



MEDIA RELEASE

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## AUSTRALIA'S EXCEPTIONAL HOSPITALITY VENUES REVEALED 2021 Eat Drink Design Award Winners

The winners of the [2021 Eat Drink Design Awards](#) have been revealed, highlighting the country's most exceptionally designed hospitality venues. The Awards, which recognise excellence and innovation in the design of restaurants, bars, cafes, hotels, temporary venues and retail spaces, come after an immensely challenging two years for the industry. Restrictions have meant added strain or even mandated closures for our beloved venues; now more than ever, it feels important to celebrate the spaces where we come together as a community.

Cassie Hansen, editor of *Artichoke* and Eat Drink Design Award jury chair, explained that the Awards are a prism through which we can analyse the influences and shifting design narratives in the always evolving, and competitive hospitality industry.

*"If there was an overarching trend across this year's entries, we can see strong evidence of the restrained and the residential. There was a shift toward more utilitarian materials, creating future-forward spaces that avoid fuss and decoration. However, when decoration did appear, it carried a distinctly residential touch, with some venues in Adelaide and Auckland feeling less like restaurants and more like much-loved homes. It's in these sorts of homely spaces that we often have the best hospitality experiences,"* said Hansen.

Best Bar Design was taken out by **Little Prince Wine by IF Architecture**. Located beneath St Kilda's iconic Prince Hotel, **Little Prince Wine** is a considerate and sheltered space that seemingly has always existed beneath the bowels of the iconic venue - such is the consideration of the design.

As in 2020, the restaurant category produced two winners, such was the strength of the entries. Parramatta eatery, **CicciaBella by Fiona Lynch Interior Design** and **Agnes by Amok** in QLD both shone as sophisticated, thoughtful eateries with chiseled textures.

Also in QLD, Best Cafe Design was awarded to the sprawling, bright and airy **Industry Beans Brisbane by Platform by DesignOffice**, another coup for the Sunshine State which fared very strongly in this year's awards.

Melbourne's **Hilton Melbourne Little Queen Street by Bates Smart** took out Best Hotel Design for its dual sophisticated lobby dining and drinking destinations. The Best Retail and Best Identity Design winners could also be found in the cultural capital, awarded to **Little Prince Wine by IF Architecture** and **Hazel by One&Other**, respectively.

The dreamy, Murray Darling inspired outdoor pavilion spaces **by BoardGrove Architects** at the NGV took out best installation design for their **NGV Triennial 2020 Outdoor Pavilions**.

In addition to the category awards, each year one landmark venue is honoured with induction into the Hall of Fame. The accolade recognises enduring excellence in the design of a hospitality venue of more than 10 years standing. The 2021 entry into the venerated **Eat Drink Design Awards Hall of Fame** is the Darlinghurst icon that has arguably acted as the blueprint for modern cafes the world over, **Bill's Darlinghurst**.

Analysing other design narratives that emerged from the Awards, Hansen explained that Australia's love affair with the local pub still burns bright, but gone are the days of the lackluster hotel bar and eatery. Instead Australasia is following the model of places like New York and Europe where the hotel hospitality offerings adjoining the lobby are destinations in themselves.

*"We have seen a number of once working-class pubs thoughtfully reimaged for a new, gentrified demographic whilst still paying strong homage to its original architectural and community intentions. We also witnessed an Australian renaissance of the hotel restaurant and bar, with especially strong hospitality offerings in Melbourne with the new and district hotels that have emerged since 2019,"* said Hansen.

*"Finally, Brisbane's rise as a formidable food destination was reflected in this year's awards. The Queensland capital's booming restaurant, bar and cafe scene was underrepresented, with just four entries across the entire awards, but two won their respective categories and a third was shortlisted. Watch this space."*

**The Eat Drink Design Award categories for 2021 include:**

- Best Restaurant Design
- Best Cafe Design
- Best Bar Design
- Best Hotel Design
- Best Installation Design
- Best Retail Design
- Best Identity Design
- Hall of Fame

Entries are carefully considered, shortlisted and eventually awarded by a jury of venerable industry leaders from the hospitality and design sectors. The 2021 jury consists of Sarah Cosentino (co-director, Studio Esteta), Anthony Gill (founder, Anthony Gill Architects), Katie McCormack (restaurateur, Congress, Future Future and Lagotto), Matt Shea (editor-at-large, Broadsheet Brisbane) and Cassie Hansen (editor, Artichoke).

