstudio**  
88 Ossington

"It became my mission in life, in class, in each studio. Cultivating a space where anyone could walk in, move their bodies and feel better about themselves when they left."



"In the next ten years the sense of community will grow even stronger. We are doing things together. We are collaborating more."

HERE HERE

**Danielle Gulic & Yvonne Reidy ↓**  
**Loverlands**  
215 Ossington

*Ideal wedding dress?*

"Any gown that makes a bride feel their absolute best. We recommend a chic silk gown that you can see/feel the workmanship, and see the quality fabric, the way it drapes on a woman's body! It compliments her without overshadowing her own natural beauty."



"The restaurants look and feel was inspired by luncheonettes in Cuba and Miami. Our grandfather had a little lunch counter in Camaguey, Cuba and our design mission was to invoke the feeling of Cuba and make it feel like it had always been on Ossington."

**Kristina Anderson →**  
**Reigning Champ**  
41 Ossington

"Saturday and Sunday are fun because everyone is out and about. Grab beers at Bellwood's Brewery, then walk to the Park and enjoy the weather."



**Pablo Mozo ↗**  
**La Cubana**  
92 Ossington

"Ossington inspired the timeless feel we hope we accomplished with the space."





**OUR DESIGN MISSION  
WAS TO INVOKE THE  
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Pablo Mozo ←  
La Cubana  
92 Ossington

# Doubleonaut Matt McCracken

215 Ossington

**Doubleonaut has helped to shape Toronto's culture from musicians, festivals, to beer. How does it feel to call Ossington home?**

It definitely feels like home to us after working here on and off for the past several years. We really like the central location and close proximity to a lot of our favourite restaurants, bars and shops. It makes grabbing lunch or going out for drinks after work



easy. It's also nice being close to many of our friends and clients like Town Moto, Bellwoods Brewery, Loversland and Telegramme.

We do a lot of work that references or represents the city in some way. It's nice to be able to walk around one of Toronto's happening neighbourhoods to soak up inspiration and get a feel for the people and places that help define it. Also, one of our main clients, Bellwoods Brewery, is right next door so we're able to try their latest beers and get inspired for upcoming label designs.

**You have seen the Ossington strip through the years, can you give us a brief overview of the then and now of your personal experiences?**

When I first moved to Toronto in late 2003, Ossington had a bit of a bad repu-

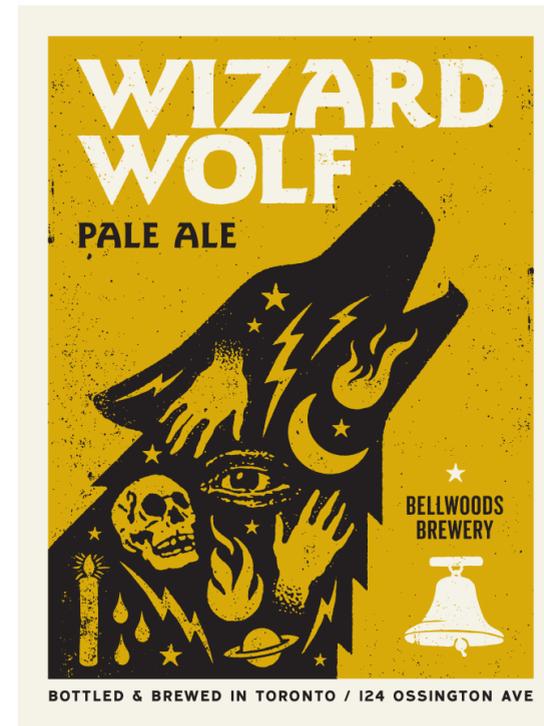
tation after a gang-related shooting that had occurred around then. Being young and new to the city, it felt like a street that should be avoided, and it didn't seem like there was much drawing people to the area in the first place. Of course all of that has changed now. Even when we first started working on Ossington in 2012, it felt like things had drastically changed with the influx of new businesses. It's hard to remember what it looked like back in 2003 but I'm sure it's completely unrecognizable now. I's gone from a neighbourhood I avoided to probably the neighbourhood that I spend the most time in.

