



Behind the designs with Eat Drink Design Awards nominees

REVIEW [JEMIMAH CLEGG](#) | AUG 30, 2017

- ▀ These days, the excitement of dining at a new restaurant is not just about the food – it's also about the decor.

From flooring to lighting, the interior can have a huge impact on the way you experience your meal, adding colour, excitement and atmosphere to complement the chef's creations.

The [Eat Drink Design Awards](#) recognise outstanding design in hospitality. This year 39 Victorian restaurants, bars and cafes, as well as three other projects in installation, retail and branding, have been shortlisted for the awards. Winners will be announced in November.

We chatted to three of the nominated designers (two with entries in both bar and restaurant categories) to find out what goes into designing these striking spaces.

The George on Collins

- 162-168 Collins Street, Melbourne
- thegeorgeoncollins.com.au

Design firm [Hecker Guthrie](#)'s re-invention of the Long Room brings warmth and heritage to the former late-night venue.



The George on Collins, designed by Hecker Guthrie. Photo: Supplied

Director Hamish Guthrie worked on the space in the '90s (back when it was called George's). That helped him understand what the firm had to deal with.

"A lot of it we couldn't see when we embarked on the project because it was layered with all this other stuff," Hamish says. "Because I'd had a bit of history with the building, I was reasonably familiar with what was behind."



The George on Collins, designed by Hecker Guthrie. Photo: Supplied

Hamish and his team peeled back the layers to reveal brick walls and alcoves that punctuate each side of the tunnel-like space.

"All the alcoves running through the perimeter of the space, also changing the location of the bar and expressing it very linearly ... it was called the Long Room for a reason."

The project has been nominated in the bar and restaurant categories.

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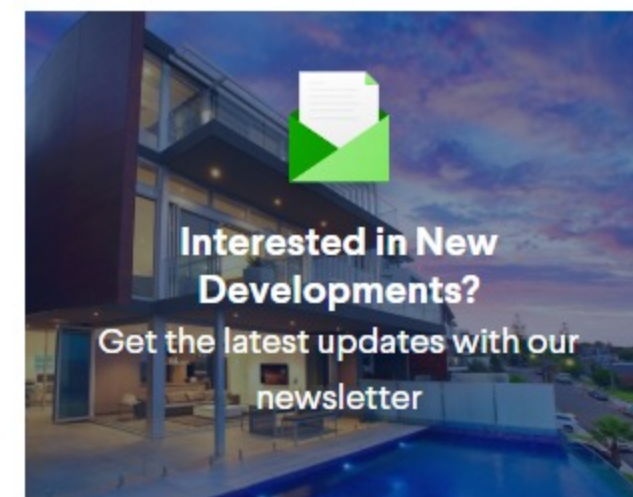
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The George on Collins, designed by Hecker Guthrie. Photo: Supplied

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Middletown

- 229 High Street, Prahran
- middletown.com.au

Design firm [Studio Tate](#) and branding company Pop & Pac worked together to come up with a unique concept for this cafe that suited the client's needs – basing their design on the Duchess of Cambridge, the former Kate Middleton.

"It was this concept of the tiny giant," Studio Tate principal designer Alex Hopkins says. "They wanted something that was aspirational, but they wanted it to be attainable."



Middletown cafe, designed by Studio Tate. Photo: Peter Clarke

"We believe that the muse of Kate Middleton represented that concept really well. We love her just as much when she's in her jeans with a striped Zara top as we do when she's in her royal garb."

The team looked at the history of the Duchess' relationship with Prince William to add to the design, including design details from a pub where the couple used to hang out. Touches of brass and a signature shade of deep blue, representing the Duchess's engagement ring and a favourite trench coat, add a sense of royalty to the cafe.

"It's a language of design elements that then gets rolled out across the project and it makes it a really easy process to make design decisions," Alex says. "The idea was to make it a brunch destination."



Middletown cafe, designed by Studio Tate. Photo: Peter Clarke

Doot Doot Doot and Flaggerdoot at Jackalope Hotel

- 166 Balnarring Road, Merricks North
- jackalopehotels.com

This much-awarded hotel's restaurant and bar have both been nominated for the awards. [Carr Design Group](#) worked with owner Louis Li to create the concept for each of the spaces.

