

# DECONSTRUCTION



## THE ORCHID ROOM

BY DANIELLA CASAMENTO

When frameless glass doors slide open at the entry to The Orchid Room in Artemis Lane in QV Melbourne, it is akin to stepping into a world of alluring Asian inspired opulence. The mysterious narrow arched colonnade offers just a glimpse of the venue which shimmers in a pool of dark polished timber flooring and reflected light. Five silver leaf arches awash with soft light are flanked by oriental statues, which seem to bestow a calm goodwill on guests.

Designed by Buro Architects as a restaurant

for a former tenant in 2010, the \$1 million interior remains largely untouched. Since the launch of The Orchid Room more than 12 months ago, the venue has hosted private functions, weddings and corporate events. The tenancy stretches from Artemis Lane to Lonsdale Street and is served by the kitchen of venue partner Red Spice Road. Each of the three function areas retains a unique character and can be hired separately or together to accommodate 300 people.

The arched entry leads to the Lower Orchid Room, which is swathed in reflective textural surfaces. It is a warmly seductive room enveloped by a pressed metal ceiling, a black marble bar clad with a vibrant, backlit laser cut screen front, and sumptuous floor to ceiling metallic curtains, which run the full length of the remaining walls. A series of billowing pendants hang above an informal seating area inviting guests to linger. Across the room, the pressed metal ceiling transitions to dark tinted mirror, which reflects the bar below.

A series of three steps span the width of The Orchid Room and divide the upper and lower rooms. As required by building regulations, the

change in floor level is bookmarked by silver tactiles that contrast with the floor to assist the visually impaired to negotiate this transition. Large custom designed sliding screens at the top step give the venue the flexibility to cater for groups of varying sizes. They also mark the change in floor finish from dark timber to dark patterned carpet tiles which absorb a little of the ambient noise.

With the change in floor level, the designers have cleverly embraced the exposed structural ceiling to lend as much height as possible to the dining area at the Upper Orchid Room. Along the east wall a framed timber and glass window with horizontal battens above the built-in banquette provides a view to the extensive wine cellar. This structural rhythm and horizontal form is imitated at a much larger scale by the timber clad ceiling beams.

But the hero of this space is a 3.4m square water feature. According to Feng Shui principles, a water feature in the right location is an auspicious symbol for prosperity and good luck. The one-metre high pool made by H2o Designs has a negative edge and is clad with blonde stone tiles that contrast with the

black interior. A cluster of cylindrical pendants above the pool of water can be further enhanced with custom designed decorative arrangements suspended from special purpose wires that span between the beams.

Several stairs to the west of the water feature lead to the Red Spice Road kitchen and a much smaller private room that overlooks Lonsdale Street. Nearby, a feature wall glows from an artful display of elongated cylindrical lights. Their undulating curved form contrasts with a large structural column finished in bright gold leaf that revels in its bulk.

The interior of The Orchid Room is a thoroughly considered play on light, texture and reflection that transitions effortlessly from one space to the next.

### » The Orchid Room

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