**What is your design process like and what kind of inspiration do you find on the strip?**

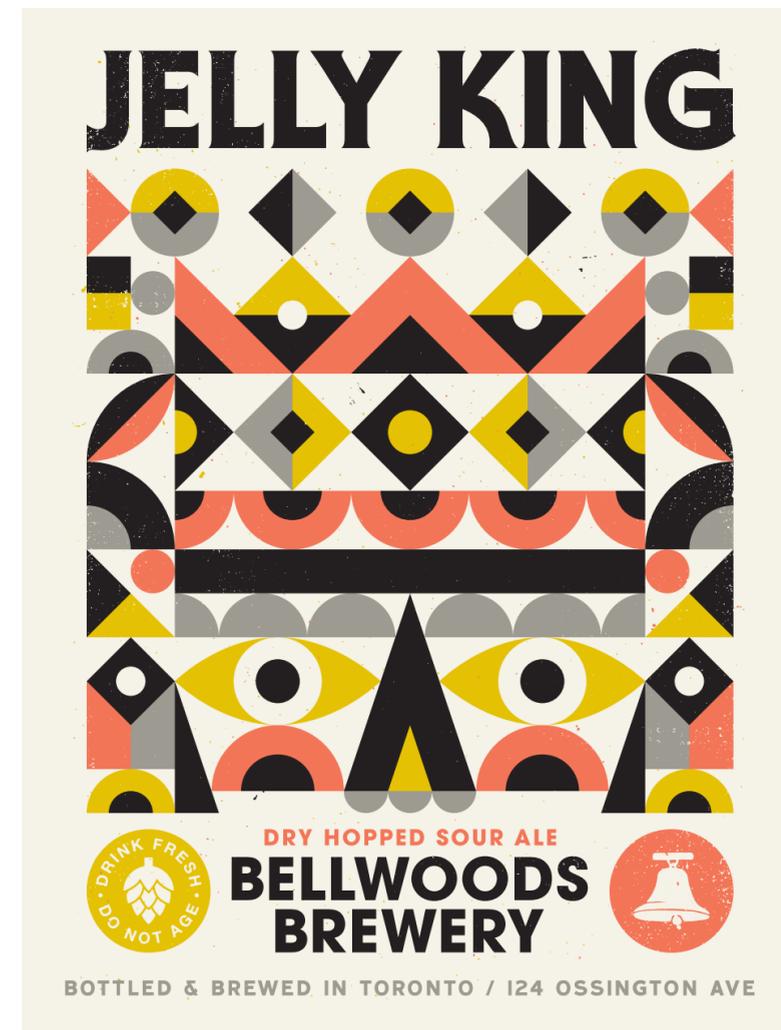
Our design process is pretty similar to most studios. Normally we start with researching, collecting references and sketching ideas until we have something we feel good about. Then we'll supply the client with sketches and a moodboard to sign off on before executing the design on computer. How the ideas come can vary though. We find they often come more easily away from the studio, when we're relaxing at home or attending a concert, etc.

**What's it like being neighbours with Town Moto?**

It's convenient for our partner Andrew, who co-owns Town Moto, to go between both businesses. It feels like we both have an increase in space as well. They sometimes use our lounge area for meetings and we take advantage of their back deck and bbq in the summer. It's also mutually beneficial in other ways with them selling our t-shirts in the shop, and us helping out at their Ride-Ins. On top of that, we're all friends so it's nice to be able to hang out when we're not too busy.



**"Toronto has a good way of embracing and promoting local artists and designers and it's been great seeing creative businesses thrive and gain exposure more easily than it was in 2004."**



# Golden Turtle Linda Nyugen

125 Ossington

**What year did the restaurant open and what made your family choose Ossington?**

The restaurant was opened in 1988, we use to be located where the Yoga Space is now. Ossington back in the late 80's - 90's was heavily populated with Vietnamese nationals. It was deemed "Little Saigon" from the stretch of Dundas to Queen West. It was full of Vietnamese Karaoke bars, café's and restaurants. Hence, Pho restaurants flourished during those times.

