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Wine Down

LOUNGE 5280, A NEW WINE BAR AT DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, OFFERS AN OASIS AMONG THE SPORTS BARS AND FAST-FOOD CLUTTERED CONCOURSES. by Misty Milioto Reagin

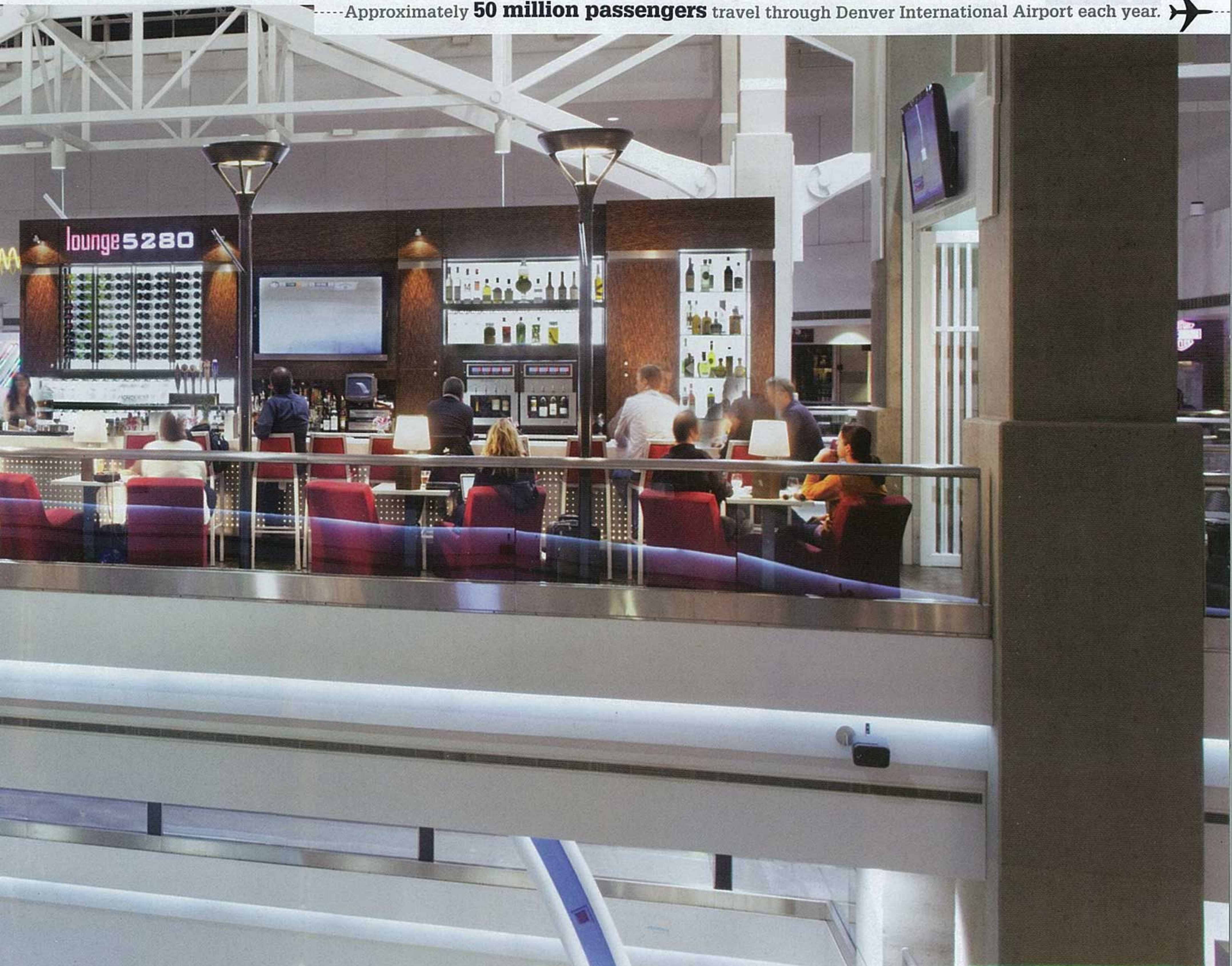
Denver International Airport (DIA) has a new gem in Concourse B that's sure to become a welcome respite for travelers. Lounge 5280, the airport's newest (and only) wine bar, is a nearly 1,550-square-foot space on the south mezzanine bridge that features modern design and an upscale atmosphere.

According to Shane Martin, associate at Colorado firm Rowland+Broughton Architecture and Urban Design, the lounge replaces kiosks, allowing the area to be used to its full potential. "You look all the way down to the train platform five levels below," Martin says. "You're floating up there in glass and stainless steel, on display but isolated from everything else around you, and it's a terrific feeling. Frankly, it's cooler than we expected."

The project began last summer when local landlord Skyport Development hired the firm to design an oasis for some of the approximately 50 million travelers who pass through DIA each year. "The client wanted something that appealed to a business traveler who maybe didn't want to be in a sports bar with 50 televisions," Martin says. "There's not really another space at DIA that caters specifically to wine or markets itself as such. It would have done a disservice to the space to take such a premium property and then slap up a bunch of Corona signs."

While creating an upscale space was the main concern, the architectural team also faced other challenges. For starters, the lounge needed to have high visual impact while still allowing views of nearby retailers. DIA also required the design to unify the south and north bridges. "That was probably our biggest challenge," Martin says. "The north bridge currently has Jamba





Juice and Caribou Coffee as tenants, and they have very disparate design styles.”

The design team presented different versions of the lounge, including one that featured large wooden archways on both bridges. That design ultimately clashed with the aesthetics of the current tenants. Instead, the team simply installed light poles on both bridges. The result is a design that draws the eye up while tying the two bridges together in a cohesive fashion. “The light poles don’t block off the view,” Martin says, “but they enclose the sense of space. They also don’t overwhelm the architecture of Jamba Juice and Caribou Coffee, and they don’t hide any of the visibility from a marketing standpoint.”

In addition to the sleek architecture, Lounge 5280 features stylish interior elements (also by Rowland+Broughton). Sophisticated millwork anchors the bar and echoes the feeling of a wine cellar. The white bar top from Silestone provides a modern contrast to the dark wood and metal laminates used throughout. Glass shelving and accents in wine-bottle green also bring a fresh sparkle to the space. Bright red upholstery and custom tables with integrated light fixtures lend permanence to the space while creating different seating vignettes throughout the lounge.

Of course, the menu also factors into the concept. Lounge 5280 offers handpicked selections of wine, spirits, beer, and food.

The wine list focuses on low-production, family-owned, boutique wines from throughout the world’s premium wine regions. The signature cocktail list includes a selection of “Colorado Inspired Cocktails,” featuring brands such as Stranahan’s Colorado Whiskey, Leopold Bros., and Silverthorne’s Montanya Distillers. The beer list also features selections from local breweries.

Overall, Lounge 5280’s location on the mezzanine bridge provides a cool vantage point from which to people watch, and the thoughtful combination of architectural and interior design with a well-planned menu creates the perfect place for busy travelers to unwind. ☐

A freelance writer and editor, Misty Milioto Reagin is new to discovering Denver.

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