

Not So Fast, Not So Casual

Years of intense antiquing, meat-slicer collecting, and general gallivanting through Europe led to the laid-back vibes and modernist design of **Verjus** in San Francisco

by CASSANDRA LANDRY

SAN FRANCISCO'S FINANCIAL DISTRICT is quick-service-restaurant central, filled with long lines, terrible puns, and limp salads. Then there's Verjus. The newest bar/restaurant/wine store/house-wares shop from Lindsay and Michael Tusk of Quince and Cotogna fame, it's a culinary wonderland that's redefining what fast-casual means for the city.

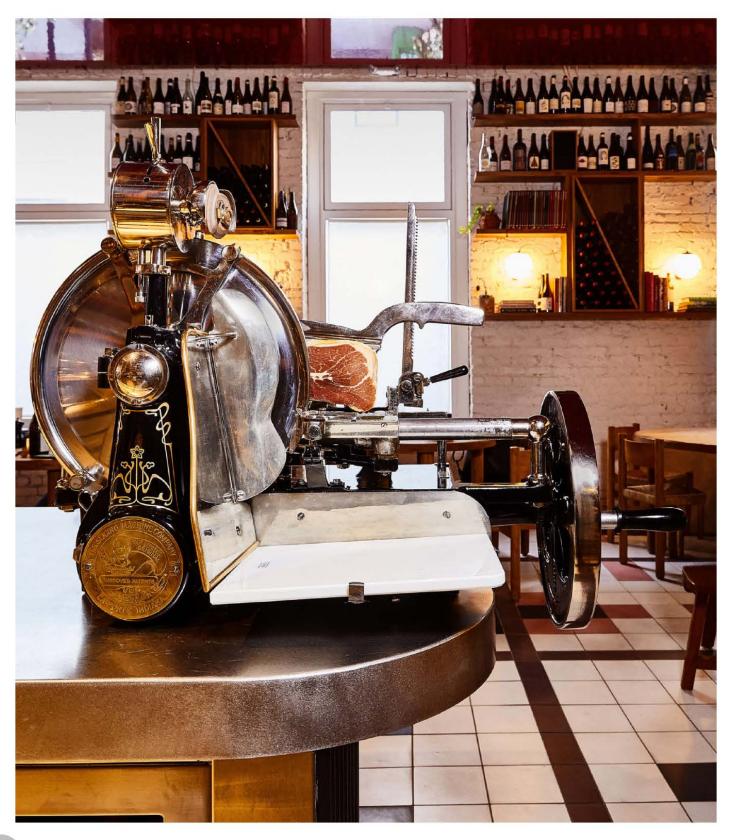
Enter through the wine shop and you'll be transported to what appears to be a cross between a Spanish pintxo bar and a Parisian cave à manger (essentially a wine shop with snacks). But really it's a scrapbook of the Tusks' European adventures. The 30 tapas bars they've hit up in Spain inspired the sleek counter, where you can pick up some of the olives, tortilla española, and tinned fish on display (or order from the glowing menu) and then grab a table. The midcentury-style tables are made by