**How have you seen the strip grow over the course of your time here?**

I remembered the area having lots of Portuguese residents along with the mix of Vietnamese residents. Back then, I can say there was a lot of racism between the two cultures. The major change that happened and everyone was shocked, was when the car wash was being converted into now Ossington townhomes. That I would say was the changing point. Then there was a major shooting at a Vietnamese karaoke, and that was the end of Vietnamese bars on the strip. People in the area were so tired of these bar fights and now deaths that there was a need for revitalization on Ossington. It started small, closures of Vietnamese bar joints, followed by Portuguese businesses, and then came development. That was the big boom. As more and more businesses came in, and commercial owners giving their buildings a facelift. Buzz started to go around, and from there Ossington was reborn, from the ugly duckling to a beautiful swan.

**Are there milestones or exciting moments that have happened at Golden Turtle?**

There were two milestones for the Golden Turtle, one being our move from 148 Ossington to 125 Ossington, we really lucked out on real estate in the area. The change was refreshing as our old space was too big, it even had its own disco dance floor. Now looking back we wonder if we should have kept the space, since now we can't even ac-

commodate most customers on some nights especially during the wintertime. The second exciting moment was when we were featured front page Toronto Star in the Food section titled "Friends of Pho's" it was about us and the competitor down the street Pho Tien Thanh. It was a really nice article showcasing our differences, follow that article we were featured in the New York Times, and that was the icing on the cake. We were so thrilled and honoured to be recognized for our Vietnamese cuisine.

**What is your favourite dish on the menu?**

My favourite dish on the menu would be the Bun Bo Hue, it's a spicy style soup with all sorts of meats and other things that you would like to put in your soup. I love this lemongrass broth over my traditional pho broth, because bun bo hue just has the added flavor of medium spice, and fragrance in a soup broth that no other soups can compare too in my own opinion.

**Is there a secret dish that isn't on the menu?**

There is no secret dish on the menu, although most customers ask whenever we have traditional family home made dinners at the restaurant that my mom would make for me and my siblings.

**Who created the menu and has it changed over the years?**

My mother is the sole creator of the menu. She has got her love for cooking from my grandma who own restaurants back home. She is very knowledgeable about the Vietnamese cuisine, and would travel around the world, whenever we have a family vacation, and would try Vietnamese food from those places.



**"Ossington back in the late 80's-90's was heavily populated with Vietnamese nationals. It was deemed *Little Saigon* from the stretch of Dundas to Queen West."**