The complete list of winners and commendations is available on the Eat Drink Design Awards website at [eat-drink-design.com](http://eat-drink-design.com) and in the last issue of *Artichoke* for 2021.

**Full details of all Eat Drink Design Award winners included on pages 3-12.**

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**BEST BAR DESIGN****Little Prince Wine by IF Architecture (St Kilda, VIC)**

Photography by Sharyn Cairns (full image library [here](#))

**Jury Citation**

There's an inevitability to Little Prince Wine, where it's difficult to imagine this space being designed any differently. Slotted beneath St Kilda's iconic Prince Hotel off Acland Street, this intimate wine bar effortlessly lends the old and the new. It's in the detail – the fibreglass champagne tub that greets guests upon arrival, the mirrored specials board, the Art Deco-inspired light fittings – but also the easy blend of beautiful curves with striking textures such as dark tiles, handsome vertical timber panelling and exposed concrete beams. The seamless incorporation of a retail element underlines the harmony of the space, but it's Little Prince's capacity to encourage punters to dwell that registered with the jury: the easy transition from natural to artificial light, the interplay between soft and hard textures, the clever sight lines, and the sense of discovery from one space to the next. A clear standout in the bar category.

**Commendations**

Atomic Beer Project by YSG (Redfern, NSW)

Hotel Ponsonby by CTRL Space (Saint Mary's Bay, NSW)

Fugazzi by studio-gram (Adelaide, SA)

### BEST RESTAURANT DESIGN (JOINT WINNER)

CiccìaBella by Fiona Lynch Interior Design (Parramatta, NSW)



Photography by Pablo Veiga (full image library [here](#))

#### Jury Citation

An Italian restaurant housed in the recently opened Parramatta Square building, CiccìaBella avoids the dull over-industrial treatments often associated with new builds, instead drawing upon a sophisticated suite of materials to create a truly unique eatery. The jury engaged with the imaginative, unexpected use of textures such as coir matting, unpainted Besser block, open-seamed suede, crushed cardboard cladding and chiselled bluestone.

The most playful touches include galvanized steel walls, some of which conceal storage, and tie-dyed cotton banners and concrete columns etched with graffiti by street artist Benzo. The designers intended to reference the natural stone, dark timber and leather of a traditional trattoria, but rather than a literal interpretation, they've created an entirely new venue that's distinctive, timeless and frequently fascinating – "a difficult thing to do when there's no existing condition to draw on," as one juror noted.

## BEST RESTAURANT DESIGN (JOINT WINNER)

Agnes by Amok (Fortitude Valley, QLD)



Photography by Cathy Schusler (full image library [here](#))

### Jury Citation

In a city relatively short on heritage buildings, Agnes makes the most of a late nineteenth-century warehouse on the edge of Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, transforming it into a temple of woodfired food. The jury noted how the design draws on the history of the premises, using a refined palette that sits in harmony with the beauty of existing features such as raw brickwork, concrete and render. Elsewhere, challenges have been treated as opportunities, a structural steel framework acting as a spine for the building, encouraging exploration of an upstairs rooftop terrace and an adjacent private dining area, and a downstairs bar.

A low-benched kitchen is perhaps the venue's defining feature: from the moment guests walk through the door, it allows an open view of the hearth, grill and woodfire oven, welcoming diners into the space and allowing them to share in an ancient and communal style of cooking.

### Commendations

Three Blue Ducks, Melbourne by Pattern Studio (Tullamarine, NSW)

Fugazzi by studio-gram (Adelaide, SA)

Hazel by The Stella Collective (Melbourne, VIC)

Harbord Hotel by Alexander & CO. (Freshwater, Sydney, NSW)

Gimlet by A C M E (Melbourne, VIC)

## THE AWARDS

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### BEST CAFE DESIGN

Industry Beans Brisbane by Platform by DesignOffice (Newstead, QLD)



Photography by Andy Macpherson (full image library [here](#))

### Jury Citation

An ebullient cafe in Newstead, just north of Brisbane's ritzy James Street, Industry Beans has completely transformed an old brick warehouse space into the quintessential Queensland daytime eatery – white, bright, airy and welcoming. Laid out across two separate spaces, the old warehouse's dock has been enclosed in a glass pavilion lined with greenery and flooded with natural light. Behind, a second high-ceilinged dining room is defined by its reams of pale timber and tiered banquette seating – it's hard to imagine there being a bad seat in here. The care the designers have put into creating the cafe's crisp, clean aesthetic is underlined by a lengthy coffee bar that has its espresso machines hidden beneath the countertop. The treatment serves Industry Beans Brisbane's multilayered offering: this is a place as appropriate for long brunches as it is meetings or informal work sessions, while an eye-catching retail zone in the centre of the venue naturally draws in takeaway customers.

