

PATRICK & LIBBY CASTRO

“The potential for what we could make together became more and more apparent.” – Patrick Castro

Couple infuse client brand into design

BY WENDY STRONG
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They call themselves “design therapists.” Patrick and Libby Castro co-own design and branding firm LP/w Design Studios and say their job is to help their clients tell a story.

The couple’s most recent design project, a restaurant called “c.1880” in Milwaukee’s Walker’s Point neighborhood, tells the tale of a turn-of-the-century building and a chef who likes to put a creative spin on his home-grown farm-to-table menu offerings.

“The theme became ‘the inventor’s workshop,’” said Patrick Castro, as he described the way he and his wife connected the restaurant’s owner to the time period the restaurant’s building was constructed.

“Patrick thought I was somewhat of a mad scientist in my cooking so he tied that in,” said Thomas Hauck, owner and chef of the Walker’s Point restaurant.

Suspended cage lights are draped throughout the eatery, giving the authentic Milwaukee space an industrial workshop-like atmosphere. The artwork depicts days past from a map of what the area looked like in 1879 to a picture of a farm boy plowing a field. “They look at the story you want to tell and use it as a motivation,”

“They **TOTALLY GET** how the other person works and you can tell.”

Kelly Mansell
Five Hearts

Hauck said.

The couple’s motivation to join forces came a few years ago when they realized Patrick Castro’s branding firm could grow by combining their talents.

Patrick Castro started LP/w Design Studios, named after Libby, Patrick and their firstborn child, Winnie, in 2005 when he was a brand manager at Quad/Graphics Inc., Sussex. At the time, Libby Castro was a product representative for Novation Architectural Products based in Minneapolis with a background in architecture and design.

“Libby’s job wasn’t going anywhere and the potential for what we could make together became more and more apparent,” Patrick Castro said.



SCOTT PAULUS

Together in 2010, they transformed the company into a branding firm that does graphics as well as interiors.

“I refocused and looked at how I could get business for us instead of business for other people,” Libby Castro said.

The couple’s first venture together was designing and branding Five Hearts, a women’s clothing boutique in Milwaukee’s 3rd Ward. The couple designed the store top to bottom from the color of concrete to the size of the fitting rooms and all the interior and branding design, recalled co-owner Kelly Mansell.

Mansell said it was nice to work with the two of them directly without having to go through a middleman or secretary.

When asked what makes them unique, Mansell said, “I think that they are husband and wife makes them incredibly unique. They totally get how the other person works and you can tell.”

Patrick Castro said the couple have been able to combine their skills to grow their company, with Libby Castro bringing her strong networking skills.

“Between the two of us, he is definitely

PATRICK CASTRO

AGE: 41

HOMETOWN: Philippines

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in graphic design from Loyola University in New Orleans

LIBBY CASTRO

AGE: 39

HOMETOWN: Racine

EDUCATION: Master’s degree in architecture from Savannah College of Art and Design

CASTRO KIDS: Winnie, 7, and Stacia, 3

JUDGMENTCALLS

(Patrick and Libby)

BEST BUSINESS DECISION?

“Working together”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE? “Getting our name out”

WHAT YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WORK?

“We work together.”

AWAYFROMWORK

FAVORITE FAMILY ACTIVITY: “We love riding our bikes together.”

FAMILY PHILOSOPHY: “Take care of each other and then the kids will be fine.”

calmer and focuses on what is important,” said Libby Castro.

The two work mostly on commercial projects, along with some residential work.

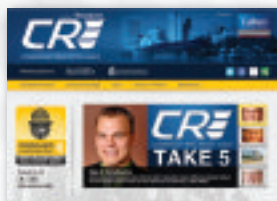
“If you look at their portfolio, everything is unique to each individual project,” Hauck said. “They have no signature design.”

Other clients from the eclectic LP/w list include Marquette University, Stanford University, Quad/Graphics, and high-end shoe designer Sperry Top-Sider. LP/w is also currently working on designing a residence in Los Altos Hills, Calif.

“Branding is a very emotional thing,” Patrick Castro said. “It’s an impression that someone has of you or a company or an organization. And it’s all grounded in truth.”

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Hartford Area Chamber

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Friday - Sunday, July 20-22, 2012

Location: Hartford Airport 4200 Hwy U

Contact: Dana Osmanski (262) 725-3591

You’re invited to Hartford Municipal Airport for the 75th Anniversary Party before the EAA Fly-In this summer! — details at www.cubs2osh.eeachapter.org

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