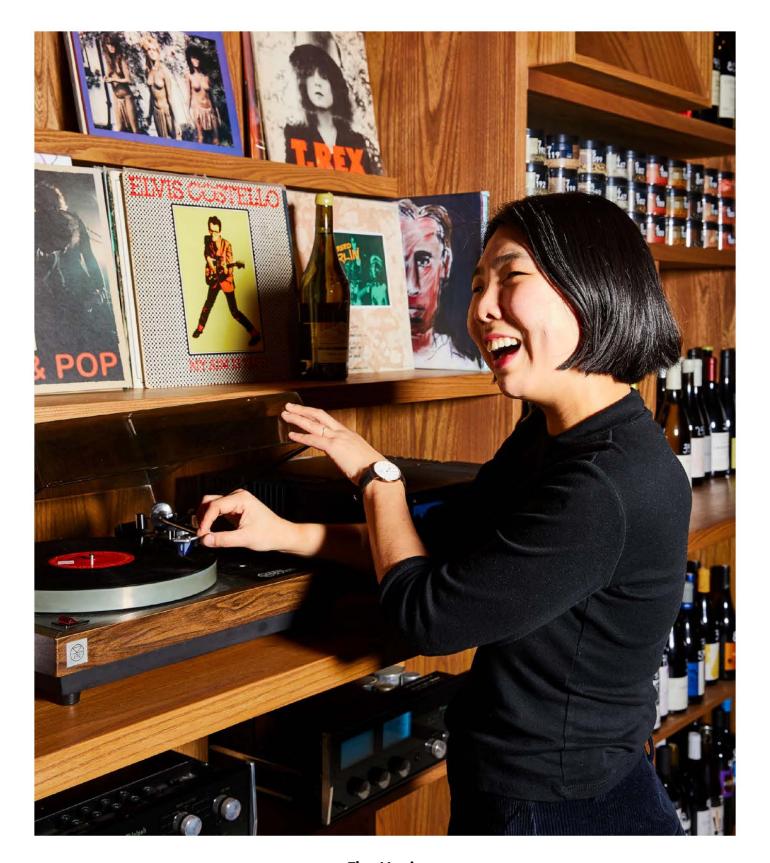


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(or order from the glowing menu) and then grab a table. The midcentury-style tables are made by French designer Pierre Chapo, whom the Tusks discovered in Provence; they then commissioned his son to build the chairs. The items stocked in an apothecary cabinet Lindsay nabbed at a notoriously cutthroat antique fair in Parma aren't just for show; they're also for sale. And in true cave style, you can buy a bottle of wine at the bar to take home—or settle in and make a night of it.

This kind of casual is exactly what the Tusks craved—and something they wanted to share with their hometown. Here's how they weaved it all together at Verjus.





The Music

Wine director Matt Cirne and Michael bonded over the Replacements, so it's no surprise they invested in a quality sound system here. In hi-fi nerdspeak, that means vintage Rogers speakers, a McIntosh pre-amp, and a McIntosh power amp to pipe their vinyl collections.



