

Case Study: Park Regis Griffin Suites

Royally renovated



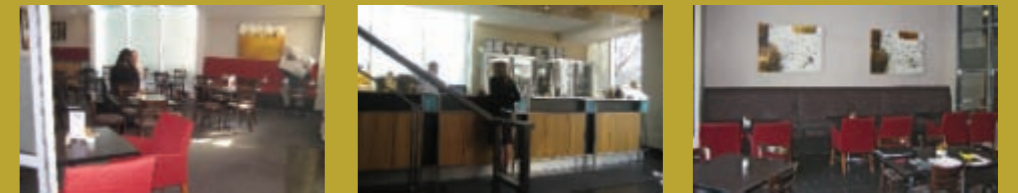
THE STAYWELL HOSPITALITY GROUP RECENTLY EMBARKED ON AN EXTENSIVE REFURBISHMENT OF THE GUEST AREAS AT THE PARK REGIS GRIFFIN SUITES IN MELBOURNE AS PART OF A RE-LAUNCH OF THE PROPERTY. The existing guest areas including the reception, lobby, restaurant and café were previously quite two dimensional, very dated and not representative of the Park Regis brand. The total area refurbished equated to 250sqm. The total budget for the transformation was limited to \$300,000 including all fees and management. The low budget for a refurbishment of this scale required some creativity and skill to be successful.

Sydney Design firm arnoldlane were entrusted with the refurbishment having recently completed the refurbishment of the corporate guest rooms at the Park Regis City Centre in Sydney. arnoldlane's concept was to 'weave' another more dynamic layer through out all the guest areas while not undertaking a major building program.

The selected finishes are polished reflective and refined to create a feeling of theatre and glamour. Horizontal screening elements combined with woven light fittings, sculptural chairs and twisted twig artworks are employed to add colour, movement, and dimension to create a dynamic space.



Above: after refurbishment.
Below: before refurbishment.
(images courtesy of arnoldlane).



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"If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves" - Thomas A Edison

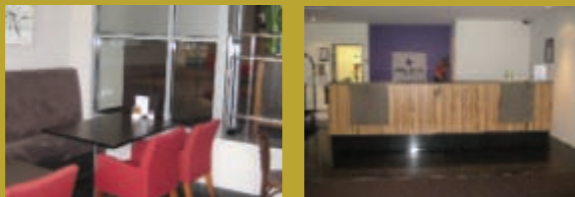


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Above: after the extensive refurbishment project.

Below: before refurbishment (images courtesy of arnoldlane).



the café area renamed Purple Café/Bar. The restaurant, formerly known as Café 604, under went an extensive refurbishment to completely transform the café by incorporating original interior design elements and contemporary colour palettes reflecting the purple theme of the café. The colour purple was chosen as the distinct theme and namesake of the café as it related well with the established Park Regis brand and logo. By definition, the colour purple signifies royalty with a hint of excitement and mystery. Christopher said there were two main project objectives in the café's design and refurbishment and the first

◀ To achieve a more boutique feel for the hotel, arnoldlane utilised only local bespoke furniture suppliers that would not usually be associated with a hotel at this level to avoid the hotel furniture 'package' look that afflicts many hotels in this bracket.

arnoldlane's Christopher Lane said the reception was a focus of the upgrade and materiality of the refurbishment as the existing reception presently poorly.

"For the reception desk we selected a back lit marble with a jewel like quality to add glamour to the entire reception area. As the reception creates the first impression for the hotel we felt it was critical in the design to make this element a sophisticated feature. The illuminated marble also allowed us to overcome a problem particular to the site. The reception desk is located to the rear of the reception area and was quite lost. Illuminating the desk with a jewel like quality provided a directional element in the foyer to identify the reception and lead guests."

To keep the budget down the existing reception desk structure was retained and re-clad. From an operational perspective the existing desk functioned perfectly.

Christopher said arnoldlane scaled back the specification of finishes in other areas to ensure some key pieces could be incorporated into the design to achieve "a good bang on a limited budget approach".

"We believe it's important on a budget to spend wisely, economise where possible and not spread the budget too thin. Otherwise the upgrade can look cheap and ill considered. It takes more time to achieve the right balance however the final outcome is far superior.

As with the furniture, the usual hospitality suppliers were not used to supply the feature light fittings throughout the guest areas. Instead they were hand picked key pieces from local lighting suppliers.

An integral part of the brief and redesign was the re-launch of

was to achieve a stand alone vibrant bar and café space whilst the second was to reinforce connection to the site and remain sympathetic to the Park Regis hotel brand and customer.

"The hotel is located on a commercial boulevard surrounded by cafes and cafes need an identify supported by great food. We approached the design with the notion that new customers may not remember the cafe or name but they could tell their friends " the place with the purple chairs". Love them or loathe them, the purple chairs have paid for themselves and achieved their purpose.

"Purple Café/Bar sets out to create an interior that is 'Melbourne genre' intimate neighborhood café, wine and espresso bar, within what is essentially a modern hotel for the business or leisure traveler to Melbourne. Custom joinery marks the boundary of the upper restaurant tier adding drama to the space and separation from the vibrant downstairs café. Classic thonet chairs painted a fun and regal purple set the tone of the cafe. Each space feels distinctly different through the use of colour, diverse seating and feature screens allowing each guest to take away a different experience from the Purple Café/Bar. The contemporary design sits seamlessly within the greater context of the tourist and business precinct of St Kilda Road Melbourne."

