

MEDIA RELEASE

DECEMBER 2023

EAT DRINK DESIGN AWARDS WINNERS

AUSTRALIA'S MOST EXCEPTIONAL HOSPITALITY VENUES FOR 2023 REVEALED

The winners of the [Eat Drink Design Awards](#) have been named for 2023, representing the most exceptional, innovative and beautiful hospitality venues in Australia. The Award winners are at the forefront of design in the realm of restaurants, bars, cafes, hotels and food retail destinations, and together they act as a prism through which the dining and cultural habits of Australians can be surveyed.

The winners (listed on the second page of the media release with full jury citations and commendations from page three) are a sumptuous illustration of Australia's status as a world-leading country in hospitality design, and provide a roadmap to the most compellingly designed places in which to eat, drink and commune.

The Eat Drink Design Awards jury explained the strength of the entries in this year's Awards along with the major themes that emerged from the winners:

"There was a diverse aesthetic in this year's winners expressing a lot of individuality, suggesting clients have allowed their design teams to lean into strong concepts and narratives. Plenty of examples of ambitious interiors offer complete sensory experiences, drama and bespoke craftsmanship," said the jury.

"The very high level of design execution and attention to detail deserves extra praise this year, given the social and economic climate these works have occurred within. The judges applauded those designs that took risks and tried something innovative; yet at the same time, they praised designs that spoke softly and will likely retain relevance for decades in an industry with a proclivity for impermanence."

In a huge coup for NSW's hospitality design sector, four out of the seven award winners were Sydney venues - Best Restaurant Design joint winners, Best Café Design and Best Hotel Design:

Joint winners for **Best Restaurant Design, Beau and Dough by Smart Design Studio** and **Kiln, Ace Hotel Sydney by Fiona Lynch Interior Design** are separated by a short five minute walk in the city of Sydney. The dual winners, which are very different from one another, provide guests with stunning new spaces to drink and dine. **Beau and Dough** deftly handled the design of two separate venues in one, and the jury were impressed by its confident sense of permanence and timeless aesthetics - an uncommon, and challenging quality to achieve for a new venue. The jurors observed **Kiln, Ace Hotel Sydney** represented a new standard in high-quality hotel dining in the city of Sydney. Its lofty heights and loving nods to its historical site - as Australia's oldest known ceramic kiln in the 1820s - secured its shared triumph.

A short drive away from the restaurant winners, **S'wich Bondi by Studio Shand** on Bondi Beach was awarded **Best Café Design** for its effortless confluence of urban chic and Bondi's laid-back culture, with loving updates to the Art Deco building. A worthy gem for one of Australia's most iconic neighbourhoods.

South Australian suburban bar **Dolly by Genesin Studio** took home **Best Bar Design** for its innovative, bold design and tactile materiality. **Dolly** joins a prestigious list of South Australian bars that have taken out this category in previous years including Sans-Arc Studio's Pink Moon Saloon and Malt and Juniper. The city of Churches continues to serve up some of the most exciting and atmospheric bars in Australia.

Increasingly, local proprietors and designers are showing a great appreciation of heritage buildings through smart, sustainable design interventions. **Best Hotel Design** winner, **Capella Sydney by Bar Studio** is a stellar example of adaptive reuse; a government building painstakingly restored and given a new lease on life with a variety of hospitality spaces.

Showcasing ice cream like precious jewels, **Le Tao's** flagship store **by K. Holland Architectural Interiors** encapsulates the soul of Japanese design. Its commitment to minimalism, geometry and raw stone materials established it as a clear winner of the **Best Retail Design category**.

Shaking off the shackles of traditional sweet graphic design with bold and almost street smart graphics, **Kōri Ice Cream by Principle Design** was named winner in the **Best Identity Design** category. The jury delighted in its bombastic aesthetics that eschewed the typical ice creamery aesthetics.

