

inside

INTERIOR DESIGN REVIEW

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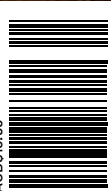
ACE HOTEL SYDNEY BY FLACK STUDIO

Taking inspiration from the cinematic colour palette of the Australian landscape, Ace Sydney is fuelled by a love for the hyperlocal, marrying the pragmatic with the romantic.

SPLINTER SOCIETY

Splinter Society's Chris Stanley talks creating projects that balance his maximalist design approach with his co-director and life partner's refined taste.

**IDEA
2022**
WINNERS
REVEALED



LEYLA, AN INVITATION TO A VOYAGE

Perched atop the Burbury Hotel in Canberra and nestled above the skyline and clouds, this café by day and bar by night reveals very different visages, one with a hint of Italian modernism by day and the other an ode to the retro universe of Edward Hopper at night.

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At first glance, if you step into Leyla, the new café within the Burbury Hotel, as the sun is still high in the sky, you get an impression of delicacy conferred by the purity of the forms. The highly sculpted space and the natural light bathes the whole rooftop.

But the strength of Leyla lies in its versatility. When night falls, another face of this convivial café emerges, reminiscent of bars of bygone days with Kubrickian accents conferred by layered and pleated design elements, as well as by generous curvatures.

There is a gravitational swing about Leyla. This is accentuated by its domed ceilings and timber canopy, giving it an al fresco atmosphere, deliciously evoking a summer by the Mediterranean shores.

Overlooking Canberra and perched above the city's low-rise skyline, Leyla is the creation of Luchetti Krelle's skilful combination of technical prowess and impeccable taste.

Designer Rachel Luchetti's feat is to offer two distinct and unique experiences to hotel guests – as well as local residents – in the same setting.

"We were extremely excited about working on a rooftop space in Canberra, because they are quite rare due to the extreme weather there," she says.

"One of the challenges was to make the elements work with us, such as the Canberran weather conditions, which played a significant role in our creative process."

Measuring up to the surrounding nature and the natural elements has proved to be a driving force in Leyla's creation.

"The challenge was to open up to these elements while still remaining protected from them," says Luchetti. "With Leyla, we wanted to celebrate the views across Canberra and the blue skies above the city."

"It's been designed as an outdoor space that can be enclosed, rather than an indoor space that can be opened."

Another challenge was to work within an original glass envelope, with no possibility of extension and limited wall space to add structural or aesthetic interest.

The practice solved the problem by creating focal points in the ceiling, lining an existing row of oculi with shallow internal circular ledges, dotted with green plants, to give visitors the feeling of being outside, especially during the day when natural light pours in.

There are dichotomies about Leyla on several levels, as the space completely changes atmosphere from dusk until dawn.

TOP Rising behind the solid central bar, an expansive semi-circular piece of onyx floats upwards like a full moon.

BOTTOM Armatures extend towards the windows, enabling additional greenery to fill the room.

NEXT TOP Key metallic elements glimmer by day including the bar's custom solid brass hexagonal footrail, while

feature lighting adds a 'plugged-in' polished resonance during evening service.

NEXT BOTTOM The space carefully balances the chill of the circular bar tables with soft leather furnishings and delicate hues including custom upholstered bar stools and chairs in antique rose-shaded fabric plus vibrant olive marble tables within the private booths.

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RACHEL LUCHETTI



THE FACTS

PRACTICE
LUCHETTI KRELLE
PROJECT LAYLA
LOCATION CANBERRA,
AUSTRALIAN
CAPITAL TERRITORY,
NGUNNAWAL



Stretching from one side of the bar to the rear wall, a canopy of wooden beams warms the travertine-clad space and is lined with curved, semi-enclosed banquettes, adding a southern European *al fresco* feel.

This hanging garden effect extends across the width of the space, as an additional cornice floats on a row of inverted conical columns, the energetic, flared angular edges of which guide the eye upwards. The frames extend towards the windows, allowing additional greenery to fill the room. Below, custom monolithic rectangular planters with rounded returns define intimate living room arrangements.

Private pods enable hotel guests to work during the day and transform into exclusive seating areas for small group sessions in the evening.

Behind arched alcoves, the walls of two private circular cabins reproduce the same pattern, with slats running from floor to ceiling in refined lineament arrangements.

The idea of privacy, a core concept for Luchetti Krelle in this project, puts the private sphere at the heart of Leyla as the practice barred the additional entrance to the two rooms from the lift corridors to install circular booths, creating the most private areas of the space.

“It was quite important to have a versatile space that would allow hotel guests to work if they wanted too, but also to welcome visitors that would only come for a cocktail,” says Luchetti.

“We needed the flexibility and the acoustics that would support a series of different activities throughout the day and into the evening, including private meetings or phone calls while still accommodating external guests to come and sip on a cocktail.”

