

Motel Flinders Studio Tate

Location Mornington Peninsula, Australia

Words Chantelle Fausset **Photography** Tom Blachford



In seaside Flinders on the Mornington Peninsula, Studio Tate has reimagined a modest 1980s motel with characteristic restraint and warmth, creating a contemporary retreat that feels both grounded and renewed. Motel Flinders now sits comfortably within its coastal setting – familiar in form yet redefined through colour, texture and thoughtful detailing.

The project began with a simple brief: to revitalise the interiors of the existing property while preserving its identity. During early site visits, the design team recognised the enduring quality of the motel's exposed brickwork – a defining feature rich in texture and patina. Rather than conceal it, Studio Tate chose to embrace it and the building's existing bones, adopting an approach that balanced practicality with sensitivity. "The project called for a light-touch approach, with adaptive reuse strategies employed at every opportunity," says Emily Addison, associate director at Studio Tate.

Guided by a creative framework of what the studio calls "neo expressionism", the interiors were inspired by Melbourne's 1980s art scene and the bold colours of artist Pasquale Giardino. This conceptual foundation made way for a confident array of saturated hues that play against the rawness of the original brick.

The reception sets an immediate tone – a lively orange-and-pink striped carpet meets a Jimmy Pike-designed wallpaper, its expressive brushstrokes infusing the entry with a sense of movement and optimism. It's a bold composition, one that instantly signals the motel's new identity while maintaining its easygoing charm.

In the guestrooms, Studio Tate used colour as both a unifying and grounding element. Soft sky-blue ceilings and sandy walls echo the peninsula and coastal horizon, while mint-green doors and burnt-orange signage nod to the building's retro origins, and custom joinery and soft furnishings balance practicality with warmth. The integration of an open storage console, minibar and compact dining nook speaks to the studio's ongoing interest in crafting spaces that feel generous within modest footprints. Upholstered bedheads in Jimmy Pike fabric and teal carpet lend comfort and tactile interest, balancing playfulness with calm. "Through the strategic application of colour and texture, the atmosphere has been transformed to feel both vibrant and inviting," says Addison.

Material honesty underpins the design – brick, timber and fabric working together to form a cohesive visual language. Each element feels deliberate, layered to bring warmth and longevity rather than embellishment.

Motel Flinders is the result of a sensitive renewal – one that values continuity as much as transformation. By preserving the motel's spirit and enhancing its guest experience, Studio Tate has created a destination for couples, families and business travellers that captures the essence of coastal living with clarity, depth and gumption.

