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We Can's Fantastic Social Space for the Long Now Foundation

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The Long Now
Foundation is not your
typical nonprofit.
Formed "to creatively

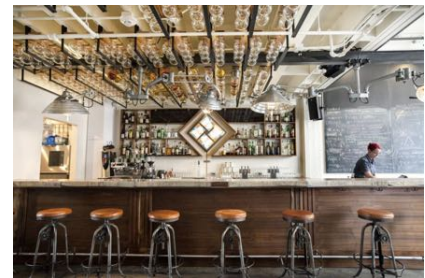


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foster long-term thinking in the context of the next 10,000 years," they undertake unusual projects like building [a thought-provoking super-clock](#) that "ticks once a year, bongs once a century, and the cuckoo comes out every millennium." (It's designed to last for ten millenia, and they're actually building it.) So when they needed an atypical, multifaceted gathering space, they turned to atypical, multifaceted design-build firm [Because We Can.](#)



Called The Interval, the resultant design is an amazing combination bar/café/library/conversation space and event space with so many layers that it's difficult to know where to start

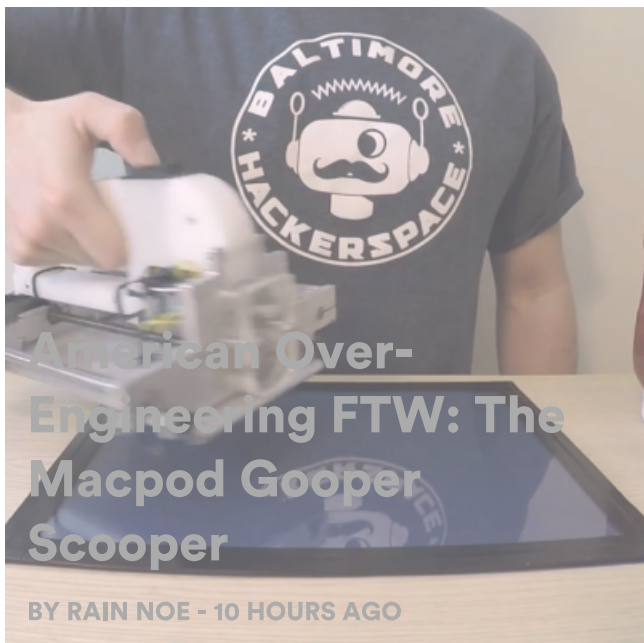
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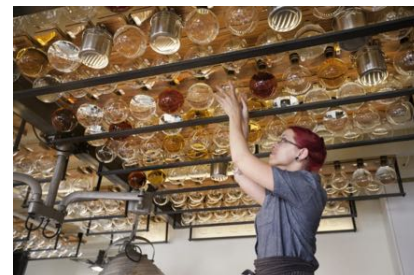
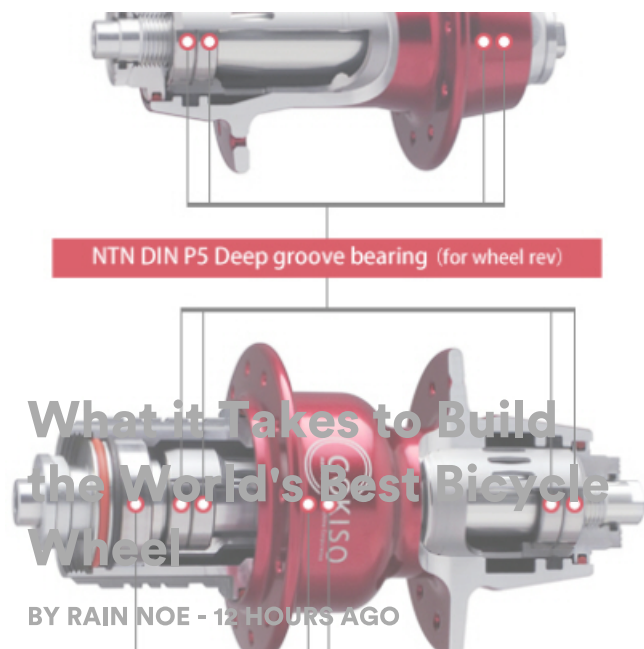
this photo tour. So I'll begin with my normal difficulty-breaker in life, the booze. Because We Can brought the Japanese practice of *keepu*—whereby patrons can purchase their own private bottles of libations which are reserved for them at the bar—and put a little twist on it. For bottles they use globular laboratory flasks, which are suspended from slots in this overhead rack.



The silver canisters contain tea, for non-boozing patrons.



When you want your bottle, the bartender pulls it down. And being located in the Bay Area, the rack is hung from anti-earthquake hardware.



Another cool detail is that the bottoms of the bottles resemble light bulbs but obviously aren't, yet they reflect what look to be LED lighting strips hidden within the hanging structure.



You might be wondering how those round-bottomed flasks are meant to stand. Here you see the solution.



The bases are custom-made from walnut, and the *keepu* hooch is made in-house.



If you prefer to forego *keepu* and just want

common booze, there's
off-the-shelf stuff
populating the back bar.

