

# Designing Without Limits— Luchetti Krelle

Words by Aimee O’Keefe • Photography by Anson Smart and Michael Wee

Ambitious yet highly pragmatic, Sydney-based architecture and interior design studio Luchetti Krelle is stylistically untethered. This approach informs the designers’ focus – hospitality design – with their flexible spirit beautifully evoking atmospheric narratives through unique and compelling sensory journeys.

A friendship naturally drew Rachel Luchetti and Stuart Krelle together before they realised the potential of their combined skillset. From here, the duo founded Luchetti Krelle in 2008, born from a desire to exercise their shared creative vision as well as a hunger for greater autonomy. Stuart explains, “discovering we worked well together and wanting to choose the projects we worked on was the driver of Luchetti Krelle – the business stuff came later.” Today the studio consists of a 20-person team, with projects across Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Luchetti Krelle is defined by an openness rather than an identifiable house style. Rachel comments, “I think not having a

house style suits hospitality because, in the hospitality space, it is about responding to different concepts, whether it is a sense of theatre, a food concept, location, visceral intrigue or creating a timeless relevance.” Having this mindset allows Luchetti Krelle to explore different themes and nostalgia. “Nothing is off-limits, which means that if a client does come to us with a strong vision, we can mould to that but still bring something to it that they haven’t thought of,” says Rachel.

As such, audacious aesthetics – defined by a bold and vibrant approach – are key to Luchetti Krelle’s design direction. “We like to have fun,” says Rachel, “we want to surprise, delight, create a sense of wonder and impact people in a way that has an energy.” While Luchetti Krelle designs calm spaces when the brief is there – case in point, Saké Restaurant & Bar Manly, which is defined by a sense of harmony and an intertwining of nature and flow – “ultimately, we love to have fun with design,” concludes Rachel.



A bold and vibrant approach sees Luchetti Krelle create a comfortable and practical dining experience for staff and patrons alike.



Nonetheless, a deep consideration of functionality remains important. Stuart explains, “because we specialise in hospitality and do it everyday, we are well equipped to make spaces that function really well in terms of supporting staff plus technical operations. The human scale and the science around activating space is really interesting to us.”

Initially drawn to hospitality after having both previously worked in the industry, Rachel and Stuart quickly realised the tangible reward that comes from designing hospitality venues. “We enjoy hospitality in the way it gives back – you get to see people enjoy the spaces, which is really satisfying,” says Rachel. Stuart reflects, “I find the problem-solving really fun – because there are a lot of stakeholders involved, working out how to compromise and make a space work according to everyone’s needs is highly rewarding in the sense of it working from a user-patron level and in the operations of the staff.”

At the same time, there are inevitable challenges that arise when designing in the hospitality space. Stuart explains, “the risk is quite high, and seeing a business fail really hurts on a personal level.” In addition, there are building standards to navigate, authorities to deal with and an entire suite of consultants to collaborate with to get the result in a timely manner. “The measure of success is the client being happy and the business case working out,” says Stuart. Bathers Pavilion is an example of this ethos – it’s timeless and highly practical while offering comfortable dining, good acoustics and a highly sociable ‘Med-luxe’ vibe.

Sustainability is another challenge, yet a creative one. “For us, the best way to be sustainable is the idea of place making and considering longevity to ensure the bones of what we create live for a long time,” says Stuart. Rachel adds, “we try to upcycle where we can, not just rip everything out and start again.” For example, Redbird in Redfern and Jane in Surry Hills are both very sustainable in using as much as possible of the existing. Similarly, Hotel Centennial reveals a timeless design, which means it hasn’t had to undergo any modifications since it was completed.

Truly believing in the profound impact that a venue can have on a community, Luchetti Krelle creates immersive, powerful designs that simultaneously speak to the client, patrons and their own ethos.