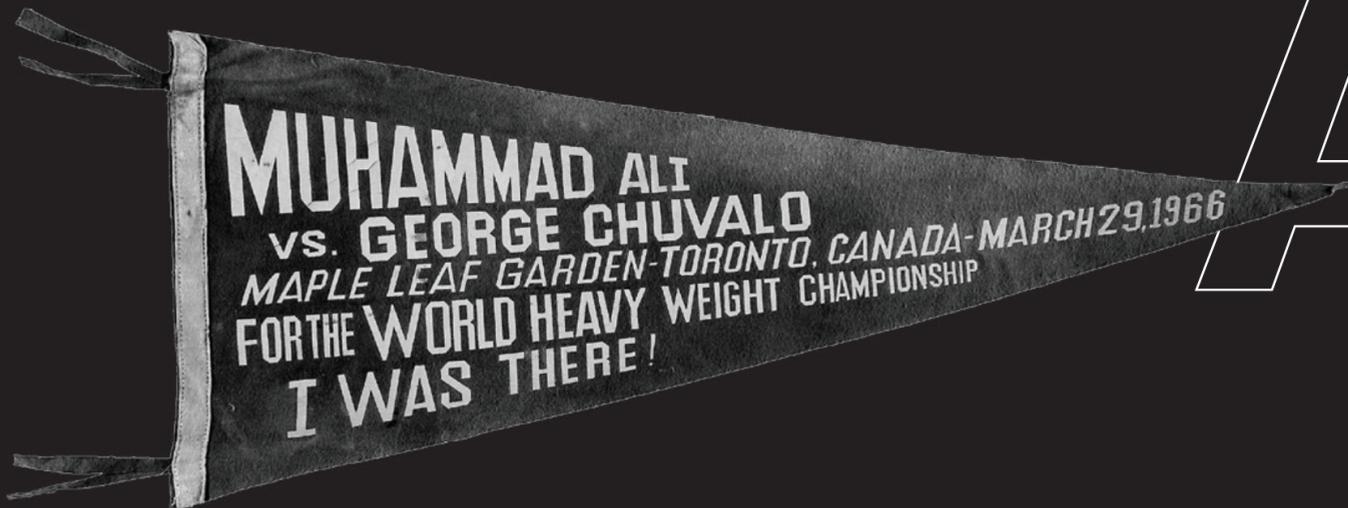


**WE ARE CULTIVATING**  
*A space* **WHERE ANY-**  
**ONE COULD WALK IN,**  
**MOVE THEIR BODIES**  
*AND feel better* **ABOUT**  
**THEMSELVES WHEN**  
**THEY LEFT.**