The Award Eat Drink Design Awards winners for 2023 are:

- Best Restaurant Design - Beau and Dough by Smart Design Studio, Surry Hills (NSW)
- Best Restaurant Design (joint winner) - Kiln, Ace Hotel Sydney by Fiona Lynch Interior Design, Sydney (NSW)
- Best Café Design - S'wich Bondi by Studio Shand, Bondi Beach (NSW)
- Best Bar Design - Dolly by Genesin Studio, Unley (SA)
- Best Hotel Design - Capella Sydney by Bar Studio, Sydney (NSW)
- Best Retail Design - Le Tao by K. Holland Architectural Interiors, Melbourne (VIC)
- Best Identity Design - Kōri Ice Cream by Principle Design, Hawthorn (VIC)

In addition, one landmark venue is honoured with induction into the **Hall of Fame**. The accolade recognizes enduring excellence in the design of a hospitality venue of more than 10 years standing. In 2023, **Bistro Moncur (1993) by Tzannes** was named the latest addition to this venerated list of iconic dining destinations. **Bistro Moncur** joins previous **Eat Drink Design Awards Hall of Fame** inductees such as Pellegrini's, Bills Darlinghurst, Cafe Di Stasio, Cumulus Inc., Cookie and Icebergs.

The full gallery of the winners can be viewed [here](#) and the subsequent pages of this media release.

The 2023 winners were awarded by a jury of venerable industry leaders from the hospitality, journalism and design sectors. The 2023 jury consists of Emma Breheny (food journalist, *Good Food*), Kevin Ho (director, Akin Atelier), Di Ritter (associate, Hassell), Brent Savage (chef and owner, The Bentley Restaurant Group) and Amy Woodroffe (acting editor, *Artichoke*). The awards encompass new projects completed between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.

The Awards along with a report published in the December issue of *Artichoke*. Details are also published online in the [Eat Drink Design Awards Gallery](#) and within other Architecture Media titles, both print and online.

For more information visit eat-drink-design.com. For further media information please contact Senior Publicist, Adam Valentine e: hello@adamvalentine.com.au m: 0411 302 769

Best Restaurant Design

Beau and Dough by Smart Design Studio, Surry Hills (NSW)



Image credit: Romello Pereira

Jury comment

Designing for two separate yet interconnected venues is a challenge that is beautifully resolved at Beau and Dough. Beau displays the typical moodiness and drama of a night-time venue through textured black granite surfaces, a monolithic bar and precise lighting that flatters the food and the space. Dough, a working bakery, utilizes industrial materials, such as reflective stainless steel and white granite, that befit its functional identity. The two distinct dining experiences and spaces are united by a throughline of long caramel leather banquettes and solid oak blonde tables that run parallel to floor-to-ceiling windows and that profile the heritage brickwork of a neighbouring building (another shared element of the two spaces). Extremely restrained in its palette and choice of materials, the design is focused on seamlessly executed details, from the undulating steel mesh ceiling to the floating banquettes that allow uninterrupted window views. This is a venue with a true sense of permanence and timeless style – and one that perhaps signposts a more sustainable design future.

Commendations

Babylon Brisbane by Hogg & Lamb, Brisbane (QLD)

Fugazzi Private Dining Room & Bar by studio gram, Adelaide (SA)

Yügen by Architects EAT, South Yarra (VIC)

Best Restaurant Design**Kiln, Ace Hotel Sydney by Fiona Lynch Interior Design, Sydney (NSW)**

Image credit: Pablo Veiga

Jury comment

Kiln takes hotel dining to new heights, literally. Perched atop the Ace Hotel in the heart of downtown Sydney, its design plugs into current conversations about sustainability, collaboration and community. Collaborations with local artisans, including Henry Wilson and Spacecraft Studio, honour the site's history – it hosted Australia's oldest known ceramic kilns during the 1820s. For Kiln, pigments were mixed out of waste materials recovered from the site. Despite Ace's global presence, the restaurant's palette of dusky pinks, greens and blues is of the Australian landscape. Locally sourced materials echo this, from leather tabletops to stone floors and raw timber furniture. The space is original and playful, its many-layered interiors inviting discovery. Further, it demonstrates a restaurant's ability to bring several design stories into a single space. By capturing a moment in time for Australian interior design, it is just as much a restaurant for locals as for visitors, mirroring a global trend of high-quality hotel dining.

Commendations

Babylon Brisbane by Hogg & Lamb, Brisbane (QLD)

Fugazzi Private Dining Room & Bar by studio gram, Adelaide (SA)

Yūgen by Architects EAT, South Yarra (VIC)

Best Café Design

S'wich Bondi by Studio Shand, Bondi Beach (NSW)



Image credit: Claudia Smith

Jury comment

This little gem is a brave circuit breaker; it's not your average pit-stop cafe-sandwich bar. A beautifully crafted bespoke space that aesthetically delivers in spades, it manages to weave together urban chic and Bondi's laid-back, fashionable culture. The crew at Studio Shand embraced the challenge of ensuring S'wich's unique cafe concept would transition with ease from day to night and lead with a strong brand identity. The design embodies every aspect you need in a local cafe – the idea of bringing warmth and comfort to the local community is very much in evidence. Located in a classic Art Deco building, the cafe was designed to nod to its Bondi heritage. The small space has a very tactile dimension, featuring custom lighting; warm, rich, bold colours; and prismatic panels between galvanised metal and original brick. This is an example of how to seamlessly integrate many materials yet leave an impression of a minimalist approach.

