

**Case Study: Sofitel Sydney Wentworth**

Australia's largest hotel reveals multi million dollar refurb

**AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST HOTEL AND THE BIGGEST SINGLE BRICK STRUCTURE IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE - SOFITEL SYDNEY WENTWORTH - LAST YEAR REVEALED THE FINISHED PRODUCT OF A \$10 MILLION REFURBISHMENT PROJECT.**

Undergoing a complete revamp of its fifth floor garden restaurant, lobby, lobby bar and the creation of the new Club Sofitel, Sofitel Sydney Wentworth has since been awarded AHA's *Deluxe Hotel of the Year* award.

A number of world renowned designers were employed to create the new design concepts for each of the areas.

For the garden restaurant, the hotel's existing courtyard garden was the inspiration for the interior theme. Lots of mirrors have been used to reflect the garden view for a semi-circular rooftop gardens is very strong and unusual for Sydney and the designer wanted to bring the garden inside with the feel of a modern, urban conservatory.

Outside finishes were also brought inside such as the restaurant flooring which is inspired by the Greek key pattern in the marble of the courtyard. White Carrara marble with antiquated edges was used to reflect an element of that geometric pattern. Drawing on other elements inspired by cafes and restaurants of Paris, the garden restaurant also boasts custom pedestal tables, wrought iron café chairs fitted with



loose cushions, striped banquettes and bold botanic print fabrics. Spaces are divided with 1960s inspired geometric bronze screens, while sassafras timber paneling has been arranged in a bold rhythmic pattern.

As for the lobby, existing timber-clad column and crystal chandeliers have been complimented with a new formal seating area and 18m hand-made rug. Custom furniture was inspired by the great French designer, Jacques-Emile Ruhlman and styled to give a modern art deco feel.

Nearby, the lobby bar was designed as the lounge room of the hotel with contemporary French furnishings, a slate blue colour palette, plush velvet upholstered sofas and modern leather fauteuil chairs.

The brand new – and possibly most exciting outcome of the refurbishment project – Club Sofitel involved a complete redevelopment of the fifth floor and the design works around a challenging floor plan creating several spaces with different uses. Drawing inspiration from the building's existing patterns such as the heritage listed ceiling that has a strong, curved, ribbed form with a very linear and rhythmic pattern, designers took that linear styling and introduced it to wall panels and partition details as to respect the architectural order and to not impose something alien.

The solution is a progression of spaces with subtly different

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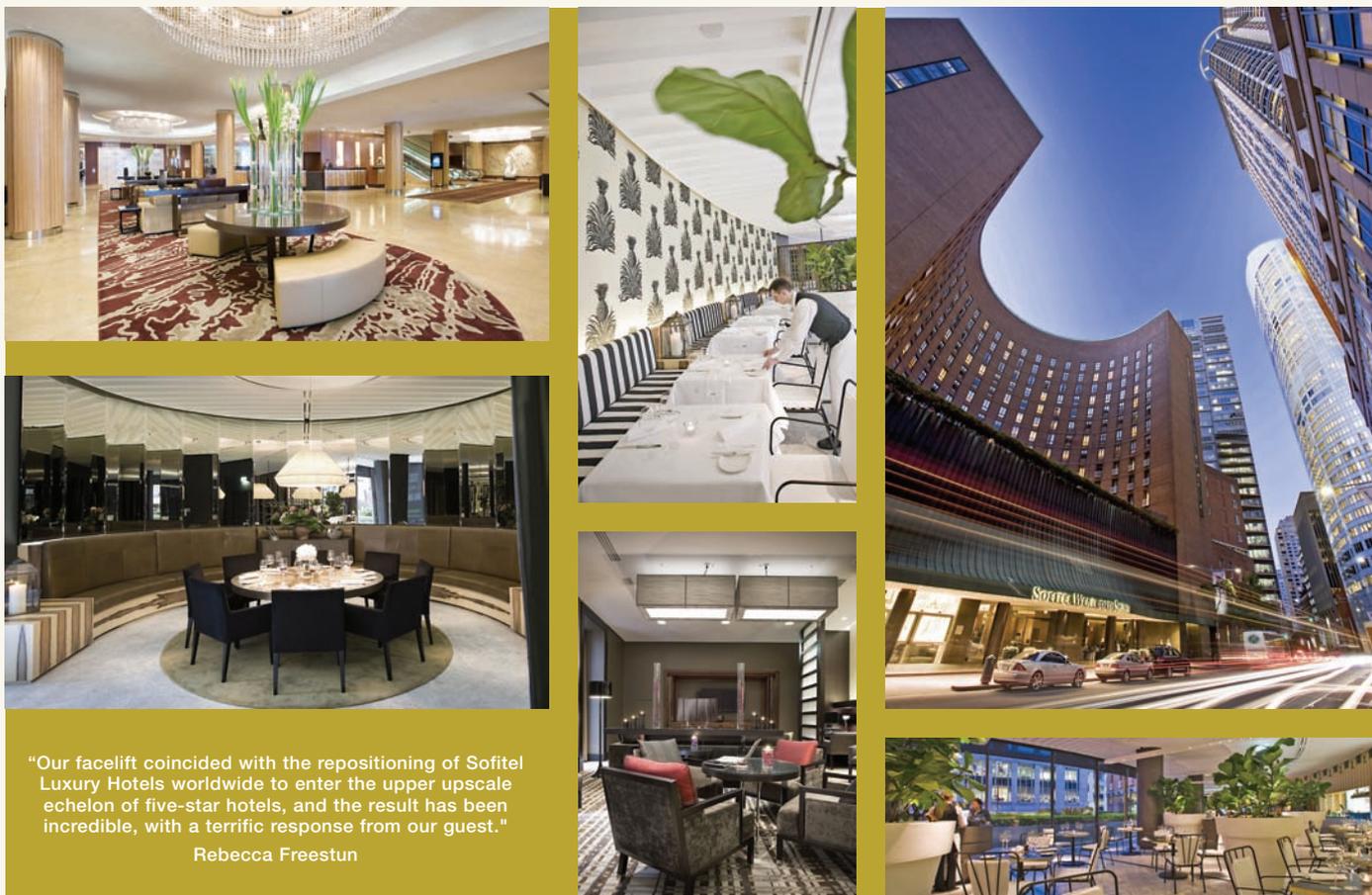
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SOFITEL  
LUXURY HOTELS



