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The 'design pharmacy' issue.

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Totally Washed Up

Laundromats have always had this kind of strangely editorial, romantic feel to them. Maybe it's because they've been so lovingly adopted by the New York fashion scene (case in point – the recent Hermès-matic pop-ups, or any campaign by Vetements).

Maybe it's because cinema and music videos have cast a romantic glow upon these humble service-centres: the promise of meeting one's soulmate between wash cycles. Whatever the reason, the laundromat has always had this built-in, but well-concealed allure, and some designers (obviously in Melbourne) are peeling back these traditionally unpolished interiors to give the modern inner-city dweller that touch of *je ne sais quoi*.

Working with the brief to "define a new generation of laundromats", Studio Tate was tasked with delivering the country's first cash-free laundry. It was to reflect "Powder Laundry's innovative brand philosophy while maintaining some of the original material and aesthetic charm these environments are known for," says Alex Hopkins, principle interior designer of Studio Tate.

The design language here is used intelligently to communicate and reinforce the brand's ethos. Its soft pink palette, for example, is a reference to that stray red sock that makes it into your load of whites. Retro-style bar stools are provided, positioned just close enough to "accidentally" bump into your neighbour. Power outlets and USB chargers fitted into the joinery mean that you can distract yourself with work or catch up on emails. The circular port-hole of the washing machines become a recurring motif, with joinery created from overlapping multiple circles, and material selections such as white perforated metal backed with a signature 'Millennial pink'.

"From a design perspective, Powder Laundry exemplifies the future of the sector," notes Hopkins, "particularly its opportunities for designers who are beginning to infiltrate often overlooked service environments and experiences like this one offers."