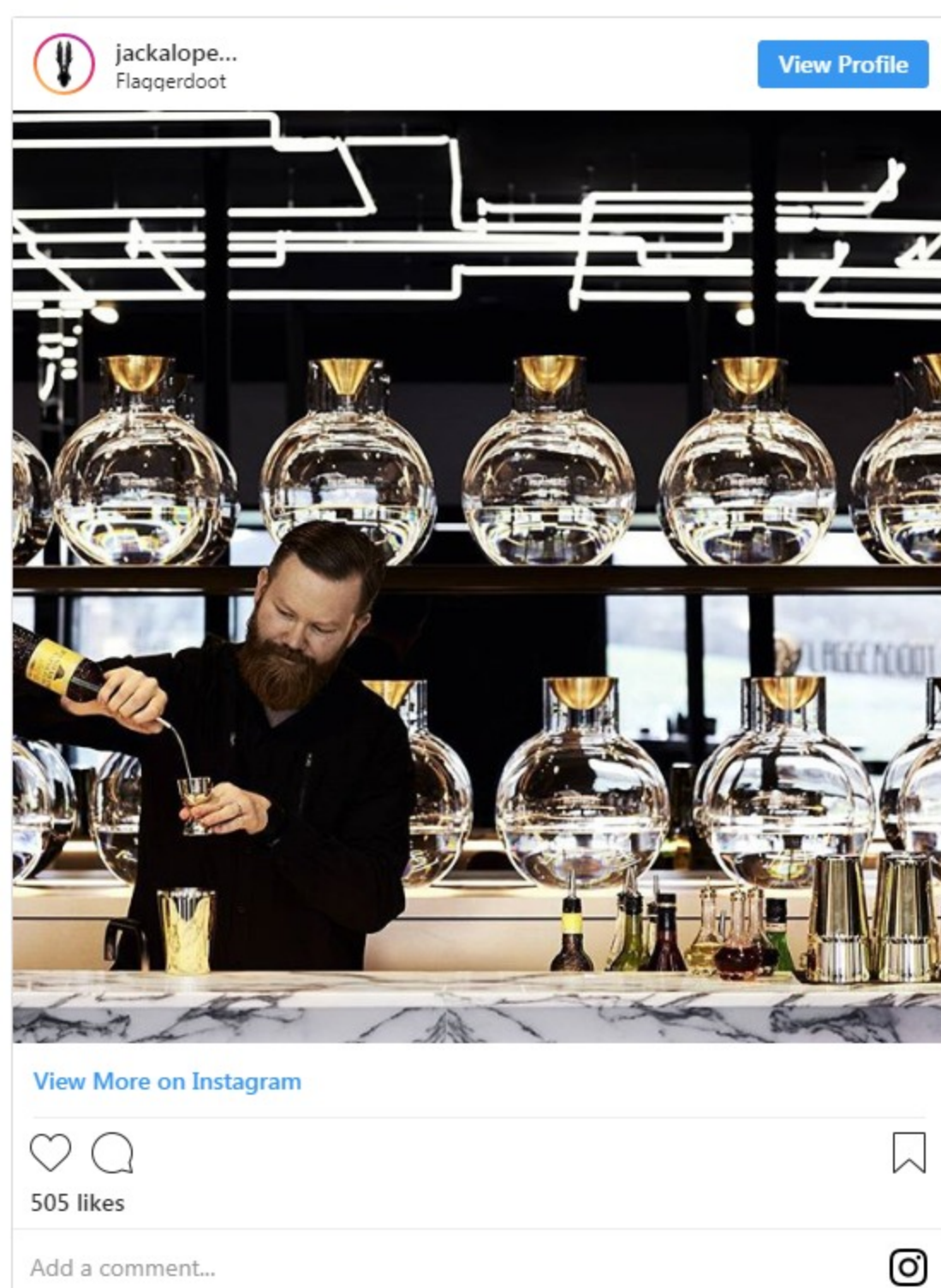
"It was a brief unlike any other," lead designer Chris McCue says. "It was much more about how Lewis wanted the emotions of the people visiting the space to be altered, and your mind-set to be changed as you enter each space."



