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In 2006, childhood friends Michael Portman and Jayson Rapaport found themselves living in Austin, TX, with nowhere to get an affordable, high-quality haircut. Together, they created a salon for men and women, took out all the fuss, and added free Independence beer to the experience. An addiction to old school arcade games developed.

Birds Barbershop has been named six consecutive times to ELLE Magazine’s list of the 100 best salons in America and by the Austin Chronicle as Best Haircut every year since opening. Today, Birds Barbershop serves upwards of 20,000 people each month and employs more than 150 people in eight locations across Austin.
The original Birds Barbershop opened in 2006 on South Lamar, back when there were a lot more places to tune up your car on the boulevard. In the beginning, we had employees park in the lot while we sat outside on our laptops to make it seem busy inside. Those were the days when all kinds of people would walk in and say “This isn’t the kind of barbershop I was looking for.” Sometimes they left, but we took it as a compliment.
About a year and a half after the first shop, we opened on Burnet road and most neighbors had never heard of us. Birds on Burnet is our love letter to Gambit, a roller rink/arcade where we spent all our quarters growing up in Laredo. “Smoke Machines and Laserbeams” was the theme of the grand opening party. People wore rollerskates and these pro breakdancers showed up to do battle.
BIRDS ON E. 6TH

1107 East 6th St, Austin, TX 78702
(512) 457-0400

A few months before east sixth became nightlife central, it was just us, the daytime bars and Cisco’s down the road. Bryan Keplesky, who designed the S. Lamar mural, modeled the East Sixth shop on the wheat pasted art of the neighborhood. With Joel Mozersky helping on interior design as usual, we transformed an old funeral home into a cozy pixel-pasted, yellow-and-black Birds Barbershop.
In the middle of building East Sixth, we got a call from the owner of the South Congress building. He’d never heard of us, but his daughter was a client and thought we’d be a good fit. “A Birds with its own parking lot on South Congress?!?” We had to say yes, even though we weren’t prepared. Since this location is HQ of our universe, the interior has a deep space feel.
We always thought a campus shop would work, but only if it could be a staple for the adjacent Hyde Park neighborhood too. When this old laundromat became available, it came with a built-in motif. While the exterior is an homage to the previous Kwik Wash tenant, the inside is our “Spirit of ’76” red, white and blue take on student life, as told through the glory of sport.
So many of our friends and employees live “super south” and we looked for years for a location there. When this space became available, we jumped at the chance to tap into a part of town that needed more amenities within driving distance. That’s Ladybird Johnson behind the shades in the mural—namesake of the Wildflower Center down the road, dedicated to the plant conservation and ecological research reflected in the amber waves of art by longtime design collaborator Karly Hand.
Surrounded by local tenants like the Soup Peddler, Papalote, Amy’s and Phil’s Ice House, Austinville 78757 is our long-awaited entrée into North Austin. Since we’re surrounded by tech campuses and supporting businesses and neighbors, Birds’ 183 and Anderson Mill is analog meets digital in design, and a totally new take on what a Birds can be. We’re excited to step up our game with this one.
Located on a new street among upscale establishments, the Birds’ design team set out to create a shop that felt dressed up, yet characteristically relaxed. The “Putt-Putt meets Country Club” theme was a collaboration of like-minded enthusiasts of all things Palm Springs, preppy and racquet sports, located at the 19th hole of the Beverly Hills Hotel, if such a place existed. Phillip Niemeyer of Northern-Southern gallery in north Austin oversaw art implementation. Mark Odom Studio oversaw architecture and Joel Mozersky godfathered design.
BIRDS ON
WILLIAM CANNON

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Coming Soon
MEDIA CONTACT

ERIN PORTMAN
Director of Public Relations
(512) 736-1640
erin@birdsbarbershop.com

PRESS PHOTOS
ow.ly/4nqOwu