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"Flexibility in function" prioritised for design of sober club in New York

Dan Howarth | 19 January 2026 | Leave a comment

New York-based studios Opa Architecture and Laube Studio have designed members' club The Maze in Chelsea, tailored specifically for the sober and sober-curious.

The Maze on West 24th Street occupies a 4,200-square-foot (390-square-metre) space that contains a restaurant, a sports lounge and a speakeasy, and is entirely alcohol free.

Designing a club that caters to a growing, underrepresented audience was a challenge met by Opa Architecture founder Aria Jahanshahi and Laube Studio founder Adrienne Laube.

"The sober and sober-curious lifestyle is a dynamic one, and the space needed to be versatile to facilitate many types of meetings and conversations," Laube told Dezeen.

The dark green reception area with matching mosaic floors leads directly into the main dining room, where the majority of activity takes place.

Here, members can grab coffee, host meetings, co-work throughout the day and enjoy dinner in the evening. A weekly program of events is also offered.

A dark green palette and mosaic tiles greet members arriving at The Maze

The sports lounge features a variety of soft seating for flexibility

A pool table and large TV screens are available for use

The focal point of this space is the bar, which is fronted by green tiles, topped with a green stone counter and framed by large antique mirrors.

"The greatest challenge was the bar itself," Jahanshahi told Dezeen. "We had to listen closely to our clients' personal experiences in the sober lifestyle to better understand how they would even approach a bar – what typical design elements would not be priorities or could be triggering in some way."

Antique mirrors and banquette seating create a bistro-style dining space

"While the visual preparation of mocktails was important, the actual display of NA spirits was not a priority," he continued. "The mission was to create a fun, elegant but understated bar experience."

Green tones continue into the adjacent sports lounge, where tennis-influenced geometries meet an Italian cafe ambiance.

While the rooms feature a pool table and large TV screens for watching games, the layout of soft seating also lends itself to small gatherings or events.

"The flexibility in function extends through the main restaurant and sports lounge," Laube said. "Unlike typical membership clubs, the space is not only oriented toward nightlife activities but is activated all day long."

The speakeasy area is decorated in darker burgundy tones, complemented by wood panelling

In the speakeasy, the palette shifts to darker burgundy tones complemented by richly grained millwork, evoking a sense of intimacy.

A cosy niche with banquette seating is tucked behind curtains, and a private room accommodates large meetings or group dining.

A cosy niche with wraparound seating is tucked behind curtains

"Speakeasies as a design concept function mostly as a cloistered bar," said Laube. "Ours is intended to be more of an intimate social space."

After a pandemic-prompted decline, members' clubs are on the rise again in New York City – popular for offering spaces to both work and socialise.

Other recent openings include SAA in a former Brooklyn warehouse, which was renovated by local studio Bench Architecture.

The photography is by Christian Harder.

Project credits:

Architect: Opa Architecture
Interior designer: Laube Studio
Contractor and millworker: De Lux Construction