Leyla’s sleek nude and white palette is accentuated by mineral elements such as an onyx stone and a spritz of green underfoot, refreshing the caramel and chestnut tones.

The key metallic elements shimmer by day, including the bar’s solid brass hexagonal railing, while the lighting adds a polished ‘hip’ resonance during the evening.

Wever & Ducré’s gold fixtures, in particular, blend perfectly with the statuesque depth of the Scarpa-esque bar.

TOP On the neutral travertine floor, a carpet-like inlay of patterned pavers adds a spritz of green underfoot, refreshing the caramel and chestnut tones.

BOTTOM A canopy of timber beams cosy the travertine-clad space lined with semi-enclosed curved banquettes, adding a southern European *al fresco* feel.

NEXT In warmer seasons, the glass ‘walls’ fold up towards the ceiling to create an instant covered outdoor balcony with waist height glass balustrades enhancing the view.

lessons learned

- 01** Collaboration, when well-balanced, is the best tool for an expected outcome.
- 02** Client collaboration is so important because the designer needs that client engagement to really push ideas. So, from the outset, the client was very involved in the development of the design.
- 03** Dichotomy is key when it comes to design versatility.

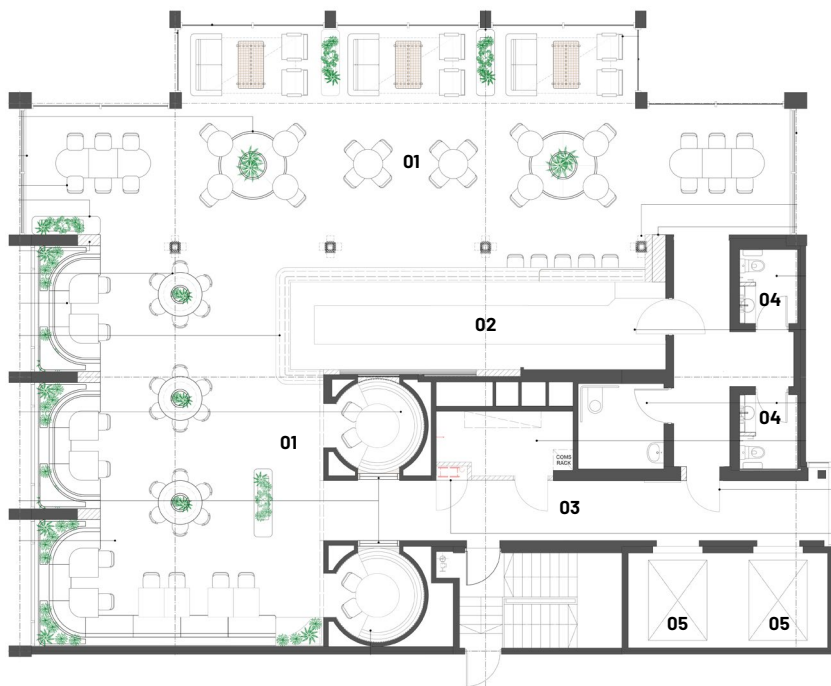




“LEYLA WAS A COMMITMENT TO
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THE PLAN

- 01 Rooftop Lounge
- 02 Bar and Prep Kitchen
- 03 Foyer Corridor
- 04 Restroom
- 05 Lift



Leyla is indeed an homage to esteemed architect Carlo Scarpa, especially when it comes to its underlying futuristic atmosphere.

“These stepped forms, the sculptural quality, the columns and how we looked at a brutalist architecture is inherent to the futuristic feel of Leyla,” says Luchetti.

“Leyla was a commitment to purity aligned with Italian modernism, a sensibility that was carried right through, as well as simplicity and refinement.”

The vintage chrome pendants in the form of twin saucers also hint at retro-futuristic influences, their overlapping outlines coordinating with the ring-shaped bar tables.

The space gently evens out the cool of these rooms with soft leather furniture and delicate hues, including custom-made upholstered bar stools and chairs in an antique fabric in a kaleidoscope of pink, and vibrant olive marble tables within the private booths.

The practice designed bar tables with stepped satellite-style edges, as well as cushioned island seating supporting potted green plants, echoing the circular shapes above the head.

It is not by coincidence that one feels a sweet summer nostalgia on the Italian coast or the French Riviera when wandering through Leyla.

Each twist and turn on the rooftop is an invitation to travel, a call to exoticism.

“Our design choices, such as the timber canopy, were our way of taking people away and transporting them somewhere,” says Luchetti.

“And even though there are European influences, we are a multicultural society and that global perspective was inspirational to us.”

Hovering around the rectangular footprint, bar tables with satellite-style tiered ledges plus cushioned island seating supporting potted greens were designed, echoing the circular shapes overhead.

