

Can A Good Interior Take A Brand From Good To Great?

Elana Castle interviews Maebe Tetlow-Stuart about Studio Tate's sophisticated interior for Toby's Estate Coffee Roasters in Darling Square. As expected, their interior is as elevated as the Toby's Estate coffee-drinking experience itself.



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OCTOBER 10TH, 2017

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It's become something of the norm to find Australia's elite coffee roasters taking pride of place within the development of new commercial and corporate precincts.

"Toby's Estate's brief for this new cafe, was to develop a highly resolved outcome, a premium experience befitting the coffee roaster's premium brand positioning," explains Maebe Tetlow-Stuart, Studio Tate's senior interior designer.

Toby's Estate latest offering is located in the new Commonwealth Bank of Australia headquarters in Sydney's Darling Square (designed by Woods Bagot).

In conjunction with the imperative to seamlessly integrate the fit-out with the building's architecture at large, Studio Tate have interpreted the vintage design cues of the adjacent, grand, entry foyer within the scheme's rich palette of colours and finishes, perfectly layering history with an acutely modern aesthetic.

"With a major Australian bank as the anchor tenant to this building, we built our design around the idea of historic bank and treasury architecture and the gold guarded within its walls," explains Tetlow-Stuart.

Considered details take the form of exposed brass fixings and a fluted bar frontage. "The restrained opulence of historic banks and treasuries is reflected in the colour palette of deep hues, warm timbers, and rich metallic," continues Tetlow-Stuart. "The sweeping bar features a carrara marble top with brass inlay. The fluted bar frontage – MDF with two-pack finishing – was conceived as a contemporary reflection of the design cues found in iconic bank and treasury architecture." This vintage sensibility extends to details such as the bullnosing to the benchtop and brass foot-railing. "Even the custom banquettes feature curved velvet backrests paired with leather-upholstered seat cushions," adds Tetlow-Stuart, "and dark-grained timber veneer is trimmed with brass and paired with the richly-coloured stone tablet tables."

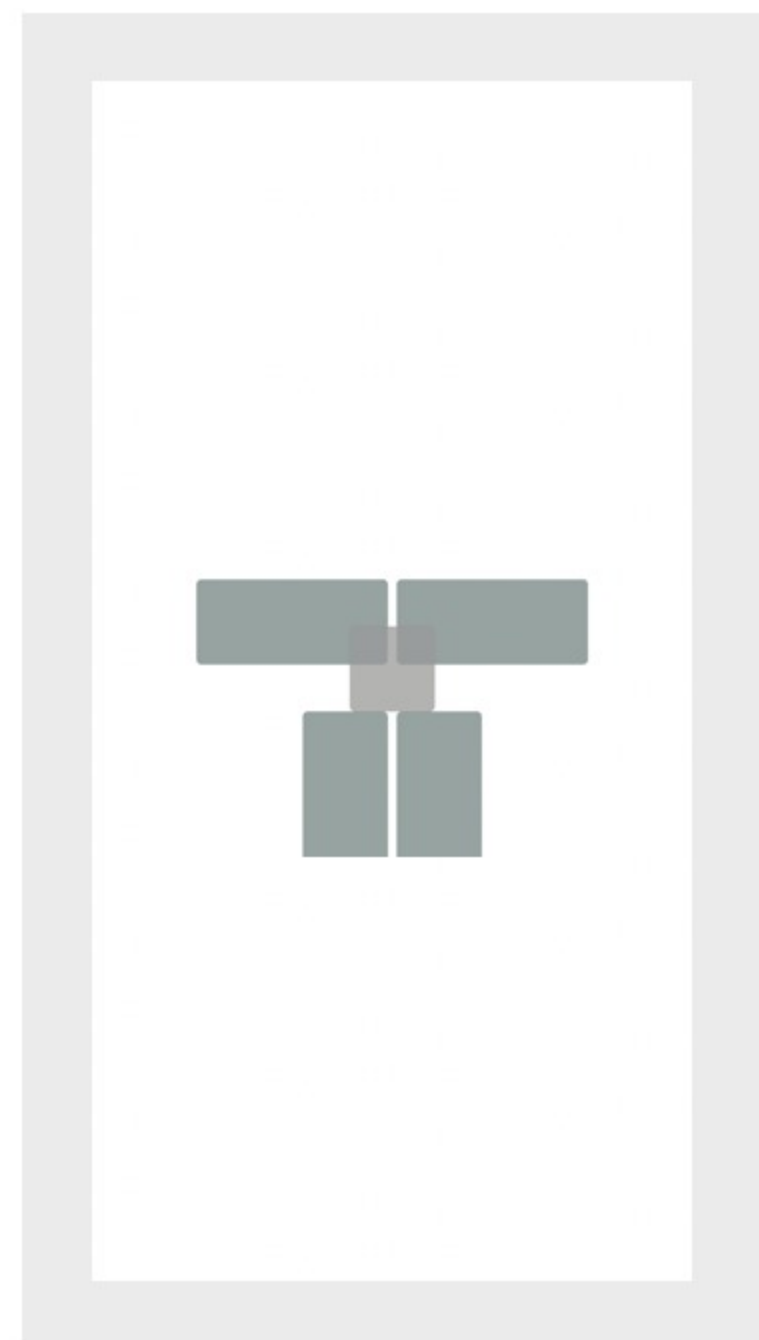
Functionally, the space is demarcated into a variety of options, addressing the scope of customer experiences through multiple modes of seating.

"A variety of options like a high table with stools, round tables, standing-height benches, and low-level lounge seating, offers customers equal opportunity to savour a meal, enjoy a quick coffee while on the run, or hold a meeting with a large group," Tetlow-Stuart explains. "The timber banquettes allow for relaxed seating, while also directing customers to the sales point at the coffee bar. The strikingly expansive coffee bar resolves a variety of functional needs, providing hot and cold food cabinetry, retail displays, and coffee preparation zones."

Special touches include the diminutive tables, the exceptional juxtaposition of materials and a real sense of dynamism in the space. "Our design particularly embraced the undulating timber battens over the bar, enhancing this element of the base build through use of line and form throughout the space," explains Tetlow-Stuart.

Photography by Felix Forest

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