



FISH IN A BOX

NOZOMI SUSHI BAR

Valencia, Spain

Masquespacio

Photography by Caubi Photo Studio

Valencia and sushi may have more in common than most would assume at first glance. A coastal city along the Mediterranean, Valencia has long asserted that it is the birthplace of paella, a dish consisting of rice and seafood that has become a source of national pride – just like sushi for Japan. Fresh ingredients are critical to successful paella and sushi preparation, and enjoying them in amiable surrounds no doubt enriches the experience. Valencians José Miguel Herrera and Nuria Morell are wild about Japanese culture; they also happen to be sushi chefs who appreciate a traditional approach to the delicacy. For their latest restaurant, Nozomi Sushi, they looked to Valencia-based creative consultancy Masquespacio for assistance with the interior design and branding of a 233sq m space.

Herrera and Morell chose the name Nozomi because of its duality: it is the name of a high-speed train service that runs between Tokyo and Hakata, more than 1,000 km away; it also means 'fulfilled dream'. The owners believed that the name's dual significance underscored a tension that runs throughout the restaurant's polar opposite themes of emotional classicism and rational contemporary. Masquespacio's design team conducted extensive research into Japanese culture after being retained for the project, to create consistent imagery and concepts that link the interiors with details such as signage and menus.

Masquespacio's founder and creative director Ana Milena Hernández Palacios led a design team that included Nuria Martínez, Virginia Hinarejos, Jairo Pérez and Ana Díaz. Together they established Nozomi's identity with a facade of grey concrete, set into it are timber slats forming a pitched roof, with the entry to the restaurant inset within a vestibule. A shoji-like entry door with glass panes allows a glimpse into the long space within. "Rational contemporary is expressed through the pure state of concrete and greys, mainly present in the most structural parts such as walls, ceilings and floors," says Palacios. "Emotional classicism makes its introduction thanks to the carpentry, its handmade quality, and the warmth of natural wood." The restaurant's logo also presents this duality with rectilinear Latin characters for Nozomi on the left representing rationalism and curvilinear hiragana characters on the right representing emotionalism.

