

**PROJECTS**

23 January 2022



## Metaphysical drinks

*Bradley Wheeler*

In Tucson, Arizona, architect and musician Rob Paulus' cozy new cocktail bar really lifts the spirits

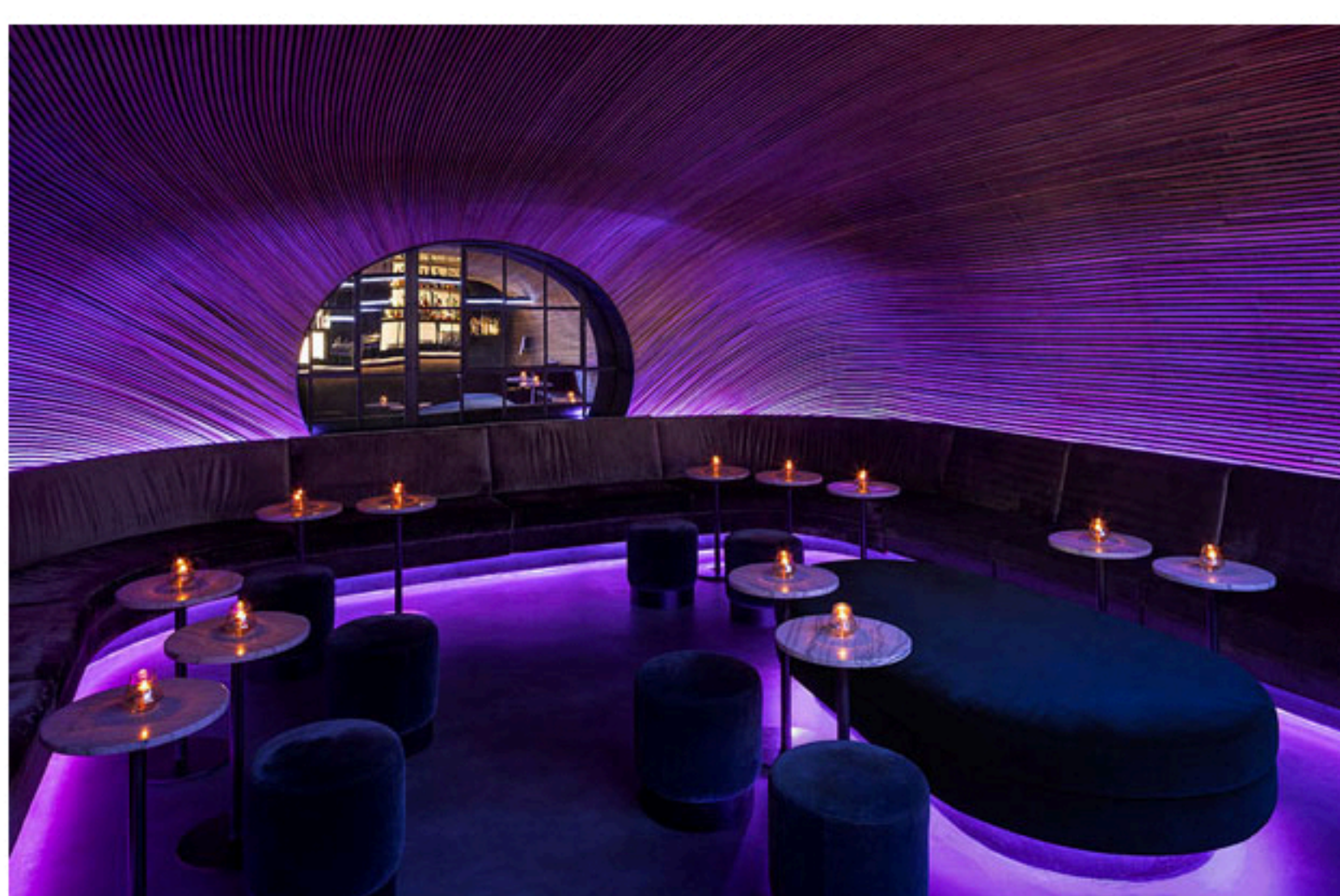
Great architecture, like all great art, should move the human psyche. On rare occasion it can transcend three-dimensional space and metaphysically transport us into another realm. In designing Portal Cocktails in Tucson, Arizona, architect and jazz musician Rob Paulus went beyond the confines of perceived reality to ideate a place that taps directly into the soul.



The journey started when clients asked him to conceptualize a high-end “transformational” cocktail experience in the back room of their successful bar and restaurant, Ermanos, which Paulus designed in 2015. After considering their request, the architect realized that he wanted to design a nurturing ‘vessel’ in which cosmopolitan clientele could not only imbibe sophisticated mixed drinks, but also replenish their soul.

*(ph. Bradley Wheeler)*

The idea of ‘vessel’ wasn’t new to the veteran architect. He had explored the concept a decade earlier for his internationally published, award-winning studio space, when he used the inside of his violin as an architectural metaphor. Now, using a similar design *parti*, Rob Paulus Architects has created an *aedicular* form (a space within a space) composed of compound curves made with strips of poplar wood. “Walk through the kaleidoscope-like, mirrored entry, and you are transported to a new consciousness,” points out project manager Kenneth Lowe. “It is almost like returning to the womb in some ways,” adds architect Paulus. As a result, Portal Cocktails becomes a “very welcoming place. The space pulls you where you feel more enlightened and willing to try different things,” he continues. “It boots a cycle of positivity that patrons feel and share.”

*(ph. Bradley Wheeler)*