



Harveys Bar & Bistro

Architect David Gole's design philosophy earned this Brisbane bistro the Australian Institute of Architects' Brisbane Regional Commendation for Interior Architecture

“**F**or about four or five years, PJ (Peter McMillan, owner and chef) had been operating the previous restaurant on this site. It was quite a difficult space—there was limited seating and quite a compromised arrangement for the kitchen. Despite the restaurant's drawbacks, PJ built a reputation, had a great following and also started expanding his catering business. He really needed a better set-up than the one he

had. I have known PJ for years—stretching back to his first restaurant, Arc Bistro—and had an ongoing working relationship with him. The restaurant upgrade was to include increased dining space, provision for a separate bar, a better kitchen arrangement and, importantly, incorporation of toilet facilities into the tenancy.

“We reworked the space so patrons feel like they're dining on a verandah or in the garden. James Street is such a lovely tree-lined—yet active—street; it was all about opening up the space in different ways. We created a separate bar zone that opens completely to the street. There's also another small seating area that's open to the street for a casual coffee or a quick meal. “Banquette seating is part of the dining area but the lines between different zones are a bit blurred. However, you're certainly able to look in from the outside and from the inside out. You're very much engaged with the street. The roofline was extended over the external area and there's plenty of umbrellas for extra shade. While the main dining space is all glazed, it can be closed up if needed. On really hot summer days, most people will retreat inside. When the weather's mild it can all be opened up and naturally ventilated.

One of the key changes that makes the arrangement work is the floating reception that sits between the formal dining area, the casual dining area and the bar. Staff can direct patrons and if someone's moving between the bar and the dining, there's a staff member there to assist. The food at Harveys is not precious fine dining but it is well crafted. The interior fit-out needed to complement that fact. The seating is a mix of classic Tolix stools and Thonet bentwood chairs. The outdoor area utilises very simple bench seating. The

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openness and unfussy detailing is compatible to the whole philosophy of the restaurant.

“There are pendant lights over the bar but otherwise the lighting is T5 fluorescent tubes. They're much smaller and finer with the warm tubes that follow the rafters in the ceiling. It helps keep that Queensland verandah feel. We also introduced a little cellar into the dining space. Rather than hiding the wine storage, it's all out on display. Patrons can watch the staff move around inside this refrigerated glazed cellar.

“The kitchen was expanded as it also handles the catering side of the business. Since the refurbishment, the restaurant has become a real hotspot, and PJ is also doing much bigger turn-over in catering.” ○

WORDS: KERRYN RAMSEY