### Commendations

Valentinas by How High (Marrickville, NSW)

Bloom-Sans by Arc Studio (Thebarton, SA)

Midi by Sans-Arc (Richmond, VIC)

Prior Thornbury by Ritz & Ghougassian (Thornbury, VIC)

### BEST IDENTITY DESIGN

Hazel by One&Other (Melbourne, VIC)



Photography by Pete Dillion (full image library [here](#))

#### Jury Citation

An obvious winner in the Best Identity Design category, Hazel's stylish collection of business cards, puzzle coasters and bill holders completes the precise branding of this pared back restaurant in the heart of the Melbourne CBD. The jury engaged with the strong typography that captures the elevation of the eatery's heritage Richard Allen and Sons premises, with blueprints of the building appearing on the reverse side of the coasters and letterpress business cards. The colour palette is subdued and timeless but never cold, and pays homage to the building's history without straying into kitsch. The brand designers worked closely with owners The Mulberry Group and the interior design team to create a visual presentation that underlines Hazel's sense of place, reflecting the warmth of the two-storey venue and referencing the building's sense of history. The jury identified this as a highly resolved design that works hand-in-hand with the restaurant it represents.

#### Commendations

Fugazzi by Design People (Adelaide, SA)

Poodle Bar & Bistro by Congrats Agency (Fitzroy, VIC)

Elma – One&Other (Port Melbourne, VIC)

## BEST RETAIL DESIGN

Little Prince Wine by IF Architecture (St Kilda, VIC)



Photography by Sharyn Cairns (full image library [here](#))

### Jury Citation

A retail space inside a bar or cafe is often a lesson in awkward trade-offs, but not at Little Prince Wine. Here, underneath the Prince Hotel in St Kilda, a counter selling cheese, cold cuts, wine and dry goods sits comfortably within an intimate bar, the two functions of the venue complementing each other and making the overall space richer. Standout features include zinc countertops, an eye-catching counter fridge and illuminated metal shelving, but it's a striking green-tiled back wall that delineates the retail from the rest of the venue and draws in takeaway customers. Still, this relatively small venue encourages exploration of its line of drink fridges and timber wine shelves, and a cellar tucked down a second staircase.

"Very often you compromise putting retail in a restaurant space," said one juror. "But for these elements to work together and make each other richer, I think is pretty extraordinary."

### Commendations

Never Never Distillery by Genesin Studio (McLaren Vale, SA)

Piccolina Hardware Lane by Hecker Guthrie (Melbourne, VIC)



## BEST INSTALLATION DESIGN

**NGV Triennial 2020 Outdoor Pavilions by BoardGrove Architects (Melbourne, VIC)**



**Photography by Rory Gardiner (full image library [here](#))**

### **Jury Citation**

Commissioned as part of the 2020 NGV Triennial, the Outdoor Pavilions were envisioned both as an “escape” from Melbourne’s COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020, and as a response to an adjacent JR artwork about the plight of the Murray-Darling Basin. The jury appreciated the project’s sense of place: set amid a grove of trees in the NGV gardens on a series of raised decks with canvas roofs slung between a repeated A-frame structure. The Outdoor Pavilions had the feel of an outback riverside campsite at night, an effect driven home by the hanging glow lights. “I would love to be there on a summer’s night,” said one juror, “especially in that setting.” During the day, the roofing was removed to create a more informal picnicking experience designed to encourage gallery goers to dwell before or after visiting the exhibition. It’s that flexibility, charm and less-is-more approach to design that the jury felt set this project apart.