Commendations

Glory Days Bondi by Cox Architecture, Bondi Beach (NSW)

Convoy by Studio Esteta, Moonee Ponds (VIC)

Best Bar Design**Dolly by Genesin Studio, Unley (SA)**

Image credit: Jonathan VDK

Jury comment

Dolly stands as a testament to innovative design in the hospitality sector. The tactile wine bar, which is located in suburban Adelaide, boasts a distinctive and timeless ambiance. The project's creative vision revolved around transforming the existing space into an experiential haven for locals. Through the design team's embrace of the cold-shell surroundings – and a progressive design brief – Dolly has emerged as a compelling oasis. Central to Dolly's success is its meticulous attention to detail. Its iconic glazed corner frontage was harnessed to craft an entrancing curtain that defines different dining zones. The striking in-situ formed concrete bar, meticulously prototyped, presents an impressive yet inviting centrepiece, complete with a bespoke, textured finish. A strategic interplay of local materials, natural and artificial lights, custom artworks and subtle colour harmonies creates a dynamic atmosphere that transforms this hospitality venue from day to night.

Commendations

Bar Morris by Tom Mark Henry, Sydney (NSW)

Butler by Hogg & Lamb, Brisbane (QLD)

Best Hotel Design**Best Hotel Design - Capella Sydney by Bar Studio, Sydney (NSW)**

Image credit: Timothy Kaye

Jury comment

The jury members were all impressed by this example of adaptive reuse. What used to be a government building has been painstakingly restored such that the original property, once inaccessible to most people, has been given new life and opened up to the public. The design seamlessly blends old and new in an approach that honours the hotel's civic history. This refurbishment has the same sense of permanence and timelessness as the original Edwardian structure, and it nods to the charm and robustness of the building. New insertions are solid and unembellished, implementing authentic materials and creating a variety of hospitality spaces. This hotel finely balances restraint and reuse. In an industry known for a high rate of replacement and refurbishment, the design stands out with an enduring quality that honours the venue's past even as it welcomes the generations to come.

Commendation

Hotel Morris by Tom Mark Henry, Sydney (NSW)

Best Retail Design**Le Tao by K.Holland Architectural Interiors, Melbourne (VIC)**

Image credit: Kristoffer Paulsen

Jury comment

The Le Tao Australia flagship store in Melbourne radiates the soul of Japanese design. The space is defined by the seamless integration of Japanese minimalism, geometry and raw materials, and the result balances theatre and utility. The design narrative elevates Le Tao's desserts into objects showcased like precious jewels throughout. Strategic lighting adds drama, orchestrating a luxurious experience that resonates with the brand story. The store's narrow layout cleverly employs simple geometry to amplify space, while a monotone palette and carefully selected materials are counterpoints to the pastel-toned products. A hallmark of innovation emerges in the singular, multifunctional bench. It unifies diverse elements, enhancing staff efficiency and customer engagement – and acting as a beacon to draw patrons within. Le Tao demonstrates that profound impact can be forged in compact spaces. This project embodies artful retail design, underscoring the power of simplicity to connect people with products.

Commendations

Kori Ice Cream by Architects EAT, Melbourne (VIC)

Kudo by Kitayama K Architects, Melbourne (VIC)

Pidapipó Laboratorio by Dion Hall, Fitzroy (VIC)

Best Identity Design

Kōri Ice Cream by Principle Design, Hawthorn (VIC)



Image credit: Saville Coble

Jury comment

Kōri Ice Cream exemplifies what's possible when branding and interior design minds work synergistically. Principle Design's street-style-inspired identity is not only successfully applied throughout interior, wayfinding and packaging, it is thoughtfully executed at all levels. It wouldn't be surprising to find a red stripe on the inside of a waffle cone (spoiler: there isn't one). What is particularly refreshing about Kōri is that it eschews expected ice cream aesthetics. It is street rather than sweet; bold rather than cute. The identity blends contemporary typography with punchy graphic devices, bespoke illustrations and photography. On paper, this sounds like "too much," but in practice – and in the context of Kōri's simple yet impactful interior – it works. There's a sense of fun in the flavour-specific tub designs (that entice you to try them all) and the giant dripping ice cream image in-store. The branding experience is memorable, caters to small and big kids alike, and leaves all with a smile.

