

Botanical Hotel, South Yarra Renovation

Client :

Colonial Leisure Group

Architect & Interior Designer:

Webb Plus

Design Team:

Simon Webb – Principal

Adrian Downes - Design Director

Mariana Millares

Matt Sullivan

Builder:

Leeda Construction

History

The Botanical Hotel was renowned as an iconic food venue until it's decline in the last few years. The new owner Colonial Leisure Group have sought to reinvent and modernise in a way that is both complimentary to the existing building, and it's loyal patrons whilst also encouraging a new Clientele. The overriding aim has been to create a standout all day dining venue with some serious pub credentials so that the primary focus is a top quality and inventive dining experience within a pub.

General Design Philosophy

The previous fitout had a minimal Scandinavian feel. Over time this had become extremely tired and there were problems with internal noise, roof leaks, and a difficult plan with the main rear bar being tucked away and the back cocktail bar almost totally separate.

The boldest design decision was to open up the whole building so from the front door there is a clear line of site through to the rear fireplace and conservatory area. The different areas then clearly laid out.

In terms of finishes and aesthetics the intention was a simple but rich palette of finishes with consistency between areas. Dark timbers, are offset by black steel, pressed glass light fittings and pale walls. Warm leather and richer tones create intimacy in the dining room, whilst the conservatory (Archer room) is lighter and brighter with an outdoor feel. The rear main bar is robust but with strong detail and opens onto a bright terrace area in monochromatic tones. The dark oak floor unifies all areas.

The intention is a timeless piece of design neither funky nor fashionable.

Specific Areas

Entry/Alfresco

The Domain Road pavement has always been popular for people watching over a coffee and the new facade and Alfresco area maximises this.

- Sliding Doors to allow connection between interior and exterior.
- A large semi outdoor casual area in strong and simple finishes.
- Bold art.
- Classic French style floor tiles in a monochromatic finish.
- Stone tables with classic French Tolix powdercoated chairs
- Bold signage, referencing the previous brand.

Front Cafe/Bar/Wine Store

A casual area for breakfast through to evening cocktails with buttoned leather banquettes, dark oak and stone tables, and a dark oak herringbone floor.

- A blackened steel bar is monolithic and references traditional French cafes.
- Wine tasting and retail area is intimate
- Wine display cabinet, powdercoated steel and glass for display of spirits, focuses the view to the raised rear bar area and screens the retail area fridges for off sale browsing.
- The existing skylight adds dramatic height and introduce daylight.

Rear Bar/Lounge

A more serious drinking area with stand up dry bars, a fireplace for Winter and opening onto a narrow terrace.

- A Long bar clad in Pietro Grigio marble with grey mirror insets, the length is emphasised by hanging pressed glass pendants. A splash of Tuscan yellow to the back bar tiling gives warmth around an illuminated bottle display.
- Robust heavy steel dry bars with stone tops offset by leather and rich fabric upholstered stools.
- The terrace is modern classic with unglazed monochromatic floor tiles, black French bistro chairs, olive trees and striped cushions to steel benches.
- The lounge area is more luxe with iconic wingback chairs and ottomans focused around the fireplace and afford views into the lush conservatory.

Archer Room (Conservatory)

A courtyard style area alludes to an outdoor space with a large scale skylight, a lush green planted wall, and is flexible for large dinner functions or general casual dining.

- Light and bright feel with solid oak tables, bright and fresh upholstery and classic Tolix chairs. The tables can be joined to seat up to 32 people.
- Self contained bar in simply detailed black stone and bold Bisazza mosaic.
- 9 metre long planted green wall offset against dark timber panelling and a green floral patterned banquette (the only real patterned fabric in the whole design)
- Stone clad Fireplace framed by feature chairs.
- Classic French style floor tiles in a monochromatic finish.
- Glass and metal (Diesel) pendant lights in soft aqua colours provide a fantastic ambience at night.

Dining Room

Whilst much of the rest of the interior has a certain masculine quality a rich ambience is created in the dining room through the use of warmer tones, plush fabrics and strong artwork.

- Iconic artichoke lights pay homage to the previous fitout.
- A folded metal and timber screen creates an arrival experience and filters views in and out as does a tree graphic glazed window.
- Dark stained solid oak tables with bespoke bases are offset by warm chestnut leather and plush blue-grey fabric.
- Subtle lighting effects.
- A bold patterned carpet in gold and earthy colours.
- Private dining room – a custom made table seating 18 will be finished with timber from the Botanic Garden opposite, and a semi industrial steel base. This contrasts with a delicate pendant fitting of nickel lamp fittings with handmade ceramic shades over that is reflected up into the new skylight at night. The side walls of large sliding glass panels have a custom designed graphic of trees that filter the view and provide privacy by means of light and shade. Handmade bronze 'branch' handles complete the botanical reference.
- The original wine wall display is reclad in dark Macassar timber to tie it to the new design.
- Glimpses of vivid orange tiles provide highlights within the kitchen.
- A chosen artwork is framed by the end window, and is a focus through the whole dining area.

Toilets

The toilets are understated in black and silver with white marble semi freestanding vanities, polished chrome legs, high gloss black tiles and brushed stainless steel feature tiles. Textured black wall tiles in the gents bathrooms echo this dark ambience and reference the matt and gloss tiles in the toilet entry.