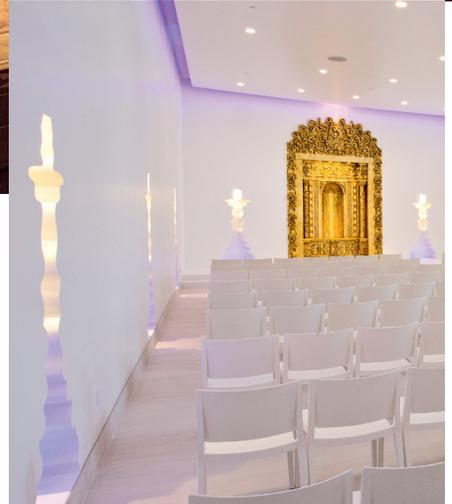




The Eldorado in downtown Santa Fe. Right, from top: the Old House Restaurant; Kartell seating is combined with a hand-carved gilded altar in the new chapel.



# Gilded pleasure

The *Eldorado Hotel & Spa* in New Mexico's SANTA FE mined the enduring myth of the *LOST CITY OF GOLD* for inspiration in its recent redesign.

At the same time that Europe was enthusiastically embracing art deco in the early 20th century, the southwestern state of New Mexico was developing its own architectural style, the pueblo revival (think flat roofs supported by exposed beams, parapets and thick walls of earth-toned stucco or adobe clay bricks). A law passed in the 1950s required all new buildings in Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico, to be designed in this distinctive style, in one stroke preserving the city's unique appeal to the present day.

The exterior of the Eldorado hotel, right in the heart of downtown Santa Fe, is a fine example of the pueblo revival look, a handsome earth-toned building just two blocks from the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and the historic Spanish-American landmark Santa Fe Plaza (the site of the popular Spanish Market and the annual Santa Fe Indian Market).

Inside the Eldorado, though, you'll be greeted with a more adventurous sense of style. As interior designer Adriana Long, who worked with California's Kris Lajeskie on the Eldorado's rooms and public areas, explains: "The town planning regulations only apply to the exterior, not the interior. The new interior spaces of the Eldorado blend elements of the pueblo revival style with a more 'pueblo

deco' style, which is a fusion of art deco and pueblo revival design. This style provides an opportunity to create more contemporary spaces while still honouring New Mexico's past."

So when you walk into the lobby of the Eldorado you'll encounter a rustic Spanish oxcart and gilded floor candelabras that rise well above eye level, but you'll also spot Cava, a striking glass-tiled lobby bar. Long says: "The story told through the design of the hotel is the story of Eldorado – the search for the fabled city of gold that brought Spanish explorers to New Mexico. The golden tiles around the bar represent the Eldorado legend – you'll find this and other golden elements throughout the property."

Cava serves up sharing plates drawing on Basque and South American influences and a tightly edited selection of cocktails – the El Conquistador, made with Patrón Reposado tequila, rosemary and tempranillo salt, was a *Vogue* crew favourite. If you're after a more substantial meal head to the hotel's Old House Restaurant, which does a mean dry-aged

rib eye steak, or settle in for the night with a martini at the Eldorado's Agave Lounge.

The 219 guest rooms and suites were also given a design refresh earlier this year, using handcrafted southwestern furniture and local artworks, a colour palette of shades of brown, grey and red and traditional wood-burning *kiva* fireplaces.

And if you find yourself overcome with the romance of viewing the Sangre de Cristo mountains at sunset from the private terrace of your room (or from the rooftop pool if you didn't score one of the terraces)? As part of the Eldorado's redesign the hotel now boasts a non-denominational

chapel featuring a hand-carved gilded altar and Peruvian wooden pews that contrast with starkly white Kartell chairs and a porcelain floor to create a unique wedding venue. "I've always loved contrasting modern design with very traditional Spanish colonial elements," says Long of the chapel, "and this was the perfect place to create a truly spiritual space."

*Eldorado Hotel & Spa*, 309 West San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico; [www.eldoradohotel.com](http://www.eldoradohotel.com).

"I LOVE  
CONTRASTING  
MODERN DESIGN  
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COLONIAL  
ELEMENTS"