Commendation

El Primo Sanchez by The Bar Brand People, Paddington (NSW)

Kin Seafood by StudioBand, Glenside (SA)

Music Room by The Company You Keep (TCYK), Melbourne (VIC)

Hall of Fame

Bistro Moncur (1993) by Tzannes, Sydney (NSW)



Image credit: Peter Bennetts

Jury reflection

It's 1992. Damien Pignolet, the chef behind three-hatted Claude's, knows a thing or two about fine dining. When Pignolet's good friend Ron White (of Milton Park Country House) asks what the chef dreams of next, Pignolet promptly answers: to open a French bistro serving simple, traditional food.

This was a radical idea in early-90s Sydney, where inauthentic French haute cuisine reigned. Nevertheless, Pignolet and White acquired the run-down Woollahra Hotel a few weeks later; Pignolet sketched the menu and invited his friend Alec Tzannes to redesign the interior, including the front room that would become Bistro Moncur. Tzannes – now an industry leader, a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to architecture and an Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medallist (2018) – was flattered yet characteristically self-effacing when he insisted he wasn't qualified for the job because he'd never made a pub. Then again, neither had Pignolet or White. Thankfully the great rapport and trust between the three friends saw them embark on an incredibly collaborative process through which Bistro Moncur was born.

They envisioned a communal space sophisticated enough to lure discerning locals from their homes, yet comfortable enough to become their second home. The bistro also had to balance excellence with efficiency, serving hundreds of daily covers at a consistently high standard. Pignolet believed success depended on the integration of design, food, price point and service; he aimed for *l'habitude* – getting locals to return every week for generations. Tzannes believed in timeless beauty, explaining: "Bistro Moncur was designed for the long term by becoming a special destination that was better than being at home."

Tzannes' design comprises durable stainless steel and solid timber, with careful consideration to lighting, air flow and sound. Classic bistro furniture, like bentwood chairs and paper-topped white tablecloths,

completes the look. The ship-like spatial arrangement opens with a warm greeting at the bar by the entrance, and tables are easily accessible from the kitchen: no long waits for pork sausages with potato puree. The ingenious vaulted ceiling was designed to maximise light and space whilst imparting intimacy. Tzannes and Pignolet staged the acoustic treatments with the help of acoustic engineer Louis Challis: launching the venue with a buzzing atmosphere that the first-wave guests affectionately termed “Disco Moncur,” then progressively implementing acoustic tweaks to reduce noise and increase comfort for a growing *l’habitude* clientele. Tzannes explains: “The attention to the acoustic design for this building typology was virtually unheard of in the early nineties.”

Also hailing from the bistro-slash-disco’s early days is Michael Fitzjames’ 12-metre mural of notable elites and scoundrels, commissioned for the launch of the venue (and, arguably, remaining its most iconic element). The artwork is now symbolic of Bistro Moncur’s lively service and dedication to guests who have become family.

“Alec and his team gave us the best dining room in Sydney,” Pignolet reflected, adding that “it has encompassed something in the vicinity of 10 million plates of food. But those plates are only as significant as the fact that that many people have been and returned.”

Thirty years later, Bistro Moncur’s interior is almost unchanged. “Design done well is a good investment,” Tzannes said. Careful upgrades by current custodian Alister Campbell include a new bar, which was designed by Richards Stanisich to address contemporary functionality with great sensitivity for Tzannes’ original, but Fitzjames’ frieze of folks still watches over the tables. We think this timeless institution will keep bringing in guests, old and new, for many years to come.

The Eat Drink Design Awards are presented by Architecture Media, Australia’s leading publisher for the architecture and design communities. Its market-leading portfolio includes titles Architecture Australia, Artichoke, Houses, Houses: Kitchens+Bathrooms, Landscape Architecture Australia and Architectural Product News, and websites ArchitectureAU.com, Selector.com.au and Productnews.com.au. Architecture Media has a reputation for delivering high-calibre, industry recognised events and programs that celebrate and promote achievements of architects and designers.