



Project:
The Kitchen Table Refresh

Location:
Rio Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas

Armstrong Flooring®:
Standard Excelon®
Imperial® Texture

Featured skus:
57547 Eucalyptus
59235 Impasto
51885 Granny Smith
51878 Golden
59243 Tannin

Rio Hotel & Casino

The Kitchen Table: A Vintage-Inspired Restaurant Transformation in Las Vegas

Bringing Route 66 to Life

Darla Real, a seasoned hospitality designer whose experience includes in-house design and development for MGM Resorts and landmark projects such as CityCenter, led the renovation of The Kitchen Table, a high-volume modern American breakfast and lunch spot inside the Rio Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas. The project was clear but challenging: refresh a heavily used restaurant without the cost or disruption of a full-scale remodel, while giving it a distinct personality that resonates with guests.

Working within a \$400,000 budget, Real approached the project holistically, ensuring that flooring, furniture, lighting, color and accessories all worked together to tell a cohesive story. "Every choice, from the chair fabric to the floor pattern, was meant to make the space feel familiar yet clearly refreshed," she says.

Drawing inspiration from vintage Route 66 diners, the design balances nostalgia with purpose. Real describes the result as perfectly imperfect,



where familiar references feel intentional rather than themed. Bright mint greens, warm neutrals, and subtle retro accents replaced a dark, burgundy toned interior, transforming the atmosphere from heavy and dated to open, inviting, and dynamic. Accessories such as platters and dishes reminiscent of a grandmother’s kitchen reinforce a sense of comfort, memory, and personality.

Existing furniture was reupholstered to align with the new palette, while carefully chosen seating configurations support both group dining and more intimate experiences. Lighting was recalibrated to lift and highlight key areas. These elements, combined with thoughtful circulation paths, ensure that the diner feels both easy to navigate and visually engaging.

“Guests may not notice every individual element,” Real says, “but they immediately feel the difference. It needed to feel familiar, but also distinctly new.”

Creativity Underfoot

A defining element of the renovation was Vinyl Composition Tile, or VCT, used not just for function but as a central design feature. Long valued in commercial interiors, VCT offers durability, abrasion resistance, and proven performance under decades of heavy use. Produced by AHF Products in the United States with domestic and global content, it is economical and readily available, and most importantly supports efficient project timelines—a critical factor in hospitality renovations.

While these performance attributes have made VCT a staple for decades, its design potential is now more expansive than ever. At The Kitchen Table,

the floor’s random pattern in varied colors introduces movement and visual rhythm, transforming it into a defining feature. The composition subtly references classic diner geometry while remaining fresh and contemporary.

VCT’s customization possibilities are considerable. With more than 100 colors to choose from, Armstrong Flooring® Imperial Texture™ provides the perfect palette for any commercial space. Designers can work with color, scale, and pattern to create floors that feel tailored to a specific environment rather than standardized.

Waterjet cutting extends that flexibility further, enabling tiles to be shaped with precision into curves, borders, logos, or complex motifs. Designers are no longer confined to rectilinear layouts, creating intricate, intentional compositions that integrate seamlessly with the space.

“There is almost no limit to what you can create,” Real says. “It allowed us to take a very practical material and turn it into something expressive and specific to this space.”

In a hospitality setting, this level of customization carries tangible impact. The waterjet cut pattern anchors the entry and bar, guides circulation, defines zones, and establishes a strong visual identity from the moment guests arrive, all while supporting the Route 66 inspired narrative.

Equally important is the renovation’s effect on daily use. VCT can withstand decades of wear while being easy and cost-effective to maintain and repair. Scuffs are easily buffed out – beauty as well as brawn.

The design also hit the jackpot with employees and customers. The staff

responded positively to a brighter, more cohesive environment, and guests entering from the casino floor enjoy the whimsical design and welcoming warmth.

At Rio Hotel & Casino, where constant activity and high guest turnover define the environment, those subtle improvements are essential. The renovation succeeds not through dramatic gestures, but through a series of deliberate, well executed decisions that bring clarity, durability, and identity to a space that rarely stands still. Every choice, from materials to finishes, reinforces Darla Real's vision: a diner that is practical, expressive, and unmistakably inviting.

About Darla Real

Darla Real has spent over 30 years shaping hospitality spaces across the United States, with a portfolio that spans luxury resorts, tribal gaming properties, and boutique hotels. Known for blending bold design with practical functionality, she transforms challenging spaces into visually striking yet



operationally sound environments. Her expertise in materials selection, spatial planning, and storytelling through design made her uniquely suited to this project, including her work throughout Las Vegas, as well as many areas in the U.S. including Florida, Mississippi, Atlantic City and Pennsylvania, as well as internationally.

Product Spotlight:

Armstrong Flooring® Standard Excelon Imperial Texture (Products used in The Kitchen Table, including sku #s: Eucalyptus 57547, Impasto 59235, Granny Smith 51885, Golden 51878, Tannin 59243)

- Construction - Vinyl Composition Tile
- International Specifications - ASTM F1066 - Class 2 Through Pattern, ISO 10595, Type II
- Overall Thickness - 1/8 in. (3.2 mm)
- Wear Layer Thickness - 1/8 in. (3.2 mm)
- Factory Finish - Fast Start®
- Installation - S-515 Tile Strong, S-319 Roll Strong, S-1000, Flip® Spray
- VCT is manufactured with 85% North American limestone
 - FloorScore® certified for low VOC emissions
 - Health Product Declaration (HPD) and third-party certified Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) available
 - Made in the USA
- Supported by a 30-Year Commercial Limited Warranty when recommended Armstrong Flooring® adhesives are used. See warranty details at ArmstrongFlooring.com for more information.