

## DECONSTRUCTION



# Little Hunter

BY DANIELLA CASAMENTO

Carved from the basement of the old Georges building is a new restaurant from the management team of Hunter Gatherer Group, Scott McDonald and Brett Louis. On arrival at 195 Little Collins Street, a small wall plaque announces the understated entry to Little Hunter. Pass through sheet metal doors at the end of the corridor and follow the brass caged wall lights down the stairs where reward awaits you.

In a space devoid of natural light and views to the street, the journey down the stairs to the dining room enhances the sense of mystery

and intrigue for first time visitors. With a design inspired by the philosophy behind the name, Little Hunter is the epitome of industrial hunting and gathering crossed with a cool New York underground milieu. Designers Samantha Eades and Wendy Bergman have enriched the interior with a mix of new and recycled finishes and salvaged finds they have sourced from overseas. The caged wall lights were sourced from a ship salvage yard in Asia and the Maitre D scissor lift table found in an auction house in New York.

Individual elements combine to make the restaurant and bar an experience that connects you to the land from where produce is sourced. A cow mural painted by Matthew Collins, and taxidermy in the form of a Dorking rooster that observes the room from the steel mesh waiters' station, are decorative elements which Bergman says are a light hearted nod to the producer-driven menu. Little Hunter's Jospet charcoal oven is one of only three in Australia and is proudly on show behind the white marble servery adjacent to the dining room. A series of windows behind the long bar also allow views to the main kitchen.

Eades and Bergman have planned the restaurant to make clever use of the original structure instead of imposing their will on it. Original round steel columns sit proudly exposed on large chiselled bluestone blocks and are simply painted gloss black. The perimeter of the dining area is defined by a series of niches that house upholstered banquettes and richly textured recycled messmate dining tables which sit on timber platforms over which sit custom designed light fittings by Paul Grummisch. Here, exposed brickwork gives a warm textural contrast to the dark navy blue saddle felt that is applied to each pillar and which serves to absorb noise of the dining room. Other nooks are home to an illuminated wine glass store and a dining booth overlooked by the cow mural.

The ceiling features original exposed beams and joists while bulkheads and suspended ceilings serve to reduce noise and conceal services. Acoustic underlay also helps to minimise noise as staff and patrons move across the timber floor.

Geometric patterned wall tiles designed by internationally renowned Patricia Urquiola

are located on the far wall and invite further investigation of the long bar. Here, you can settle in for a drink and wait for a table while you enjoy the hustle and bustle from a quiet vantage point. A series of unobtrusive hooks fixed below the recycled messmate bar top deal with the problem of where to hang your coat or bag. Low stools with salvaged timber seats and metal frames, bottle displays with panels of safety glass and feature light fittings by Grummisch are evidence of a well considered approach to the design of Little Hunter.

Eades and Bergman have employed a combination of richly coloured recycled messmate, honed marble, textured tiles, rendered bricks, steel mesh and black stained timber to create an earthy yet chic new venue.

» **Little Hunter**, 195 Little Collins St, Melbourne. 9654 0090.

[littlehunter.com.au](http://littlehunter.com.au)

