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Featured Store: Target at Grand Parkway – Richmond, TX

A “risky” open floor plan and inside-outside design characterize a new Licensed Store

When Target asked Starbucks to present its “latest and greatest” ideas, store designer Piyali (Pia) Kar accepted the challenge. Pia had already worked on an innovative design for a [Starbucks at the Sunnyvale Target in California](#), and applied its same inside-outside, open-floorplan concepts to the new store in Richmond, a suburb of Houston, Texas.

The layout of the Richmond store, however, is entirely unobstructed, with an open kitchen and a sunny patio extending from the indoor seating area. Work areas are positioned perpendicular to the craft bar, giving customers less visibility to secondary tasks while placing the front bar at center stage. Suspended steel shelving provides baristas with clear sightlines across the café to the patio, allowing for better security and communication with customers. The design eschews the familiar U-shape prototype for one that is more contemporary and, according to Pia, somewhat avant-garde.

“We are breaking boundaries and introducing a whole new prototype for Target,” she says. “Working with a new layout has its challenges but we kept pushing and reinventing and a lot of great things fell in place.”

The fresh design complements Target’s “Next Gen” model, a redesign of hundreds of its stores that brings a more open layout, natural and warm materials, more glazing, and separate entrances for shoppers in a hurry and those looking to browse. The Richmond Target is [the first to showcase the Next Gen redesign](#) and new Starbucks modern prototype.



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A minimalist layout needs balance, and Pia employed a patchwork of warm- and cool-toned industrial materiality to add texture and movement. Oak banquettes and ceiling baffles and a rustic, multi-tone wood bar front offset pale concrete wall panels and polished concrete flooring. The combination of elongated baffles and panels brings a linear rhythm to the space, complemented by a playful mural by local artist [Sophie Roach](#). The intricate artwork depicts a topographical-style sketch of terraced coffee farms and captures the directional characteristics of the store’s form and finishes.

Pia borrowed the building’s exterior finishes, such as multi-level concrete panels, for the interior. But she also wanted to leverage the outside floorplan and merge the interior with the exterior, a visual feat achieved with the café banquette that appears to flow through the glazing, becoming one with the outdoor benches.

“It’s unusual for a Licensed Store to have an adjacent patio,” Pia says. “I wanted to make the most of it and have both areas feel

cohesive and natural.”

Design program manager Sue Brooks oversees all of the nearly 1,500 Starbucks housed within Target stores, and countless times has walked the delicate balance of design negotiation that comes with Licensed Stores.

“With a Licensed Store, there’s a lot of back and forth and selling of ideas that pose different challenges,” Sue says. “Fortunately, we have a great relationship with Target, despite being strong brands with strong opinions, and we always find ways to put our cool spin on their needs to respond to the challenges.” Adds Pia, “It’s the type of negotiation that Sue does so beautifully. She truly believed in the design and found ways to make it work.”

The store opened last October, the first of hundreds of Target remodels over the next several years that will include the Starbucks store prototype. Target leadership has responded positively to the layout and is open to implementing more innovative ideas from Starbucks.

“The whole experience was great, with a lot of cross-functional coordination from Target, concepts, sourcing, ops engineering and more,” Sue says. “I think everyone understood that great design is about taking risks. When you are vulnerable, you make smart, fact-based decisions and that’s how we achieved this beautiful and innovative store.”

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