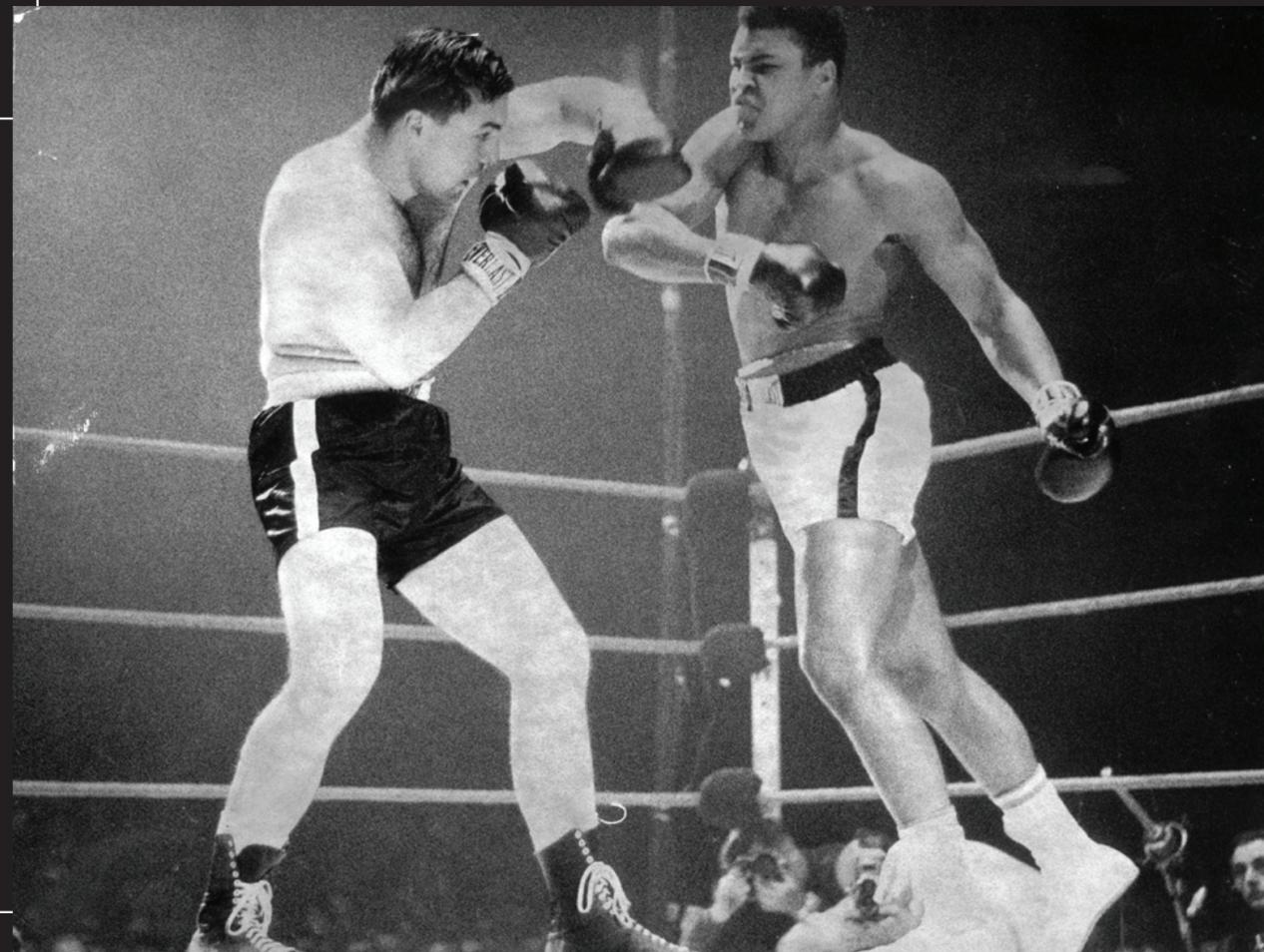


Amber Joliat →  
Misfitstudio  
88 Ossington

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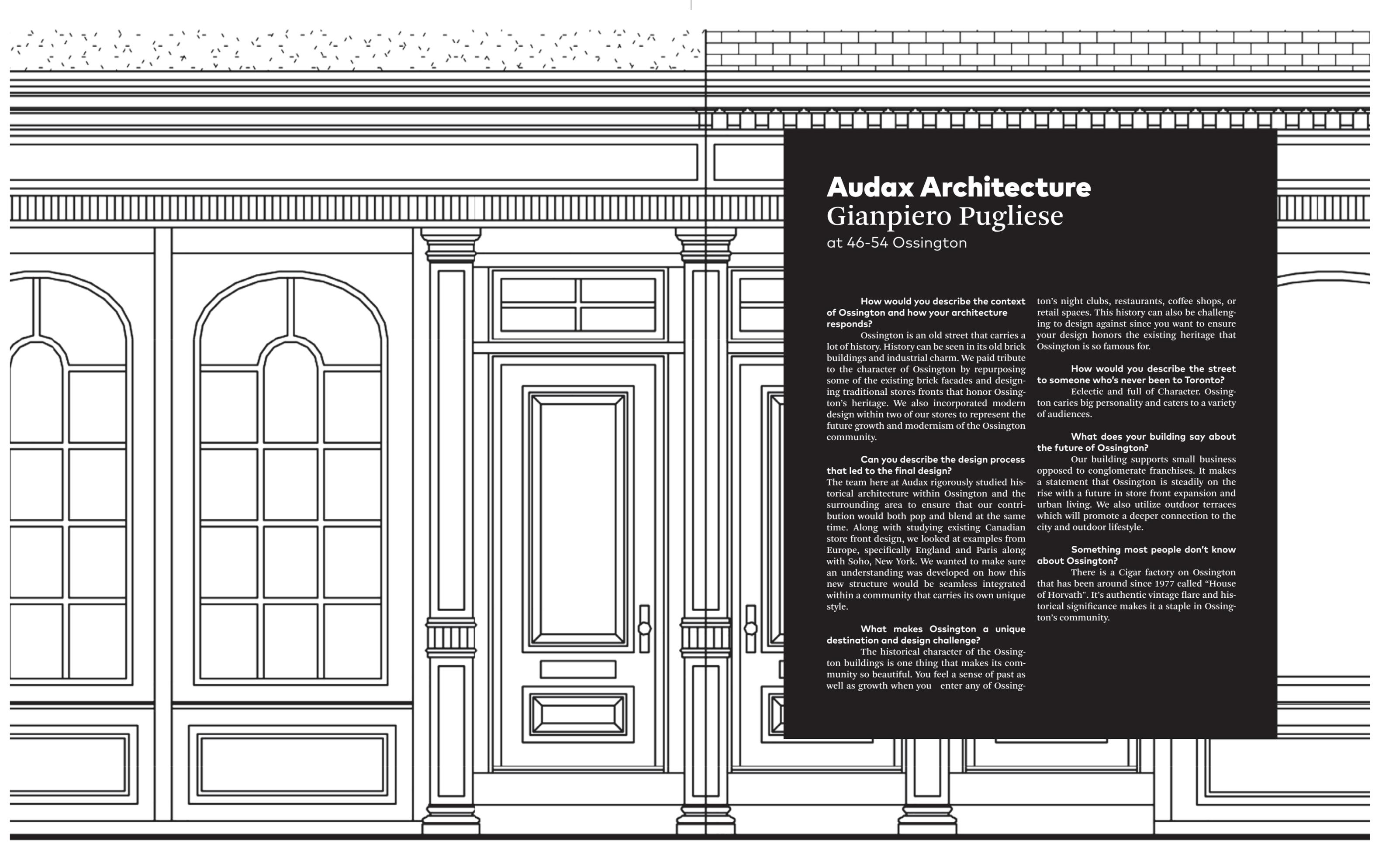
VS