Flaggerdoot at Jackalope Hotel. Photo: Supplied

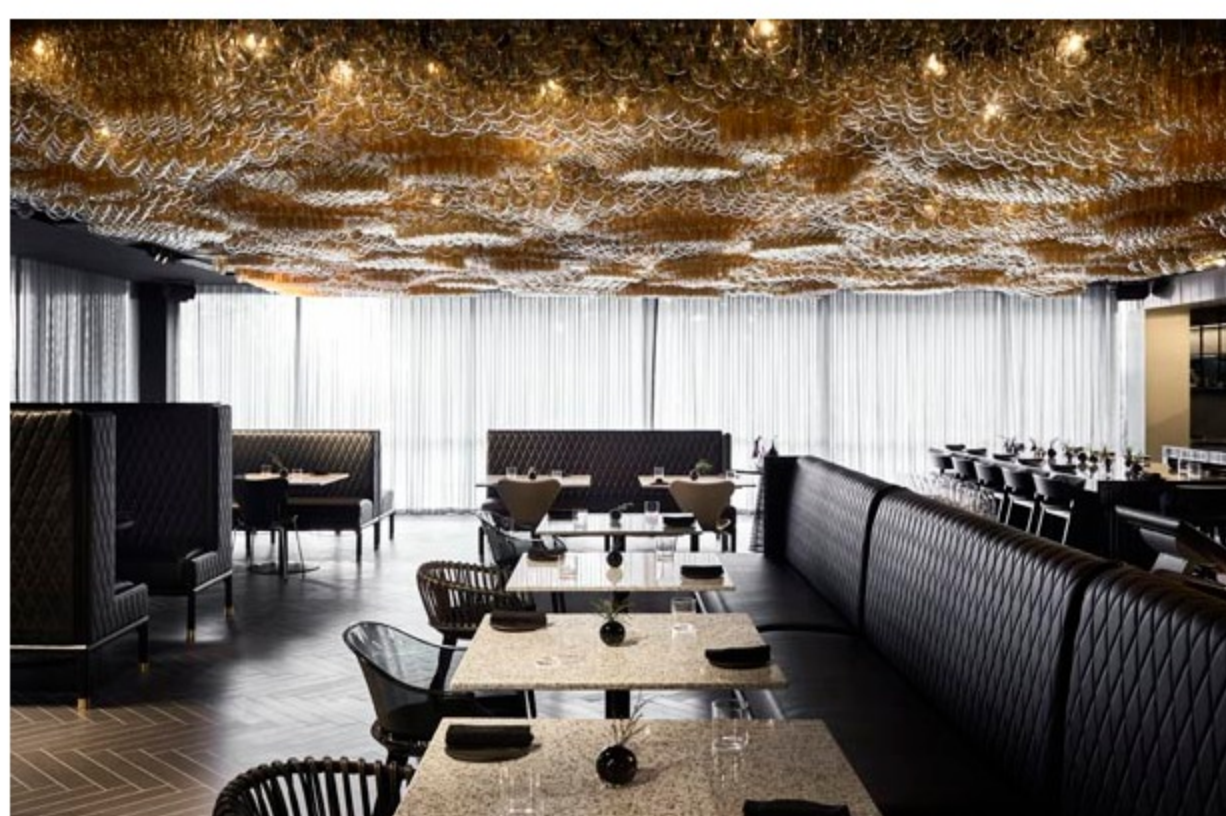
Flaggerdoot bar is adorned with neon lights, abstract art and head-turning furniture, including metal and cork barstools and gold leather chairs. Despite the whimsy of the bar, Chris says the design is simple and classic at its core.

"If you strip out all the art installations, the base building is black; it's classic, it's highly refined and detailed, but it accommodates art in many different forms," he says.



In the restaurant, Doot Doot Doot, it's a similar story – dark colours make a backdrop for an installation of golden light globes hanging above speckled tables.

"Everything is designed to capture your attention and your view and to guide it in a particular direction," Chris says.



Doot Doot Doot at Jackalope. Photo: Supplied