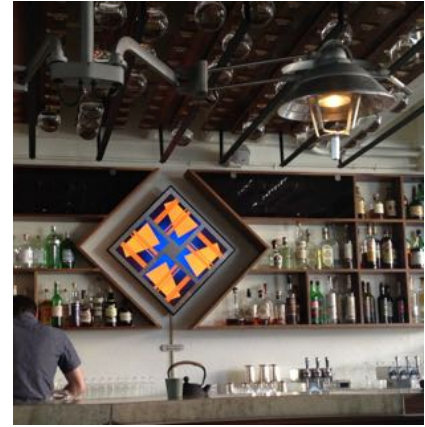


But what makes the
back bar decidedly not
common is the
centerpiece, this
animated,
kaleidoscoping art
piece designed by Brian
Eno.



It constantly changes
patterns.



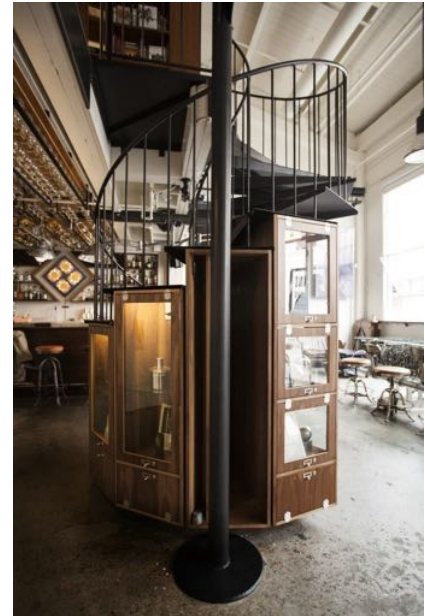


Even knowing that bar-goers' eyeballs are going to be drawn to the Eno piece, and probably not looking down, the design-builders poured attention into the custom foot rail. I'm loving the exposed end of the dowel. And in this close shot we can also get a good look at the locally-sourced walnut the bar is made from.

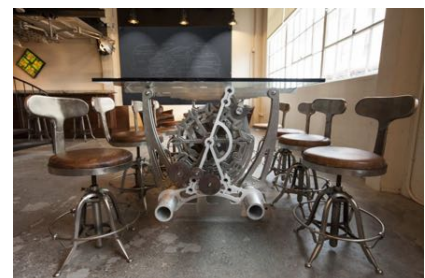


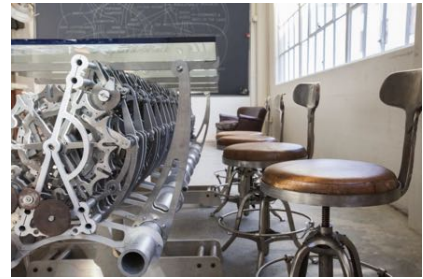
Although the space is sprawling, Because We Can couldn't resist pulling one of their

space-saving moves: To utilize the space beneath a spiral staircase, custom-made curiosity cabinets display pieces of the Foundation's projects.



Remember that clock we mentioned earlier? An early prototype of it has been harvested to create the large communal table.

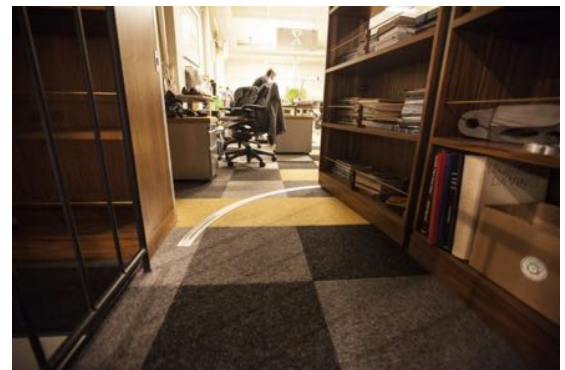




The bookcases stretch two stories high behind this centerpiece in the entryway, also made from clock prototype parts.



And what's cool about those bookcases is, one of them is actually a hidden door leading to the office upstairs.



That's not a gimmick: In addition to providing some extra storage

space, the book-filled door serves as sound insulation from the space below.

As the Long Now Foundation describes the space:

The Interval provides all our visitors with a place that is welcoming and inspiring whether they are students, tourists, local residents, and whether it's their first visit or they are long-time members

The design vision was to create a compelling venue for conversation that invites visitors to spend time in a place that itself encourages long-term

thinking. It's a work in progress, but we are off to a great start. e students, tourists, local residents, and whether it's their first visit or they are long-time members. With The Interval we have re-made our space to better represent Long Now and serve all our guests.

We partnered with the design-build studio Because We Can to create a gathering space that features a floor-to-ceiling library, state-of-the-art A/V system, unique art by Brian Eno, and Long Now prototypes and artifacts. We

serve artisan
tea & coffee by
day and
inspired
cocktails by
night. The
Interval also
hosts live
events and
activities for
our members
and the public.



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RAIN NOE

Rain Noe is an NYC-based writer and vintage sewing machine repairperson.

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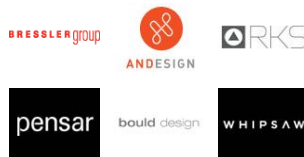
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