Muhammad Ali vs George Chuvalo  
109 Ossington

In March 1966, Muhammad Ali trained at 109 Ossington to fight Toronto-born George Chuvalo for the World Boxing Council heavyweight championship at Maple Leaf Gardens. Ali trained at the boxing promoter Earl "Sully" Sullivan's Toronto Athletic Club, which was located above a garage here. Fans paid between \$1 and \$5 to watch Ali spar and he used the proceeds to support the neighbourhood children. Chuvalo trained nearby at Lansdowne Athletic Club.

CHUVALO





## Audax Architecture Gianpiero Pugliese

at 46-54 Ossington

**How would you describe the context of Ossington and how your architecture responds?**

Ossington is an old street that carries a lot of history. History can be seen in its old brick buildings and industrial charm. We paid tribute to the character of Ossington by repurposing some of the existing brick facades and designing traditional stores fronts that honor Ossington's heritage. We also incorporated modern design within two of our stores to represent the future growth and modernism of the Ossington community.

**Can you describe the design process that led to the final design?**

The team here at Audax rigorously studied historical architecture within Ossington and the surrounding area to ensure that our contribution would both pop and blend at the same time. Along with studying existing Canadian store front design, we looked at examples from Europe, specifically England and Paris along with Soho, New York. We wanted to make sure an understanding was developed on how this new structure would be seamless integrated within a community that carries its own unique style.

**What makes Ossington a unique destination and design challenge?**

The historical character of the Ossington buildings is one thing that makes its community so beautiful. You feel a sense of past as well as growth when you enter any of Ossing-

ton's night clubs, restaurants, coffee shops, or retail spaces. This history can also be challenging to design against since you want to ensure your design honors the existing heritage that Ossington is so famous for.

