



THE GOODS

edited by Jennifer Acevedo



PORTFOLIO: LCBO, Toronto

SCALING DESIGN TO FIT HIGH-density metropolitan areas is the name of the game for Toronto’s urban infill – an initiative spearheaded by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO). When Toronto-based II by IV Design stepped up to the challenge of bringing a craft liquor store to the neighborhood, fitting its vision of “retail theater” into 7476 square feet was the biggest hurdle. “Our brief as part of the urban infill concept was to appropriate the product within a smaller footprint and balance it with creativity,” says Founder and Project

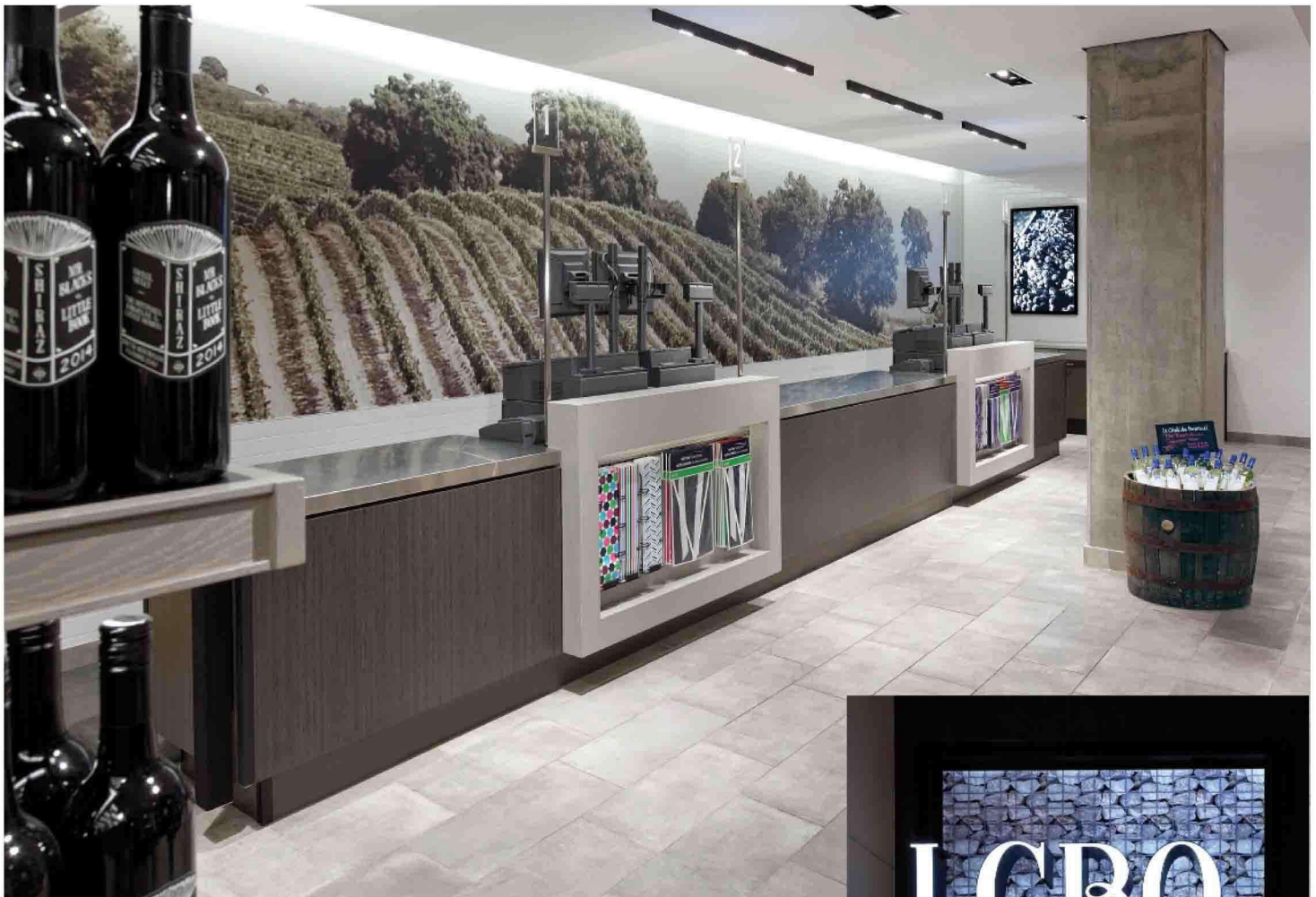
Lead Keith Rushbrook of II by IV Design. “Inspired by vineyards and the craft process of making spirits and beer, it’s all about romancing the product.”

There’s limited space in midtown Toronto – an up-and-coming area of the city that’s packed with 30-something professionals. In this second LCBO location, in a smaller format, at the corner of Eglinton and Dunfield Avenues, designers had 3000 fewer square feet to work with. “What at first looked like a challenge actually worked to our benefit: The tight entryway and narrow focus allowed us to set the

scene for our retail theater, with the product taking center stage and the consumers acting as our audience,” Rushbrook says. “The proportions of the space accentuate the drama.”

The store speaks to the locale’s discerning urban demographic, with a bespoke, label-driven product in a premium setting. Subtle nods to the winemaking process are peppered throughout – from the gabion aeration wall behind the LCBO graphic to the rustic wine barrels that line the interior walls. The narrow entrance theatrically opens out onto high ceilings, accentuated

DAVID WHITTAKER, TORONTO



by lofty frame fixtures. With herringbone-tiled floors and repurposed oak crates carrying artisanal labels, it's reminiscent of an authentic wine warehouse. Bleached woods and warm concretes balance the industrial metals, with contrasting shelving adding splashes of rich, red wine tones. A sepia-hued vineyard graphic subtly draws attention to the cash wrap, while stark, white-on-black text marks vintage wine, beer and whiskey offerings.

"We wanted to keep everything reachable and in sightline, with low-maintenance shelving and fixtures," says Rushbrook. To this end, a runway centerpiece cuts across the floor

and is shoppable from both sides. "We stayed away from current trends as they tend to date. Instead, we went for a look that echoes the point of origin: vintage-looking prints, reclaimed kegs and backlit transparencies with bold graphics and timeless monochrome accents."

Dedication to the customer journey is what sets this location apart in Toronto's privately controlled liquor market. Iconic, urban to the core and with a barrel full of high-end appeal, it's beverage store design at its finest. *—Georgia Mizzen*