

hospitality design

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hd awards issue

wave of the future 2016

HDexpo
hospitality design event

back space catching up with



john tong →

*Founding Principal
+tongtong
Toronto*



Standout recent projects → Our office really thrives on a diverse range of project types and scales. Batch [1] is a project we just completed for Molson [Coors brewing company] that integrates bar, restaurant, retail market, onsite microbrewery, corporate event space, and game room in a historically designated building located in Toronto's business district. We also renovated the much-celebrated restaurant Nota Bene [2] for chef David Lee. We aimed to bring a sensuality of material to the concept while maintaining a very sleek, architectural approach.

Compelling non-hospitality project → We recently finished a renovation and addition to an old Victorian mansion on a 40-acre property just outside of Toronto. The existing tower has a spectacular old spooky tower and has been the set of several horror films. We renovated it for a new family with three kids.

Designing across genres → +tongtong has been incorporating multi-programmed concepts for many years—first bringing lifestyle to corporate creative spaces with lounges, cafés, game rooms, communal breakout space, etc. We've integrated this into retail and hospitality. Reinforcing and engaging local communities has been a big component of our success; our continued work with Drake Hotel Properties is case in point. Another is BlackToe Running, an elite runner's equipment store located at the base of a new condominium building. It's now a community gathering space for locals to meet and start runs.

Favorite hotel I didn't design → The penthouse and private ensuite rooftop terrace at the Broome Hotel in SoHo—a very small, cozy hotel run by French owners with a beautiful courtyard. It's New York's best-kept secret, and I'd like to keep it that way.

Beloved Toronto restaurant → One of my many favorites is Buca on King Street. I love the food but also enjoy the double-height industrial space.

Recent travel highlight → While in Las Vegas after HD Expo we went hiking at Red Rock Canyon. It was a great way to counterbalance the overtop grandness of the Strip. Both are at the extreme ends of magical.

Interesting collection → I collect vintage British Alex Moulton bicycles—I have seven of them. Moulton was the engineer of the Austin Mini in the '60s. It is one of those designs that is so widely misunderstood. It has an international cult following.

Guilty pleasure → No doubt, my vintage 1972 Honda CB550 motorcycle.

Most people don't know → I'm an introvert.