**How would you describe the street to someone who's never been to Toronto?**

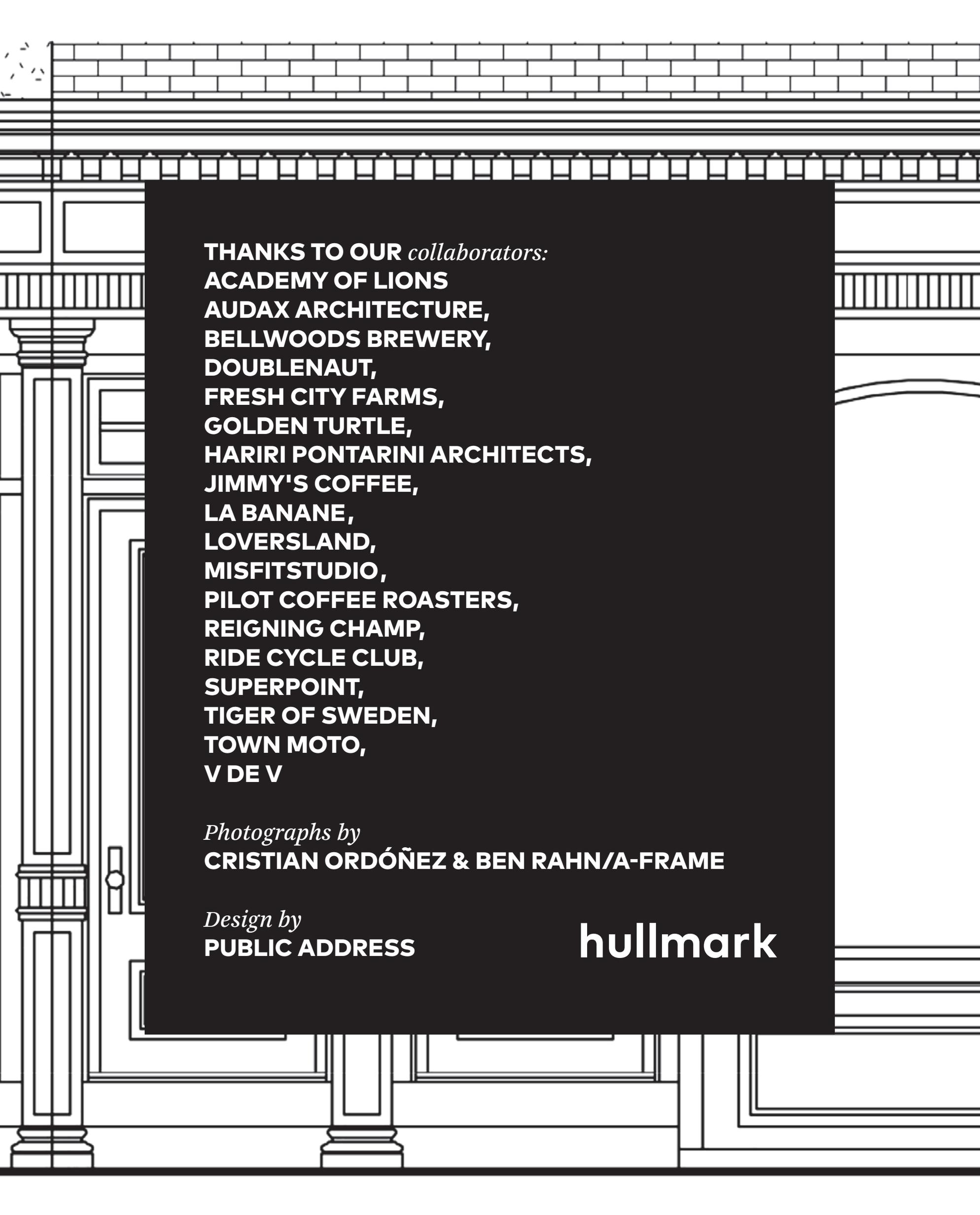
Eclectic and full of Character. Ossington carries big personality and caters to a variety of audiences.

**What does your building say about the future of Ossington?**

Our building supports small business opposed to conglomerate franchises. It makes a statement that Ossington is steadily on the rise with a future in store front expansion and urban living. We also utilize outdoor terraces which will promote a deeper connection to the city and outdoor lifestyle.

**Something most people don't know about Ossington?**

There is a Cigar factory on Ossington that has been around since 1977 called "House of Horvath". It's authentic vintage flare and historical significance makes it a staple in Ossington's community.



**THANKS TO OUR *collaborators:***  
**ACADEMY OF LIONS**  
**AUDAX ARCHITECTURE,**  
**BELLWOODS BREWERY,**  
**DOUBLENAUT,**  
**FRESH CITY FARMS,**  
**GOLDEN TURTLE,**  
**HARIRI PONTARINI ARCHITECTS,**  
**JIMMY'S COFFEE,**  
**LA BANANE,**  
**LOVERSLAND,**  
**MISFITSTUDIO,**  
**PILOT COFFEE ROASTERS,**  
**REIGNING CHAMP,**  
**RIDE CYCLE CLUB,**  
**SUPERPOINT,**  
**TIGER OF SWEDEN,**  
**TOWN MOTO,**  
**V DE V**

*Photographs by*  
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*Design by*  
**PUBLIC ADDRESS**

**hullmark**