

DECONSTRUCTION



D.O.C DELICATESSEN

BY DANIELLA CASAMENTO

D.O.C Delicatessen in Carlton is the first stand-alone deli for business partners Tony Nicolini, Robert De Santis and Michael Costanzo. During a 10-day research and buying trip to Italy last year, the D.O.C team visited fresh food producers, factories, traditional delicatessens and little eateries to bring an authentic experience to their own deli. This retail concept shares a consistent theme with their restaurant and produce store in Mornington and D.O.C Espresso next door.

Tasked with the role of designing D.O.C Delicatessen in collaboration with the business owners, architect Domenic Ridolfi has created a retail experience that is part theatre and part visual feast in response to the brief. If the primary role of retail design is to create a space that effectively promotes and sells product and is targeted to re-enforce a brand, then this is it. Ridolfi has designed an authentic modern

Italian deli experience that is enhanced by the flavours and aromas of fresh produce.

One side of the entry is dedicated to a black steel framed structure that displays large cheese wheels and a variety of hanging cured meats. Packaged pasta and bottles displayed on the opposite side allow a view into the store and the theatre of customer service at the display counter beyond. Inside the long, narrow shop Ridolfi has employed a combination of efficient planning, a refined industrial aesthetic and a neutral palette of materials and track lighting to draw the eye into the store. Custom designed and made stained plywood display modules at the front of the shop and along one wall give order to an array of authentic Italian produce.

Bright white rectangular wall tiles contrast with the polished concrete floor and the warm Porter's Paints stained timber lined ceiling. These neutral tones accentuate the colourful

produce and packaging while the aroma of a variety of cheeses and Italian cured meats keeps customers lingering inside. A retro-look SMEG fridge finished in green, white and red stripes adds a humorous touch and an authentic vintage Berkel scale is a merchandising highlight.

Nicolini explains that their aim was to provide an environment which could double as a retail store with a limited dining menu and an event space where customers feel comfortable to ask for information about products they wish to buy. Round timber display tables made by local artisans Arteveneta, are made to support the weight of a 30kg wheel of cheese used for tasting while small dining tables and stools allow customers to sit and savour the atmosphere of the preparation area.

More than 60 imported and locally made prosciutti hang like an art installation on sturdy

butchers' rails at the preparation area. Light streaming from a skylight above accentuates this as the heart of the business. "Pasta made on site here is supplied to D.O.C Espresso next door on a daily basis," Nicolini says. "Our customers love the theatre of the preparation area and have a hunger for information about our products." An event space on the second level is used to educate customers about cheeses, cured meats, pasta varieties and wines.

A custom made black steel stair and balustrade leads customers upstairs to the event space where two original fireplaces hint at the previous life of the building. In this large and light-filled room, a bespoke antique look dining table crafted by Arteveneta seats 20 people and is complemented by No.18 Thonet chairs. Both walls are lined with stained timber storage units and at the end of the room a window provides a view to Lygon Street and a void in the floor provides a view to the activity of the store below.

» **D.O.C. Delicatessen**
330 Lygon Street, Carlton

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