The refurbishment project came as StayWell Hospitality Group – the owner and operator of the Park Regis hotel brand – completed a major refurbishment project across six of its well-known properties.

Simon Wan, managing director of the Staywell Hospitality Group is very happy with the end result and believes the investment and design will provide a strong platform to improve the hotel and guest experience.

Simon Wan stated, "We appreciate the hard work, creativity, discipline and professionalism that arnoldlane have displayed during this process" and the end result exceeds our expectations."

Alexia Purcell - AMG Industry Reporter

Case Study: InterContinental Melbourne The Rialto



The rebirth of a legacy

MELBOURNE'S THE RIALTO BUILDING IS ONE OF THE CITY'S BEST AND LAST-REMAINING EXAMPLES OF THE INTRICATELY DECORATIVE VICTORIAN GOTHIC BUILDINGS, POINTING BACK TO AN OPULENT PERIOD OF WHAT WAS AT THE TIME, THE WORLD'S RICHEST CITY.

The Rialto and the Olderfleet Buildings are highly-prized relics of Melbourne, forming part of an intricately decorative group of commercial buildings along western Collins St. Both Victorian Gothic buildings were built for businessman Patrick McGaughan. The architect William Pitt adopted a similar Gothic-Revivalist style in other masterpiece buildings, including the Stock Exchange. The Rialto was erected in 1890-91 by the contractors Comely and Guillam.

With the building's grandeur however, also came a very dark and foreboding interior. The design elements that contributed most to this atmosphere are either part of the building's superstructure or otherwise heritage-listed, heightening the challenge of lifting the overall aesthetic.

The designers took a creative and innovative approach to addressing this challenge. They began by taking inspiration from the building's foundations and materials, such as bluestone – as ubiquitous to 19th century construction in Melbourne as sandstone was in Sydney – and the still-existing cobblestoned tram track passages running between and alongside the Winfield and Rialto wings.

Traces of original construction materials and styles have been emulated throughout the revitalised building, albeit through contemporary interpretation. An example of this can be found as guests enter the hotel from Collins St, where the flooring morphs from polished bluestone into white marble as they enter the reception area – creating a link between old Melbourne and grand hotel luxury.

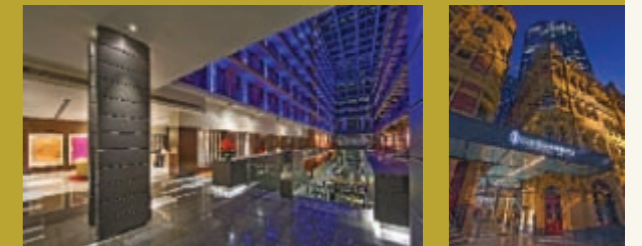
The building itself is essentially two tall wings – originally, the Rialto and Winfield buildings – linked by a glass dome, creating a narrow nine-storey well with a restaurant and bar at its base. Being restricted in what could be done to allow more natural light to enter, Joseph Pang and his team used light and colour to bring life to the space.

Interestingly, the chosen colour palette – inspired by the original construction materials and styles – is largely populated with rich, dark tones and punctuated with carefully-chosen splashes of warm hues. Throughout the hotel – in the Rialto Bluestone bar, for example – you'll find browns and umbers alongside bright oranges and reds, adding vibrancy to what were before uninspiring and foreboding spaces.

Other design elements, such as the 50m wall mosaic that spans the entire length of the hotel alongside Alluvial Restaurant, create unique talking points. A classic damask pattern with a modern slant, the mosaic is made up of more than 342,000 Bisazza glass



The historical building was originally converted for use by Le Meridien Hotel, with a nine-storey glass atrium joining The Rialto and Winfield Buildings.



tiles imported from Italy. Alluvial Restaurant features a combination of modern architecture and décor delivering Modern Australian dishes with an Asian and European presence. Executive chef, Nick Reade sources ingredients from premium producers with a focus on regional produce.

The innovative use of light and colour is never more prominent than at night, when the mood-inspiring LED lighting at the base of each balcony column of the Winfield wing lights up the central well. The new lighting concept transforms what is an otherwise repetitive and characterless façade, creating movement with gradual modulations of intensity and colour – each change altering the hotel's public spaces.

Other areas of the hotel have been converted for unconventional uses that both enhance the guest experience and facilitate the smooth running of the hotel. One example is the rooftop kitchen garden, a small, beautiful green space dedicated to herbs, fruits and other edible plants used in the kitchens of the hotel's executive chef Nick Reade. More than allowing immediate access to the freshest possible fragrant ingredients, the garden is an oasis among the glass skyscrapers of Melbourne's financial district.

One thing that characterises The Rialto building is its symmetry, a feeling accentuated in the use of exposed timbers and steel to contrast the ornate wrought iron balustrades and brick facades. From the highest reaches of the atrium to the new rear entrance onto Flinders Lane, the building's lines have been breathed new life through the unconventional use of light and colour. ■