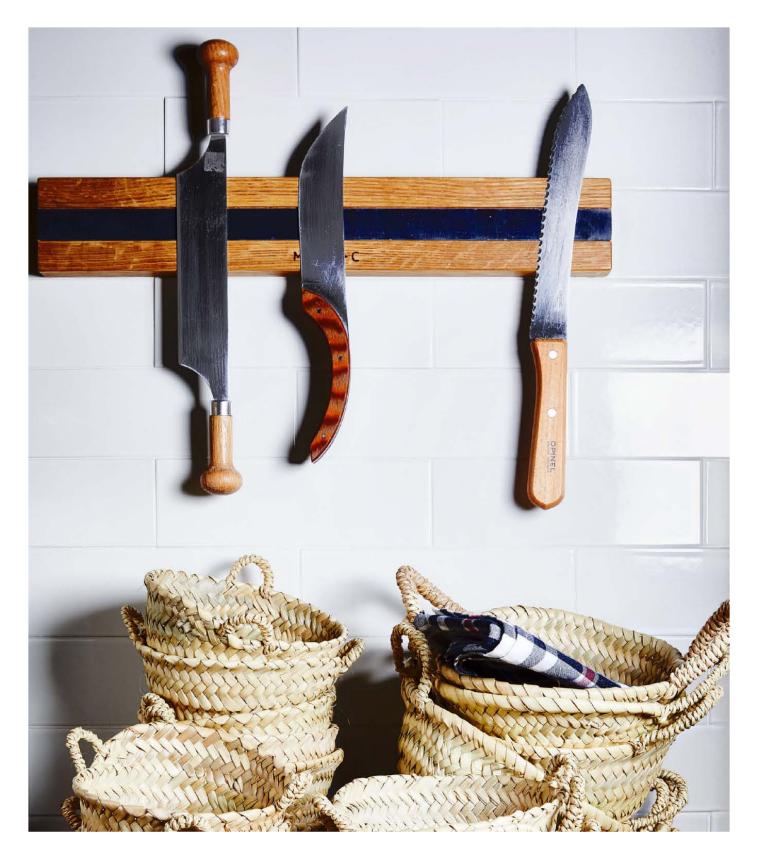




Tuna in a spicy tomato sauce with house-made bread

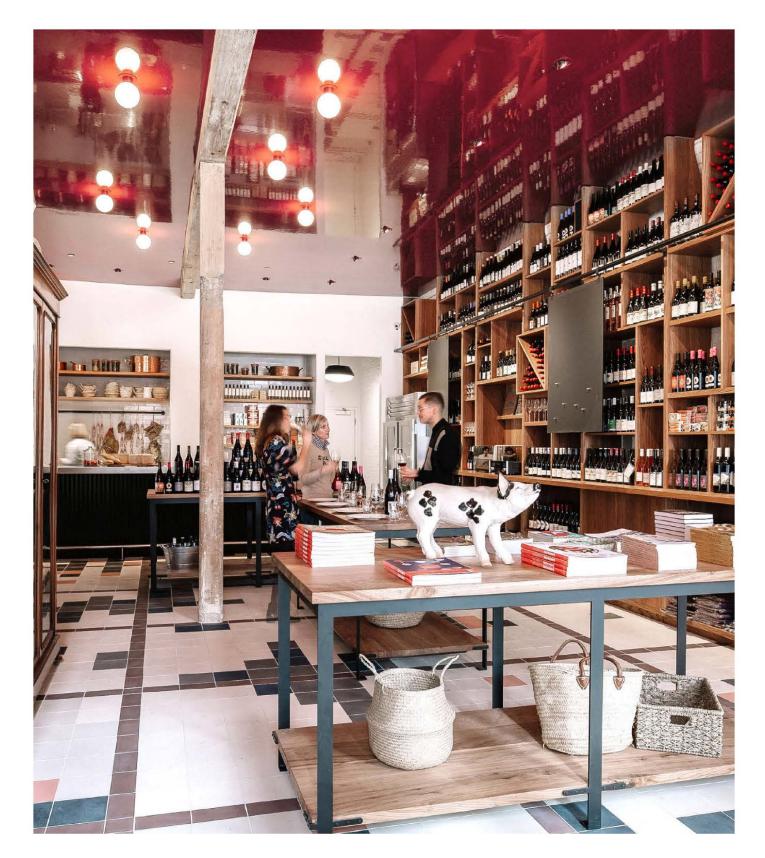






The Knives

The corners of Verjus are packed with mementos from the couple's time spent roaming the globe, including these stunning cheese knives from Paris, hung as they'd be in a cave à manger.

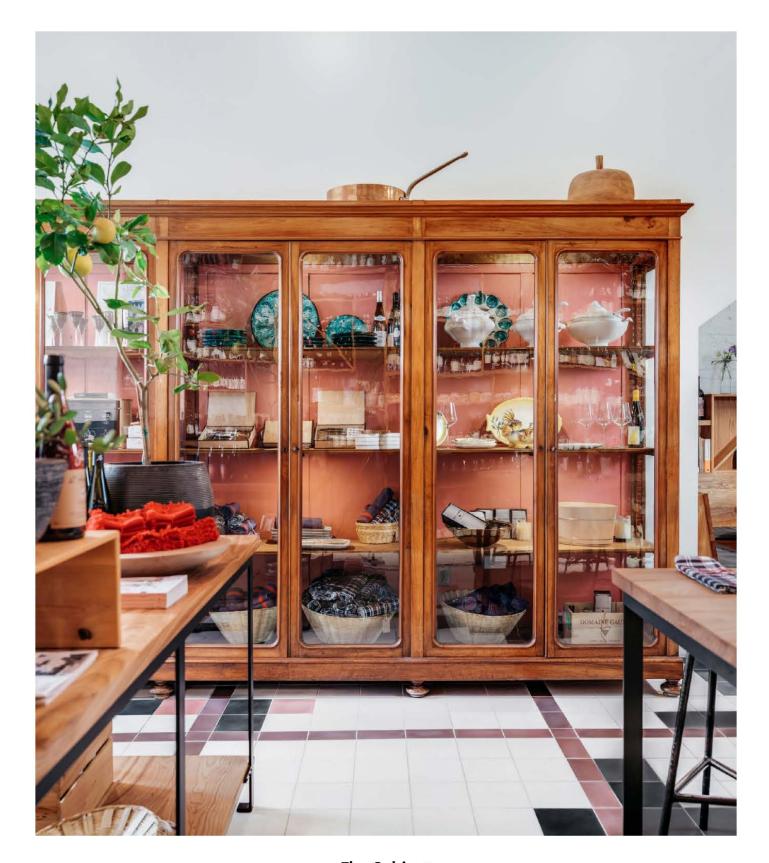


The Ceiling

Lindsay imagined installing mirrors overhead—she loves how they bring more light into a room. But she couldn't shake off the burgundy ceiling she'd seen at Le Baron Rouge, a blue-collar wine bar in Paris. She found a happy medium in this reflective oxblood-red paint made by Fine Paints of Europe with its high-gloss "Brilliant" finish.







The Cabinet

In its former life the cabinet served as a shop case for an apothecary in 1890s Florence. These days it displays housewares available for purchase, from French ceramics to Japanese cedar ice buckets.







The Wine Shelves

Lindsay hired local artisan Michael Mellon to create custom elm shelving that can fit magnums alongside regular bottles, like the cult favorite Vini Viti Vinci's 2016 Vieilles Vignes. The design is inspired by the modern tables and chairs to create a harmonious look.