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Rebecca Freestun

◀ atmospheres and uses, allowing guests to seek out areas to suit their individual tastes and moods.

Avoiding a clinical, hard-edged corporate look and drawing on references to the existing architecture with its simple 1960 forms, domed ceiling and timber wall units, the finished Club Sofitel product is a residential feeling, warm, welcoming living room space. With a fireplace, timber floor and rugs, whilst some areas of Club Sofitel offer a relaxed ‘reading the newspaper’ type atmosphere, others are also formal enough for meetings and client briefings. All the furniture has been custom designed and built with colours and textures chosen for warmth and richness, mixing soft leather and plush velvet with accents of silk fabric and feature floor lanterns provide serene lighting by night.

Supply of the custom made furniture and lighting was done by high end commercial fit-out specialists, Intelligent Living. Director, Joseph Karam said, “Our scope of supply was complex and broad for the Sofitel Wentworth. We supplied custom made lighting, coffee tables, side tables, arm chairs and lounges in various finishes including marble, high polish stainless steel, brass, glass, leather, fabric and veneers. The detail and collaboration required was extensive. In the end we delighted our client with the outcomes delivered.”

Sofitel Luxury Hotels public relations manager, Rebecca Freestun said, “The Wentworth is renowned as one of Sydney’s original luxury hotels and has always been the place to be seen – a true society venue. “That was a key consideration for our design team, and a lot of careful

thought went into the renovation and ultimate look and feel that we wanted to achieve, from the chandeliers and carpets in the lobby to the décor in our Club Sofitel Suites. We wanted to retain the character and heritage features that the iconic Wentworth is so famous and loved for, but at the same time wanted to update the hotel to reflect the urban sophistication and modern yet classic European stylings that the Sofitel brand embodies.

“Our facelift coincided with the repositioning of Sofitel Luxury Hotels worldwide to enter the upper upscale echelon of five-star hotels, and the result has been incredible, with a terrific response from our guest.

“The transformation of level five of the hotel has been truly amazing. It’s unrecognisable to those who haven’t visited for a while. Essentially we have an entirely new restaurant, Garden Court, complete with more casual bistro style seating and elegant private dining spaces. Our ‘hotel within a hotel’, Club Sofitel has also been embraced by guests, offering that extra service and exclusive facilities that frequent travellers and those celebrating a special occasion appreciate.”

Located on Philip St in the heart of Sydney CBD, Sofitel Sydney Wentworth first opened in 1854 as a guest house and was rebuilt several times before its current building opened in 1966. Since then the Wentworth has become an iconic hotel and the scene of events from royal visits and celebrity appearances to prime ministerial speeches and corporate dealings and today offers 436 luxury five-star apartments and suites as well as a plethora of high-class facilities. ■

Alexia Purcell - AMG Industry Reporter