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# Life after Panton

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Photos Zoëy Brown

Designing the successor to an iconic interior isn't easy. As the winner of a competition to create a cafeteria for the new harbour headquarters of Hamburg-based media giant Spiegel Group, Ippolito Fleitz realized it had big shoes to fill. The old canteen, an eye-popping environment created by Verner Panton in 1969, had become as legendary as its creator. 'There was a certain amount of pressure on us,' says identity architect Peter Ippolito, recalling a competition brief expressing the hope that Panton elements would be used in the new space.

With partner Gunter Fleitz, he quickly discovered the impossibility of complying with that request – owing to the unusual polygonal shape and large glass walls of the existing 525-m<sup>2</sup> space – and began the search for an alternative solution. 'Modernizing Panton was out of the question,' says Ippolito.



No fewer than 4230 circular ceiling elements in matte aluminium add geometric drama to Ippolito Fleitz's jazzy new Spiegel cafeteria.



The result is a dining room that's just as futuristic as its predecessor had been, but arguably more in step with the needs of a modern media company. Huge glass windows allow daylight to enter from the waterside and reflect off 4230 circular ceiling elements in shimmery matte aluminium, their visible surfaces slightly askew for a diffusing effect. Also suspended from the ceiling are movable rods in clear acrylic resin, designed as space dividers, and large yellow 'light dishes'.

Along with wood panelling, granite tabletops, dimmable lamps and other custom fixtures, the ceiling features add depth, texture and visual interest to the space. The cafeteria brilliantly fulfils its mission as an 'information hub' for Spiegel employees and their guests. Ippolito sees the project's potential as a future icon – perfectly in line with the previous interior designed by Panton.

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