

MODERN HISTORY

A new Calgary space feels like a world away.

Foreign Concept may have just opened this past December, but the restaurant feels steeped in history. Fitting, given that the menu by chef and owner Duncan Ly takes its cues from a specific time and place: colonial Vietnam.

Ly had tasked designer Alykhan Velji with creating a space that reflected the food—“a nod to the Asian, but not over the top,” said Velji—and also converted a 3,500-square-foot L-shaped space into an intimate dining area. The designer’s first step was to break up the layout with custom logo screens (a colonial standard made modern): the dining room is now split in two, with an open kitchen on one side and a charcuterie bar on the other, with a smaller lounge also separated via a screen. Though the menu is heavily influenced by Vietnam, Ly brings in flavours from across Asia, and Velji did the same with the design. Antique moon-cake moulds from China were framed and hung, and chinoiserie-inspired murals were commissioned for the walls; underfoot, Persian rugs top a dark hardwood floor, and rattan-backed chairs line custom tables made in collaboration with Room B. It’s a mash-up of historically inspired artifacts that together make something beautifully new.

—Gabrielle Lakusta



Screen Time
Velji designed a **custom iron screen** to break up the main room into three distinct areas.
alyveljidesigns.com

Big Picture
The **custom mural** adds colour and a sense of place to the lounge area.
interiorstoinpire.com



Cool Tools
Vintage moon-cake moulds become a striking wall display.
wuandmchugh.com



Table for Four
Bentwood dining chairs line a **custom table** made in collaboration with Room B.
roomb.ca



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