## BEST HOTEL DESIGN

Hilton Melbourne Little Queen Street – Bates Smart (Melbourne, VIC)



Photography by Sean Fennessy (full image library [here](#))

### Jury Citation

The newly opened Hilton Melbourne Little Queen Street seamlessly combines the heritage Equity Chambers building with a modern 16-storey tower and includes two distinct food and beverage spaces. Luci, the hotel's restaurant, complements original details such as coffered ceilings, ornate plasterwork and carved timber features with rich upholsteries, handsome banquette seating and modern lighting, creating a timeless lobby restaurant experience. Its location, in the original building's former grand hall, can be viewed from above from the reception area, placing it at the centre of the guest experience. The Douglas Club is the opposite – a charismatic, intimate bolthole anchored by a striking marble cocktail bar.

The jury appreciated the contrast between the spaces, which spoke to the overall sophistication and confidence of its interior design. The winner in a healthy category that signals an Australian renaissance for the hotel restaurant and bar experience.

### Commendations

Next Hotel Melbourne by Woods Bagot (Melbourne, VIC)

Ovolo South Yarra Hotel by Luchetti Krelle (South Yarra, VIC)

## HALL OF FAME

**Bill's Darlinghurst by Brian Kiernan with later additions by Tyrone Dearing & Meacham Nockles (Darlinghurst NSW)**



**Photography by Ross Honeysett**

### **Hall of Fame reflection by Matt Shea, on behalf of the jury**

Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise. Leonardo DiCaprio. Thandie Newton. Julia Roberts. It's perhaps easier to ask about the famous faces who haven't graced the communal table at Bills.

"People felt understood and comfortable," Bill's Darlinghurst owner Bill Granger says. "I don't understand why. It's not what you think a celebrity hotspot to be." Not in the traditional sense, anyway.

Twenty-eight years after Granger opened his iconic cafe in the poky corner tenancy of a narrow Darlinghurst terrace, there's a fair chance you've sat there for a recovery breakfast or a birthday date. And if you haven't perched at that table – a 16-seat solid oak number custom-made by Fewings Joinery in Mascot – you've experienced its DNA, just somewhere else. Modern Australian brunch began at Bills, before taking over the country and then becoming one of its best-known cultural exports.

Still, the table was initially a solution to a problem: "We were only allowed 28 people," Granger says. "So how do I fill that space? ... It wasn't a practical thing, it was an aesthetic

thing." Aesthetic also is Granger's love of minimal Shaker design, which in turn suited the then 22-year-old's tight \$20,000 budget. The table cost \$12,000. Much of the rest of the money went on chairs from Melbourne's Map Furniture.

Granger had briefly studied interior design at RMIT before moving to Sydney, and had a good sense of what he wanted.

Helping formalize the process was the late Brian Kiernan, perhaps best known as Paul Keating's interior architect (he'd later design Annie Lee's Fu Manchu).

"Brian's great contribution was helping keep it simple," Granger says. "He was very good at saying, 'Don't spend money. You don't need to.'"

When Bills opened, little had changed from a semi-realized cafe fitout that existed before. "It was white," Granger says. "The floorboards were the same floorboards ... It was basically like it is now."

Bills was instead defined by the brilliant Sydney light that streamed through its large windows. And, of course, the vibe created by the table. "The big table freaked everyone out," Granger says. "I went and bought lots of magazines and put a bowl of fruit [in the middle] so people didn't have to look at each other."

There were other things going on here, of course. Bills became famous for its ricotta hotcakes, scrambled eggs and the now ubiquitous avocado on toast.

And Granger's experience front-of-house meant that he focused on service. "You've got to introduce [guests to the space] and make them comfortable, and be friendly," he says. "That was more revolutionary for fashionable restaurants."

Little has changed over the years, minor refreshes from Tyrone Dearing and Meacham Nockles notwithstanding. The Map chairs are now custom-made numbers inspired by Pierre Jeanneret's Chandigarh chair. Extra dining has been added behind the fireplace. And art comes and goes, depending on what Granger wants to add to the space.

As for legacy, it didn't take Granger long to notice Bills' influence, but he feels that it's only in the past 15 years that other operators have begun to capture its spirit.

"That essence, that warmth and friendliness, mixed with the design and a good quality product," he says. "People started to understand that formula."

**For further media information please contact Eat Drink Design Awards Publicist, Adam Valentine: [hello@adamvalentine.com.au](mailto:hello@adamvalentine.com.au) 0411 302 769**

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