

The Commercial Project



N°18

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Cibaria Manly Luchetti Krelle

Location Sydney, Australia
Words Sophia Fawdry **Photography** Steven Woodburn **Styling** Olga Lewis



Cibaria Manly brings Italian vibrancy to the base of the Manly Pacific Hotel, merging the communal sentiment of piazzas and the charm of southern Italy’s coastal villages with the relaxed ease of Sydney’s beaches. The space orchestrates a theatrical interplay of materials, colour and light, reflecting the diversity of Italian dining with an offering for everyone: spaghetteria, bistecceria, friggitoria, salumeria, gelateria.

Navigating the vast volume – once home to a Japanese restaurant and nightclub – Luchetti Krelle introduced defined zones that balance openness with intimacy while maximising coastal views. The design unfolds as distinct yet interconnected spaces, inspired by Puglia’s farmhouse hotels, known as masserías, and Jacques Couëlle’s Hotel Cala di Volpe in Sardinia.

“We had to deal with a lot of open space dotted with dominating square structural support columns that we needed to conceal,” says Rachel Luchetti, principal and creative director of Luchetti Krelle. “The new partition walls iced with a textural stucco create intimacy while absorbing the columns, yet the arches connect the spaces for a semi-open feel.”

Two open kitchens with bar seating draw guests in to Cibaria. The pistachio-tiled bistecceria/spaghetteria kitchen buzzes with activity, while further inside, an antipasti kitchen, once a sashimi bar, now houses a forneria. Banquette seating offers a more intimate dining experience, while the gelato bar – with its mesmerising, curved, rose marble counter – adds a casual, playful contrast. For larger

gatherings, two private dining rooms provide a more secluded setting.

Materiality ties the design together, delineating each area while maintaining a cohesive flow. This ranges from textured terrazzo floors with terracotta hues flecked with amber and pistachio tones to checkered tiles in shades of mint, butter yellow and silvery blue. “Terracotta pavers set within thick grouting ground the formal dining rooms overlooking the ocean. Terrazzo lines the rear dining area with a rich, resonant terracotta shade, the main open kitchen’s seated bar area is a pistachio green, and the gelato bar is a lighter nougat base flecked with nutty shades,” explains Luchetti.

Curved finishes soften the structured tilework, from fluted timber accents on the banquette bases to the concierge desk. In the unisex bathroom, a striking curved vanity carved from a single block of Italian silver travertine is perched on four sculpted legs. Colours and motifs throughout reference Italy in a nuanced way. Deep burgundy and rich terracotta replace tomato reds, while soft gelato greens take the place of traditional verdant shades. This refined approach is also evident in the use of stripes, a motif nodding to Venetian mooring poles. “Via different mediums, this striped motif links the spaces, also encouraging the eye to look up, down and across to observe other intricate features.”

Anchored by nostalgic yet refined materials and colours, Cibaria Manly embodies a richly layered Mediterranean aesthetic, informed by Italian tradition while embracing its place on Sydney’s coastline.