

Upending Convention

Glavovic Studio has designed a **Flagler Village** venue for **M.A.S.Café** that embraces community and culture, reflecting its proprietors' goals as well as its location.

Text John T. O'Connor

FAT Village, once just an acronym underscoring the hopes for the future of a small part of downtown's Flagler Village, (FAT stands for Flagler Arts & Technology) has come into its own over the last few years with a speed most were not expecting. Born in a group of old warehouses snuggled up to the FEC rail lines, property owners Doug McCraw and Lutz Hofbauer saw the potential here for a neighborhood that might draw in creatives from many fields. Early on in 1998, sharing this vision, developer Alan Hooper bought four acres of this land, envisioning an ideal spot for urban apartments unlike any other. Lofts... real lofts. Over the last decade, this little section of Flagler Village has exploded with arts and culture, its Art Walk jamming its streets full of people and entertainment and food trucks. During that same 10 years, Flagler Village itself has grown organically, spreading its denizens from roughly Broward Boulevard on the south to E. Sunrise Boulevard on the north and from N. Federal Highway on the east to the new Brightline tracks on the west.

The single most important element of this growth

is not the giant new mixed-use structures popping up everywhere, but the small businesses and artist studios that have proliferated with the area's newfound popularity. Urban, funky and authentic are words that best describe these small businesses. Businesses that don't fit the traditional mold, businesses that are happy on the edge are what Flagler Village is all about... what gives it its unique *flavor*. So when Marcela, Alejandro and Santiago, the three siblings who run M.A.S. Café, decided to bring farmer-to-consumer Colombian coffee to Fort Lauderdale, Flagler Village was the obvious choice. Likewise, Glavovic Studio, a design firm that has been deeply involved in the cultural transition of this neighborhood, was the architecture firm that made the most sense to them for their café.

The family that owns the M.A.S. Café business sees Flagler Village for what it is: A place that definitely thinks way outside the box with painting studios carved from garage spaces, mural-covered retail and office buildings, a place where you can walk in one direction to get a Cuban medianoche,

another to get a classic Reuben and another to down a brewed-on-premises pint at a pet-friendly, outdoor beer garden. Glavovic Studio understood this environment innately as they've been steeped in it and encouraged its growth for a dozen years.

For M.A.S. Café, Margi Nothard and her team at Glavovic designed a structure that would reflect back on the village it hopes to anchor in late 2018. The café would be completely open on the front, weather permitting, its four shipping containers connected together and tilted at about a 30° angle. The Café spills forth towards the street with outdoor seating platforms and a wide plaza with café tables beyond, perfect for relaxing in the sun with an iced espresso. At just 32' across and 21' at its highest point, Glavovic's design for M.A.S. Café is, thankfully, scaled for the pedestrian. Together, M.A.S. Café and Glavovic Studio are creating a future for the north end of Flagler Village, one that reinforces the new, pedestrian nature that is fast coming into existence here with the proliferation of housing and the arrival of the WAVE light rail system.

